SBG120: Master's Degree Final Project

Cultural Ties: an education program to raise awareness about the different cultures in California: implementation in a local school in San Diego

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Abstract

The United States of America is home to a very diverse population made up of people from many different backgrounds. The first two maps and data below (United States Census, 2010) show us how the population is divided by "race" and how the population of the country is growing more and more diverse.

This means that within the American society, people interact with individuals from all over the world in their daily lives. Even though this phenomenon is happening on a national basis, the third map below (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2016) shows that some states like California are more diversely concerned than others. With 39% of white people, California is the 3rd state after District of Columbia (37%) and Hawaii (19%) that has less white people than the rest of its culturally diverse population. More precisely, it is estimated that 39% of the population in California is White, 5% is Black, 38% is Hispanic, 15% is Asian, 1% is American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 2% have two or more races. The same source shows that on a national basis, about 62% of the population is White, 12% is Black, 18% is Hispanic, 6% is Asian, 1% is American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 2% have to or more races. With these figures based on the National Census in hand, California has even more cultural diversity than the USA as a whole.

In order to promote a peaceful and cooperative society, it is thus of a great importance that people living in the USA are able to acknowledge and appreciate this *melting-pot*, starting at a young age with children in schools. In order to do so, a special educational program supporting the one already existing in most States should have a special focus on the cultures from which students' families are derived and that surround them.
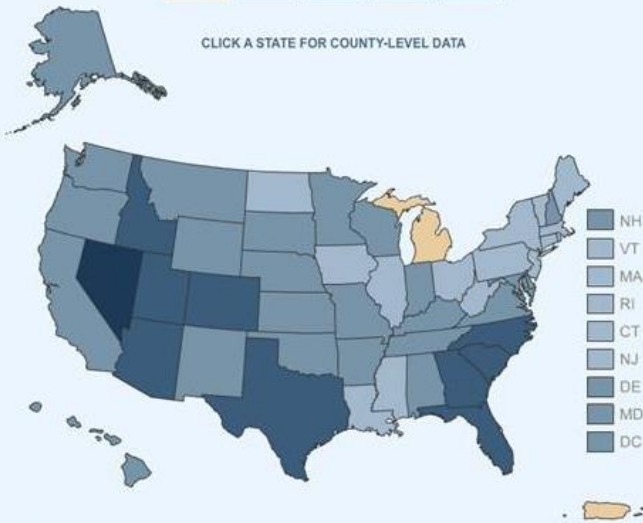
United States NATIONAL POPULATION: 308,745,538

HIDE FULL SCREEN

POPULATION CHANGE BY STATE: 2000-2010

LOSS | 0-5% | 5-15% | 15-25% | 25% +

CLICK A STATE FOR COUNTY-LEVEL DATA

NH VT MA RI CT NJ DE MD DC

NATIONAL POPULATION BY RACE — UNITED STATES: 2010

PERCENT OF POPULATION	CHANGE 2000-2010
White alone — 72.4%	5.7% ↑
Black or African American alone — 12.6%	12.3% ↑
American Indian and Alaska Native alone — 0.9%	18.4% ↑
Asian alone — 4.8%	43.3% ↑
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone — 0.2%	35.4% ↑
Some Other Race alone — 6.2%	24.4% ↑
Two or More Races — 2.9%	32.0% ↑

NATIONAL POPULATION BY HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN — UNITED STATES: 2010

PERCENT OF POPULATION	CHANGE 2000-2010
Hispanic or Latino — 16.3%	43.0% ↑
Not Hispanic or Latino — 83.7%	4.9% ↑

United States Census Bureau

National Population of the United States by race and state in 2010 and the according change since 2000

(United States Census Bureau, 2010)

United States NATIONAL POPULATION: 308,745,538

HIDE FULL SCREEN

POPULATION CHANGE BY STATE: 2000-2010

LOSS | 0-5% | 5-15% | 15-25% | 25% +

CLICK A STATE FOR COUNTY-LEVEL DATA

CALIFORNIA
2010 POPULATION
37,253,956
TOTAL POPULATION: 1960-2010
POP. 40,000,000
0
'60 '70 '80 '90 '00 '10 YEAR

NH VT MA RI CT NJ DE MD DC

STATE POPULATION BY RACE — CALIFORNIA: 2010

| PERCENT OF POPULATION	CHANGE 2000-2010
White alone — 57.6%	6.4% ↑
Black or African American alone — 6.2%	1.6% ↑
American Indian and Alaska Native alone — 1.0%	8.8% ↑
Asian alone — 13.0%	31.5% ↑
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone — 0.4%	23.4% ↑
Some Other Race alone — 17.0%	11.2% ↑
Two or More Races — 4.9%	12.9% ↑

