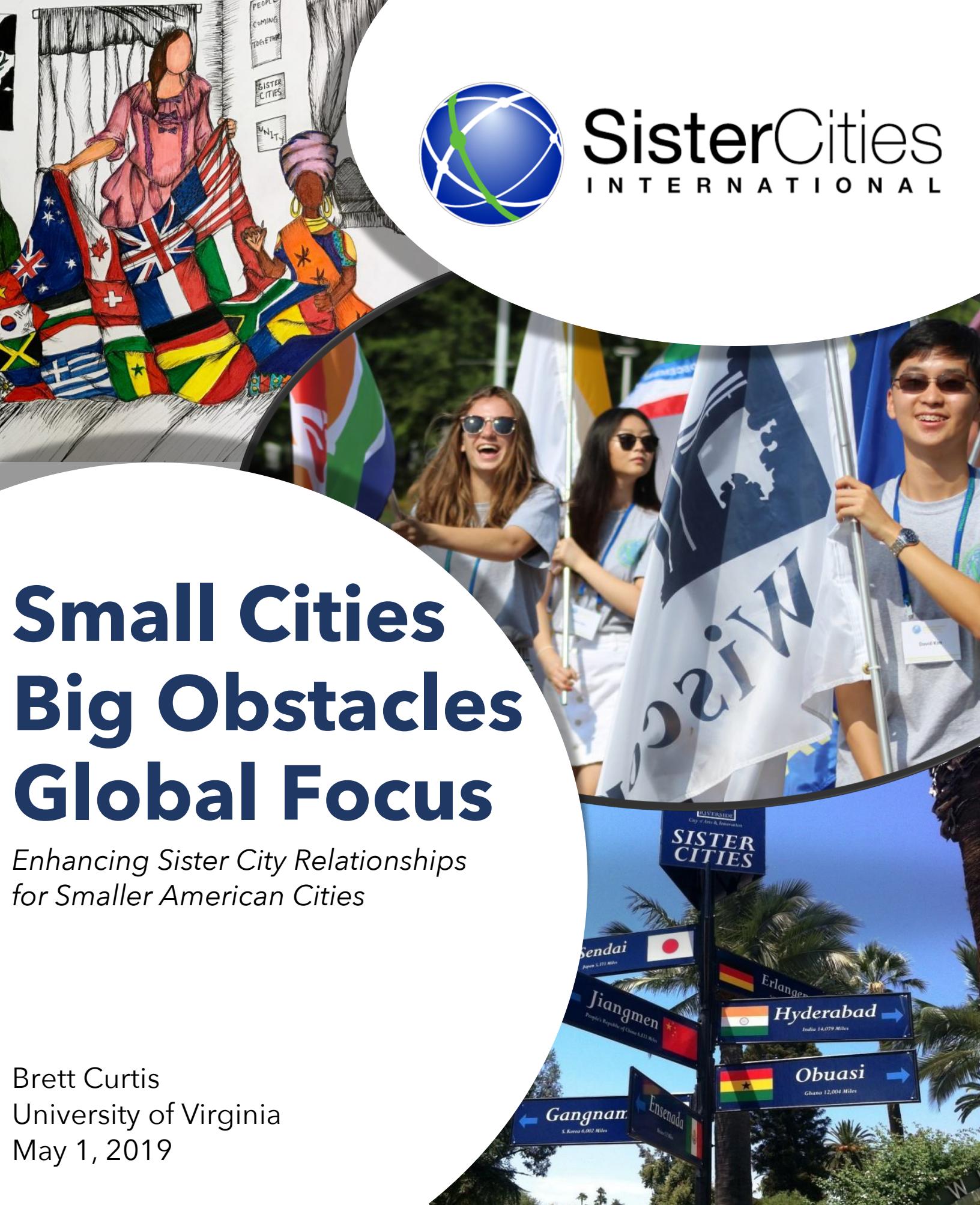




Sister Cities
INTERNATIONAL



Small Cities Big Obstacles Global Focus

*Enhancing Sister City Relationships
for Smaller American Cities*

Brett Curtis
University of Virginia
May 1, 2019

About Sister Cities International

Sister Cities International¹ (SCI) is a U.S. 501 (C)(3) nonprofit that serves as the official membership organization of United States sister city relationships. Founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, the vision of SCI is "to remain the largest and premier global network connecting people and communities from all backgrounds within the United States with people and communities around the world, to foster peace and prosperity."

Today, after more than 63 years, **tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers in over 500 U.S. member communities enjoy more than 2,000 partnerships in 140 countries on 6 continents.** Every day, the lives of millions are touched through economic development and business opportunities; education and scholarship programs; environmental projects and emergency response; arts, cultural and heritage activities; municipal, youth, and sports exchanges. SCI programs aim to empower individual citizens to represent their community and the United States abroad. These collaborations promote cooperation and trust among nations, create opportunities for economic innovation and development, and lay the foundations for continued peace and prosperity. What distinguishes SCI's mission from most other people-to-people programs is the emphasis on community-building relationships and the value placed on sustained connections.

Membership with SCI is open to cities, counties, and states in addition to special regions of all sizes. A Sister City member may have any number of Sister City programs, with community involvement ranging from a dozen to hundreds of volunteers. SCI member local Sister City programs typically include individuals from all sectors of society (municipal governments and special public entities, the private sector, the non-profit sector and other civic and neighborhood organizations). Membership includes access to affinity benefits (discounted travel insurance, travel medical services, background checks, free visa consultations with immigration lawyers, hotel discounts), governance assistance opportunities, state representatives for administrative support, opportunities to participate in programmatic efforts such as the Young Artists and Authors Showcase, reduced conference rates, and access to the SCI network.

Volunteer community leaders from these community members are part of a global network of citizen diplomats within a unique volunteer leadership structure. This network includes an elected national board of directors; a 50 State Representative

¹ This section is adapted from the Sister Cities International website, their 2018 Annual Report, and governing documents. Title page images courtesy of SCI. More information about SCI can be found at: www.sistercities.org

operational field team; an Honorary Board Alumni Association; a Global Outreach Team (composed of the Eisenhower Distinguished Leadership Council, the Mayors Leadership Council, Global Envoys, and continent, region, and country specific representatives) as well as an associated SCI Foundation. These national volunteer community leaders expand SCI's reach at the municipal, state, national and international levels and help build a robust grassroots network of SCI ambassadors who support the network's membership, special initiatives, and the national office.

The role of the Sister Cities International office is to facilitate and empower individual U.S. cities to better foster citizen diplomacy with foreign cities through economic ties, mutual exchanges, and conversation. These people-to-people interactions are driven by interests at the local level while the international office is there to help facilitate and provide guidance where possible. Every SCI member and association operates independently

Purpose & Process of Paper

The Applied Policy Project (APP) is a thorough analysis of a significant public policy question facing an organization in the public, non-profit or private sectors by applying the interdisciplinary methods, approaches, and perspectives studied in the University of Virginia, Frank Batten School's core curriculum. This APP was conducted through outreach to more than fifty Sister Cities International staff, city leaders, board members, volunteers, and researchers in the citizen diplomacy field. Twenty individual interviews were conducted. Data collected by SCI, examining best practices, comparisons across members, and an extensive literature review form the basis of this report.

Disclaimer

The author conducted this study as part of the program of professional education at the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, University of Virginia. This paper is submitted in partial fulfillment of the course requirements for the Master of Public Policy degree. The judgments and conclusions are solely those of the author, and are not necessarily endorsed by the Batten School, by the University of Virginia, or by any other entity.

"On my honor as a student, I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment."

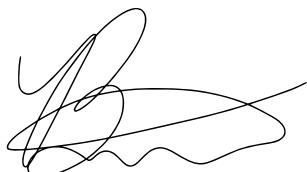
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "YB".

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List of Abbreviations

ALA: The American Library Association

C2C: City-to-City cooperation

DOS: U.S. Department of State

ECA: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

IFLA: The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

IO: International Organization

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

SCL: Sister Cities International

UCLG: United Cities and Local Governments

501(c)(3): An organization whose received charitable contributions are tax deductible by the donor for federal income tax purposes

Defining a City:

The term 'city' is used throughout this report without any preconception of size, historical significance, boundary, governance structure or other descriptor unless so defined. The word 'city' can be replaced by other titles such as 'municipality' or 'town'. Small U.S. cities, for the purpose of this report, are defined as a locality that has a population of less than 100,000 residents. There are approximately 310 U.S. cities with a population above this threshold, leaving well over 19,000 defined U.S. regions/cities/localities with fewer than 100,000 residents.²

² Author calculated figures from the United States Census Bureau FactFinder, using population estimates as of July 1, 2017. More info: <https://factfinder.census.gov/>

Executive Summary

Smaller city-twinning organizations lag behind their larger counterparts in their ability to conduct foreign affairs at the local level. While financial concerns remain an issue for all SCI members (79% have a total budget under \$25,000), funding differences are exacerbated in smaller cities (there is a more than thirty percentage point difference between small and large cities that receive more than \$5,000 from their city government). Additionally, smaller city members are less likely to register as a 501(c)(3) which impacts their ability to fundraise and receive tax-deductible donations. The size of an SCI member city is therefore a strong indicator of the financial resources available and the number of international exchange programs coordinated.

This report works from the understanding that citizen diplomacy extends beyond official government efforts to reach foreign audiences and impacts the way other nations see each other. Since the 20th century, subnational governments are increasingly involved in foreign policy, and the rise of city-to-city (C2C) cooperation and city-twinning is related to efforts in defining soft power foreign policy strategies. SCI members in particular have attempted to design programs that achieve peace, economic returns on investment, and cultural understanding. Some SCI members are more impactful in these endeavors, and smaller cities stand to learn from these successes.

With this goal in mind, three potential alternatives are identified and discussed: 1) designing an international sports exchange program; 2) forming a sister-library partnership; and 3) implementing a social media campaign. These options are evaluated against four criteria to include the alternative's ability to promote mutual understanding between cultures, its administrative capability and adaptability, cost, and focus on intentionality and purpose.

This report ultimately recommends that SCI members struggling to engage their foreign counterparts and local communities focus on implementing a sister-library program with their twinned-cities. Implementation strategies for this long-term recommendation are presented, in addition to more immediate opportunities for growth that members can utilize, independent of a library program.

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It so happens that our own people in the United States have been peculiarly without the kind of education in foreign affairs. Not only have we been very busy over the development of our own country and our own institutions, but our comparatively isolated position has prevented the foreign relations of the old world from becoming matters of immediate vital interest to the American people, and they have not been interested in the subject...**The conditions are now widely different. Our people have been taught by events to realize that with the increased intercommunication and interdependence of civilized states all our production is a part of the world's production**, and all our trade is a part of the world's trade, and a large part of the influences which make for prosperity or disaster within our country consist of forces and movements which may arise anywhere in the world beyond our direct and immediate control.

//

- Elihu Root, 1922

38th U.S. Secretary of State (1905-1909)
41st U.S. Secretary of War (1899-1904)

Introduction

It is the role of the U.S. Department of State (DOS) to lead and promote American foreign policy and national interests abroad. The mission of the State Department is to use “diplomacy, advocacy, and assistance to advance the interests of the American people, their safety and economic prosperity” while concurrently promoting and demonstrating “democratic value[s] to] advance a free, peaceful, and prosperous world” (“About the U.S. Department of State,” n.d.). In essence, the agency handles matters of foreign affairs with other nations and international agencies.

While DOS is the diplomatic wing of the federal government, ***foreign policy is also conducted at the state, county, local, private, and citizen level.*** Since the beginning of the 20th Century, subnational governments are increasingly involved in foreign policy; leaders at all levels, especially in the United States, have substantial impact not just on economic policy, but on issues of border security, energy, environmental protection, human rights, and more (Herrschel & Newman, 2017; McMillan, 2017). Further, transnational actors—such as international organizations (IOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), multinational corporations, and religious organizations—as well as the influence of terrorism, criminal actors, immigration and diaspora communities all alter the state of diplomacy through official and unofficial government channels (Hägel, 2016).

Although written in response to growing public desire to be involved in international affairs after World War Two, Elihu Root’s ideas are just as applicable today. As more than half of people across the world identify more as a “citizen of their city than their country,” and urban population centers grow to have larger GDPs than entire nations, there is a growing understanding that foreign policy has become more impactful at the local level (Florida, 2017; McPhillips, 2019). But while DOS has made minor strides in outreach domestically, IOs and NGOs such as SCI attempting to engage Americans with the world continue to find that the average household has not realized how foreign and domestic policy is linked (Ahmed et al., 2018). Nonetheless, this work remains critical to expanding diplomacy efforts and engaging a politically and policy tumultuous world.

