**Project No. 3-5**

**Regions:** Africa and Asia  
**Countries:** Ghana and Viet Nam

**Project:**
Managing small business associations

**Donors:**
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) for Viet Nam; The Netherlands for Ghana.

**Project Description:**
Small enterprises are the main sources for the creation of new jobs and contribute significantly to economic growth. But in spite of their resilience and capacity for innovation, many of them do not have the means to build and maintain networks in order to pool resources and share risks. This limits their ability to widen market opportunities and frustrates their efforts to improve competitiveness.

To influence policies that would alter their situation, small entrepreneurs in many countries lack the channels of representation to voice their concerns and aspirations. Their potential contribution to an enabling legal and regulatory environment for job creation and poverty alleviation particularly at the local level is not realized.

The ILO helps employers’ organisations and trade unions to reach out better to small entrepreneurs and their workers, so that their voices are heard. It also works with small entrepreneurs and their workers to strengthen their own democratic and representative organisations. To do this, ILO supports capacity building among and for small business associations (SBAs) through guidelines, manuals and training programmes.

A small business association is understood as an organization of small entrepreneurs or workers that is i) member-based, ii) democratic, iii) representative, and iv) aims at collective benefits or advances a common goal. Small enterprises are those with no more than 20 people employed.

**Training programme to strengthen small business associations**

One of the major support tools that has been developed is a comprehensive training package to address the demands for strong and effective member-based associations. The training is usually delivered through national partner institutions.

**Target group**
Elected leaders of the SBAs, members of the Board of Directors of different committees, personnel of the SBAs whether employed full time or on a part-time basis: managers, trainers, and administrative personnel.

**Intended users**
Professional staff of different governmental organizations, Employers’ Organizations, Trade Unions, as well as NGOs and private consultants who want to provide technical and managerial support to small business associations.

**Practice base**
In Viet Nam, the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) has adapted the training manual to local needs. A total of 9 facilitators - 4 of them women - have been trained, who in turn have held about a dozen training courses throughout the country. More than 200 association members have participated. The National Government has made a significant financial contribution to strengthen and expand the training capacity of the VCCI.
In Ghana, the manual has been adapted to the specific needs of small business associations in two Districts. A group of experts from the Ghana Employers’ Association, the Trade Union Congress, NGOs and business consultants have developed a facilitators’ guide and a resource guide. The training package has been used to strengthen associations in two Districts and have led to the formulation of comprehensive local economic development plans to enhance growth and reduce poverty.

In other countries the training material has been used to support women business associations, such as in Tanzania and Ethiopia.

The capacity building for associations is most effective if embedded in wider development efforts that provide a more comprehensive response to the many needs of micro and small entrepreneurs. In Ghana, the associations participate in a local economic development committee - an expression of local social dialogue. In Viet Nam, the associations are conduits to entrepreneurship and market improvement programmes.

**Contact Details:**
Kees van der Ree  
ILO SEED, Geneva  
Telephone: 41-22-7997034  
Fax: 41-22-7997978  
vanderree@ilo.org

Viet Nam:  
c/o ILO Office, Hanoi  
hanoi@ilohn.org.vn

Ghana:  
Kwamina Amoasi-Andoh  
E-mail: kwaminamoasi@yahoo.com

**Project Website:** [www.ilo.org/seed](http://www.ilo.org/seed)