

# STRUCTURE MANUEL



LAUDERHILL, FL

## Goals of Sister Cities International

- Develop municipal partnerships between U.S. towns, cities, counties, states and similar jurisdictions in other nations
- Create opportunities for the citizens of sister cities to experience and explore other cultures through long-term community partnerships
- Create an atmosphere in which economic development and trade can be developed, implemented and strengthened
- Stimulate environments through which U.S. and foreign communities can creatively learn, work and solve problems together
- Collaborate with organizations in the United States and other countries sharing similar goals

# The Role of Sister Cities in Economic and Community Development

The results of sister city programs provide irrefutable evidence that sister city links have both positive and long-lasting effects on international development. There are myriad examples of how sister city partnerships are playing a crucial role in economic and community development in both the local and global arena. The following provides a brief look:

## **Reliable Business Contacts**

Long-term community partnerships have established trust, respect, and good communication – the necessary prerequisites for any business partnership to succeed, especially in an international setting. Thus, in addition to the benefit of being a part of an enormous global sister cities network, sister city affiliations at the local level get regular access to contacts for possible joint ventures and invaluable information on successful business projects in different regions of the world. Susan Herlin of Sister Cities of Louisville notes, "Sister Cities is sort of like a matchmaker network. If you maintain a relationship over many years, which is what we've done...then you actually build relationships between individuals. And just like with any other kind of relationship, it can then become the basis of things like this economic development connection."

## **Forums for Discussing Complex Global Trade and Development Issues**

Open forums like the Sister Cities International Annual Conference and smaller, local level meetings reaching across states and communities bring grassroots volunteers, citizen groups, businesses and organizations together to discuss and find solutions to many complex global issues. For example, in July 2005, the Phoenix Sister Cities Commission's annual economic forum engaged 200 local business representatives and international business leaders across its eight sister cities to discuss the economic advantages of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), expansion of the European Union, and the growth of China and how they could jointly benefit. These networking opportunities create profitable and long-lasting alliances between different groups as they tackle issues such as urban sprawl, climate change, literacy, public safety, drug and alcohol addiction, and more.

# The Role of Sister Cities in Economic and Community Development, *cont'd...*

## Cross-Cultural Expertise

Perhaps you've heard this joke: "What do you call someone who can speak two languages? *Bilingual*. Three languages? *Trilingual*. What do you call someone who can't speak any foreign languages? *An American*." This joke unfortunately has a strong element of truth to it. Nevertheless, hundreds of sister city activists nationwide are helping to break down this stereotype over time. At the local level, broad-based sister city committees include businessmen and women, teachers, city officials and professors with language and cross-cultural expertise in various regions of the world. At the national level, Sister Cities International is in touch with these experts in every state and facilitates networking among them through grant programs, publications, and high-quality conferences, including the Sister Cities International Annual Conference.

## Increased Tourism

Some communities and companies depend on tourism as their primary revenue source, clearly benefiting from the increased business, jobs, and taxes that sister city exchanges and projects generate. Fort Worth, Texas, for example, estimates that its sister city programs bring in two to three million dollars in trade and tourism each year. New York City similarly relies on its sister city relationships to promote economic activity. In 2003, its city officials held a summit among the leaders of its nine sister cities to discuss how they could mutually boost international tourism and travel and specifically get New York back to its pre-September 11th levels. International members, as well, harness these benefits, as exemplified by the tourist industry in Agogo, Ghana having profited by tens of thousands of dollars from exchanges and projects since partnering with Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

# Structuring A Strong Program

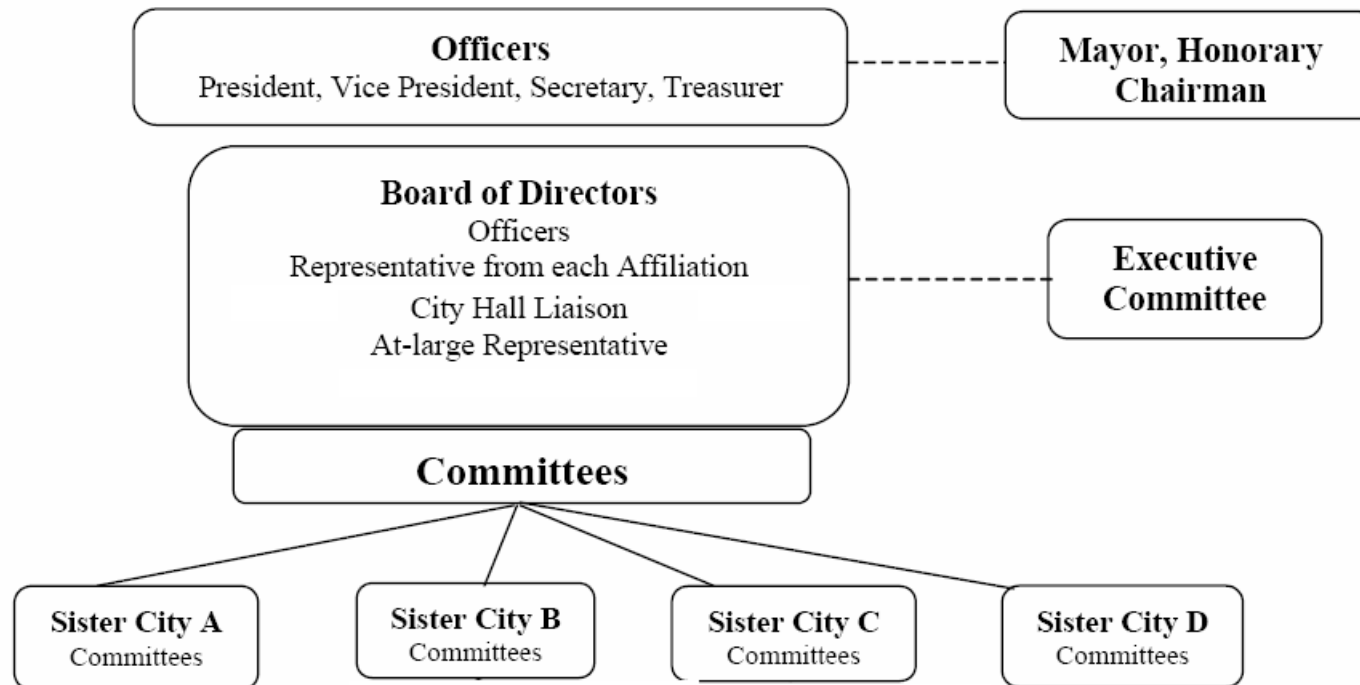
Here are questions community members should consider when establishing their sister city programs:

