
Sister Schools Project Packet

Introduction

Sister Schools' partnerships work because of the collaborative group projects conducted between schools. This is how cultural exchange and mutual understanding are achieved among students and schools. *Conducting projects together is the core of the Sister Schools program.* Choosing and committing to a project is the most important aspect of being Sister Schools.

Teachers have different needs and very busy schedules. This is why coordination between schools is vital to a successful partnership. Teachers will need to coordinate their schedules and communicate their educational interests in order to collaborate and design their Sister Schools projects.

Remember: Consistent Communication is needed!

Goals of the Project Ideas Packet

As a service to teachers in Sister Schools' partnerships, Sister Cities International offers the following project ideas based on different grade levels and time commitments. Teachers can use this project packet to help develop a Sister Schools Project that is compatible with both school's schedules and classroom needs.

- The following is a synopsis of different project levels, based on time needed to complete them and the grades they are appropriate for
- The break-down of project levels will help teachers evaluate and modify projects to benefit their schools' schedules and needs
- The project levels increase in sophistication and time commitment from levels 1(Basic Projects) to level 3 (Advanced Projects).

Project Level 1

Basic Projects require minimal classroom time to incorporate into a Sister Schools partnership. They are less time consuming and simpler in their structure and content than intermediate or advanced projects

Approximate time needed: 1-3 Hours a week

Grade levels: Elementary- High School

Project Level 2

Intermediate Projects require more classroom time than basic projects. They incorporate more critical thinking and analytical skills from students. More frequent correspondence may be needed between teachers to conduct these projects.

Approximate time needed: 1-4 Hours a week

Grade levels: 5th Grade- High School3

Project Level 3

Advanced projects are for Sister Schools who want to integrate a more focused international studies curriculum between their two schools. They may introduce concepts such as: social changes, economics, or humanitarian needs, as well as cultural understanding and exchange. These projects demand additional commitment from both schools in order to be properly presented, conducted, and completed between Sister Schools.

Approximate time needed: 2-5 Hours a week

Grade levels: Middle School-College

Modifying Project Ideas

Many of the Sister Schools project ideas can fluctuate and be modified to accommodate different age groups and classroom schedules.

For example: a pen-pal exchange between elementary age students may be modified for high school students by assigning more analytical subject matter for students to discuss with their Sister School pen-pal. Writing about student government issues or current political affairs may be more suitable subject matter for older students.

Remember: Involving students in the design of projects between Sister Schools is a valuable tool. It encourages students to be more active participants and provides them with a chance to voice their interests.

Project Level 1

Elementary – High School

Basic Level Projects:

Pen Pals / E-pals

Students are paired with a student at their Sister School. Students write to each other once a week. This can be a free-form assignment, or the students can be given prompts to write to their pen-pals. The prompts should be adapted for different ages.

Yearbook Trade

Trading yearbooks is a great way for Sister Schools to share their school's community and interests with one another.

Here's an idea! Send two yearbooks to your Sister School – One for them to keep, and one for them to sign and return to you! Display the yearbook in the library so the whole school can benefit from it.

A Day in the Life – Photo exchange

Send a disposable camera to your Sister School and have them take pictures of their city, school, local events, etc. As a variation, specify a focus or theme, with instructions of what should be photographed.

For example, a theme could be: A Day in the Life of Our School. Each school takes pictures on the same scheduled day and mails the cameras back to their Sister School to develop. Or create a CD of the pictures, and share them over the web!

Culture Box

Send a package to your Sister School that contains items your students feel represent their school, community, and culture.

Make a list of items for each Sister School to include. Such as: an article of clothing, a music CD, a picture of your city, a piece of art, a non-perishable local food item, or anything else you can think of that your Sister School will find interesting! Hold an assembly and share the contents of the Culture Box with the entire school.

Student Scavenger Hunt

Sister Schools compile a list of items, perhaps with a theme, for classes to gather and send to each other.

For example, try the theme: “What’s in your classroom?” Items on the list include: something you write with, something blue, something to read. Have fun with it!

To individualize the scavenger hunt, have students choose something that represents them personally and write a paragraph about the item and what it means to them.

For example, a good theme is: “Student Hobbies” Item descriptions could include: Something you collect, or, something you play. Student may contribute a baseball, a picture of themselves playing an instrument, or a guitar pick. Be creative!