STATE POPULATION BY HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN — CALIFORNIA: 2010

PERCENT OF POPULATION	CHANGE 2000-2010
Hispanic or Latino — 37.6%	27.8% ↑
Not Hispanic or Latino — 62.4%	1.5% ↑

United States Census Bureau

California State Population by race in 2010 and the according change since 2000 (United States Census Bureau, 2010)

Population Distribution by Race/Ethnicity: White, 2014

| 19%- 40% | 44%- 64% | 66%- 79% | 80%- 94% |
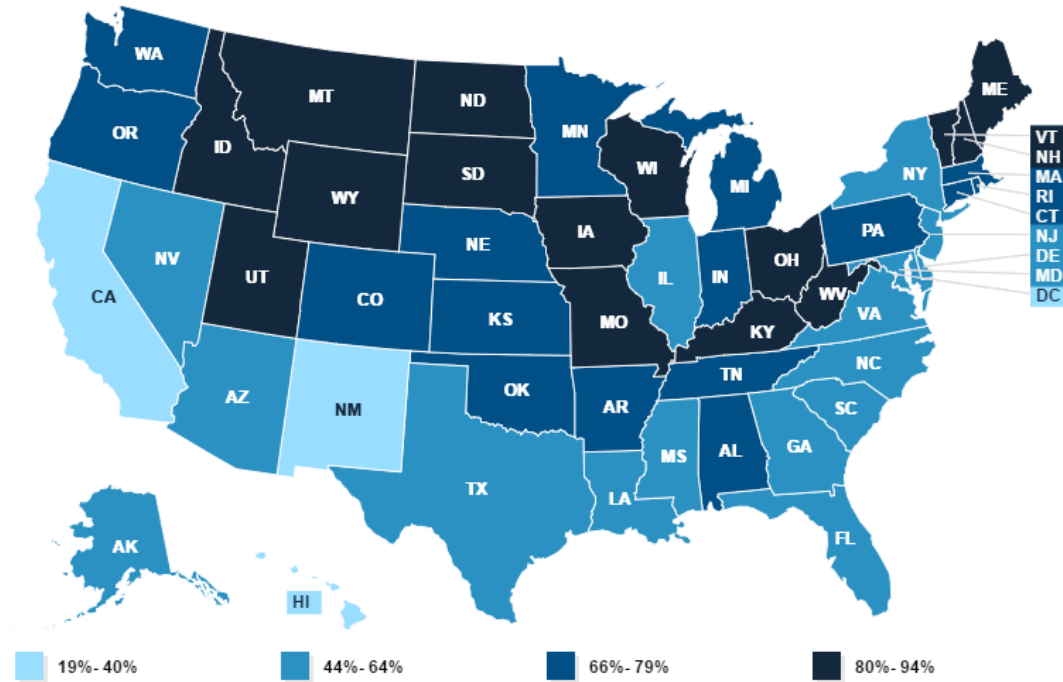
SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation's State Health Facts.

Population distribution by race / ethnicity estimates (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2016)

This project should teach students from 3rd and 4th grade (8 to 11 years old) the basics of different cultures and encourage them to learn more about them, the main goal being that children are able to understand different cultures effectively and communicate with the diverse populations that make California such a rich State on a cultural and linguistic level. Indeed it is fundamental that students develop positive relationships with their classmates and neighbors, regardless of any cultural difference. I will develop this project in the State of California, and more particularly the region of San Diego, where I have done my internship. This program is designed to be at first carried out in a local public school. However, if it is successful, the scheme could be extended to other schools in the San Diego area, then further adapted to other cities in California, and eventually, why not nationally.

Index

Introduction

After reflection I have decided to entitle this project *Cultural Ties*. The term means that people are connected through culture, that they share the same culture. The word *culture* has, however, many different meanings. The main definition, according to the Oxford dictionary (2016), is "*The arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively*". The most relevant sub-definition for my project would be the following: "*The customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group*". In these terms and based on ethnic and social groups, California is thus a culturally rich state. What make up its culture are precisely the many different groups and minorities that settled there throughout history. Therefore, no matter their ethnic, social background or traditions, people in California share the same culture of diversity.