The old adage “all politics is local” is ringing true once again as cities attempt to interact and promote their own foreign policy. This report aims to clarify the literature that guides these goals, understand citizen diplomacy efforts that have taken shape, and present opportunities for smaller American cities to lead from the front.

Background

There are two important, but underappreciated, areas of foreign policy today that impact the work of Sister Cities International: soft power diplomacy and citizen diplomacy. This background leads into a discussion of the literature and data surrounding the growth of international city relationships and city-twinning endeavors.

Soft Power Diplomacy

First introduced by Joseph Nye in his book *Bound to Lead*, soft power is defined as the ability "to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies" (1990). Rather than aggregate resources or military strength alone, soft power hinges on the resources of culture, values, policy, diplomacy, and mutual understanding. Further, how a nation utilizes its material resources to benefit its own citizens and allies, instead of the actual possession of those resources, is a measure of their soft diplomatic power (Nye, 2008). Soft power institutions, including those such as SCI, have the ability to set agendas, define values, and shift the paradigm of what individual actors in a country desire.

By comparison, hard power is the command, coercion, inducement, and strength abilities of a country; such authority relies on tangible power resources (e.g. military forces, economic levers, etc.) (Wagner, 2014). Gallarotti stresses that hard power evokes compelled action, whereas soft power induces voluntary action (2011). **Simply the greater attention being paid to soft power indicates a changing international relations landscape; the move to a "softer world" in the modern age has elevated the importance of soft power relative to hard power** (Gallarotti, 2011; Nye, 2009). Soft power will be critical to understanding America's role in a changing global world order and how the U.S. can leverage its *non-military assets* to dictate their authority going forward.³

"The shape of the world a generation from now will be influenced far more by how well we communicate the values of our society to others than by our military or diplomatic superiority."

- Senator J. William Fulbright, 1964

³ (For more extensive discussions on hard and soft power, see Gallarotti, 2011; Heywood, 2014; Nye, 1990, 2009, 2011; and Wagner, 2014 among others.)

Citizen Diplomacy

Citizen diplomacy extends *beyond* official government efforts to reach foreign audiences and impacts the way other nations see each other. The concept stems from the idea that every individual can shape foreign relations; whether students, tourists, athletes, entrepreneurs, or humanitarians, those that engage with others beyond their nation's borders often are involved in benign citizen diplomacy. Mueller and Rebstock (2012) define two forms of citizen diplomacy:

- 1) Spontaneous Citizen Diplomacy – during daily activities and routine events, individuals affect others' perceptions of their country (e.g. a student at a U.S. institution who befriends a foreign exchange student)
- 2) Intentional Citizen Diplomacy – individuals deliberately choose to participate in programs to build positive relationships (e.g. hosting a foreign exchange student)

Often, intentional citizen diplomacy is engaged in via organizations including IOs and NGOs as well as DOS supported programs such as Sister Cities International (SCI), Peace Corps, the Institute of International Education (which conducts the Fulbright program), and more. Each organization, and each individual engaged in such work, has their own personal definition of what citizen diplomacy means to them. There are unifying ideas, of course, and citizen diplomacy programs encourage citizens to see themselves as not just citizens of their country, but to have a self-awareness that they are ambassadors of their country. This suggests a difference between being, for example, simply a tourist abroad, and serving in a more official capacity as a citizen diplomat. In the latter, one is taking on the responsibility of representing their home country and should encourage others to see them in this way.

As more Americans than ever before study abroad, travel internationally in their work, and engage in foreign volunteer and tourism activates, it is necessary to understand impact, and how to tap into the potential, of such activities (Bhandari & Belyavina, 2011). This contrasts interestingly, and rather fittingly, to Elihu Root's (1922) article that explicates the U.S. will not be successful in its foreign policy and realize peace as it desires until individuals understand and have an active role in international relations.

Citizen diplomacy programs can occur for youth, education, cultural, and sports exchange, but also through political, business, and economic exchange. The ideas underpinning city-twinning (the concept of two local governments engaged in a formal relationship for cultural, social, or economic goals, and discussed in depth below) are inextricably linked to citizen diplomacy and many values and goals are shared.

International City Relationships

The majority of the world's population—4.2 billion people—lives in metropolitan areas, and about sixty percent of the world's economy is driven by only approximately 600 cities (Dobbs et al., 2011). More than half of people across the globe identify more as a "citizen of their city than their country" (McPhillips, 2019). Not just population hubs, the global economy runs through cities; the ten largest metro areas have a bigger GDP (at \$9.5 trillion) than the fourth and fifth largest economies, Japan and Germany, *combined* (Florida, 2017). Despite growing power centers for innovation and economic growth, most cities, however, remain beholden to their nation-states regarding politics, policy, and international affairs. This is changing, and foreign policy efforts are being undertaken at the local level. A historical understanding of prior city relationships helps underpin changes going forward.

The first documented foreign policy relationship between two foreign cities is believed to have occurred in the year 836 between Le Mans, France and Paderborn, Germany, in an attempt to grow Charlemagne's influence in Europe ("What's the point of twin cities?," 2018). In their earliest iterations, these agreements (which often were not legal in nature) occurred between cities that had preexisting relationships between residents (e.g. mayors, military) and had no stated goals.

The practice of international city affairs becomes more prominent in the 20th century as cities began to take a more active role in international relations as separate entities of their national government. This is noted especially in Europe during two periods: at the end of World War II and after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 (Council of European Municipalities and Regions, 2008). As mayors and citizens of previously war-torn cities and long-divided nations recognized the humanity and nobility of integration and connection, working beyond international borders from city hall became more common. Successes of these relationships are predicated on the rise of urbanization and infrastructure development, globalization and a growing desire to determine the position of cities, and the recognition of international links as a means to foster economic and social well-being (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, 2001).

The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements defines the growing trend towards city-to-city cooperation (C2C) as all possible relationships between local authorities, often in two or more countries, collaborating on issues of mutual interest. The first official international association of local authorities to pursue this mission was established in Ghent, Belgium—Union Internationale des Villes—in 1913. These partnerships were established primarily as a means of information exchange and

support, but only a small number of direct links were established (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, 2001). With growing trends towards democratization and decentralization beginning in the 1940s, and especially in Europe in the 1980s and 1990s, the desire for international cooperation between local authorities has increased (Herrschel & Newman, 2017). Metropolitan areas and cities increasingly participate in an international system of “competition, collaboration, and social interaction” as they work towards becoming their own international actors (Scott, 2012, p. 12).

In June of 1996, at the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities in Istanbul, Turkey, the U.N. officially recognized this status of local governments as international actors. The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) formed in 2004 out of the original 1913 Union Internationale des Villes and continues to unite major local and regional government associations and represents the needs of local governments on the world stage. By building and joining these networks for collective engagement and lobbying, cities are designing and implementing their own agendas vis-à-vis states and other IOs (Herrschel & Newman, 2017). This is increasingly common in areas of global climate change, energy practices, immigration, and technology.

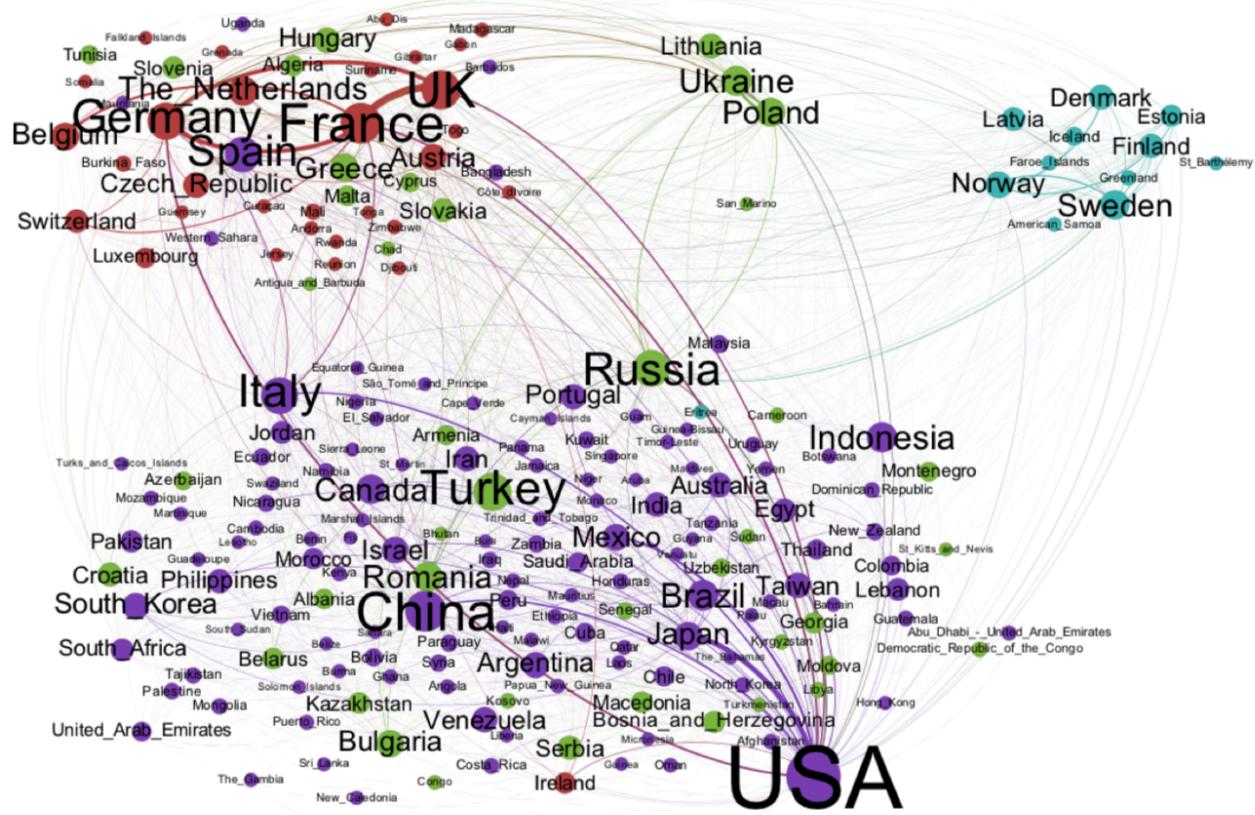
The Rise of City-Twinning Relationships

Sister cities or city twins are a specific form of C2C cooperation via a legal agreement between two localities in different countries that are meant to foster economic, cultural, and social ties between the residents of those locations (Kopf, 2015). The formality component is important as it distinguishes C2C cooperation, which can vary and wane, from a (theoretically) more permanent and exclusive relationship. The exact number of such relationships, especially those that are active, is hard to pinpoint. Zelinsky (1991) identifies more than 11,000 pairs of sister cities across 159 countries, while Kaltenbrunner et al. (2013) suggest more than 15,000 pairs of sister cities. Figure 1 shows the country network of city-twinning relationships that highlights the most common city-twinning pairs across the world by country; node size indicates how the U.S., France, the U.K. and China are driving forces in twinning networks.

While the social and technological conditions for twinning were available in the 1940s (e.g. international tourism, sports exchanges, pen pals, radios, etc.), sister cities do not appear in a well-defined, organized movement until the 1950s (Zelinsky, 1991). This is correlated to the end of World War Two, where cities became active in promoting reconciliation and peace, and developing relationships between disconnected or previously fighting localities. The data supports this: the countries with the most sister city pairs are either formerly declared combatants or geographically close in proximity (Kaltenbrunner et al., 2013). However, while the likelihood of partnering with a city

nearby is only slightly larger than random, countries with a significant number of pairs have often declared war: The United Kingdom and France have the most sister city pairs, the United States and Japan the second most (Kaltenbrunner et al., 2013).

Figure I: The Country Network of City-Twinning



Source: Kaltenbrunner et al., 2013

Sister cities in the modern era have been criticized as being token relationships between seemingly random cities that have few tangible benefits (Mohammed, 2018). While it is true that some relationships were initially built on similarities in name, economic outputs, or between fighting nations, **the motivations for new and continued agreements today are far from symbolic** (Cremer, Bruin, & Dupuis, 2001). Although city twinning still includes an element of international friendship and cultural exchange, economic development and strategic partnerships have become primary motivators underpinning these relationships (Cremer et al., 2001; Villiers, Coning, & Smit, 2007). Considerations of historical connections, cultural and ideological similarities, and ease of access are often now precursors but no longer guarantee entering into these twinning agreements (Zelinsky, 1991).

