

JCI's Guide to Twinning



THE JCI TWINNING PROGRAM

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The JCI Twinning Program

What Is Twinning

The JCI Twinning Program is a voluntary and reciprocal agreement between national organizations or local organizations in different countries, regions or cities.

The motivation to twin originates from the members in two national or local organizations who wish to establish a mutual understanding and friendship. The objective is to exchange personal visits, ideas, projects and culture. With modern communication and transportation systems, distance is no longer an obstacle. For this reason, twinning is easier now than ever.

How to Approach Twinning

Twinning frequently starts with correspondence between two organizations. This form of international cooperation does not require regular visits, and the link lasts for as long as the two organizations wish. Organizations can use twinning to learn more about the culture, problems, and successes of others. This exchange generates positive change through better understanding and cooperation. Joint projects and exchanges magnify the benefits of fellowship through twinning.

Below JCI has outlined the steps recommended to facilitate communication with another JCI organization. These activities enable organizations to make contacts with foreign organizations, which may then twin in the future.

Twinning Committee

Begin by forming a committee comprised of members who represent your own community and who are experienced members of the organization. The proper selection is important to a successful relationship. The committee's initial task should be to draw up a plan of action, taking into account the financial and membership resources of the organization. Tackle twinning as you would any other project. Identify your own objectives, time scale, and budget.

Selection

The committee should next assemble a list of likely sister organizations and, following discussion and analysis of each, determine those that seem most promising.

There are many ways to select a sister organization and different elements can determine this selection:

- A. Friendship between two or more members, who lead their organizations to twinning,
- B. A sister-city relationship between the two local communities,
- C. Economic and trade interests between members of the organizations,
- D. Similarity of interests and problems which lead the organizations to cooperate.

A list of potential organizations to twin with can also be found on the JCI website (www.jci.cc/twinning).

While this program is open to both national and local organizations, when considering a twin you want to choose one that is similar to your organization – national organizations with national organizations, and local organizations with local organizations.

Analysis of Potential Organizations

When choosing a potential sister organization, your organization should consider such important factors as proximity, similarity of background, interests, language and an indication of genuine willingness of the other to become a "sister" to your organization.

Common Interests and Proximity

Compatibility is an important factor between twinning partners. Ideally, the organizations should be similar in size of membership and have some common aims or objectives. If your interests do not correspond, you should search for another candidate, as communication on common interests is the most important base of your activities with your twinned organization.

Another factor to consider is cost and ease of travel when determining ideal proximity.

Background

Weigh the historical, cultural, and economic background when making your selection. There may be grounds for twinning between organizations in cities that have much in common; for example, where both cities are country or regional towns in industrial areas or where both are ports. Twinning should be encouraged between the cities of organizations that already have their own twinning arrangements at the local government level. For further information, check with your local government office.

Language

It is not necessary for the potential twinning organization to speak your language, but being able to communicate easily is important. Consider the availability of translation services for correspondence and verbal interpreters for visitors.

Willingness

If any of the requirements were to be singled out, a genuine willingness on the part of your twinning organization to participate openly and enthusiastically would be paramount. Good will and a mutual interest in becoming friends will overcome most obstacles.

Background Information

When your organization decides to become associated with a organization in another country, it is recommended that you conduct thorough background research on that country, its people, and its customs. This will help you to adopt the correct approach when dealing with your prospective partners.

Contact

There are many ways in which you can make initial contact; below are three suggestions.

- A. The first is to communicate with your national organization secretariat or officers in charge of international affairs, as they may be able to help by providing you with information. Then write to a particular National Organization and explain why you are interested in its country; then request to be referred to a suitable organization. You

will save yourself extra steps by writing directly to the organization if you already have the address.

- B. Another good way to get well acquainted with members of a foreign organization is to attend a JCI Area Conference or JCI World Congress. These events present many opportunities to meet representatives from foreign organizations.
- C. Also available to local and national organizations interested in twinning are the online tools offered on the JCI website. On the JCI Twinning Forum, local and national organizations are able to post messages and respond to messages enabling you to search for compatible organizations interested in developing a relationship with another local or national Organization. There is also a comprehensive list of organizations interested in twinning.

Communication Continuity

Once a contact has been established, continuity is crucial to the success of a twinning agreement. A regular channel of communication must then be set up by exchange of newsletters, organization directory, plan of action, photographs, and information, particularly regarding change of officers.