(Tip: The Student Scavenger Hunt can be done as an online activity, or sent as a package to your Sister School. Or, to cut down on shipping costs, photograph the scavenger hunt items and send the photos to each other. Or, go even further and do an on-line exchange of scavenger hunt items.)

Holiday and Festival exchange

Students study each other’s holidays and festivals. Use resources such as books, the internet, and of course the best resource is the students themselves. Individual students can also write to their pen-pals about how their family celebrates the different holidays and what it means to them. Ask your sister school to send items that represent and/or are used during the holidays and festivals. Choose one holiday or festival to share with the entire school and perform a skit. Tape the skit and send it to your sister school.

Country Collage

Students contribute personal photos, or pictures from magazines or newspapers which they feel represent their community or country. Be creative with the theme—ask for pictures that represent history, geography, natural resources, natural disasters, cuisine, local customs, pop culture, etc. Students vote on the best pictures and compile the winners into a collage. The schools exchange collages and use the collages as a taking off point for new dialogue.

Art exchanges can take on many topics and formats. They can be individual art projects, or group projects. Ask students to contribute other art exchange ideas as well!

Poetry/ Art Exchange

Sister Schools compare and study the works of a famous artist from each other’s country. Students then do an art project or write a poem in the style of the chosen artist. This is a great way to get to know the art history of a region, and incorporate an art-based project.

US – Spain sister school pair example: the school in Spain selects Picasso as their artist and the US school selects Andy Warhol . Students send a brief history and presentation to their Sister School on their chosen artist. The Sister School in Spain does an art project in the style of Andy Warhol and the US school does an art project in the style of Picasso. To conclude the exchange, students send their artwork to their pen pals, or hang the artwork up at their own school; whatever your class decides.

Music /Dance Exchange

Schools compile a CD of songs that reflects the traditional music of their country. Accompany the CD with a brief history/explanation of each song. This is a wonderful way to learn how music is integrated into the customs and history of a nation.

Traditional dances are also a great way to learn about another culture. In many cultures, dances are performed for certain festivals, or as ritual. Sharing the history of their meanings and purposes is exciting for students.

Go further: Videotape your students performing traditional dances to share with their Sister School! This exchange can also be done with modern music and dance.

(Be aware of region codes for DVD's and Cd's)

Folklore Exchange

This project is a great way to share the history and cultures of the Sister Schools. Storytelling throughout history and across cultures not only depicts the values and moral teachings of a specific culture but also can express the similarities across different cultures. Sister Schools select a traditional story or set of stories (like creation stories) from their country that is often told and/or they feel represents their culture.

For example: an American school may choose a Native American tale that was told by a tribe native to their area. A school in England or Germany may choose a fairy tale to share. A school in India might select an ancient Hindu story. A school in Greece may choose one of Aesop's many fables.

The Schools then send a book of the story as a gift to their Sister Schools. Another option is to have the students in both classes illustrate/create their own version of the fairytale or story and put it together as a gift to their Sister School. The books could be displayed in their school's library or around the school. As many folklore stories are based in specific locations or regions, pictures of the area where the story took place would be a good addition to the compiled story.

As a summary of the project have students do a report or discussion on the similarities and differences between the stories and how the different stories show the specific cultural character or value system. If they want, students could also act out the story from their Sister School as a better way of understanding the stories from another culture. Getting the students as involved as possible will make the project more enjoyable for them.

Travel Brochure/Newsletter Project

Students research their Sister School's community, state, or country as a whole. The class then compiles pictures and combines them with descriptive paragraphs to design a flyer or mock "travel brochure" of the different sites and cultural highlights of their Sister School's city. Or, schools make a flyer or travel brochure of their own culture, and send it to their Sister School. Such a brochure could also be a map or current events brochure that the students could put together and copy for all the students at their Sister School. Either approach will be educational and fun.

If possible this could also be made into a website that the student would create. Each student would be given a city, historical landmark, large-scale annual event, or special tradition and all the information could be compiled into a webpage of their School and area. With a link to their Sister School, frequent updates on current events and happenings would keep the Schools connected and would keep the students interested so that it could become a long-term/full-year project.

