

**SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL
CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHEET**

Generating Publicity And Recognition For Your Sister City Programs

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Purpose

This assessment instrument is designed to be used by your community to undertake a relatively quick assessment of how well you generate publicity and recognition for your sister city programs. It is designed to be used within your community, as well as for specific sister city partnerships. The outcomes from this assessment should enable your community to better focus its resources, both human and financial, with the objective of significantly improving your local sister city organization's publicity generation capability.

This instrument is not a strategic planning instrument. You may wish to use this instrument in the context of a strategic planning process. However, the instrument is specifically designed to allow you to use this at a regular meeting or at a special meeting of your sister city leadership, and you should be able to complete the assessment within a two-hour time frame.

The assessment should result in a better understanding of how well you are generating publicity and recognition for your sister city programs. Ideally, this instrument should also be used by your sister city partner community, and the results of both assessments should be shared between the communities.

Important Ground Rules and Principles

This instrument should be administered by a volunteer facilitator who is not involved in a leadership position within your sister city organization; however, they should be familiar enough with your organization to be able to administer the process. This is extremely important. Such an individual may be found within your local government or within organizations such as the United Way, colleges or other non-profit organizations.

In addition:

- Do your best to have as many of your sister city volunteers and key local government officials participate in this process as possible.
- All viewpoints are welcomed and valued. There are no right and wrong answers.
- Keep focused on developing an action plan that can result in concrete steps to improve the capacity of your sister city organization.
- Do not attempt to solve all the issues that emerge from this assessment. It is strongly recommended that a limited number of action items be perused at one time.
- You can use this assessment instrument more than once – conducting an assessment on an annual basis is ideal.

Process

- 1) The instrument should be given to everyone at least one week prior to the meeting, and everyone should bring a completed copy of the assessment instrument to the meeting.

2) At the meeting:

- Flip charts and “dot” identification should be used to quickly compile the results. (There should be a flip chart page for each table in the assessment tool. Have each person place a dot sticker on each chart that matches their selection on the completed copy they brought to the meeting.)
- Once the information on the assessment form has been compiled on the flip charts the results should be discussed in detail. This should take place in sub-groups of no more than 8.
- Each sub-group should answer the following two questions:
 - What are the three most important areas our organization should focus its energy and resources on in order to significantly improve the capacity of our sister city organization?
 - Within each of the three priority areas, what are two specific action items that can be taken over the next six months?
- Each sub-group should report its findings and recommendations to the whole group, allowing for a good dialogue to occur, but making sure that the two specific questions are addressed with clarity.
- The whole group, either through consensus, “dot” voting or some other process should:
 - Select no more than three areas for immediate improvement.
 - Select two action items under each priority area.
 - Designate a lead individual and a volunteer task force to work on each of the action items and to complete their work in a timeframe of no longer than 6 months. Periodic updates should be given at subsequent meetings.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Place an X next to the description that best fits your sister city organization this particular point in time.	
Description	X
1) Outstanding: We should be used by SCI as a model organization.	
2) Robust, Expanding and Improving: If we continue on our present course we should become a model sister city organization.	
3) Increasing Levels of Commitment and Performance: We are moving in a positive direction with good energy. Need to stay focused and on course.	
4) New Program: We are a new program and need to get off on a positive track.	
5) Cruising but unsure where the future will take us: We have a small publicity program, but we do not have a strategy/plan for improving/increasing our publicity efforts.	
6) Stagnant and living off past performance: We once had a significant focus upon publicity, but it is not growing. We focus more attention on our past accomplishments rather than future goals.	
7) Never got off the ground: We have never taken advantage of our great enthusiasm and little has been accomplished to expand and diversify our publicity sources.	
8) Declining: We are doing less, involving fewer people and our organizational capacity is headed in the wrong direction.	
9) Need to immediately “jump start”: This is our last chance to get things going in the publicity arena.	
10) Defunct: Our organization has never had a publicity program. We need to start over and make this a core objective of our sister city organization.	
11) Other: Please specify.	

**KEY FACTORS TO INCORPORATING PUBLICITY AND RECOGNITION INTO YOUR
SISTER CITY PROGRAM**

Key Factors	Select your top 3 priorities
1) Developing a comprehensive publicity and recognition strategy that is realistic	
2) Establishing a publicity and recognition task force/committee that will take responsibility for implementing action plans for each of our major sister city events	
3) Developing a working relationship with the local newspaper and other media, to have them report on our major sister city events	
4) Telling our sister city success stories in a timely, comprehensive yet concise manner	
5) Working with our local government, especially the person or office that has overall responsibility for public relations and communications, to tell our sister city story	
6) Celebrating our successes and recognizing those individuals who have played a leadership role in implementing specific sister city projects and programs	
7) Reaching out to the community, telling the sister city story, and inviting new individuals and organizations to participate	
8) Actively informing and involving the political leadership of our community in our sister city events and programs	
9) Developing written promotional materials to use at our sister city events and programs	
10) Utilizing the power of the Internet to communicate our sister city programs	
11) Please identify any other Key Factors	
12) Please identify any other Key Factors	
13) Please identify any other Key Factors	

KEY FACTORS AND ACTION ITEMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Once you have selected the top three key factors, decide on two action items for each that can be implemented in the next six months. Below you will find some examples of possible action items; please add any others that are appropriate for your community. **For the purposes of this assessment during this workshop, please circle the action items that you feel are the most important for your community.**