One area of note: while twinning often reinforces and humanizes political and economic interests of a nation, aligning with many soft power interests, some sister city relationships may promote ideological and humanitarian programs that are at odds with official policy (Zelinsky, 1991). It is therefore imperative to remain vigilant of changing political and policy agendas in individual cities and nations, as well as how decisions that are in the interest of one country may counter those of a sister city. This was the case between Osaka, Japan and San Francisco, California: Osaka withdrew from the six-decade relationship after San Francisco erected the "Comfort Women" monument to honor women who were forced to have sex with Japanese soldiers during World War Two; Japan denies that women were forced into sexual slavery.

The United States City Twinning Movement

North American city twinning is traced back to Toledo, Ohio's relationship with Toledo, Spain in 1931. Government support for twinning grew out of the People-to-People citizen diplomacy program started by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956. Originally a subcommittee of the people to people initiative, Sister Cities International (SCI) established itself as an independent non-profit entity in 1967.

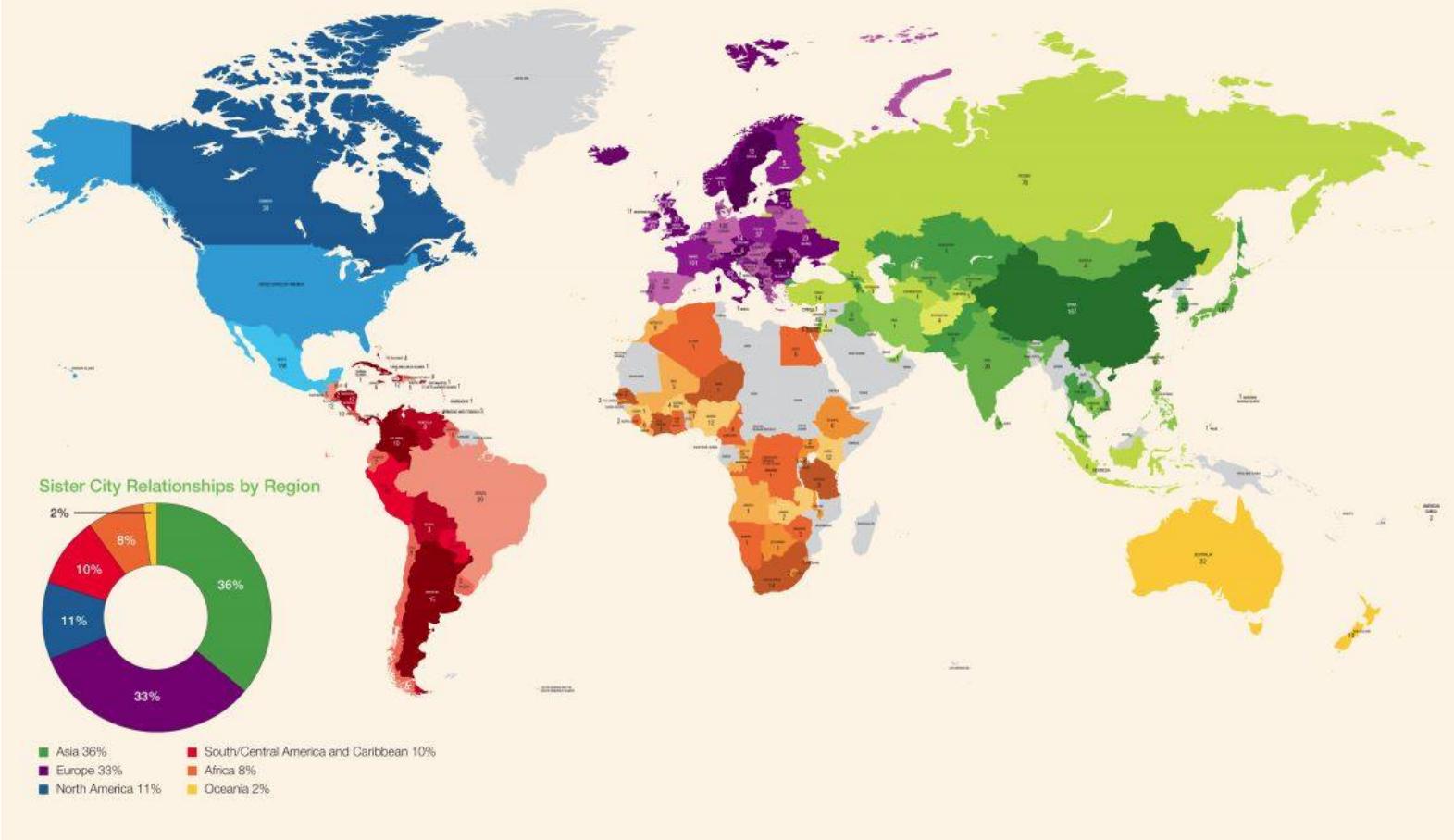
Today, SCI is the national membership organization for individual sister cities across the United States. The mission statement for the organization is "to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation – one individual, one community at a time." According to their 2018 annual report and membership directory, SCI currently has about 500 members, connecting more than 2000 communities, in over 140 countries. SCI works in conjunction with individual city governments and local sister city affiliates, as well as with other international twinning bodies including the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, and other public and private partners.

Benefits of Sister City Relationships

Many of the benefits of citizen diplomacy efforts influence and improve, or are intended to improve, the image of the United States abroad. These relationships also provide avenues for individuals to get involved and participate in foreign affairs, a task traditionally relegated to leadership in D.C. Participants in citizen diplomacy efforts also encourage the development of democracy abroad, impact the economic and cultural development of their local communities, and positively contribute to their children's education and knowledge of current events (Mueller, 2002). City twinning provides individuals, groups, elected officials, foreign officials, and visitors alike the

Figure II: U.S. Sister City Relationships by Country

U.S. Partnerships Worldwide



Source: Sister Cities International

opportunity to engage with people across the globe. Benefits include cultural, linguistic, and educational experiences, as well as friendships, economic trade partnerships, job growth, business contracts, tourism, and traffic (Cremer et al., 2001; Mohammed, 2018; Villiers et al., 2007).

The consulting firm A.T. Kearney's Global Cities Index measures how prepared cities are in key areas that affect their competitiveness as influential, global cities in the 21st century. While measures for innovation or financial capacity are present and important, the metric allocates 2.55% of a city's total score to the number of sister city relationships maintained. Implicit in this weighting is a recognition that interdependence, globalization, and international connections are increasingly important to a city's economic, cultural, and social well-being. As innovation, transparency, and information exchange continue to define the next generation of influential world cities, those with

global ties are uniquely positioned to get ahead (Peña, Hales, Peterson, & Dessibourg, 2018).

The movement of people is perhaps the most measured impact of city twinning. Data from the 1980s in Western Europe found an average of 188 annual participants per community in exchange programs to twinned-cities; with 5,600 total relationships, it was estimated that there were over a million people involved in exchange each year (von Lenep, 1983, p. 15). French-German exchanges were estimated at 120,000 young persons alone in 1987 (Casagrande 1987, cited in Zelinsky, 1991). And in 1983, 72 U.S. Sister Cities—just one-tenth of all active members—reported 7,294 personal exchanges. Conservative estimates of the annual number of individuals involved in sister city exchanges each year falls somewhere between one and two million (Zelinsky, 1991). More recent measures suggest even greater impact today. From SCI's "Measures that Matter" Report in 2015, there were 14,153 visitors from 1,123 inbound exchanges and 9,889 U.S. residents participating in 944 outbound exchanges in the one year alone (valueideas, 2015). With over 2,300 sister city events, participation was estimated at well over 1.1 million people

SCI actively encourages these international exchanges, but it is important to note that they differ from more traditional study abroad, semester, or summer programs. These exchanges can be academic in nature, but SCI exchanges tend to focus on building specific relationships and may be motivated by business opportunities or cultural ties. They are often shorter, ranging from just a few days for many trips, but do also include extended homestay exchange programs in some cities. Regardless of length or purpose, international exchanges do contribute to an individual's development and international understanding, and studies reveal that participants in an exchange program are more knowledgeable of international affairs (Sowa, 2002). What tends to be most effective, especially for short-term programs, is to set expectations prior to leaving and recognizing what benefits are sought (Hulstrand, 2006).

While SCI does not have an official, comprehensive process for examining economic significance, the organization has made strides to quantify their impact. The 2015 "Measures that Matter" Report conducted the first economic impact analysis and found beneficial impacts on the U.S. economy of over \$525 million per year. Understanding the economic impact of city twinning is complicated by the global marketplace and the reality that municipalities engage in economic diplomacy far beyond their sister city relationships (Fry, Radebaugh, & Panayotis, 1989). Further, most evidence of impact is anecdotal and specific to each city. Nonetheless, there is evidence of significant

sustained economic impact as a direct result of SCI relationships; some of these examples are included in Appendix I.

Direct sister cities activities such as international exchanges, events, and volunteering created an economic impact on the U.S. economy of \$525.7 million [in 2015]. Globally, international exchanges by U.S.-based members contributed \$106.8 million (USD). The global direct impact of the SCI network was \$237.6 million (USD) and the total impact was \$537.7 million (USD).

When adjusted to the average value of the global Purchase Price Parity Index, the direct SCI contribution to the global economy was \$18.5 billion and total contribution was \$41.9 billion. "Not only is the Sister Cities International network a leader in citizen diplomacy and peace building, but this data shows that our network is also of huge importance to the global economy as demonstrated through tourism, trade, and investment," said Mary D. Kane, Sister Cities International President and CEO.

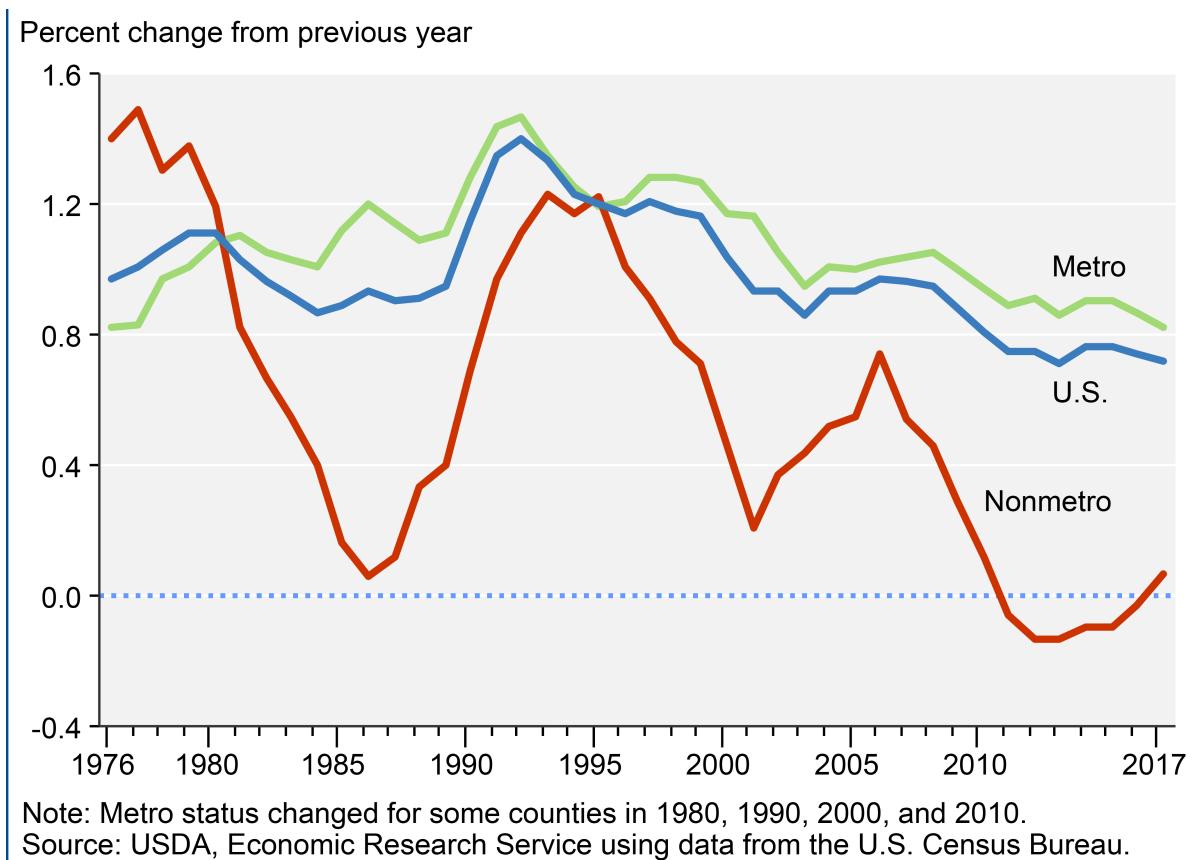
Excerpt from Sister Cities International Press Release, October 7, 2015

Big Cities Lead, Small Cities Struggle

By 2030, it is projected that the global urban population will reach seventy-five percent, and more than ninety percent of global GDP will result from urban activity (Dobbs et al., 2011). Figure III highlights the population growth gap between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan (smaller) cities. Nonmetro populations are also significantly whiter and older than the rest of the United States (Hendrickson, Muro, & Galston, 2018). Central to this change is globalization, increasing trade flows between regions, and shifting economic power towards the emerging economies of Chinese and Indian cities ("How sister city partnerships can play a new role in a global economy," 2014). It is no surprise that the world's biggest, most interconnected cities – such as New York, London, Paris, and Singapore – attract the best companies, talent, investment, capital, and information, and get to set global agendas and integration (Peña et al., 2018).