Another option is to use similar information on sites and events and create their own small newsletter or newspaper which could be sent at intervals throughout the year to their Sister Schools. This would keep the schools connected, the students involved, and the schools updated on the happenings near their Sister School. This would showcase the cultural differences and similarities as they students followed the events at their Sister School throughout the year.

Geography projects

Teachers ask students to create a presentation outlining geographical aspects of their state/ country. Students will be able to identify the landscape, topographical layout, and natural resources of their environment. This is a chance for classes to send beautiful landscape and scenery photos of their home to their Sister School. Geography projects can also tie into historical facts and events about surrounding territories. This is a great way to study and integrate environmental issues as well.

The students could also make a map of the area, choosing specific landmarks or historical markers to research and then draw on the larger map. The map would have a key attached to it of the students' research and would give their Sister School something nice to put on their wall in recognition of their relationship.

Native Wildlife projects

Students study and research native wildlife of their area, and create a presentation of their findings for their Sister School. Pictures or drawings would complement the reports to give a visual representation of the flora and fauna of their area. A specific habitat map or drawings could be compiled to create a student-made expression of the environment around them.

Local organizations and foundations that aim to preserve and restore habitats for native wildlife can be incorporated into this Sister Schools project, either as a field trip or resource of information. Bird watching tours or other expeditions would give the students the chance to take photos of their particular animal or plant or would give them the opportunity to draw it so that they were doing the project as a whole, not for homework at home or on their own time.

Phrase Book Project

Compile a list of phrases that your class would like to learn to say in your Sister School's language. A "phrase book" should include useful and interesting phrases for students to use. When they receive the requests, each student could be given a word or statement that is often used and asked to research the origins of that word or phrase. Another option would be to send a sample of local clichés to their Sister School with explanations of when the phrases are used and where they came from. This would educate students in their own language as well.

Here's a fun twist – in the phrase book, ask your Sister School to have a “slang section” which provides pronunciation and examples of their local slang! A videotape of the students using these phrases in context of conversation would be a fun addition. A compilation of music that includes these words or phrases would also be a fun cultural exchange as well as a learning experience. Of course, the students would need to censor their usage of certain “slang” words which are inappropriate for the classroom environment.

Classroom Journal/ Student Journals

Teachers dedicate the last 5-10 minutes of class to student journals. Students write about what they studied that day in school. The teacher may keep a classroom journal as well.

The students' journals can be shared between pen-pals, and the classroom journal can be shared between teachers at the end of each week and printed out to show to their class. This could also be implemented in the form of blogs for each student who could share their thoughts and ideas that day to their pen-pal. The teacher could come up with a question every day or once a week which would direct the subject of the journal entry and the students within the classroom could present them to the class. This would help the students learn more about each other and bond in that way, as well as giving them a chance to reach out to their pen-pals overseas.

Sister School Scrapbook exchange

Throughout the year, create a scrapbook highlighting projects your Sister Schools have done together. At the end of the year, send it to your Sister School as a gift and reflection of a fabulous year of international exchange together!

This could also be a fun project to document the activities of your own class. Students could be given disposable cameras or the teacher could be in charge of taking the pictures of the fun activities the students do in class throughout the year. Small scrapbooks could be sent to your Sister School throughout the year, maybe in addition to the journals, to keep your sister class updated on your activities. This could also be done over the internet through a webpage or blog and the students could write small descriptions or reports of what the activity was and what lessons were learned.

Field-Trip Comparison

Teachers coordinate their classes to partake in similar field trips whether it is to a wildlife reserve, a zoo, a museum, or a historical landmark. The classes then compile a synopsis of what they experienced in a report, and send it to their Sister School. They could also have a small scrapbook of the trip and a list of things they learned. This could also be presented in class as a summary tool for the students to better process the information they learned on the trip.

The schools then compare and contrast their experiences. A report would then be done analyzing differences and similarities in the field trips and why they are that way.

How Far is it to Our Sister School?

Sister Schools can incorporate P.E. classes into a Sister School project by tracking how many miles or kilometers students collectively run. This would be tallied up throughout the year as a race between schools to see who could be the first to run the approximate distance between the two schools.