However, despite such a variety, many people in California are not well integrated into society and are victims of racism, whether directly or indirectly. People tend to be separated in special districts according to their racial or socioeconomic background, especially in Los Angeles and San Diego. According to City Data, in 2013, 29.9% of the people legally residing in San Diego area were from Latin America. Now, 66.2% and 62.6% of the people living in the adjacent cities of National City and Chula Vista were Latinos. However, this kind of isolation is generally due to one of these two factors. On the one hand, the city of San Diego is very expensive and only people who make the most money (a majority of white people) can afford to live there. Indeed there is very little interaction and a big discrepancy among who is working what kind of job. Most medical or high position jobs in San Diego ask for individuals who are bilingual (English and Spanish), who are almost always Latino or White, excluding in this way black, Asian or Middle-Eastern people.

On the other hand, the different ethnic communities often do not want to mix with other communities and prefer gathering separately. Therefore, isolation can be a choice, but in any case it leads to an apparent segregation and too many times to general feelings of intolerance towards other communities.

As a result, it seems like the United States merely stands for "United States" rather than "United people". The rise of Donald Trump as a Republican candidate for the presidential elections and the high number of supporters of his ideas perfectly illustrate how racism or ignorance is still anchored in the USA, although too many times hidden or denied.

In order to promote a peaceful and cooperative society, it is thus of a great importance that people living in the USA are able to acknowledge and appreciate this *melting-pot*, starting at a young age with children in schools. In order to do so, a special educational program supporting the one already existing in most States should have a special focus on the cultures from which students' families are derived and that surround them. I will design such a program as part of a potential project for the organization where I have done my internship, The Worldview Project (WVP), whose educational mission is to promote greater cross-cultural awareness, knowledge and understanding.

This project should teach students from 3rd to 4th grades the basics of different cultures and encourage them to learn more about them, the main goal being that children are able to understand different cultures effectively and communicate with the diverse populations that make California such a rich State on a cultural and linguistic level. Indeed it is fundamental that students develop positive relationships with their classmates and neighbors, regardless of any cultural difference. At the WVP, we have decided to focus our project on this age group because we believe that this is the most appropriate to ensure the success of Cultural Ties. From the WVP's previous experience with children we have concluded that before 8 may be too young to raise the students' interest, without forgetting that their knowledge may not be

sufficient to understand the context of our project. Our intervention counts on the teachings pupils have learnt from grade 1 to 2. We think that from grades 6 and up (11 years old and up) students have more character and start to have stronger opinions, as a result it is important to introduce them to the cultures of California before they believe in stereotypes or racist ideas they may have heard.

Actors	Interests	Impact
Primary		
Students	Interactive and practical learning (games, stories, objects, music, dance, food)	+
Teachers	Teach within the education standards, receive children's attention and interest, promote peaceful relations, children learn well	+
Ambassadors	Promote their culture to children, be understood, receive children's attention and interest and erase any wrong stereotype	+
The Worldview Project (in partnership with the Center for World Music)	Promote cross-cultural awareness and peaceful relations	+
Secondary		
Parents	Good education provided to their children, good grades given to their children	+
School directors	Meet education standards	+
Government of California	Enforce education standards, provide high quality of education to the community, promote cultural tolerance	+

List of actors, their interests and impact on Cultural Ties

The first step I will take when designing this project is the development of vision and mission statements. These statements are crucial because they will guide our general effort. On the one hand, they will contribute to maintaining an emphasis on what is of most importance so that participating members always keep them in mind while working on the project and feel bounded together by this common objective. On the other hand, they will give an overview of

the WVP's identity and goals to the public and other organizations that may be interesting in contributing to the project. Indeed, it is important for a small Non-Government Organization like the WVP (not very well-known to the general public) to reach out to the people about what we do; and in order to do so basic information should be easily and clearly accessible to people. This strategy can also be very useful when it comes to hiring new people to join our effort or establish partnerships with other organizations.

