

THE BASICS OF CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

What is citizen diplomacy?

Citizen diplomacy is the concept that the individual citizen has the right—indeed the responsibility—to help shape U.S. foreign relations.

Who can serve as a citizen diplomat?

Traditionally, individuals involved in international exchange programs as hosts or as participants have been considered—and consider themselves to be—citizen diplomats. Most are volunteers. Some are paid. Almost all are affiliated with nonprofit organizations that were founded to promote international understanding and cooperation or to tackle a problem of global dimensions.

In addition, citizens who interact with people from other countries (such as business representatives, government officials, academics, organizational leaders, and students) should be encouraged to view themselves as citizen diplomats. Just like the participants in international exchange programs, their actions influence foreign colleagues' views of the United States and their willingness to work with us.

What is the Coalition for Citizen Diplomacy (CCD)?

The Coalition for Citizen Diplomacy is a nationwide movement to promote citizen diplomacy, comprised of committed national, state, and community leaders. Thanks to support from the Johnson Foundation and the work of an informal Steering Committee, a core group of these leaders met in March 2004 at the Johnson Foundation Wingspread Conference Center to consider the urgent need to counter growing anti-Americanism and the lack of American knowledge of other countries, cultures, and languages. At this conference, the Coalition for Citizen Diplomacy was established.

What are the goals of the Coalition for Citizen Diplomacy?

- 1) Recruitment—Increase exponentially the number of Americans who engage in international exchange programs; build awareness of those who already interact internationally of the opportunities they have to serve as responsible citizen diplomats.
- 2) Recognition—Raise the visibility of citizen diplomacy, both that of the impressive results already achieved, and that of its tremendous potential, so that more Americans recognize the importance of assuming their responsibility to develop constructive foreign relations.
- 3) Resources—Expand fourfold the resources—both public and private—that are devoted to citizen diplomacy activities.

How does the Coalition for Citizen Diplomacy plan to meet these goals?

- 1) Orchestrate a series of National Summits on Citizen Diplomacy. The first was convened from July 12 – 14, 2006, and coincided with the 50th Anniversary Conference of Sister Cities International (SCI).
- 2) Encourage local leaders to conduct Community Summits on Citizen Diplomacy throughout the United States. 50 community summits have been held to date. The CCD Steering Committee, leaders of independent organizations, is modeling nationally what we hope will continue to happen in communities across the United States.
- 3) Work closely with the new U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy in Des Moines, Iowa to reach CCD goals.

National Summit on Citizen Diplomacy is scheduled for February 12-13, 2008. It precedes the General Conference of the National Council for International Visitors. Please visit the CCD website at <http://www.coalitionforcitizendiplomacy.org> for more details on the National Summit.

Contact Information

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CITIZEN DIPLOMACY QUOTES

"If only people will get together, then so eventually will nations."
—President Dwight D. Eisenhower

"The final battle against intolerance is yet to be fought...it won't come from the chamber of any legislature, but from the hearts of men."
—President Dwight D. Eisenhower

"Educational exchange can turn nations into people, contributing as no other form of communication can to the humanizing of international relations."
—Senator William Fulbright

"Average Americans, in their natural state, are the best ambassadors a country can have."
—*The Ugly American*
(published in 1958 by William Lederer and Eugene Burdick)

"Your work leverages us in such an important way. When you open your homes, when you open your communities, when you open your hearts to visitors from around the world, you give your guests a chance to see America at our best, to see our warmth and our base of diversity... Not only do you help acquaint visitors with what is in American hearts and on our minds, you also help to educate members of our own communities about hopes, fears and dreams of your visitors. As citizen diplomats, you bring world issues home to the American people in the most direct way possible."
—Former Secretary of State Colin Powell
(at NCIV National Meeting in 2002)

"Historically...the most effective public diplomacy tool in our arsenal has been our people-to-people exchanges."
—Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes (2005)

"We must empower our most important international asset: individual American citizens."
—Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes (2005)

"Citizenship consists in the service of the country."
—Former Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru

"Citizenship is what makes a republic; monarchies can get along without it."
—Mark Twain

"If a man be gracious and courteous to strangers, it shows he is a citizen of the world, and that his heart is no island cut off from other lands, but a continent that joins to them."
—Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

"Friendship is the only cement that will ever hold the world together."
—President Woodrow Wilson

"However great the importance of international cultural exchange from the standpoint of our relations with other countries, this is not the main reason why we Americans have need for cultural contacts with other peoples at this time. The main reason lies rather in our own need as Americans for just this sort of enrichment of our national spirit."

--George F. Kennan, at a symposium sponsored by
The International Council of the Museum of Modern Art, New York City, May 12, 1955