A measurement of the distance between the Sister Schools would be determined and, throughout the year, teachers tally up the distance students have run. Schools have a friendly competition to see who has “reached” their Sister School first, or who gets the closest by the end of the school year! (This can be a great fundraising event as well!) The two schools could set up a map on their wall with a line and measurement between the two schools and each week, update the map and send the updates to their Sister School to keep the students engaged in the year-long competition. Markers on the map could indicate the position of the two classes and a small award could be made indicating who won for each year, recording the continual friendly competition between the two schools. This award could be passed back and forth each year, giving the students more motivation to do well in P.E.

Fundraising

Sister Schools decide to collectively raise money for a project at one of the Sister Schools. This could be a charity or the addition of a new garden/bench/item the school needs. Or Sister Schools may pick a joint cause to raise money for, outside of their schools. There can be a friendly competition between schools to see who raises the most money.

Sister Schools could have the same fund-raising events/ activities, or independent methods. However, the goal should be the same in order to create a mutual objective and mission.

Project Level 2

Intermediate Level Projects

Middle - High School:

Media Exchange

Sister Schools will send a local or school newspaper, or other local publication, to each other. Teachers then choose a few articles to look over in class to learn about current affairs in their Sister School's community. Sister Schools may choose to write about a certain issue in an article; such as an election or other noteworthy event that is being reported.

A media exchange project is a great learning opportunity for students to evaluate the role of media in society. How do different media sources report, or distort information? Is the news always unbiased or do different sources reflect certain interests? What are the most reliable sources of information that we've found as a class?

Definition Workshop

A definition workshop is a great activity for students to gain mutual understanding of their international peers' perceptions and interpretation of key terms.

Each school selects at least 3 - 5 words or phrases that they feel are relevant, controversial, or often used to describe their country or society. For example; an American school may choose to define the words: Democracy, Freedom, Patriotic, Equal Rights, and Terrorism.

Sister Schools share the 3 - 5 terms that their class chose. Teachers then write each word (from their Sister School) on a separate piece of butcher paper. Teachers will tape the different pieces of paper (with the words written on them) around the classroom. Have the students walk around the classroom and write a sentence or a phrase underneath each word with their thoughts or understanding of what each word means.

Sister Schools compare their thoughts and ideas, and have an online dialogue about their findings from the definition workshop.

Heroes/ Leadership Qualities workshop

Students choose people who represent their country and are viewed as heroes or noble leaders. Heroes can be high-profile politicians, activists, entertainers, or everyday people, like someone who works at their school.

A workshop on what makes a hero, and what values they embody, is a great way to share beliefs and explore subconscious values of a society and culture.

A great activity to do with this workshop is a “Leadership Qualities” activity. Have a class discussion and ask students to identify attributes that are good qualities for a leader to have; such as: honesty, perseverance, fair, noble.

Once many attributes have been written down, have students take out a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle. Tell them to label the left side of the paper “Leadership Qualities I Have,” and the right side, “Leadership Qualities I Need to Work Towards.” This activity fosters self-awareness and reflection in students. At the end, exchange ideas with the Sister School to see what traits were discussed in both classrooms and why some were left out.

Make a Fact Book of Your Country/City

Schools look up their country on the CIA’s World Fact Book website and compile a Fact Book for their Sister School to look through. Then final project may come in many formats, like a poster board, a brochure, or a Power Point presentation. Sister Schools may decide to look elsewhere for facts about their country, or to include other information they want to share with their Sister School.

Making a Fact Book for your city would also challenge your students to find interesting things about your city that they may not already know. Then an exchange of these projects between the Sister Schools would show the students the similarities and differences between their two cultures.

World Literature Comparison

Teachers choose a piece of classical literature that was written by an author from their region or country. Students then read the literature from their Sister Schools, comparing classical literature from different parts of the world.

Economics Projects

An economics project can help students gain an understanding of international finances, free-trade, and macro and micro-economics.

Economic projects can have a variety of focuses. What is the main source of industry in our region? What is the history of industry in our region? What are our country’s main resources? Do we have trade agreements with any other nations? If so, what are they? See what economic or industrial similarities you have with the city near your Sister School.

Take this opportunity to introduce your students to international economics, an often ignored subject area in pre-college education.

Cultural Iceberg – Values workshop

A popular theme in cultural curriculum is the “Cultural Iceberg.” Some facets of a culture are obvious: clothing, music, food, religion; while other aspects of a culture are “hidden,” or lay under the surface, such as: values, beliefs, perceptions, and other social norms.