Prior to the signing of the agreement, each organization must appoint one person to oversee and be responsible for the twinning project. Part of their duties would be to ensure the agreement is continued from year to year and that activities are carried out to make certain there is a sustained mutual benefit. This individual needs to frequently recognize that twinning is the mutual exchange of ideas and information requiring contributions from all parties.

Before Twinning

At the beginning of negotiations, both organizations must agree upon a pre-twinning assessment period, this will give both organizations an opportunity to evaluate the compatibility of the agreement. Also during that period, it will be possible to resolve any problems regarding incompatibility without embarrassment, and both organizations can either proceed to active twinning or withdraw.

During the pre-twinning assessment period, it would be ideal to exchange visits between the two organizations in conjunction with a regular exchange of newsletters and information.

Twinning Ceremony

Once a firm twinning relationship is established, a twinning agreement should be signed. This should take place during a formal ceremony, attended by local civic leaders and the media. In addition, invite officers of each national organization to attend. During the ceremony both organizations should exchange official twinning documents, as well as gifts typical to each organization's land or region. Please contact JCI World Headquarters to request an official Twinning Agreement Certificate. An informal social event or formal reception should follow the twinning ceremony.

An officer should then advise both national organizations of the successful completion of the twinning agreement.

JCI Area Conferences or JCI World Congresses are also good places to conduct a twinning agreement ceremony with the support of organization presidents, national officers and the JCI President.

Twinning Activities

Now that the agreement has been, signed it is time to start exchanging information and activities. This is when the twinning project leader's role becomes very important. Although decisions regarding what activities the organizations carry out should be made by the organization as a whole, the project leader must research and develop a list of activities that best fit the needs of the organization.

Examples of Activities

There are a variety of activities and programs that organizations can conduct. Keep in mind that although many listed below involve travel, there are a number in this guide that do not. Some exchanges are simply listed below, while for others we go into greater detail.

- Exchanging flags, stamps, currency, coins, local publications, photographs, videotapes, and greeting cards.
- Organizing an "international night" locally.
- Extending congratulations to foreign embassies on their national holidays.
- Establishing an international library.
- Creating a used clothing or toy collection.
- Mailing booklets about your country to the twinning organization.
- Establishing a collection of dolls in the traditional costumes of the countries..

Correspondence

Exchange by personal correspondence is encouraged. Such contacts help to form a permanent bond between organizations and create continuity of contact. This form of contact can be maintained for long periods of time without any official visits. One way is through an informal exchange of letters or emails between individual members of twinned organizations and also between their children, on a "pen-pal" basis. Such an exchange of information on hobbies, jobs, and families may lead to long-term friendships, which extend long after retirement from JCI.

Messages of Greetings Tape Exchange

Exchange formal pre-recorded messages on special occasions if exchange visits are not possible.

Exchange Visits

Members of twinned organizations should make periodic exchange visits, although frequent visits may be impractical due to the distances involved. When hosting another organization, home hospitality should be arranged for the visiting members.

In addition, delegates from twinned organizations should also take advantage of the opportunity to meet at JCI conferences and congresses. Such events allow for formal discussions between sister organizations in order to evaluate their relationship and plan future joint projects.

Keep in mind that any organization twinned with several others in a multi-twinning should meet periodically. The meeting can be primarily a social gathering, but might include a business session with a pre-established theme.

Trade Exchange

Businesses need contacts. Twinning is a golden opportunity to establish new business contacts between countries and could be of great interest to members in your organization who wish to initiate or facilitate business transactions with a foreign country.

Exchange Programs

Organizations must share best practices for the successful implementation of JCI Programs and local projects. By sharing your best projects with your sister organization and sharing valuable program ideas, not only will you gain useful information, you will also strengthen and expand the business and community programs that are offered to your members and those of your sister organization.

Student Exchange Program

The student exchange program is a more sophisticated program which requires community assistance. This involves hosting students from your sister organization's community for a period of time and vice versa. Choose the age group, the type of program and its objectives, the length of stay, how the program will be financed, etc. Deal with the educational department, community leaders, local school authorities, and business leaders for sponsorship.

Direct Aid and International Programs

These programs address a specific need or request from the sister organization. Such joint programs may include providing medical supplies, installing water pumps, or establishing trade schools in developing countries. This cooperation between sister organizations can be done in collaboration with organizations such as UNICEF, sponsoring child-survival programs, for example.

JCI

For further information, please visit our website: www.jci.cc/twinning or contact the JCI Programs Manager at the JCI World Headquarters for assistance and advice.