1) Developing a comprehensive publicity and recognition strategy that is realistic

- Ask SCI for examples of outstanding strategies other sister city organizations implemented
- Creatively brainstorm regarding all the publicity and recognition opportunities that are available in our community

- Take a specific successful event and brainstorm about how more publicity could have been generated if certain specific steps had been taken
- Set specific achievable goals for generating publicity around the next major events
- Establish a recognition program as part of a major annual event
- Others—please list

2) Establishing a publicity and recognition task force/committee that will take responsibility for implementing action plans for each of our major sister city events

- Recruit an individual who has knowledge/expertise to chair the task force/committee
- Make the task force/committee an integral part of the planning for the event; have periodic reports given to our Board
- Set realistic publicity and recognition goals for the event and measure how well we succeeded in meeting these goals
- Carefully consider *why* the media should be interested in the event and make a personal appeal to them to attend
- Create a media opportunity segment during the event – make the media feel that they are being provided with a unique opportunity
- Others—please list

3) Developing a working relationship with the local newspaper and other media, to have them report on our major sister city events

- Recruit a member of the media to be on our Board or to participate in the publicity/recognition task force
- Recruit an individual with a public relations background to be on our Board
- Set up individual meetings with key members of the media to inform them about our sister city programs, past accomplishments, and our vision and plans for the future
- Invite key members of the media to actively participate in our events—for example: master of ceremonies at a special event; a speaker at an event; a participant in an exchange
- Others—please list

4) Telling our sister city success stories in a timely, comprehensive yet concise manner

- Create a newsletter for our membership, supporters, and friends
- Have a sister city website or a dedicated portion of our local government’s website
- Communicate with our members, supporters, friends, and the media via e-mail—develop an e-newsletter
- Work with our local government to develop a sister city program or public service announcement (PSA) for the public access TV channel; ask that the PSA be aired during the broadcast of city council meetings
- Develop a press kit that can be adapted for all our major events
- Others—please list

5) Working with our local government, especially the person or office that has overall responsibility for public relations and communications, to tell our sister city story

- Identify the lead person in our local government who has this responsibility; if this is not clear, consult with our mayor, city manager, county executive, governor, etc.
- Creatively brainstorm with this individual about how to most effectively tell and communicate our sister city story to the public at large

- Ask for specific assistance—for example, developing a sister city program, which can be aired on public access TV
- Plan to meet with this individual on a regular basis and stay in touch with this person well in advance of any sister city events
- Others—please list

6) Celebrating our successes and recognizing those individuals who have played a leadership role in implementing specific sister city projects and programs

- Create an annual sister city recognition program that recognizes outstanding contributions
- Recognize key volunteers during a sister program or activity, especially those folks who worked behind the scene to make it happen
- Recognize long-term commitments to our organization—consider making them lifetime members of Sister Cities International (SCI is in the process of developing a program whereby each member community could recognize one or two individuals a year as lifetime members of SCI. For more information please contact Amy Kohlbrecher at SCI membership@sister-cities.org.)
- Recognize the political leaders in our community who have been strong supporters of sister city programs—do this at our annual meeting or a special event
- Others—please list

7) Reaching out to the community, telling the sister city story, and inviting new individuals and organizations to participate

- Identify key organizations and outreach opportunities such as Rotary and other service clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, schools and universities, etc.
- Develop a public service announcement to be aired over our public access TV station promoting sister city programs and inviting people to actively participate
- Have a booth at a community festival
- Have a sister city display within city hall or at such places as the airport
- Have a sister city park, a sister city sculpture garden, or any other kind of high visibility public venue
- Others—please list

8) Actively informing and involving the political leadership of our community in our sister city events and programs

- Carefully identify the political leadership within our community—this includes elected leaders at the local, county, state, and national levels
- Carefully identify key administrative leaders, such as the city manager or department heads
- Make sure that all political/administrative leaders receive our publications and are invited to our events
- During local political campaigns, inform the candidates about our sister city program and ask for their support
- When a new mayor or city manager assumes office, ask for a meeting to provide them with a good overview of our sister city programs and the issues/concerns that we would like their support for/help with
- Others—please list

9) Developing written promotional materials to use at our sister city events and programs

- Develop a sister city membership brochure

- Develop a sister city newsletter
- Develop a sister city website
- Develop a sister city press package
- Enter our sister city information, **including program information**, into SCI's online database (www.sister-cities.org)
- Others—please list

10) Utilizing the power of the Internet to communicate our sister city programs

- Invite young people to take responsibility for communicating over the Internet—let them play a leadership role in developing our Internet communications strategy
- Develop a sister city website and keep it updated
- Communicate via e-mail and consider developing an e-newsletter
- Enter our sister city information, **including program information**, into SCI's online database (www.sister-cities.org)
- Others—please list

Other key factor

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Other key factor

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Thank you for participating in this workshop. We trust that you enjoyed the presentations and the introduction of this assessment instrument.

We are asking you to share your information with SCI so that we can further develop this assessment instrument and make it available to all SCI members. **Please complete the information below and give this handout to the volunteer at the door.**

THANK YOU AGAIN!

Name:

Sister City Organization:

Position within your Sister City Organization:

E-Mail Address:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Country (if outside the U.S.):

Phone:

I would like this handout returned to me at the address above: Yes _____ No _____

I would like a copy of this assessment tool e-mailed to the address above: Yes _____ No _____

I would like _____ copies of this assessment tool mailed to the address above: Yes _____ No _____