The “Cultural Iceberg” workshop can lead to a very interesting discussion about what is “normal” to a certain culture, and how differences between cultures are neither better nor worse, but just that: different.

Activities and workshop curriculum based on the “Cultural Iceberg” can often be found online. Or, for more information, contact Sister Cities International.

Student Govt. Action and Comparison

Students will compile a review of their Student Council and school government: how it is set-up, how often they meet, how many members they have, how representatives are elected, etc.

This project allows students to analyze how their student government gets things done, what sort of accomplishments they have made, how much influence they have over the administration, and what could make them more effective in influencing school policy.

Students could potentially use this project to identify an issue they would like to address at their school, and strategize on how to present that to the student council and administration. Sister schools could compare their findings and objectives, and help each other with an action plan to define and accomplish goals for their school.

Citizen Diplomacy Workshop

Teachers conduct a classroom workshop defining and drawing examples of “Citizen Diplomacy.” Sister Schools compare their definitions and examples. What does it mean to be diplomatic? What is a citizen diplomat? What are ways that students can act as citizen diplomats? Have any students participated in exchange visits before? What are ways students can act as citizen diplomats in the future? For more information and material regarding citizen diplomacy, contact Sister Cities International.

Also, choose a crisis or situation where diplomacy is needed, ideally involving one or both of the Sister School’s countries. Have the students act out a simulation of the negotiation/diplomatic process and compare notes with your Sister School. What techniques work the best? Is compromise impossible? Why? What other actors in the international community could help with diplomacy? (UN, regional orgs)

Fundraising

Sister School partnerships are a great chance to promote humanitarian efforts and fundraising projects at your school. Fundraising can take on many forms. Schools can conduct a joint effort to support an outside cause, or raise money for a project at one of your Sister Schools.

For example, one Sister School may recognize a need in their community or at their school, and propose it as a fundraising project. Both schools could organize fundraising events to raise money for the project. The plan could be as simple as raising enough money to buy new chalkboards, or to support a local charity in a Sister Schools community. A friendly competition for fundraising would give students more incentive to participate. The possibilities are endless!

Language projects

Many Sister Schools partnerships are based out of language departments. There are many ways to incorporate language projects into your Sister Schools curriculum. For example, schools could prepare tests or quizzes for one another on their language, and see how well their Sister Schools scored! Or, exchange papers or newspapers and see how well the other class can translate into your language and vice versa.

Exchange visits are common between language classes as well, and are great ways to immerse students in foreign language studies.

Create a Sister Schools Club

Forming a Sister Schools Club at your school should be offered as an idea to students, and pursued by dedicated and willing participants. This club could be in charge of fundraising campaigns and other competitions or activities that occur between Sister Schools. For more information and resources for implementing such a club, contact Sister Cities International.

Project Level 3

Advanced Level Project

Middle – High School

Advanced Cultural Values Workshop

An advanced cultural values workshop is a more in-depth analysis of your culture and its values, and acts as an extension of the cultural iceberg metaphor.

What are the important values of your culture? Is individuality emphasized as an important value, or is being part of a whole more important? Is respect for the elderly an important value, or are the youth more of a focus in your culture? This type of social-analysis project provides students with a greater understanding of their own culture, and helps them recognize their Sister School's societal norms and culture.

Virtual Exchange: *Video Project/ Videoconferencing*

Classes make a video documenting daily life, or a special event at their school. Sister Schools can share the videos on-line or by shipping a DVD or videotape.

Videoconferencing should be utilized whenever possible by Sister Schools as an immediate and efficient form of communication across long distances.

Comparing Political/ Economic Systems

Teachers can use this project as a way to teach students about different political structures around the globe. Schools analyze their country's political and/or economic system and create a presentation.

Sister Schools then use the presentation to teach each other about how their country employs the political/ economic system, and the origins of how it was first implemented in their country.

Comparing political systems between Sister Schools is a great way to introduce complex political, economic, and social concepts to students. By relating to their international peers, students will learn how monarchies, democracies, capitalist, and/ or communist systems structure a society, and shapes the everyday lives of the citizens.

While comparisons and critical thinking are key to such a project, it is important to remember that the idea behind it is to foster mutual understanding, not to overly-critique or place judgment.