As it relates to local level foreign affairs, more than half of people across the globe identify more as a "citizen of their city than their country" (McPhillips, 2019). Cities, especially urban population centers, have secured the ability, economically and socially, to operate, compete, and lead globally as international actors today. As international issues such as climate change and immigration remain subject to political and policy whims, cities have stepped into a new role and their authority in the

Figure III: Population Change by City Size, 1976-2017



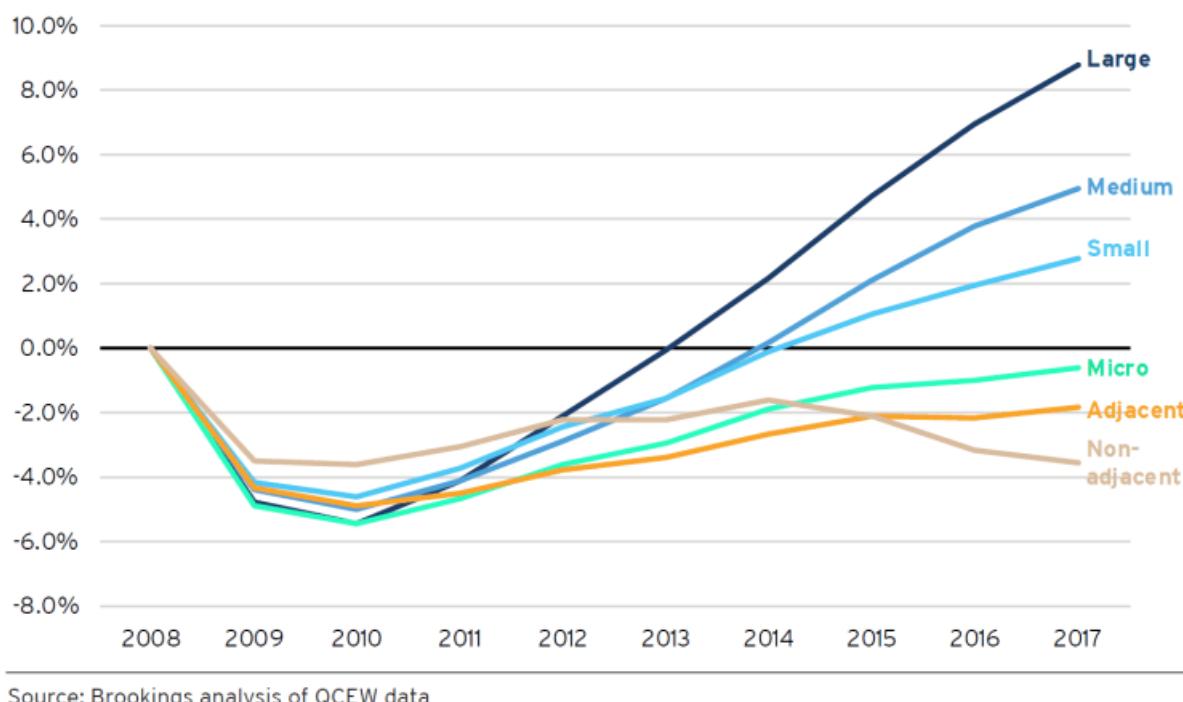
globalized world is growing. Less partisan in many respects, positive and steady global ties regardless of national politics, have made cities a logical choice to foster person-to-person relationships. Those in urban population centers also tend to be more global-minded and inclusive (McPhillips, 2018). As technology and international travel, centered in larger hubs, provides greater opportunity for international connection for those with access, rural and smaller cities struggle to compete.

There is a growing consensus that location may be the driving force behind economic, health, and social mobility outcomes. Market trends and increased focus on digital and e-commerce technology have led to a divergence in growth rates. Larger metropolitan communities (the top two percent of U.S. cities) grow consistently faster than small cities (Hendrickson et al., 2018). Since 2010, these large cities saw population increases upwards of six percent, while smaller cities saw slower growth rates correlated to their population size, as seen in Figure IV (Arnosti & Liu, 2018). Following the 2008 Great Recession, employment returned to pre-recession levels by 2012 in the largest 100 cities and has since grown an additional 9.6%, but many smaller cities have still yet to return to pre-recession levels (Chacón, 2018). This growing divide between booming urban population centers and seemingly forgotten former

manufacturing and coal-mining towns has shifted political discourse and policy proposals.

Small towns and districts face unique challenges that center on limited financial resources, crumbling infrastructure, and minimal staffs (Berube, 2019). Strained budgets have also often prevented new technological advancements that could ease processes. And with departments that have few employees and potentially no support staff, it is often difficult to move beyond reactive governance.

Figure IV: Employment by Community Size Type, Percent Change since 2008



Source: Brookings analysis of QCEW data

Regarding funding, most municipal government budgets have remained relatively stagnant or decreased since the 2008 recession (McNichol & Waxman, 2017). Although some areas of the country have seen increased farm profits or oil revenue, these remain volatile funding mechanisms and have not resulted in increased government operations (McNichol & Waxman, 2017). Given that local revenues primarily come from property and other use taxes, the concerns regarding population may exacerbate the current situation (Tax Policy Center, n.d.) For example, local governments in Michigan face state constitutional property tax limits, restricting one of the only revenue sources localities can control. In North Dakota, despite record oil revenues, the state has cut the budget again this year (Newcombe, 2017).

A looming crisis also exists in filling municipal positions as retirement rates rise for the baby-boomer generation (Dohm, 2000). The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) reports that in 1971 about seventy-one percent of all city, county, and town managers were forty years old or younger; in 2006, only thirteen percent were under forty and only one percent was younger than thirty. Today, thirty to forty percent of local government employees are currently eligible for retirement, leading to a potential crisis of leadership in small towns.

Many of these concerns manifest in the funding and organization of smaller SCI members, as explained in the problem definition below.

There is a caveat regarding foreign affairs work on the local level: for existing sister city relationships, the larger the city, the less likely the average citizen is to participate in sister city initiatives or be aware that the relationship exists (Zelinsky, 1991). This is somewhat intuitive as larger cities have a greater number of competing international organizations and opportunities. In stark contrast to the growing economic and interconnectedness of the world, the smaller the community, the greater likelihood of awareness and personal involvement in a city-twinned program (Grunert, 1981). For example, in many Western European twin cities with less than one thousand residents, more than seventy-five percent of the population attended the twinning ceremony. Given that SCI remains a primarily volunteer-driven organization for member cities with interests built by individual communities, in city-twinning organizations that remain active we can expect a similar trend to remain true.

Problem Definition

The role of Sister Cities International is to facilitate and empower, not issue directives, on how U.S. cities can foster citizen diplomacy with foreign cities through economic ties, mutual exchanges, and conversation. These people-to-people interactions are driven by interests at the local level; the international office is there to help facilitate and provide guidance where possible. **Every SCI member operates independently.**

However, while initial C2C and twinning relationships were formed out of mutual interest and shared benefits between large cities that had the ability to make these connections, a growing number of smaller cities have entered into sister city relationships. Approximately 50% of the cities within the SCI network have populations that are under 50,000 and almost 70% are under 100,000. As the literature discussed previously, larger C2C and twinning cities tend to more easily focus on international exchange programs, have better staffed government offices that can focus on international issues, and are more likely to have either an international convention or visitor's bureau. Smaller cities often do not have similar departments or resources.

Smaller city-twinning organizations lag behind their larger counterparts in their ability to conduct foreign affairs at the local level. While financial concerns remain an issue for all SCI members (79% have a total budget under \$25,000), funding differences are exacerbated in smaller cities (there is a more than thirty percentage point difference between small and large cities that receive more than \$5,000 from their city government). Additionally, smaller city members are less likely to register as a 501(c)(3) which impacts their ability to fundraise and receive tax-deductible donations. The size of an SCI member city is therefore a strong indicator of the financial resources available and the number of international exchange programs coordinated.

Table I: Analysis of Differences between Small & Large SCI Members

| Small Cities | Larger Cities |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 46% have a budget <\$5,000 | 38% have a budget <\$5,000 |
| 16% receive >\$5k from government | 50% receive >\$5k from government |
| Average 1.51 exchanges/year | Average 3.97 exchanges/year |
| 51.4% registered as nonprofit | 64.4% registered as nonprofit |

//

The emphasis on global cities, of course, excludes the activities of numerous 'lesser' cities, and regional and sub-regional groupings, that have forged cross-border international alliances...Academic interest grows in the economic power of, and challenges faced by, 'macro-regions', 'mega-cities', and 'city-regions'.

//

- Tessilo Herrschel and Peter Newman, 2017, p. 11

Additional Immediate Concerns for SCI

Given the concerns regarding funding, infrastructure, and domestic focus of smaller cities, many SCI members look towards the international office in Washington, D.C. to provide key resources. Members and literature highlight specific areas that SCI members should be able to respond to:

Quantifying Impact

Measuring the direct and indirect contributions of city-twinning has been a goal and necessity since the late twentieth-century (Zelinsky, 1991). Few longitudinal evaluation studies exist (most conducted on U.S. State Department programs and none on SCI twinning-relationships) and various measurements or results may not be in the interests of all parties (Mueller, 2002). It is difficult for SCI to move beyond anecdotal evidence or data for a specific city in explicating benefits currently. It is natural for cities considering a twinning relationship to ask certain questions about membership with SCI, including:

- Why should the city join SCI?
- What are the benefits to our city and residents?
- How can SCI make our sister city relationships more impactful?

SCI does not have significant data to respond to these frequently asked questions.

Specifically, in the wake of the 2008 recession, evidenced-based and data driven impacts are critical to engaging funding streams. While the desire to measure and show evidence of impact and successes of citizen diplomacy is not new, there is a lack of standardized measurements (see, for example: Bellamy & Weinberg, 2008; Bhandari & Belyavina, 2011; Mueller & Rebstock, 2012). The wide variety of citizen diplomacy programs (youth exchange, homestay programs, business partnerships, etc.) makes it almost impossible to measure outputs using the same tools, and evaluations, which tend to rely on self-reports and participant perceptions, are not comparable or scientific in nature (Bhandari & Belyavina, 2011). For similar reasons, it can be hard to develop criteria to measure the efficacy of an organization that aims to create change in, and exists within, the citizen and public diplomacy sphere.

Political Concerns & Current Events

The work of citizen diplomacy necessitates individuals functioning as diplomats, not politicians. While some people abroad do have the ability to separate a current administration and the American public as a whole, it can be difficult to separate current rhetoric from the mission of presenting oneself as an individual. These concerns are somewhat mitigated for existing relationships—the purpose of twinning is

to build personal, lasting relationships at the city level, independent of national politics—the leadership of the United States nonetheless impacts how SCI's citizen diplomats are viewed. Especially as nationalist rhetoric, strained alliances, and political uncertainty become more prominent in global politics, a nonpartisan message of steady ties is imperative.

Even if there is no political challenge, foreign nations and their citizens have been fascinated by seeming failures of the United States: Why is there so much poverty in the richest country in the world? How has there been no end to gun violence? What is going on domestically that has led to drug use and the opioid epidemic? It is not a new phenomenon for domestic policy to impact standing in the international arena; how citizen diplomats are prepared to answer these current event questions and provide a positive avenue to see the strides the country is making in these areas is needed.

