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The Global Imperative

The importance of international-based right of way education

Our members play a pivotal role in facilitating infrastructure development and land acquisition across the world. Although the bulk of our members are based in the United States and Canada, it is vital that our education comes from an international perspective through our specialty courses and material supplements as well as webinars supporting specific international topics and learning goals.

As an instructor of our entry-level class, Course 100 — Principles of Land Acquisition, one of our best truly international offerings, I delight in being able to teach this course to any individual from any nation. When I reach the Relocation/Other Compensation section of the course, an interesting discussion always arises when addressing why we are moving from the main learning guide into the U.S. Law Relocation Supplement, which focuses on how different this approach is in the U.S. due to the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970. Without fail, I catch U.S. students flipping back to the learning guide, curious as to how the course varies for the other students. This gives the students a sense of the much larger world of infrastructure development they are part of. The same sharing of knowledge and diversity of thought occurs every year around June at our annual international education conference, where many of our international Chapters, affiliates



and partners gather to share their knowledge and grow their network. This international approach has many significant impacts to our purpose and mission:

1) Collaborative Knowledge Sharing

The international scope of IRWA provides a platform for professionals to share insights and experiences from various regions. Educational programs that encourage knowledge exchange foster a global community of experts, each contributing to the collective understanding of right of way challenges and solutions.

2) Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement

Successful infrastructure development relies heavily on positive stakeholder relationships. Education on effective communication strategies, conflict resolution and community/landowner engagement empowers IRWA professionals to navigate negotiations and build consensus. By understanding the concerns and perspectives of diverse communities, they can contribute to the sustainable development of projects.

3) Promoting Ethical Practices

IRWA places a strong emphasis on ethical conduct in right of way practices. Educating members on global ethical standards ensures that the Association maintains a reputation for integrity. By adhering to ethical principles, IRWA professionals contribute to building trust with stakeholders, fostering collaboration and ultimately facilitating the success of projects. Also, ethnocentric bad behaviors can emerge in insular cultures that lack the sharing of global standards of practice; it is essential we protect our members and industry from this potential.

4) Mitigating Legal and Regulatory Challenges

Every municipality, state, province, territory and country has its unique set of laws and regulations governing land acquisition, real property and real estate. A thorough education in these matters equips professionals with the knowledge needed to navigate legal complexities. By staying abreast of international legal frameworks, IRWA members can effectively guide projects through potential legal hurdles, ensuring compliance and ethical conduct. Additionally, understanding how issues were handled in other jurisdictions can help our members influence legal change in their locality.



5) Cross-Border Infrastructure Development

As nations collaborate on international infrastructure projects, the harmonization of right of way practices becomes crucial. Educating professionals involved in these projects ensures a standardized approach, minimizing conflicts and delays. Understanding the diverse legal and cultural aspects of right of way in different countries is vital for seamless cooperation.

6) Professional Development and Certification

A robust education system within IRWA promotes continuous professional development. Offering internationally recognized certifications ensures that members are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills. This not only elevates the standards of the profession but also provides professionals with a competitive edge in the global market.

In the era of global collaboration and interconnected infrastructure development, the International Right of Way Association must continue to prioritize and enhance its education as first and foremost coming from an international basis. By doing so, the Association not only contributes to the professional growth of its members but also plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of ethical, efficient and sustainable right of way practices on an international scale. 🌍