Local History project

A local history project can motivate classes to utilize local informational resources, and develop research skills. Classes go to their local library or online to find pictures and information on their town's history. A presentation is put together to give to their Sister School. Through such an exchange, students are

learning about their own local history as well as their Sister School's; creating a well-rounded learning experience.

History of Civil Disobedience & Civil Rights Movements

Teachers collaborate to analyze different historical incidents and examples of civil disobedience. For example: the Montgomery Bus Boycott led by Martin Luther King during the civil rights movement in the United States, or the Salt March to Dandi, led by Gandhi in India.

This subject can lead to a joint discussion between Sister Schools to examine the role that civil disobedience has played, or could play, in social reform and civil rights within their own community, state, or country.

Student Government Action Plans

Sister Schools help one another identify issues at their school which they would like their student government to address.

Perhaps students would like their school to be cleaner. Or do they want their student government to have more of an impact? Students could write a petition to present to the school board requesting more money to be allocated for computers, or to fund art classes. The possibilities are endless. Students should be encouraged to come up with ideas.

Use this as a chance to show students how civic engagement and project planning at the grassroots level can have a real impact.

Once a goal is identified, schools then create an "Action Plan" as a strategic way of planning and addressing the issue at their school. An "Action Plan" maps out a timeline for the project, uses a task list to assign responsibilities, and identifies needs, targets, strategies, and resources for the project. (For Action Plan worksheets, ask the Youth Department at Sister Cities International!)

Sister Schools then trade Action Plans to help each other evaluate and revise their Action Plans. Certain questions should be asked, like: Is our Sister School's project realistic and/or feasible? Is there any way their strategy could be improved? Are there other resources they should consider asking for help, such as: local government, businesses, or school board members? How is our own school addressing similar concerns, and could this strategy work at our Sister School?

Remember! Invest time in a project that is going to be completed. This way, students have a valuable and rewarding learning experience.

Comparing Constitutions/ Write Your Own Class Constitution

Sister Schools will compare and contrast their nation's constitutions. This is a chance for students to learn about their own country's policies and values, as well as their Sister School's. Another approach to this project is for students to write their own constitution, by evaluating policies and values.

Certain questions should be considered for students to analyze and write their own constitution. Is there anything students would change about their current constitution? What would they add, amend, or remove? What do they think of their Sister School's constitution? Is there anything they could learn from one another's?

Or, create your own "Sister Schools constitution." This is a great way to strengthen your partnership and teach citizen diplomacy in your classroom.

Environmental Awareness Projects

The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. Aiming projects towards cultural *and* environmental awareness will help them prepare to build a peaceful and sustainable future for our world.

There are many important topics to choose from when selecting projects focused on the environment. Project-based learning is a valuable and effective curriculum tool. The first step in creating a class project is to have a focus question. Here are some examples of subjects and focus questions for an Environmental Awareness Project with your Sister School:

- **Natural Resources Project**
 - >What are the main natural resources/ exports our country produces?
 - >How sustainable are these resources?
 - >What are ways to improve current methods and to avoid destruction of our resources?
- **Global Warming Focus**
 - >What are the facts supporting Global Warming?
 - >How are these facts argued or disputed?
 - >What do we think of Global Warming?
 - >Can Global Warming be reversed or prevented, & how?
- **Water and Energy Sources**
 - >Is clean water readily available for everyone in the world?
 - >What are some ways of making clean water more accessible for people in developing countries?
 - >What are the main sources of energy production in our country/ state/ city?
 - >What are some alternatives to these energy sources?
 - >What do we think is the best energy source for the future and for our environment?
- **Sustainable Development**
 - >What does Sustainable Development mean?

>What examples can we find of “more sustainable” methods being used in our country/ state/ city/school?

>What can we do to make our school more sustainable?

Ask Your Parents Project

Have students ask their parents what issues concern them the most. These issues can include current affairs in the news or personal concerns. Teachers can also have students ask about specific subjects, for example; the environment, local politics, global affairs, or job security.

Students then share their findings with their class and compare and contrast their parent’s answers.

Another exercise to be done as part of this project is to compare students’ concerns with the adult concerns. How do they differ? Why do they differ? Are there common concerns? What did we realize from this? These are all questions that can be evaluated from such an analysis.

The class discussion and results will then be shared with their Sister Schools as a group presentation, or written about between e-pals on an individual basis. Sister Schools can compare and contrast the cultural and regional differences between their findings as well.