Additionally, DOS and ECA have been subjected to a number of budget cuts under the Trump Administration. One report suggested that ECA was “originally slated for extinction” although Congress ultimately allocated \$285 million, less than half of the department’s \$590 million appropriation in 2016 (Morello, 2017). Public reports and academic literature continue to conclude that U.S. diplomatic efforts are underfunded. Leading up to the 2008 recession, although overall spending for ECA had increased after the Bush Administration, it had only achieved a budget similar to the early 1990s (Bellamy & Weinberg, 2008). Investment and new funding structures have not come to fruition.

The Need for Foreign Affairs Involvement

With every year that passes, people seem to have more pressures on their time. Although aggregate hours that Americans have worked has decreased over the last several decades, people now have more opportunities to multi-task, work from home and on the weekend far more often, and spend only a fraction of their time *not* on mobile devices (Weller, 2017). In sum, Americans feel like they have less free time. Concurrently, the nation, and particularly many middle-class Americans remain far more concerned with domestic policy, local community issues, jobs, the economy, and mortgage payments. This impacts their ability to be concerned with affairs that they don’t engage with on a daily basis, such as their sister cities.

While U.S. national security and foreign policy attempts to bolster the country’s global leadership and promote macroeconomic growth to benefit the nation, people on the state and local levels remain uncertain how these activities help them or their communities prosper (Ahmed et al., 2018). Ahmed et al. (2018) question whether the

U.S. role abroad and foreign policy endeavors is advancing the economic well-being of the middle class at home. While this tends to be true, policymakers and those who work on foreign affairs have often ignored how Americans feel about this work. Although most Americans support an engaged role in the world and the moral imperatives of foreign policy and humanitarian aid, the U.S. writ large also has a traditionally low opinion of foreign aid and believes the country spends significantly more abroad than it does (Hurst, Hawkins, & Tidwell, 2017; Kull, 2017). This low opinion may be one reason the U.S. spends less on aid as a percentage of GDP than any other developed nation.

Such opinions may correspond to the low number of Americans that have traveled abroad, or even left their own state (Schmall, 2018). Foreign policy aims to protect and enhance the United States' safety and prosperity, the average household has not realized how foreign and domestic policy is linked (Ahmed et al., 2018). The foreign policy establishment currently lacks perspectives from state and local leaders, small business owners, community leaders, and working families. Although the State Department has made strides in outreach domestically, foreign affairs NGOs such as SCI also face concerns about building an appetite and creating appropriate avenues for Americans to engage with the world. It is also unsurprising that many SCI programs tend to have older participants and be run by those with foreign policy experience; this is not inherently negative, but rather a necessary recognition for the organization.

Volunteers & Turnover

As a primarily volunteer-driven organization, the success and impact of most SCI members is dictated by the level of involvement of residents of the locality. Many interviewees discussed problems with turnover in their associations, and an overall dependency on a limited number of volunteers driving the organization. Such a reliance creates problems when volunteers leave the organization for a myriad of reasons. There are also demographic concerns as to who is engaged with the work of citizen diplomacy, and SCI programs should encourage a diverse audience and volunteer base.

In a similar vein, some SCI members have noted that turnover has occurred in the national office that is affecting institutional memory and ability to interact efficiently.

Policy Alternatives

In this section I present three options that smaller sister city members could implement to enhance their international partnerships. These options are by no means exhaustive but instead provide plausible, evidence-based alternatives that are shown to have an impact in their ability to drive the mission of SCI and lead to greater international exchange. While recognizing that every SCI member has different resources and unique challenges, these alternatives are targeted for SCI members who may have a small base of donor support and volunteers or who have recognition in their community, but are struggling to engage with their sister cities abroad. A specific set of additional recommendations in which all SCI members can and are encouraged to partake, especially if there are concerns of membership organization, recruitment, and funding, are included in the recommendations section that follows.

The descriptions below provide evidence of effect and summaries of the three options that are suggested. The following section, “Evaluative Criteria”, will explain methods to consider when comparing which option may be most effective and impactful for an individual SCI member. The “Analysis of Policy Options” section provides details on how to place the criteria in context and leads to a recommendation.

Option I: Design an International Sports Exchange

Sport is often considered a universal language. It has the ability to transcend borders, economic barriers, and cultural differences—bridging gaps where traditional communication may not be able. Sports Diplomacy programs have grown into an important facet of DOS exchange programs for their ability to create dialogue and cultural understanding; exchanges have occurred in over one hundred countries with the goal of establishing links between U.S. sports professionals and teaching about American culture abroad, while also teaching leadership and teamwork skills (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, n.d.).

The Sports Diplomacy Division of ECA conducts and funds multiple sports exchanges per year through their SportsUnited and Sports Envoys. These programs have been well documented, and surveys indicate that the majority of international participants view the U.S. Government and the American people more positively after participating in an exchange program (eighty-seven and ninety-two percent, respectively) (Pitts, 2013). More than half of these responses indicated a ‘much more favorable’ view of Americans (Pitts, 2013).

Perhaps the most famous example of the power of sports diplomacy was the 1971 U.S. table tennis team to visit China—the first Americans to enter the country since the Chinese revolution in 1949 (Gitlin, 2017). Dubbed “the ping heard round the world,” this interaction is largely credited for restarting official relations after almost a quarter-century (Gitlin, 2017). An official office coordinating these programs, however, wasn’t created until after September 11, 2001. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, looking to improve the U.S. image in the Muslim world, wanted to use sport as a component of outreach to young people in the Middle East region (Rice, 2004, 2006; Gitlin, 2017).

Today, the Sports Diplomacy Division has only five full-time staffers and receives only .0001 percent of the DOS budget (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, n.d.). While the office maintains its mission to increase dialogue and cultural understanding, its priorities have shifted to reflect the interests of the Secretary of State and President (Alvarez, 2017). For example, Secretary Hillary Clinton emphasized women’s rights and girls in sports; Secretary John Kerry focused on a sports and sustainability initiative; President Barack Obama’s focus on Cuban relations led to ECA’s push for envoy leaders to that country (Alvarez, 2017).

“Actually, our sports exchanges are the most important exchanges that we do. And when I go to other countries around the world and we talk about what kind of exchanges that people are looking for, very often a leader will say ‘how about a sports exchange?’”

- Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State (2012)

However, given ECA’s limited budget and general concerns about DOS funding discussed previously, **SCI members have a unique opportunity to partner with ECA for support and conduct their own sports diplomacy programs.** Because of existing ties between foreign networks and the SCI network’s knowledge and experience with conducting general exchange programs, many of the steps of identifying partners and preparing to travel internationally are in place. Instead, the focus shifts internally to the actual sister city organizations to identify youth and sports mentors who would be ripe for an exchange program. This also allows sister cities to explore new ties and connections between their communities (such as similar sports popular in their countries) or to provide insight into one country’s culture surrounding sports (e.g. the popularity of collegiate athletics in the U.S.).

EXAMPLE: Culver City, CA Marathon Exchange Program

Every year, Culver City's Sister City Committee conducts a marathon exchange with their sister city, Kaizuka, Japan by sending two runners to participate in the KIX Senshu International Marathon. Two runners from Kaizuka also visit Culver City to participate in the Los Angeles Marathon.

A sports diplomacy program harnesses the power of sports to strengthen relations and create friendships between two sister city members. However, the results extend beyond the stadium or pitch, building communications, teamwork, and leadership that will benefit both cities long-term. Such programs also complement the missions and objective of other youth-centric SCI events such as Youth Leadership Summit. By working with local sports programs, such as Little League, YMCA sports leagues, travel sports teams, and even with local schools and their sports programs, a variety of stakeholders can be engaged. Working within the SCI network also prevents sports programs or missions from being coopted by the national foreign policy framework and can allow for specific programmatic aims that complement the existing relationship and city desires.

Option II: Create a Sister library partnership program

While the focus of this paper has been on city-twinning relationships, the term twinning can more broadly apply to a relationship between communities, organizations, or networks. One such area is in library-twinning, where two libraries in different countries establish a relationship for the purposes of improving the practice of librarianship across boundaries (Doyle, 1994). John (1991), writing for the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) identified the following benefits of library twinning:

- Exchange of information about libraries
- Improved access to published information, in both developed and less developed countries
- Information about new techniques for library management and new technologies for library programs made available more widely in developing countries
- Greater awareness by libraries in developed nations of the issues facing libraries in developing countries
- Regular international sharing of problems at the operational level
- Involvement of all levels of library staff sharing information about their problems and common concerns
- A broader view of the library profession (John, 1991, pp. 316-317)

To "promote the concept of a global community of libraries," the American Library Association (ALA) also encourages its U.S. member libraries to proactively establish relationships abroad ("The Sister Library Program," 1999). Similar to the benefits of IFLA, the ALA notes information exchange, raising awareness of library needs, and strength/weakness comparisons, but also highlights **additional benefits that expand not just the practice of librarianship but benefits the community writ large** and aligns with SCI goals:

- Improve access to information published in both countries
- Offer opportunities to learn more about a region or country represented by an immigrant group in your community
- Increase staff and community knowledge of other cultures
- Increase diversity of interaction between professionals ("The Sister Library Program," 1999, p. 2)

ALA, in fact, cites SCI as having relationships that meet such goals, but these networks do not often interact with local library systems. Further, SCI previously coordinated with the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), helping to select fifty-one libraries in 1999 that participated in its "Sister Libraries: A White House Millennium Council Project" (Rogers & Oder, 1999). However, little evidence in the literature discusses these partnerships and lasting impacts, suggesting they have not been further engaged. The only other mention of library twinning is found in IFLA's Sister Library program that focuses on children and young adult literature started in 2009, and the 2012 International Library Cultural Exchange Interest Group (ILCE-IG) with the Colorado Association of Libraries started by Lee and Bolt (2016). Nonetheless, as other municipal functions are already coordinating for the purpose of a city-twinning relationship, adding an additional partner has been shown to be simple and expands the network further (Lee & Bolt, 2016). Anecdotal evidence, and impacts discussed by SCI members similarly suggest successful project aims.

**"Libraries build community, but today's community is a global one.
Many of today's library users have immigrated from other countries.
Many routinely travel for pleasure and conduct business abroad.
Becoming a Sister Library is an opportunity to build relationships with
libraries in other cultures that can help us learn, understand and better
serve our own community."**

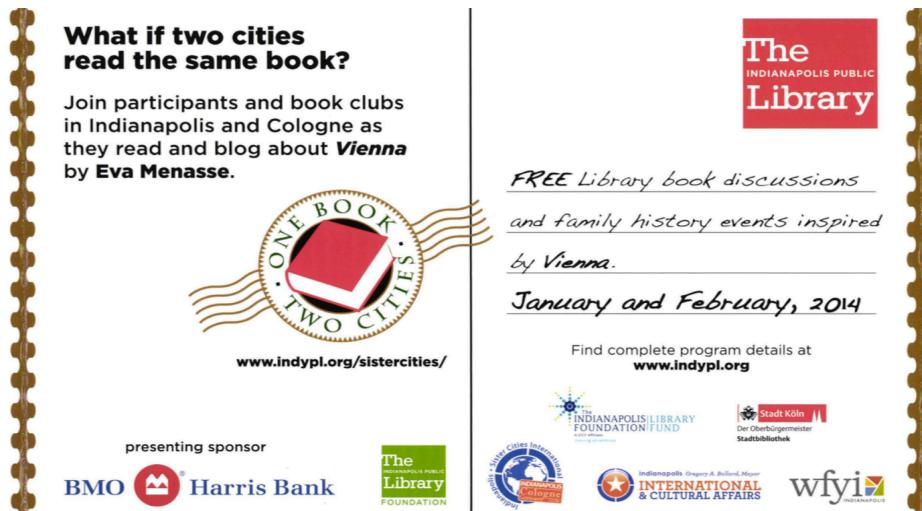
- Sarah Ann Long, President of American Library Association (1999)

The sister library program would encourage the creation of an international component within existing library infrastructure. This can include simple implementations such as exchanging displays of books written by authors in the sister city or sharing newsletters electronically, to more complex programs such as staff or author exchanges, an ongoing pen pal program, or interlibrary loans of materials. The possibilities for library programs are extensive and can be tailored to the goals of the sister-city relationship. At its core, this alternative is meant to grow community engagement and awareness of the sister city relationship, while allowing individuals to partake in a myriad of programs developed by the libraries for their specific needs. While the sister library partnership may begin with simple communication between staff members, it may be able to be a starting point for further and deeper connections after creating a touch point. Many of these options are low- and no-cost, built into existing library infrastructure (e.g. Skype conversations with a librarian in another country, e-book sharing).

