

Bulding a Culture for Civic Associations

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Overview

- Culture of civic associations;
- Present different types of organizations and their characteristics;
- Identify common elements of organizations;
- Membership.

Culture of civic associations

- Participation;
- Engagement
- Ownership;
- Representation;



Freedom of Association

- Free and independent associations play a critical role in the function of any democratic government
- Associations provide:
 - A consolidated voice for their members to government representatives concerning specific issues
 - Information and analysis to both the public and lawmakers
 - The ability for a greater number of stakeholders to participate in the democratic process

Why should I care?

- Youth are often underrepresented in policy discussions that will effect your employment opportunities;
- You will be paying taxes (the salaries of your government and its politicians) upon leaving university – you should understand what you are paying for;
- Active participation;
- Politicians need to be held accountable for their decisions and policy positions;

Associations

- Created to serve a purpose, which depends on the type of association
- Their creation and operations are governed by specific laws and regulations
- Types of associations:
 - Professional (lawyers, notaries, accountants)
 - Employers' – participate in social dialogue
 - Business support associations
 - Serving the community (environment, child care, cultural, handicrafts)

Chambers of commerce

- Membership based organizations
- Role: to advance the interests of their company members
- Three types:
 - Continental model
 - Anglo-Saxon
 - Mixed model
- Mandatory versus voluntary membership
- Focus on services and representation

What do they have in common?

- A mission
- Bylaws
- MEMBERS
- An organizational chart
- A work plan
- A budget to finance their activities



The Organization and Its Members

- A membership organization should represent the interests of its members;
- A membership-based organization is a mini-democracy:
 - Elections;
 - Board of Directors
 - General Assembly, etc.
- Programs, services, projects addressed to members
- Members:
 - Owners;
 - Customers;
 - Suppliers.

Members:

- **Reasons to Affiliate**

- Business interests;
- Representation (advocacy, lobby)
- Protection
- Profession
- Networking
- Impulse
- Sharing your success
- Services

- **Reasons to Get Involved**

- They feel represented
- The Organization is tailored to their needs
- They perceive **Value**
- Tangible benefits
- The right thing to do (involvement in public life)
- They understand that alone they can not make change

BEING A MEMBER in an organization BRINGS

Rights

- To participate
- To receive information, services, referrals, etc
- To elect and be elected
- Others?

Responsibilities

- To participate
- To abide by the rules of the organization
- To pay dues
- Others?

A few questions for you

- Are you a member of an association/NGO/club?
- Why? / Why not?
- What benefits do you get for being a member?
- Do you know your rights and responsibilities?
- If you are not a member, what type of organization would be interesting for you?