I- Vision

Based on the educational mission of the WVP, which is "*to promote greater cross-cultural awareness, knowledge and understanding*", the following chronological vision statements would perfectly fit our project:

- *Cross-cultural education in schools*

- *Understanding and knowledge of the different cultures*

- *Global tolerance*

- *Peace*

The WVP believes that these principles would be the ideal conditions for the community. They are rather general and inspiring, and could therefore embrace a wide range of local perspectives. In other words, they reflect our hope for a better future and what is desirable for the greater community. If the educational issue that matters to us were addressed, tolerance and peace would prevail because people would understand and know the different cultures that make up the Californian population.

However, it is even more fundamental for the meaning and success of our project that our first planning statement are rooted in common beliefs and values. The WVP was created in order to tackle the important aspect of cross-cultures in the San Diegan community, and the project I am designing for our organization is based on the knowledge and observation of the

important issues around this aspect which is generally not quite understood or even unknown. Nevertheless, the issues of intolerance and cultural segregation in San Diego won't change if people are not aware of them or ignore them. We want to raise more cross-cultural awareness and understanding in schools because it is vital for the development of a strong, effective and enduring action towards tolerance that people, starting with children in schools, know and feel concerned about the current issues in their community. Peace and well-being (through integration) are in the interest and reach of everyone, whereas cultural violence, intolerance and racism are problems of bad or nonexistent education.

Indeed if the ability to be violent is biologic to human beings, so is their ability to be peaceful. However the decision to use violence (physical as well as verbal) is a behavior that one learns at one point in their life. As a consequence, if human beings can learn to be violent, they are also able to unlearn it, and to learn to be peaceful instead, if that is not the case yet. Children are constantly in a learning process and learn what they see or hear without having the capacity yet to judge by themselves if this is wrong or right. They tend to take for granted what they hear, especially from their parents or the TV, and often don't understand it fully or even misunderstand it. This is how they may adopt violent ideas and become intolerant or racist without even realizing it is wrong. Paige (2009) believes that that it is entirely up to us to stop using violence and that we have the capability and the means to do it. Indeed human beings organize their relations themselves: if they are able to show any kind of violence, they are also able to show affection and love of the others. To sum up we are able to favor peace over violence, justice over injustice by choosing how we relate and answer to the others. Children in particular need more affection and love to grow up in a positive environment and become good persons. Our project seeks to lead them naturally to relate to others peacefully no matter their differences.

We would like to place a special focus on cultures and practices that are often seen in a negative way and thus discriminated against. The Islam, for instance, is mostly stereotyped as violent, fanatical, expansionist and anti-progressive based on its extremist movements, regardless of their representing an extreme minority of the Islamic world. It seems like the growing concept of secularism in Western societies (in particular Europe and the USA) has expanded to the inability of the latters to understand the cultural meaning of religion that still prevails in other societies. This behavior of rejection of the other has created societies in which there is barely any intercultural dialogue but rather a separation of its different cultural identities or even their alienation, as it is the case in San Diego.

Xenophobia towards Muslims in Western societies is nurtured by a "*collective extremism of perception*" (Hafez, 2000). Even though racist violence exists through a minority of people, many others practice cultural discrimination and cultural supremacy because of the wrong and biased interpretation they make of the Islamic culture caused by all the fake and generalizing ideas that exist in our societies. This phenomenon represents a menace to the Western democracies when it comes to fighting racism.

Nonetheless, the interests of both the West and the Muslim world in situations of conflicts are not as different as they are often believed to be. Let's take the example of the tense relations between the USA and Iraq: both have the same aim to put an end to violence, to create a climate of security and stability, have a government that favors the protection of its citizens' rights and the satisfaction of their needs, have peaceful relations with its neighbors, and see the American soldiers go back home (Cataldi, 2011).

The problem is that we grow in societies marked by these two distinctive and opposite concepts of "*the West*" vs "*Islam*". It is mainly due to the media that only mention Islam through violence: terrorism (lately the IS), gender inequalities… and create a negative image of opposition to "*the West*", without ever mentioning the shared history of both parties, their

common objectives and willingness to live at peace, and especially the fact that only a minority of Islamist people resort to violent. Chirol (1924) argues that the tensions that creates this Orient / Occident separation "*arise out of a clash of different, and in many respects mutually antagonistic, civilisations.*" The media are masters at conveying cultural messages which influence the opinion of people.

As a result, and this a challenge the WVP is contributing to achieve through Cultural Ties, Ernst (2010) thinks that "*it is mandatory to visit, challenge, critique, and deconstruct the powerful and seductive paradigm of 'Islam versus the West' (and the twin 'clash of civilizations') before we can offer a more holistic alternative*".