EXAMPLE: Indianapolis Public Library & Indianapolis Sister City Program

The Indianapolis Public Library (IPL) partnered with Indianapolis' eight sister cities, forming lasting connections with four, in Brazil, China, Germany, and Slovenia. Programs began with an exchange between libraries of books and music, creating a display of the foreign city in the IPL library. Special events have also been held, including visiting dance performances, staff and librarian exchanges, common reads between cities, and ongoing Skype conversations and book exchanges.

Figure V: Example of IPL Sister-Library Promotional Marketing Material

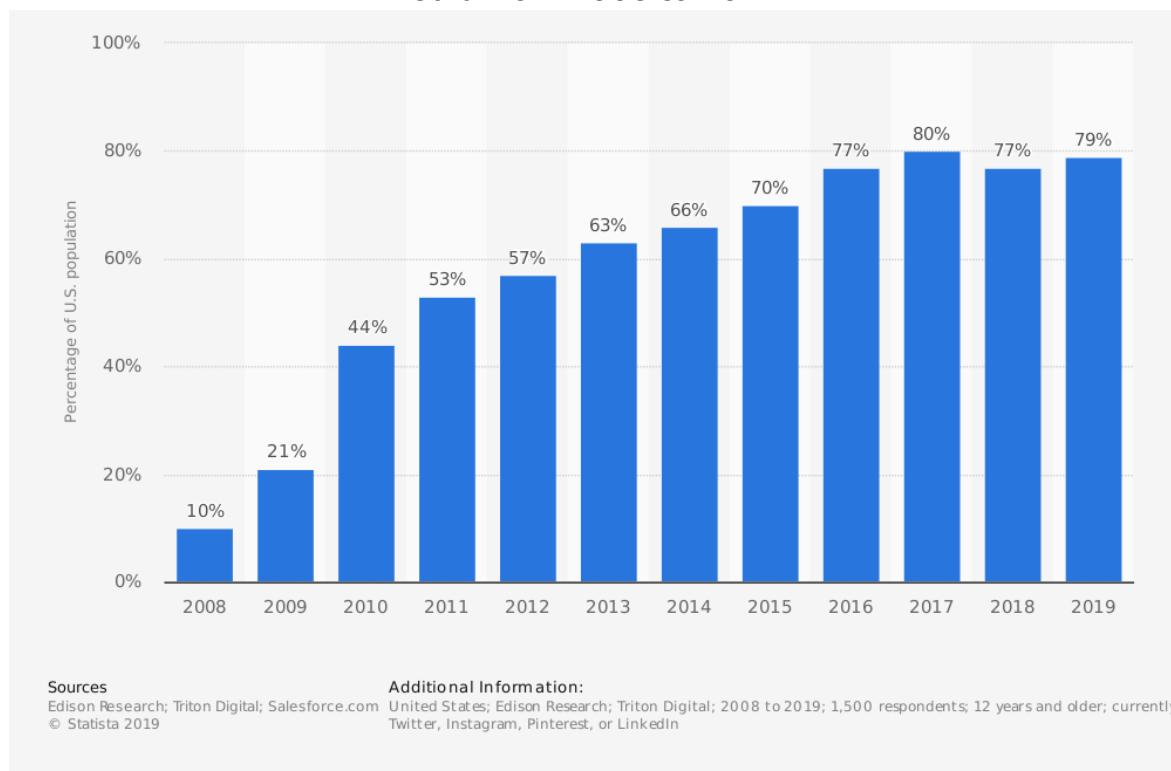


Source: Indianapolis Public Library

Option III: Social Media and Brand Campaign

SCI members are constantly trying to raise awareness of their programs and appeal to a wide audience in their communities. Key marketing outcomes, including brand awareness, brand engagement, and word-of-mouth are critical for understanding how successful these outreach efforts are (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). Currently SCI maintains a nationally-focused social media presence which highlights events coordinated by the office in Washington, D.C. and occasionally showcases events and accolades from the SCI network. However, there is no requirement for members to have their own social media pages, websites, email addresses, logo, or marketing materials. Although this provides flexibility, it can also create a lack of a brand. The extremely fast take-up rate of internet and social media use seen in Figure VI, particularly among younger individuals, provides a unique avenue for SCI members to cost effectively engage with their communities.

Figure VI: Percentage of U.S. population who currently use any social media from 2008 to 2019



At its core, a successful brand and media program develops meaningful relationships between an organization and its consumers. Analysis of the most impactful campaigns indicate that these outcomes are most visible in long-term results (more than one year)

and not necessarily indicative of immediate returns on investment (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). This is because consumers must first become aware and engaged with a brand, before they begin to communicate their experiences and opinions with others. Between a blend of advertising, outreach, and publicity efforts, the 'rule of seven' (an idea formulated by Dr. Jeffrey Lant that states to penetrate a buyer's consciousness one must make a minimum of seven contacts within eighteen months) requires an extended approach of a unified image and brand (Payne, 2011). Although social media posts are often not effective for extended engagement, posts and constant engagement are useful in building the network for future growth (Payne, 2011).

A successful SCI social media and brand campaign would **analyze what marketing materials are currently in-use by the member (e.g. a Facebook page, email database) and bolster outreach in the social media category.** For organizations that do not have a unified logo, social media account handles, stock photographs and existing promotional materials, these should be created. Other SCI members may need to focus on refining what their mission of the organization is and engaging critically with their existing networks and online presence. Research, for example, suggests that posts on Facebook should average about three per week; Twitter needs greater engagement to ensure the best response and interaction rates (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). The goal of a media campaign is to create a sufficient critical mass with consistently engaging content that users and those that view the content are compelled to consider engaging offline.

Evaluative Criteria

There are guiding principles and assumptions that are useful in developing the criteria that will be used to examine the policy options presented in the preceding section. As a professional partnership initiative and grant recipient of the U.S Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, SCI programs should align with similar goals of advancing foreign relations and people-to-people diplomacy. Specifically, SCI coordinates and participates in a number of DOS programs (e.g. J1-Visa High School Homestay Program), and it therefore makes sense to consider metrics that DOS and ECA use to examine similar programs. Additionally, best practices on citizen diplomacy have been developed, implemented, and quasi-tested by multiple NGOs, non-profits, private organizations, think tanks, and academic research (including The Center for Citizen Diplomacy, Fulbright Program, the International Visitors Leadership Program, Global Ties U.S., and the Institute of International Education).

The experiences and research under-pinning these citizen diplomacy efforts guide the following criteria. These metrics will be applied to the alternatives to allow for a comparison that ultimately selects the best recommendation for SCI members going forward. There are four criteria sections, with specific sub criterion, to include: the promotion of mutual understanding, administrative capability and adaptability, cost, and intentionality and purpose. **A total of fourteen points are possible.**

Promotion of Mutual Understanding

The mission of ECA is "To increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange that assist in the development of peaceful relations." Given increasing interdependence among nations, it is important for cultural exchange and citizen diplomacy to foster greater relationship and understanding between peoples. As understood by ECA and DOS' goals, mutual understanding can be defined as an affinity between foreign individuals. ECA seeks to establish mutual understanding in four ways: (1) Expose current, emerging and future foreign leaders to American values, language, ideas and methods in order to develop a network of current and future foreign leaders who will understand the United States and exert a multiplier effect on their societies; (2) Increase knowledge and understanding of international issues and foreign societies and cultures among current, emerging and future American leaders; (3) Expand the paradigm of partnership in which the Bureau engages with the private and non-profit sectors, as well as with foreign governments by establishing new partnerships and enhancing long-lasting and productive relationships between U.S. and foreign individuals and institutions; and (4) Leverage increased levels of public and

private financial and in-kind support within the U.S. and abroad ("Mutual Understanding," n.d.).

The level to which any alternative clearly explicates a method for enhancing mutual understanding is important. Each alternative will score one point if the sub criteria is met, for a total of zero (low) to four (high) points in its ability to consider and make an impact on these DOS and ECA goals.

Administrative Capability and Adaptability

This criterion will examine if the proposed alternative is feasible to implement given SCI's current concerns. Incumbent in this is staff, member finances, and volunteer resource constraints, as well as recognizing that new recommendations must be implementable for the vast SCI network. Further, any recommendation must be analyzed for where it will operate within existing SCI programs and who is responsible for the implementation (i.e. individual members, international office). Additionally, what is beneficial and works for a sister city in California is vastly different from the needs of a member in Vermont, Kansas, or Florida; can the program easily be adapted to individual needs?

This criterion will use a similar zero (low) to three (high) scale. Each alternative will receive one point based on the determination of if it is adaptable, ease/speed of implementation, and ability to operate within existing infrastructure.

Cost

Given the limited financial resources available to SCI and individual members (approximately 79% of SCI members have a budget under \$25,000), it is important that any policy be accomplished at minimum cost. This criterion will first determine what, if any, tangible costs will result from the policy option. These may be actual costs of materials, implementation or development costs, or the projected costs of ongoing policy adoption. For the alternatives that do/can include a travel component, estimates of airfare, travel, lodging, etc. are provided. Average cost of travel varies by location, when trips occur, how far in advance travel is booked, the number of people traveling, and so much more. ValuePenguin and LendingTree estimated in 2015 that the average vacation costs between \$144-\$271/person/day with transportation accounting for about half of the budget ("Average Cost of a Vacation," 2015). American Express has suggested an international vacation averages \$1,145 per person, while the travel website Kayak has estimated a roundtrip international airfare ticket to be around \$800-\$900 USD (Elliott, 2018).

An additional projected cost will be in a volunteer's time for the tasks required. The value of a volunteer hour, calculated by The Independent Sector, is estimated at \$24.69 per hour (Independent Sector, 2018.)

Given smaller SCI members already have strained budgets, higher cost programs quickly make an alternative unrealistic. However, a high volunteer cost should not necessarily be viewed negatively, as SCI programs largely operate on a volunteer basis already – assigning a dollar figure simply makes comparison between alternatives plausible. Considering these factors, ranges have been developed to offer a projected cost score that then makes comparison across criterion plausible; scores will fall between zero (high-cost) and three (low-cost) using the following ranges:

- 0 < Policy Alternative <\$5,000 receives a score of three (3)
- \$5,001 < Policy Alternative < \$10,000 receives a score of two (2)
- \$10,001 < Policy Alternative < \$22,000 receives a score of one (1)
- < \$22,001 receives a score of zero (0)

Intentionality and Purpose

Cultural and educational exchanges, when used as public diplomacy tools, should be intentional and purposeful. Building on the research of Bellamy and Weinberg (2008), Mueller (2002; 2012), and programmatic evaluations conducted by ECA, there are multiple sub criteria to consider. Principles that should be adhered to include:

- o *Diversity*: Do the participants of the program and diplomacy efforts adequately represent the diversity of the United States?
- o *Constructive Relationships, Enduring Ties*: Professional and personal friendships should be long-lasting and built on mutual attraction, not coercion, to encourage longevity and lasting.
- o *Empowering Citizen Diplomats*: Many people, by virtue of study abroad, volunteering, and even tourism, can be or are involved in public and citizen diplomacy, without even knowing it. Are programs encouraging and empowering wide audiences?
- o *Focus on Youth*: Younger individuals tend to be most historically influenced and impacted by citizen diplomacy efforts, and they also have the opportunity to shape local opinions going forward.

Each alternative will be measured on a scale of zero (low) to four (high), scoring one point if the sub criteria is met.

Table II: Summary of Evaluative Criteria

| Possible Score | Evaluation Criteria | Measurement Sub Criteria <i>(if applicable)</i> |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| 0-4 | <i>Promotion of Mutual Understanding</i> | Expose current, emerging, and future foreign leaders |
| | | Increase knowledge of American leaders to international issues |
| | | Enhance partnerships between U.S. and foreign institutions |
| | | Leverage public, private, and in-kind support in the U.S. and abroad |
| 0-3 | <i>Administrative Capability and Adaptability</i> | Level of adaptability to unique SCI member needs |
| | | Ease and speed of implementation of alternative |
| | | Ability to use existing infrastructure and networks |
| 0-3 | <i>Projected Costs</i> | |
| 0-4 | <i>Intentionality and Purpose</i> | Level to which participants represent the diversity of the U. S |
| | | Constructive, lasting relationships built on mutual attraction |
| | | Encouraging and empowering citizen diplomats at every level |
| | | Focus on youth |
| Maximum possible score: 14 | | |

Analysis of Policy Alternatives

Every SCI member is at a different stage of their citizen diplomacy work and has current immediate and long-term needs. The range of alternatives presented should be examined for the needs of a specific city and current conditions.