Local Non-Profit/ Social Service Focus

Have the class choose a local non-profit or social service organization to visit. How does this organization work with, and service, the public. Sister Schools have a discussion comparing the different non-profit organizations and social services that are offered in their respective communities. What kinds of services are offered? What services are still needed? If your class were to start its own organization, what would it be and who would it help?

You can plan a field-trip to the organization, or have a speaker from the organization come to your class to speak about their work.

Another option, is to have students individually pick an organization to call and research on their own. Have them share their findings with their Sister Schools e-pal.

Use this project as a chance to analyze social problems and solutions.

Exchange programs

Exchange visits are an amazing chance to create person-to-person, citizen diplomacy efforts in your school. Exchange visits should be arranged far enough in advance to ensure that proper preparations are made. Exchange visitors should stay with host families in order to provide a more intimate and rewarding exchange experience. For more information and tips on how to set up an exchange visit between your schools, contact your local Sister Cities Association or Sister Cities International’s office.

Fundraising

Fundraising efforts between Sister Schools have the potential to become school-wide projects. Indeed, some schools have found that students are very eager to engage in humanitarian efforts, and students are often the driving force behind fundraising events when given the opportunity. However, such efforts should only be conducted by committed schools that are focused on creating real outcomes. (For tips and ideas on fundraising projects and ideas, contact your local Sister Cities Organization or Sister Cities International's office.)

One World Youth Project

Sister Cities International has teamed up with the One World Youth Project to offer Sister Schools a more advanced, year-long, collaborative project.

The One World Youth Project asks Sister Schools to develop a service project based on one of the U.N. Millennium Development goals. Together, Sister Schools choose one of the Millennium Development Goals as a focus for their "service" project. Schools then work plan, conduct, and complete their service project by the end of the school year. Each project is supervised by a Youth Ambassador, a youth volunteer that helps the schools develop and implement their project throughout the year.

This a wonderful project for Sister Schools wanting their students to be more involved in international curriculum and project-based learning.

Students will learn how to evaluate their chosen Millennium goal, and how to design a project that represents those values. Students will learn leadership skills and gain international awareness through participating in the One World Youth Project.

Make Wikipedia pages for schools with: *WikiProject Schools*

Wikipedia is the online informational source that is open to the public for contributions and editing. Wikipedia offers a detailed outline and templates for constructing your school's very own page.

Sister Schools can use this resource to design their schools' own Wikipedia page, making information about their school available to the world!

Each school will first write the content of their Wikipedia page using the outline provided at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Schools

Sister Schools trade outlines to review and give feedback to each other. This process will not only help each school improve their own Wikipedia page, but will also give the students a chance to learn more about their Sister School.

This is a great project for incorporating technology skills and for teaching students about educational online applications.

Microeconomics project with Kiva

For an advanced project that studies the impacts of microeconomics in developing countries, Sister Schools may want to work with the online non-profit organization, Kiva.

Kiva is an organization that allows users to make micro-loans to workers in developing countries. Loan amounts may be as low as 25\$. Loaners are allowed to pick their loan recipient based on their profiles which are displayed on Kiva's website. These profiles include a picture of the worker requesting the loan, how much they are requesting, and a description of what the loan will be used to purchase.

Classes from both Sister Schools can create their own profile, and can even correspond with the person they loan the money to! This is a great way for Sister Schools to collaborate on a project, learn about modern micro-economics, and see direct results. For more information, go to kiva.org or contact the Sister Cities International main office.

i-EARN: *Online Educational Network*

i-EARN and Sister Cities International have partnered to include Sister Schools in the i-EARN International Educational and Resource Network. Online collaborative projects are being conducted by schools around the world on i-EARN's website throughout the year. Log on, and join in on a project, or start your own between your Sister Schools, and utilize their website for communication. i-EARN is a great tool for any school trying to integrate international education and technology into their curriculum.

Conclusion

We hope these project ideas are helpful in directing collaborations between Sister Schools. Feel free to adjust or alter any project ideas to more suitably fit your own Sister Schools partnership. Remember to be creative, and to look for new project ideas from students and online as well. If you need any assistance or further information, please contact the Youth & Education Department at Sister Cities International.

And remember to utilize the online i-EARN educational network that you are a member of through your Sister Schools membership!