As Jeong (2008) confirms, "*Given that people tend to react to the world according to their own perceptions, subjective understanding can be a more crucial element in shaping conflict behavior than the objectified knowledge of reality.*" Indeed people "*are not motivated by facts, they are motivated by their perceptions of the facts, their interpretations of the facts, their feelings about the facts*" (Ramsbotham, 2005). As pointed by d'Estrée (2008), "*Negative feelings and beliefs about the other party lead to negative interpretations of the other party's behavior, reduce contact, make retaliation more acceptable, and result in reduced empathy for the other party*". According to Cataldi (2009) "*this leads not to a clash of civilizations but a clash of perceptions*". She (2011) reminds us that "*when people perceive that a person or group is hostile to them or their identity group, they will often mistrust the other side's intentions, refrain from building relationships, view the other as an adversary rather than a partner for problem-solving and therefore not engage in problem-solving, and react with hostility toward the other group and/or dehumanize the other in return*" (2009). Limbert's discourse (2009) corroborates this discourse by adding that "*Assumptions about hostility create more hostility...Hostile intent is assumed, and both sides find the evidence to fit their assumptions*". In other words, "*Hostility perception also creates significant obstacles to*

addressing the substantive issues of conflict by obscuring the real interests and needs of the parties. Attributing negative actions of the other to hostility or malice can prevent one from understanding the actual root causes, interests, and needs that may be driving those actions – such as fear, lack of security, or economic need. Without this understanding, it will be very difficult to address these issues in a way that meets the underlying interests and needs of the other, thus making it unlikely that the negative behavior of the other will change" (Cataldi, 2011). Jeong (2008), in turn, notes that, "*Incompatibilities in goals can be more easily managed or removed by the clarification of misunderstandings if the perceived difference is illusory, or is not based on real sources.*" Cataldi (2011) claims that "*addressing perceptions of hostility can also help in the healing and reconciliation process. The realization that whatever other problems and outstanding issues still exist, one is not necessarily being hated or threatened by the other can help begin the process of emotional healing as well as to create real hope for the resolution of the conflict and for a better future. This can also help enable the building of relationships, which are often critical to problem-solving and conflict transformation. Gopin's (2009) work on citizen diplomacy indicates that the building of relationships plays a critical role in changing consciousness, which is critical to changing structures, which are often critical to addressing root causes of conflict.*" Cataldi (2011) concludes by saying that "*in order to be able to collaborate as partners, both parties need to believe that the other wants to work with them, to know that the other does not hate them, and to trust that the other shares goals in common with them – such as peace and security – even when each party has different ideas about how to reach those goals.*"

The WVP vision for this project will hopefully draw people to common positive and effective action towards its implementation. In any case, it will provide a basis for elaborating the other parts of our project planning process.

II- Mission

Now that we have a global vision for our organization, the following step is to put it in practical terms for our project. How can the WVP put its vision into practice? What are we going to do and why? The mission statements below illustrate what is the aim of what will be our project:

- *Promote cross-cultural awareness for children through a special school program with teachers and ambassadors from different cultural backgrounds.*

- *Contribute to developing a safe and peaceful framework free of racism for children within the classroom.*

- *Promote a peaceful community through the general understanding and knowledge of the different cultures that make up the American nation.*

I have developed these concrete mission statements as part of a project that we would be able to carry out and that perfectly illustrates our vision. Our mission is clearly action-oriented and tackles the issues noted in the introduction as well as the outcomes the WVP is working to achieve. In doing so, it clearly and concisely explains our goals to interested parties and potential partners and funders, hence convincing the latter that investing in our project would be a right decision.

Having said all that, in order for these vision and mission statements to be useful, it is important that we spread them. How will we diffuse our message?

First of all, we will publish our vision and mission statements on our website (creating a special page for the project) and our Facebook page (followed by over 1,200 people). Second, we will print our vision on the business cards and add it to our emails signature. Third, we will print it on the stationery (bookmarks and pens) we will use and give out for this project, among others. In other words, we will use materials we already have and we will update them in order to focus on our current project.

III- Objectives

Now that we have the statements we needed to begin, I will develop the objectives of our project that are focused on achieving our mission. In order to measure the success of our project, it is important to establish what we want to accomplish and by when. Indeed, focusing on objectives will help us create specific and achievable ways to carry out our mission. It will also help us set priorities for our goals as well as guidelines and a task list to follow for our involved members. Last but not least, our objectives, once achieved, will reveal our potential, showing the community and potential funders what we have and can accomplish.