This analysis and following outcome matrix are for an “average” sister city member. Such a city may receive some funding from the city (enough to cover dues) and has a traditional municipal service operation. It is also expected that the member has conducted an inbound and/or outbound exchange previously. Some member infrastructure (e.g. committed volunteers, working knowledge of travel processes, etc.) are necessary.

Recognizing that not all SCI members meet these criteria, a blank outcomes matrix is included in Appendix III for individual cities to examine their own alternatives against the identified criteria. The analysis provided here should provide insight in how this can successfully be accomplished.

Option I Analysis: International Sports Exchange Program

Summary of Sports Exchange Analysis

| Max Score | Criteria | Sub Criteria | Sub Score | Total Score |
|--------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 4 | Promotion of Mutual Understanding | Expose foreign leaders | 1 | 3 |
| | | Expose American leaders | 1 | |
| | | U.S. & foreign partnerships | ½ | |
| | | Variety of support | ½ | |
| 3 | Administrative Capability and Adaptability | Adaptable to SCI Member | 1 | 1 ¾ |
| | | Ease and speed of implementation | ¼ | |
| | | Existing infrastructure and networks | ½ | |
| 3 | Projected Costs: | Between \$12,151.20 and \$18,576.80 | | 1 |
| 4 | Intentionality and Purpose | Represent diversity of the U.S. | 0 | 2 ¾ |
| | | Lasting relationships | ¾ | |
| | | Encourage Citizen Diplomacy | 1 | |
| | | Focus on youth | 1 | |
| Alternative Score: | | | | 8 ½ |

Promotion of Mutual Understanding

3 This option would create exchanges designed specifically to expose U.S. and foreign youth to the unique challenges of each of their countries was also providing a fun, competitive, and enjoyable arena to discuss a variety of topics. Opening ceremonies and press events may also encourage diplomatic organizations (e.g. embassies are often involved in SportsUnited programs) and elected officials to participate. Further, increasing sports exchanges may garner new local sponsors, such as a community business or school. Harnessing the existing SCI network and expanding on potentially existing foreign exchanges conducted by the member suggest this option scores highly on the criteria. However, while data suggests sports diplomacy to be effective, some additional programming may be required to bring key lessons together.

Administrative capability and adaptability

1 3/4 While a sports exchange is designable around the unique sports and interests of an SCI member, the existing city partnerships may not align to these preferences. This could be an asset or hindrance, as participants can learn about a new culture and sport but may also be unwilling to participate/finding a sports team could be more complicated. A new sports exchange requires finding the coaches, travel partners and plans, participants, and facilities for such events; in essence, it would not occur quickly, especially as most travel plans are booked far in advance for cost purposes. Although existing exchanges may provide guidance, the unique challenges of traveling with younger participants could slow the process. There are also passport and visa concerns that must be considered.

Cost

1 Given the variability and number of factors that impact international travel costs, estimates for a sports exchange are extremely wide. Estimates are provided here using the available metrics cited above. Using this data, it can be projected that a ten-

| Transportation Expense | Best Estimate | Conservative Estimate | Liberal Estimate |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Travel (airfare) [roundtrip] | \$900 | \$750 | \$1,755 |
| Travel (ground) | \$56 | \$35 | \$81.25 |
| Lodging | \$42 | \$37.52 | \$56.92 |
| Food | \$35 | \$33 | \$38.75 |
| Entertainment | \$15 | \$13 | \$24.41 |
| Travel Insurance | \$1.69 | \$1.10 | \$2.26 |
| Total Cost Per Day | \$149.69 (+airfare) | \$119.62 | \$203.59 |

day trip for a ten-person basketball team plus two coaches (twelve people total) would cost: \$10,800 (airfare) + \$17,962.80 (daily costs) = \$28,762.80.

Fortunately, many of these costs are ultimately passed on to the individual (i.e. travel costs are paid by the participant, not the city member). Additional costs can also be built into each participants' total to cover the volunteers' travel. This, however, may drastically exclude who could participate in travel/exchange programs. Additionally, some costs may be paid by the SCI member (e.g. paying for one meal, covering costs of coaches, etc.) For simplicity and based on how many previous exchanges have operated, the actual cost is *not* included in the analysis score.

These exchanges should however be reciprocal in nature, and incoming exchanges *may* result in costs to the SCI member (e.g. facility rental fees, paying referees, travel, etc.). Although these may be minimal, it is estimated that costs could range between \$300-\$800. The bulk of the costs considered in this analysis surround volunteer time. Using the same example above, two volunteers chaperoning a trip for ten days at the hourly rate of volunteer time of \$24.69 for twenty-four hours/day amounts to a cost of \$11,851.20. There is also required volunteer time to plan the trips, coach teams, and setup events. The best estimate used for total cost in this criterion is between \$12,151.20 and \$18,576.80. This receives one point.

ECA does conduct the International Sports Programming Initiative (ISPI), a grant competition for U.S. 501(c)(3) organizations proposing a sports exchange designed to reach underserved youth and/or coaches. While this may be a potential avenue for some SCI members, funding is not guaranteed. Further, ECA budget concerns put this funding stream at risk. Additionally, the SCI member would need to be designated as a 501(c)(3) before being eligible to apply

Intentionality and Purpose

**2
3/4** Sports exchanges may be limited to those who can afford to engage with such programs. As smaller exchange programs from only one city, they are not particularly representative of the diversity of the U.S., although they may showcase diversity within the local city. By designing an exchange on mutual interests, sports exchanges are intentional and encourage individuals to maintain contact, although this is not guaranteed, especially for younger participants who do not have social media or with nations where continued contact is difficult. Further, while athletes are traveling under the guise of sport, they are being encouraged to act as liaisons and diplomats. Sports exchanges also inherently target youth and young adults.

Option II Analysis: Sister Library Partnership

Summary of Sister Library Analysis

| Max Score | Criteria | Sub Criteria | Sub Score | Total Score |
|--------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| 4 | Promotion of Mutual Understanding | Expose foreign leaders | 1 | 3 1/2 |
| | | Expose American leaders | 1 | |
| | | U.S. & foreign partnerships | 1 | |
| | | Variety of support | ½ | |
| 3 | Administrative Capability and Adaptability | Adaptable to SCI Member | 1 | 2 1/2 |
| | | Ease and speed of implementation | ½ | |
| | | Existing infrastructure and networks | 1 | |
| 3 | Projected Costs: | \$3,466.04 - \$6,751.34 | | 2 |
| 4 | Intentionality and Purpose | Represent diversity of the U. S | ½ | 2 ¾ |
| | | Lasting relationships | 1 | |
| | | Encourage Citizen Diplomacy | ¼ | |
| | | Focus on youth | 1 | |
| Alternative Score: | | | | 10 ¾ |

Promotion of Mutual Understanding

3 1/2 Local libraries provide a unique outlet to showcase a diverse set of cultures and information through materials, displays, and programming. Given the fairly limitless set of proposals available to libraries, a successful partnership program will enhance the learning of American and foreign individuals. Librarians in particular are a wonderful resource for local communities, and library-twinning has been shown to better the profession and the knowledge they can impart on patrons. Authors from each city can also find new audiences abroad and local officials can participate in grand openings and showcase events. Once concern however could come from leveraging additional support networks; as information becomes more readily available electronically, the use of physical library spaces may diminish. Nonetheless, libraries, especially in schools and on college campuses are a novel potential partner.

2 ½

Administrative capability and adaptability

Relationships with a municipality between the sister city organization should exist in some capacity. Given that municipal functions such as a library operate independently of the SCI organization, the biggest hurdle would be the coordination between activities. However, libraries, and librarians, may be interested in new partnership opportunities and often seek to enhance the programs of organizations in their communities. Library staff are a large part of, and benefit from, the library-partnership, so there is evidence to believe these programs are implementable and adaptable to the unique staffing and goals of a member. Such a program could utilize the existing SCI network to outreach to the city-twin, providing a common connection that could make the library partnership easier to implement.

Cost

2

Using estimates established above, \$149.69/person/day + \$900 for airfare is again considered the cost of international travel. Unlike the sports exchange, these costs would not necessarily be the responsibility of an individual traveling abroad in their working capacity. Although some of these costs may be covered by a municipality, and additional travel expenses by the participant, this estimate suggests between twenty- and forty-percent of costs would be the responsibility of the SCI member. This leads to a range of \$479.38-\$958.76 in travel costs for one individual.

The cost of time is also calculated slightly differently; the average salary of a librarian in the U.S. is estimated at \$56,123, which is paid at an hourly rate of \$26.98/hour. Even if a librarian only spends one hour/week on library-twinning activities, this is a cost of \$1,402.96/year. A more realistic estimate includes a varying amount of time per week, as well as international activities and travel, and is projected at \$4,208.88. There are also volunteer hours required for programming, event staffing, planning exchange events and more. A rough estimate uses the volunteer time rate for fifty hours of volunteer time, adding an additional \$1,234.50 in annual costs.

A U.S. Postal Service first-class international package (the least expensive option available for most library materials such as books) averages \$23.28 per package. Although many materials can be exchanged electronically, having physical copies of some materials would add to the impact of the exchange. Additionally, some display options may be larger and cost more to ship abroad, to this per package cost remains a likely average. At 15 shipments per year, the cost to the member is \$349.20. In sum, this alternative is estimated to have a cost range between \$3,466.04 and \$6,751.34 and receives two points.

**2
3/4**

Intentionality and Purpose

The library is an open, accessible location that serves a variety of constituents, although they may be self-selecting. Librarians who participate in exchanges and sharing of information and ideas may have a multiplier effect, as whatever they learn can then be shared with library users. Libraries also tend to place a large focus on younger patrons, with specific kids' sections and programming directed at/for youth. The benefit of placing foreign materials aimed at this demographic in libraries, though, also extends to all patrons and individuals who see and engage with the material. This alternative aims to create a lasting partnership between two institutions, but may struggle to encourage active participation in citizen diplomacy efforts beyond programming conducted at the library. At their foundation, libraries remain an enduring institution and are unlikely to disappear any time soon.

Option III Social Media Campaign

Summary of Social Media Campaign Analysis

| Max Score | Criteria | Sub Criteria | Sub Score | Total Score |
|--------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| 4 | Promotion of Mutual Understanding | Expose foreign leaders | 1 | 2 1/2 |
| | | Expose American leaders | 1 | |
| | | U.S. & foreign partnerships | 1/4 | |
| | | Variety of support | 1/4 | |
| 3 | Administrative Capability and Adaptability | Adaptable to SCI Member | 1 | 2 |
| | | Ease and speed of implementation | 1/2 | |
| | | Existing infrastructure and networks | 1/2 | |
| 3 | Projected Costs: | \$10,469.76 and \$14,973.40 | | 1 |
| 4 | Intentionality and Purpose | Represent diversity of the U. S | 1/2 | 1 3/4 |
| | | Lasting relationships | 1/2 | |
| | | Encourage Citizen Diplomacy | 1/4 | |
| | | Focus on youth | 1/2 | |
| Alternative Score: | | | | 7 1/4 |

Promotion of Mutual Understanding

**2
1/2**

The power of the internet would allow a social media campaign to quickly and efficiently reach U.S. and foreign leaders and members of sister city organizations. However, the content should be interactive and encourage participation, e-mail signup, or otherwise push for greater involvement with the member. Recognizing that media requires multiple contacts before an action would occur, this alternative scores highly for its ability to expose to a variety of content, but struggles with actually creating and engaging within partnerships and garnering further support.

Administrative capability and adaptability

2

Local member control of the social media campaign, logo, and methods for outreach provide the greatest adaptability of any of the alternatives. This, however, may be a negative as it requires unique content generation and consistent media updates. The national SCI content can help supplement within a long-term media campaign, but the individual member would need some dedication to focusing on this alternative over time. While this alternative may be easy to implement on face and able to utilize existing mediums like Facebook and Twitter, there is still an initial hurdle in learning best practices, design requirements, sourcing content, and building the network.

Cost

1

Unlike the previous alternatives, all of the costs of a social media campaign are the responsibility of the SCI member. Volunteer time makes up the majority of the cost analysis, as one or multiple people will need to dedicate time and effort to content creation and media management. Facebook, for example, estimates that once a page is established it requires between "seven [and] ten hours per week on page maintenance and optimization".⁴ This analysis uses the same target, leading to an estimate of between \$8,987.16 and \$12,838.80. Additional time may be required at the beginning of the campaign, and some training (such as a paid program and/or simple trial-and-error) should be considered. This adds between \$300-\$500 to the estimate.