- What is our mission?
  - How do we accomplish it?
- What are our short-term and long-term goals?
  - Why are we important in our community?
  - What do we have to offer our community?
    - With whom should we partner abroad?
- What are our criteria for choosing a sister city?
  - What do we have to offer our sister city?
  - Do we want more than one sister city?
- If we have multiple affiliations, will we structure an umbrella organization?
  - Who is in the program now?
  - Who would we like to join our organization?
    - How can we build a diverse, multi-generational membership?
- What provisions have we made to have people with disabilities participate in our program?
- What provisions have we made to have people of all socio-economic levels participate in our program?
  - How can we include ethnic and racial minorities in our program?

# Structuring A Strong Program, *cont'd...*

- Who are the leaders?
- Whom would we like as leaders?
- How can we design our program so that people will want to join and leaders will get a chance to lead?
  - What are the responsibilities of the leaders?
    - Who chooses the leaders?
    - Who makes decisions?
  - Who gives them authority to make decisions?
    - Who does the work?
    - How can we share the work?
- How can we teach new people the skills we already have and learn the ones they have?
  - How will we raise money?
  - From whom do we solicit funds?
- Can we design a structure that is flexible enough to change when our members, goals or community changes?
- Do we want to design a structure that is flexible enough to change if our sister city counterparts change their priorities?
- Does the state's statute covering nonprofit corporations allow the formation of a corporation to participate in the type of activity the group envisions?

**STRUCTURE FOR A MULTIPLE SISTER CITIES PROGRAM**  
Sister Cities Association of \_\_\_\_\_, Inc.



# Officer Roles and Responsibilities

## President/Chairperson:

- Leads the organization
- Serves as the spokesperson for the group
- Chairs board meetings
- Sets the pace for the board by raising funds
- Motivates and challenges the whole group

## Vice President

- Assumes the president's/chairperson's duties when absent
- Assists the president/chairperson with duties
- Can serve as the president/chairperson-elect

## Treasurer

- Is responsible for the overall financial management of the program
- Prepares financial reports for internal use and tax reports
- Is **not** in charge of fund raising

## Secretary

- Sends written notices of meetings to members
- Takes accurate minutes of meetings
- Provides internal communication and correspondence

SCI recommends that the local program organize its members in a “pyramid” fashion. Programs should have a president or chairperson, a vice president, a treasurer, secretary, a board of directors and many committees.

# Sister City Committee Responsibilities

## COUNTRY COMMITTEE

### Public Relations

- Creates positive attitudes and opinions of your program
- Serves as the information link to your community and media (this includes writing news releases, developing personal contacts with reporters and responding to requests for information)
- Arranges speaking engagements for sister city volunteers with other civic organizations
- Prepares newsletters, information brochures, flyers and other printed material
- Prepares slide shows and video presentations
- Plans and carries out special events

### Hosting Committee

- Handles protocol for international visitors
- Arranges tours, cultural outings and home-stays for visitors from the sister cities
- Organizes receptions for sister city visitors
- Arranges for visitors to meet their professional counterparts

### Municipal and Congressional Relations Committee

- Serves as the direct liaison with City Hall and municipal government departments
- Establishes and develops relationships with the state and federal congressional representatives

### Education and Youth Exchange Committee

- Serves as the liaison with schools (primary, secondary, post-secondary), colleges and universities in the community
- Promotes “sister school” linkages and the introduction of the sister cities program into the city’s educational curriculum
- Organizes youth and academic programs and exchanges between the sister cities

# Sister City Committee Responsibilities, cont'd...

## Sports, Culture, and Exchange Committee

- Plans sports and cultural events, such as sporting events, educational exhibits, photographic displays, musical and theater performances and language classes
- Develops sporting events and cultural exchanges with its sister city counterparts
- Highlights and promotes the important role that the sister cities program and volunteers perform in the community in terms of cross sports and cultural exchange

## Fundraising Committee

- Plans and organizes events to raise money
- Solicits donations from local organizations, foundations and corporations

*Importantly, while the fundraising committee may be primarily responsible for fundraising activities, everyone within your program should be prepared to assist.*

## Trade and Commerce Committee

- Develops trade and business exchanges, seminars, exhibitions and trade fairs with businesses in the sister city
- Acts as the liaison with the local chamber of commerce
- Promotes industries and exports of the sister cities to local industries
- Develops relationships with economic interest in SCI