WVP objectives for our project:

- *By the end of the 2016-2017 academic year, raise awareness about at least 5 different cultures that are often discriminated against from 3rd to 4th grade (Middle-East, Africa, Asia...).*

- *Teach children 3 new words for each new culture discovered (Hi, Thank you, Bye).*

- *At the end of the 2017 academic year, have over 75% of students pass the cross-cultural exam.*

- *By the end of the 2017 academic year, decrease by 50% cultural harassment and bullying from the 3rd to 4th grades.*

- *Increase the popularity of the WVP within the community and spread our vision to a larger public in San Diego (have 300 more sign ups by the end of the program).*

- *Strengthen the WVP's ties with other organizations committed to the same goals (collaborate with at least 4 of them for our program).*

Our objectives are behavioral because they seek to change the attitude of people and the consequences of their behavior. We would like to put an end to cultural intolerance and discrimination, and only a change of attitudes could achieve these objectives. We want to

make a change at the level of the whole community, without targeting individuals in particular.

These objectives are **A**chievable for several reasons (cf **S.M.A.R.T. +C).** First they are **S**pecific: we have established percentages for what we would like to achieve by given dates. Second, they are **M**easurable: we will be able to collect information about the outcomes of our project from the records we will keep all along the process. Third, the objectives are **R**elevant to our values: the WVP has developed them because they fit in our vision and mission. Fourth, they are **T**imed: we have established a timeline that will allow us to achieve our goals step by step. To finish with, they are **C**hallenging: we aim at seeing considerable improvements in the interests of the community.

These objectives illustrate changes that need to be made in the community. So far there hasn't been obvious progress to change this issue of discrimination. Even though a lot of positive changes have been done in the past centuries, especially with the Civil Rights Movements, discrimination and cultural ignorance in the 21st Century take a completely different form. Many would say that racism was abolished by the Law. Nevertheless, while the Law has the power to smother behaviors, it doesn't necessarily change people's minds and ideas. Keeping people from acting in a certain way doesn't keep them from thinking in this way. As previously mentioned in the introduction, racism and discrimination still exist in the United States, however it has taken a completely new form. People don't talk about it but the separation or gathering of people from different backgrounds are the evidence that other changes need to be done. Laws alone don't educate people and that's why our program aims at tackling a new aspect towards solving the issue of discrimination: education and awareness.

These objectives I am proposing will be introduced to other members of the WVP when the project will be presented to the board. They will be evaluated and accordingly agreed on or modified. It will also be presented and implemented in partnership with the organization

Center for World Music, who has some experience with the kind of educational intervention we wish to carry out and is keen to be part of ours. Moreover, our objectives will be shared and maybe modified with the help of the school director and teachers who will be part of this project and are thus in a position to contribute to a successful outcome. Since the professors will be one of the main actors of our project, it is important to discuss logistics with them. Would they be willing to integrate our project in their classroom plan? Since our project meets the education standards of California, how will the school directors include it in their program, schedule and budget? The idea is that our cultural ambassadors intervene during regular class time (no extra time) with the presence of the teacher. The latter will contribute to guiding the students and ensuring a smooth intervention (he / she knows the students and discipline better than us, and is still responsible for them). Ambassadors will not be paid but professors will be if our project is accepted in schools. Since our aim is to demonstrate the suitability of our project regarding the education standards in California, teachers who take part in it shall be remunerated in the same way they are when giving their classes. That is to say not by us but by the Government in the case of public school or by the school (through pupils' tuition fees) in the case of a private one. Our project should thus be regarded as an outside intervention that is part of the curriculum and that stands out due to its particularly real-world, recreational and participative aspects.

In a nutshell, we will require from the school an available classroom (the one usually used by the professor at the time of our intervention), the participation of their teachers and that the latter are remunerated the same way they are for their normal work. There is no special training needed as interventionists will talk about a part of their life. The WVP will organize a meeting with each teacher / volunteer prior to the class in order to create a plan together and decide on the activities and resources that will be used during the intervention. This meeting could happen either at the WVP office at no cost, or in the classroom that will be used. The

WVP has at its disposition some materials that could be used during interventions, such as computers, a projector, books… and a printer available for participants if they need it in order to achieve our objectives.