While operating a successful social media presence is important, this alternative also calls for advertising and "boosting" posts to expand reach and lead to greater impact. Facebook again provides some data on ad sponsorships, which is accurate as of April, 2019. The average cost per thousand impressions of a paid advertisement (CPM) is

⁴ Additional information on running effective pages can be found in the Facebook ad center: https://www.facebook.com/business/help/205739000014484?helpref=uf_permalink

\$7.19 and the average cost per click when a user actually engages with an advertisement is \$0.26. Based on the “rule of seven” impressions discussed above, the following calculations are estimated:

An advertisement that seeks to reach 20,000 impressions would cost approximately \$143.80. Over seven ad campaigns, that brings the cost to \$1,006.60. If a conservative estimate of one hundred clicks per ad is reached, an additional \$182 is added. This brings the estimate of ad costs to \$1,188.60. It is more expensive, at \$.70 CPC, to target users sixty-five+ (a key demographic of SCI) so an additional adjustment allocating 600 clicks to this age is made to bring the estimate to \$1,634.60. The total estimated cost for this alternative is between \$10,469.76 and \$14,973.40 which scores one point.

Intentionality and Purpose

1

3/4

A media campaign can highlight the diverse audiences and groups that engage with SCI work, but this is also dependent on who is participating in the other programs offered. By providing an avenue where successful programs and star volunteers can be noticed, it may be a successful opportunity to further engage and build greater ties for members. This could draw their friends and others into the work. Although there is a potential for others who see materials to begin participating in citizen diplomacy efforts, it is unlikely to create impact outside of SCI. Further, although there can be a focus on youth, especially for exchange programs or events that have a youth component, there may be concerns over using those under eighteen in images and not all young people are on social media.

Full Outcomes Matrix

This matrix provides a full summary of how each alternative is scored based on the evaluative criteria.

| Max Score | Criteria | Sub Criteria | Sports Exchange | Sister Library | Social Media Campaign |
|----------------------|---|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 4 | Promotion of Mutual Understanding | Expose foreign leaders | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | | Expose American leaders | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | | U.S. & foreign partnerships | ½ | 1 | ¼ |
| | | Variety of support | ½ | ½ | ¼ |
| 3 | Administrative Capability and Adaptability | Adaptable to SCI Member | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | | Ease and speed of implementation | ¼ | ½ | ½ |
| | | Existing infrastructure and networks | ½ | 1 | ½ |
| 3 | Projected Costs | | 1 (\$12,151.20 - \$18,576.80) | 2 (\$3,466.04 - \$6,751.34) | 1 (\$10,469.76 - \$14,973.40) |
| 4 | Intentionality and Purpose | Represent diversity of the U. S | 0 | ½ | ½ |
| | | Lasting relationships | ¾ | 1 | ½ |
| | | Encourage Citizen Diplomacy | 1 | ¼ | ¼ |
| | | Focus on youth | 1 | 1 | ½ |
| Total Score (Max=14) | | Alternative Score: | 8 ½ | 10 ¾ | 7 ¼ |

Recommendation

After comparing the alternatives across the evaluative criteria and projected outcomes, **it is recommended that SCI members pursue policy option II and work towards implementing sister-library programs with their twinned-cities.** The Sister-Library program ultimately scores the highest of each of the alternatives in each criteria category.

Although each alternative scores highly in promoting mutual understanding overall, option II is expected to have the most enduring partnerships across sectors that can create productive relationships for the sister-city program going forward. Given the likelihood that libraries remain a crucial municipal service for cities, the infrastructure and institutional nature of such a program should assist in enhancing citizen diplomacy efforts going forward. To this end, the library setting is a positive location to display existing efforts and spark curiosity—especially for younger audiences—but this alternative does score low in its ability to drive spontaneous and intentional citizen diplomacy for new members. A sister-library program should look for ways to harness interest with actionable items and events.

Funding remains a major concern for all SCI members, and option II provides an avenue to begin a new program with relatively few startup costs. Although a social media campaign can also begin with little to no cost, the benefits of having professional staff such as a librarian and working with a physical space where results can be more tangibly viewed, outweigh the higher early implementation cost. To a similar degree, while an international sports exchange may show more tangible immediate impacts (whether through anecdotal evidence, media buzz, or a participant's desire to keep in touch with a new friend, for example), many of the results can come out of a less expensive and more inclusive library program. Whether starting a pen pals or social media relationship, or simply exchanging books and stories across cultures, the location (a display, a library corner, etc.) allows these results to exist beyond the individual participant.

The flexibility of the alternative is also noteworthy, as the libraries and sister-city programs can work together to determine specific goals. While a sports exchange is narrowly focused to a limited group of individuals, and a social media program may cast too wide of a net that touches but cannot ultimately engage many, the library program targets a specific population of users, as well as opening opportunities for the community to participate. Such communal spaces can engage with a diverse set of

audiences and expose future leaders to opportunities they had not considered previously.

The primary challenges associated with the option revolve around implementation. Successful implementation will require a number of dedicated volunteers willing to bring their existing knowledge and programs into a space where they are not primarily in control. This policy will require time and effort to build a new relationship not just with a local city partner, but an additional partner abroad as well. While this can be difficult, time consuming, and has a potential not to see the desired success in practice that is expected on paper, these new partnerships also offer significant growth opportunities for all parties. The following section begins to examine these implementation concerns.

Implementation Strategies

The ALA provides a “checklist” for libraries considering a twinning relationship to confirm they are ready for the undertaking; this document appears in Appendix III. An SCI member considering this recommendation should analyze this document and see how their own organization would be able to answer most of these questions: what resources do we offer to the library? What relationships do we already have? Is anyone in our community fluent in the language of our sister city? Understanding the needs, questions, and thought processes of the municipal library system will help ensure a more honest and thorough review before the idea is even broached. Likewise, the sister city association should familiarize themselves with the programming that the local library system already engages in. For example, do they already conduct Skype workshops with authors or a pen pal exchange with students in another location? Understanding the infrastructure and what the library already coordinates may make adding a new pen pal location or asking to coordinate with a foreign author extremely simple when it may currently appear complicated.

A key to implementing this new partnership is finding mutually beneficial ways that the sister city association can assist the library, and vice versa, without overtaking or pushing a one-sided endeavor. Understanding what the library may want out of a relationship with your organization—increased usage of library facilities, more patrons checking out books, a rotating display case, for example—can tailor ideas that harness the power of both staffs.

The IFLA keeps an updated list of participating sister libraries for children and young adult readings [here](#). Browsing the list for an American city that is nearby or that you

would be willing to have a relationship with can help make this new outreach effort more successful.

It should also be understood that this policy option is incremental in nature. Starting with exchanging books between libraries can be the impetus for popular authors to visit the other country. At its core, this alternative is meant to grow community engagement and awareness of the sister city relationship, while allowing individuals to partake in a myriad of programs developed by the libraries for their specific needs.

Additional Recommendations

It is important to recognize that the policy options previously presented are not inherently mutually exclusive. A growing SCI member should aim to find new local partners to expand their foreign affairs and diplomacy efforts while also considering their brand image and how to design more effective foreign exchange programs. The recommendation of a library-twinning program is novel because it can be a launching change for future endeavors. To this end, there are a number of ideas and recommendations that were noted in the literature and in interviews that some cities may find useful. They are presented here as stand-alone options for implementation:

Establish a 501(c)(3) Organization

As DOS and ECA funding remains uncertain, and municipal budgets remain stagnant, it is critical for SCI members to engage with local donors and support networks. Establishing the local organization as a non-profit allows for the sister-city association to receive tax-deductible charitable contributions. This can make establishing online fundraising platforms slightly more beneficial as non-profits are often eligible for discounted credit card processing fees (as well as other benefits like less expensive postage). This can also help entice larger and corporate donors to partner with the organization as the tax write-offs are to their benefit.

City-Specific Impact Analysis Report

Evidenced-based and data driven impacts are critical to engaging funding streams. The ability to show economic impact and program success not only allows the organization to internally evaluate its initiatives and reorient resources as needed, but it can be used to lobby additional funds from the city and donors. Although there is a cost, outsourcing a customized economic and/or societal impact study to an organization such as Americans for the Arts or Tripp Umbach could be well worth the investment.

Data Collection Practices

Even if not conducting a thorough analysis, it is important for an organization to know how well their initiatives are performing. Although anecdotal evidence is helpful and quotations from participants can enhance websites and brochures, starting to implement a quantitative data collection process is recommended. This does not have to be large or complex in nature; starting with number of attendees at an event or dollars raised towards an initiative is an excellent starting point. To this end, when conducting surveys with questions that utilize numeric responses, ensure that the software requires the user to input digits and not text; this makes analysis and computation definitively easier in the long-run

Record Keeping

Decades of citizen diplomacy programs, institutional memory, and evidence of impact (even anecdotal in nature) is diffused across many areas, cities, organizations, and agencies. A significant effort can be taken by a member to bring together information and best practices. This is helpful especially for recurring programs to have changelogs and notes on why decisions are made. Additionally, turnover in a volunteer organization is common, and having a unified database with activities of the organization will assist future leaders.

Organization Contact Options

Multiple SCI members that were examined were found to have information about the sister city relationship on an official city or local government website, but did not maintain their own web address or contact option. Ensuring there is a way for interested parties to reach out to a member of the sister city organization is helpful. There are multiple free and low-cost options available for an SCI member to consider. It is recommended that the organization first check with their city offices about a specific domain or email address (e.g. yourcitysistercities@yourcity.gov). Third-party options are also available, such as a free email provider (e.g. Google, Yahoo, Hotmail), and the basic Google Suite is available to nonprofit organizations at no charge.

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Appendix I: Selected Sister City Relationships

- Atlanta, Georgia saw \$84.5 million in direct and indirect [economic impact](#) in 2016, primarily from travel and tourism. This averages \$189 per resident.
- Fort Worth, Texas and their eight sister-city relationships generated almost \$14 million in [benefits](#) for the city.
- Charleston, South Carolina brings almost \$50 million per year into the local [economy](#) during their yearly, multi-day Spoleto Festival USA that focuses on the performing arts and culture of their sister city, Spoleto, Italy.
- The Lakeland, Florida-Chongming County, Shanghai Partnership [resulted](#) in a local Florida engineering firm landing an over \$1 billion contract to build a theme park and resort on Chongming Island
- A 2013 city-to-city trade agreement between San Antonio and Kumamoto, Japan [landed](#) the U.S. city a Toyota Manufacturing plant. Toyota is one of over 30 Japanese companies that invest in the city.

Appendix II: ALA Sister-Library Checklist



A ROUND TABLE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Become a Sister Library →Checklist

Before initiating a sister library relationship, consider the following questions. Depending on your situation, there may be other steps you must take.

Who is on board?

- Educate your staff and administration about the Sister Library idea. Who is most interested and available to help?
- If you are a public librarian, involve your board in discussions about what you want to achieve.

How could your library benefit?

- Analyze your library's needs.
- Check the Resources page for additional information.

What can you offer a Sister Library?

- Identify your library's resources.
- Determine the level of commitment that you and your institution can make and who will be responsible for overseeing the project.
- Determine your budget for this program.
- Get approval and financial backing from your institution (i.e., board, administration, advisory group).
- How can your community help?
- First involve the library community (staff, trustees, friends and volunteers).
- If you are part of a larger institution, see who else is interested. Who is doing similar activities?
- Reach out to the public. Organize a local committee.
- Find out if you have someone on your staff or in your community who is fluent in the language of the other country and is willing to act as your liaison.
- How might your participation change over time?
- Be flexible. The other library may have somewhat different objectives and expectations. Both libraries need to be involved in shaping the relationship.
- If management or staffing change, how might your participation be affected?

Appendix III: Blank Outcomes Matrix

| Max Score | Criteria | Sub Criteria | Sports Exchange | Sister Library | Social Media Campaign |
|----------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 4 | Promotion of Mutual Understanding | Expose foreign leaders | | | |
| | | Expose American leaders | | | |
| | | U.S. & foreign partnerships | | | |
| | | Variety of support | | | |
| 3 | Administrative Capability and Adaptability | Adaptable to SCI Member | | | |
| | | Ease and speed of implementation | | | |
| | | Existing infrastructure and networks | | | |
| 3 | Projected Costs | | | | |
| 4 | Intentionality and Purpose | Represent diversity of the U. S | | | |
| | | Lasting relationships | | | |
| | | Encourage Citizen Diplomacy | | | |
| | | Focus on youth | | | |
| Total Score (Max=14) | | Alternative Score: | | | |