

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Philippines

Academy of Political Management

Background

The Philippines is considered to have among the richest and most vibrant civil society organizations (CSOs) in the world. These CSOs are the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), people's organizations (POs) and mass and sectoral movements (labor, youth, women, etc.). From protests to partnerships, CSOs have committed themselves to the tasks of development, protection and promotion of people's rights and welfare, with particular preference for the poor and marginalized. These tasks entail both small changes and overhaul of the structures or the system. In these tasks, sustainability is key.

The sustainability of CSOs, as they themselves recognize, is challenged, among others, by the dearth of skilled second-liners and the 'fragmentation' of progressive movements.

The shallow bench of skilled second-liners can be attributed to, among many other factors, the lack or absence of a development or capacity building programs for its members.

The practice of 'sink-or-swim' learning or 'organizing-on-the-go'—among progressive and activist organizations which make up mass movements and political groups—has animated and capacitated people to address a host of

urgent issues, but it has its limits. There are also now far fewer young people going into community-organizing work, which has been a fertile ground for developing NGO leaders in the past.

As organizations expand or when seasoned PO/NGO leaders are pulled out of their organic groups to assume other responsibilities or perform other tasks, the organizations are left to the care of young, often inexperienced successors, given the absence of thorough, programmatic, coordinated and measured leadership development interventions. On the other hand, continuous 'de-fragmentation' or the splitting-up of mass movements happen as older generations of leaders take more and more political baggage while less and less opportunities for sitting to talk and work together are created.

Within its mandate as a political-educational foundation, one area in which FES can assist its partners as well as the general public interested in progressive leadership development is to provide training and capacity-building to potential leaders and "next-generation" or second-line cadres who can perform both organizational and political tasks. This means investing to develop the skills and abilities of the individuals that are inclined to undertake activism, or those that run or are poised to soon be in positions of decision-making in FES partner organizations.

The Academy of Political Management (APM) was conceptualized and premised with these considerations in mind. It recognizes that in order to advance reforms that form part of the necessary ingredients for social democratic ideals, the organizations that espouse good governance, political and electoral reforms, social protection, among others, must themselves be sustainable. It recognizes the need to deepen the bench for and develop skilled second-liners and use them to bridge the divide between progressive movements by creating a venue for structured capacity building, shared learning, and collaborations.

Program overview

APM is a progressive political leadership training program. It caters to second-line leaders of progressive organizations and/or individuals who are committed to the values of freedom, equality, social justice and solidarity, and plans to pursue social and political development work and political management positions.

This program is fully supported and managed by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Philippine Office, a political foundation dedicated to the core values of social democracy. Active in the Philippines since 1964, FES collaborates with civil society organizations, labor groups, academia, and the government to help strengthen democratic institutions, promote an inclusive political system, and advance people-centered economic development.

General and specific objectives

The Academy of Political Management (APM) aims to:

- provide cadre-formation for FES partners and progressive organizations,
- build a network of and cooperation among young progressives,
- draw in new leaders to the progressive movement, and
- develop progressive future leaders in government, elective posts, businesses, CSOs, political parties and social movements.

Target participants and selection process

The target participants for the APM are the successor generation of leaders, activists and advocates from FES partners and networks, 20-35 years old, and divided equally between male and female participants. It is expected that the same set of participants will be attending all sessions from beginning to end.

The curriculum

The curriculum aims to address both skills and knowledge development of the second-line of leaders. In the curriculum, personal skills will be first developed, such that these skills can already be used in the knowledge/content-based module. The curriculum covers themes/topics which are grouped into five (5) session clusters, spread over seven months. The topics were chosen and developed in close coordination with partners to suit their organization's needs.

5 session cluster topics

- Session Cluster 1:
Foundations of Political Identity
- Session Cluster 2:
Political Systems, Governance, and Economics
- Session Cluster 3:
Project Management Tools and Skills
- Session Cluster 4:
Political Strategy, Advocacy, and Resilience
- Session Cluster 5:
Project Planning and Pitches

The curriculum is different from that in an academic institution but it is a learning program oriented towards practical life-skills needed most by individuals who see themselves as catalysts of change.

The curriculum is a modular training program with a clearly designed yet dynamic content that will continuously be informed by the learning from program implementation. It is a balanced mix of theorizing development, political and sociological conditions anchored on the praxis of social change as it has evolved in the country.

Aside from FES partners, resource persons/experts in the various fields will be tapped to continually develop the curriculum. A pool of resource persons/experts will also be convened to serve as APM's faculty.

At the end of the training program, the APM scholars will develop a progressive project, contributing to policy development or advocacy. This project will be an initiative that has the potential to influence public discourse, policy formulation, or political strategy. It will be collectively agreed upon, designed, and implemented by each batch of scholars. All the sessions in the program, from Cluster 1 to 5, are intended to help the scholars identify a problem, propose a solution, come up with a human-centered

design, and manage a collaborative project. Each progressive project is (at least partly) supported by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Training schedule

The participants are required to attend all sessions. Here is a schedule of this year's training clusters:

- Cluster 1:
March 14, 21, and 28, 2026 (via Zoom)
- Cluster 2:
April 20-25, 2026 (face to face; Iloilo City)
- Cluster 3:
May 9, June 28, July 4, 2026 (via Zoom)
- Cluster 4:
August 24-29, 2026 (face to face; Metro Manila)
- Cluster 5:
September 12 & 26, 2026 (via Zoom)

How to apply

Your application should contain the following documents:

- Letter of application addressed to FES Philippines Country Director Natalia Figge
- Accomplished application form (see template)
- Letter of recommendation (see template)
- Interview timeslot (please see "interview process below")

Please email the abovementioned documents to apm.ph@fes.de. In the subject field, use this format:

Last name, First name | APM 2026

Letter of recommendation

At least one (1) letter of recommendation should be written by a person of authority who has worked with the applicant in a particular project and/or advocacy. Please use the official recommendation letter template.

Please inform the person giving the recommendation to send the letter directly to apm.ph@fes.de. They may also

properly seal it in an envelope, sign across the seal, and (1) give it to the applicant directly for submission, or (2) mail it to: Ms. Regina Rebuena, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Philippine Office, Unit 2804 Discovery Centre, #25 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, 1600 Pasig City, Metro Manila.

Deadline of application

All application documents should be submitted to FES not later than February 5, 2026 (Thursday), 11:59PM. Incomplete applications will not be entertained

Interview process

Interviews are scheduled for 16-20 February (Monday - Friday). Applicants will be interviewed by the APM Selection Panel. Each interview will last for around 20 minutes. Please sign up for a time slot before sending your application. We will email or call you to confirm your time slot at least 3 days before your scheduled interview.



Sign up for your timeslot here
<https://bit.ly/apm-interview>

All interviews will be done via Zoom. A link will be provided to you a day before your scheduled interview. Please be at the Zoom meeting room at least fifteen (15) minutes before your interview.

Disclaimer: Depending on the number of applicants, only shortlisted candidates will proceed to the interview phase. However, securing your interview slot in advance is recommended to ensure a smooth process if you are selected.

For any queries or clarifications, you may contact us by emailing Regina Rebuena, the APM Assistant Program Manager at apm.ph@fes.de.