

THE OMBUDSMAN CONCEPT

In most countries around the globe parliamentary control bodies are established. Apart from auditing institutions there exist parliamentary Ombudsman institutions, which form an integral part of constitutional reality and make important contributions to implementing the rule of law, monitoring good public administration, protecting and promoting human rights and fighting corruption.

The Ombudsman concept has proven extraordinarily adaptable and innovative while remaining true to its core principles of independence, impartiality and fairness and its main role of protecting people against violation of rights, abuse of powers and maladministration.

Ombudsman institutions are an important mechanism in the improvement of public administration. They make actions of governments more open, their administration more accountable to the public and also play an increasingly important role in the protection and promotion of human rights.

In fulfilling their diverse mandate, Ombudsman institutions constitute an essential and necessary element in every person's right to access to justice and the development and maintenance of a transparent and accountable democracy.

WHAT THE IOI STANDS FOR

- ➔ **Worldwide representation** through more than 170 member institutions
- ➔ Direct and **non-bureaucratic** aid via training offered to members free of charge and via regional subsidies
- ➔ Building efficient and **accountable public sector institutions**
- ➔ Valuable **expertise** in the field of good governance and the rule of law
- ➔ **Member benefits:** free training, funding of individual projects in the regions and free access to IOI publications, research material and online case database

CONTACT

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INTERNATIONAL OMBUDSMAN INSTITUTE

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The International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) was established in 1978 and is the only global organisation for the cooperation of more than 170 independent Ombudsman institutions from more than 90 countries worldwide.

The IOI is organized in six regional chapters: Africa, Asia, Australasia & Pacific, Europe, Caribbean & Latin America and North America.

The IOI is committed to promoting the Ombudsman concept and it does so in a variety of ways: it encourages the creation of Ombudsman institutions where they do not exist, it promotes information exchange and shared learning through conferences and training initiatives and it funds research and regional projects.

In its ongoing dialogue with key international organizations and stakeholders, the IOI engages in Ombudsman-related topics. It considers policy areas that are of specific importance to its members and issues statements with a view to improving public services worldwide.



TRAINING

Since 2010 the IOI hosted and/or supported various training initiatives and was able to forge close ties with renowned partner institutions offering training workshops, such as the Ombudsman of Ontario (Canada), the Scottish Queen Margaret University (QMU), the Ombudsman of New South Wales (Australia), the Vienna-based International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) or the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT).

The huge success and positive feedback from member institutions show a strong demand for training and encourage the IOI to further embark on such projects and provide its membership with additional training in the future.

With the view to strengthen its members' capability and to foster the exchange of expertise among Ombudsmen worldwide, the IOI always strives to identify training needs that are of specific concern to Ombudsman institutions and to broaden the range of topics offered to its members in tailor-made training seminars.

Training workshops are offered to IOI members free of charge and a certain amount of scholarships are usually funded as well to enable the attendance of staff from institutions with limited financial resources.

RESEARCH

The IOI aims at implementing research projects that will become the basis for an intensified exchange of best practices among the international ombudsman community.

A comparative research study on European Ombudsman Institutions (2008) was followed by an edition about Ombudsman institutions in the Australasian & Pacific Region (2012). A study about Ombudsman institutions in the Asian Region is currently underway and will mark the continuation of this series.

By offering members free web-access to these studies, the IOI makes the concept of ombudsmanship widely known thus contributing to good administration and the rule of law.

REGIONAL SUBSIDIES

Over the past years, the IOI has offered regional subsidies to support ombudsman-related projects in the regions. The high number of applications for such subsidies shows the increasing need for direct funding in the regions.

The promising projects that received funding from the IOI were – among others – an awareness raising program for women's and children's rights in Pakistan, a training course on good governance and transparency in Tanzania, the development of a starter kit for new Ombudsman and developing or expanding offices or a manual on a human rights-based approach to the work of Ombudsmen.