In order to measure the achievement of our objectives, we will collect baseline data on the issues we are addressing. Following the model of the chart below, we will collect the same data for the school concerned. In order to do so we will ask the target school how many students they have, how many have been reportedly harassed or bullied, and what the ethnicity of these students are. These data are very important because they can prove potential funders that there really is a significant problem in the community that needs to be addressed. Moreover, having initial facts and figures in hand about the extent of the problem in the community will help measure the progress of our project. This information will be very helpful when looking for potential funding and partners because it will show that our organization is effective and thus reliable. If the project is successful and we have figures that reflect the problem we want to tackle both before and after our project, we will be able to prove what we have done.

The US Department of Education (2012) gathers estimations about many different school-related topics in the different states, classifying issues according to gender and ethnicity of the pupils. Even though these data are based on the whole State of California and are only estimates, which may not reflect properly the case of San Diego taken apart, they give us a general idea of how racism still exists in school. According to the chart below, in the 2011-2012 academic year, 40.5% of public school students who reported a form of harassment or bullying were Hispanic or Latino, while 25.5% were Black or African Americans, and 22.6% were White. This shows that harassment and bullying in schools happens to all ethnic groups, but to a majority of Latino and Hispanic pupils, followed by Black and African Americans. As a result, racism is still a major issue in schools (see chart below).

Basis of Harassment or Bullying	Gender	Total Students		Race/Ethnicity													
				American Indian or Alaska Native		Asian		Hispanic or Latino of any race		Black or African American		White		Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander		Two or more races	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Sex	Male	2 948	45.4	41	0.6	99	1.5	1 455	22.4	304	4.7	974	15.0	22	0.3	53	0.8
	Female	3 548	54.6	54	0.8	95	1.5	1 759	27.1	274	4.2	1 272	19.6	19	0.3	75	1.2
	Total	6 496	100.0	95	1.5	194	3.0	3 214	49.5	578	8.9	2 246	34.6	41	0.6	128	2.0
Race, color or national origin	Male	2 762	62.7	33	0.7	168	3.8	1 107	25.1	698	15.8	618	14.0	41	0.9	97	2.2
	Female	1 645	37.3	23	0.5	75	1.7	676	15.3	426	9.7	380	8.6	16	0.4	49	1.1
	Total	4 407	100.0	56	1.3	243	5.5	1 783	40.5	1 124	25.5	998	22.6	57	1.3	146	3.3
Disability	Male	971	68.8	10	0.7	41	2.9	402	28.5	144	10.2	338	24.0	5	0.4	31	2.2
	Female	440	31.2	4	0.3	12	0.9	176	12.5	84	6.0	144	10.2	1-3	0.1	18	1.3
	Total	1 411	100.0	14	1.0	53	3.8	578	41.0	228	16.2	482	34.2	7	0.5	49	3.5

Number and percentage of public school students reported to have been harassed or bullied, by race/ethnicity, by gender and basis of harassment or bullying, in California: School Year 2011-12 (U.S. Department of Education, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2012)

With these figures in hand, it is clear that our objectives and the measurement of our progress are limited. The WVP is a NGO with very limited funds, as a result limited resources to accomplish our mission alone. That's why we have adapted our objectives to our resources and funds. The WVP will not put an end to racism and discrimination, neither will we create equal opportunities for all in California, but at least we will contribute to this mission at a local level, starting in a school.

We believe that in the long term and with the help of other organizations and the contribution of other schools to our program, our initial objectives could have a bigger impact.

It is nearly impossible, however, to measure our progress based on the numbers in the chart above because they represent the whole State of California. The situation in the first (and each) school we will carry out our program may be very different. As a result, while meeting the school board to discuss our educational program, we will establish the same chart as above with the specific figures standing for harassment and bullying reports in the concerned school. As set in our objectives, we want to reduce it by 50% at the end of the first academic year. Starting with numbers provided by the school will help both the latter and us to measure the progress of our program within our common mission to promote cultural peace in schools.

As we will see all along its design our program does not require many resources, and we believe that we can find volunteers that will play the role of cultural ambassadors. The WVP has partnered with many different intercultural organizations so far, and members of the latter are very likely to contribute to our educational program. Indeed, we have organized special events for these organizations and we have also participated in the running of events held by them. For this reason we are convinced that members of the organizations we support would be happy to take part in our program and spread their culture, because it is also their mission.

For instance, every year in April, the WVP holds a cross-cultural non-profit fair called Harmony In Action. This event brings together many nonprofits that operate in San Diego County and give them the opportunity to meet other organizations that may share the same mission and may be interested in establishing partnerships. In addition, participating nonprofits also get to meet the general public (the event is open and free to all and it takes place in the very famous Balboa Park), making it possible for them to spread their mission and recruit potential volunteers and interns. Local organizations and branches such as Alliance for African Assistance, Hosteling International, Child Rights and You, Cultural Homestay International, Center For World Music, Pacific Arts Movement (San Diego Asian Film Festival), United Nations Association, German American Society, Mayan Families, Nos de Chita Brazilian Traditional Arts), Persian Cultural Center, Alliance Française... among many others, have participated.

Every year in September, the WVP also organizes Harmony and Motion, an international music and dance festival, gathering performers from worldwide different backgrounds, who could perfectly become ambassadors for our project too. Let's not forget that the WVP hosts every year interns from different countries who would make very good ambassadors of their culture. Last but not least the WVP often goes to the different universities of San Diego to give a word about our mission and invite students to sign up for our newsletters. These interventions could also be the opportunity to invite international students to take part in Cultural Ties as ambassadors. Many students are required to do some volunteering for different organizations by their professors and their intervention in our project could be part of it. If they need to show a proof of their intervention we will give them a certificate from our organization or sign any document they may already have.

It is hard to know what we can reasonably expect to get done through our educational project, but we have the volunteers and the will to carry it out. We do not need many additional

resources because our school program will take place in the classroom, which is already equipped, without mentioning the materials available at the WVP office, other participating non-profits offices and at the library.

In order to make these general objectives possible, the next step is to develop successful strategies.

IV- Strategies

Strategies describe in a general way, without getting into details yet, how the WVP is going to focus its efforts and fulfill its objectives. By developing strategies, I will try to broadly answer the question "How will the WVP get there from here?". If we want our initiative to be successful, we need to elaborate strategies that will consider existing and potential barriers and resources, such as money, materials available, people involved in any way, and so on. By doing so, we will be able to not only take advantage of the resources available to us and existing opportunities for our project, but also to respond effectively to potential oppositions. In addition, it will allow us to make a more efficient use of our time, energy and resources. Hence it is important that our strategies go in accordance with our vision, mission and objectives. In order to achieve our objectives, we need to find strategies of different types and levels. Among others, our strategies will provide information about our project and give overall directions to enhance special skills for the actors (in our case both cultural ambassadors and students). They should also create or improve existing services and support, and aim at modifying access, barriers and opportunities that may exist in our academic context. To some extent, they may as well change the consequences of efforts. Unlike objectives that focus on outlining the aims of a project, strategies will help us decide how to accomplish our vision and objectives, in other words what we need to do to in order to reach the objectives of our initiative.

Our broad strategies for Cultural Ties are the following:

- *A school program whose main actors are ambassadors from different cultural backgrounds to promote cross-cultural awareness and tolerance.*

- *A school program that uses various educational and recreational methods and materials so that it promotes enjoyable and hard-hitting learning.*

- *Enhance cultural mixing and respect within the community by encouraging students to socialize with people from different backgrounds by awakening their interest and tolerance.*

Consequently, our strategies include actors and resources from different parts of the community of San Diego, and even from different worldwide communities. They provide cultural information that is not always included or not tackled deeply enough in the school syllabus. As a result they create opportunities under the form of access to diverse cultures that the students may never properly get to know otherwise, thus enhancing the understanding of cultural differences. In other words our strategies should improve respect and integration of the other, no matter their cultural background, and the socioeconomic background that may be related to it. While our strategies may sound too ambitious, they fit our resources and opportunities because they are rather flexible and we will use them at a local level, starting with only one school. These strategies have been established based on our current resources and assets. The latter include, among others, the intervention of our volunteers in a material or nonmaterial way, such as by helping organizing a class or by lending useful materials such as books, computers, games and so on... and the willingness of our ambassadors (from our partner organizations as well as by simple knowledge) to talk about their culture. Even though the intervention of persons in a project usually requires financial resources, our ambassadors will see it as an opportunity to defend an ideal we (as individuals as well as organizations) have in common, namely cultural respect. In a country that witnesses racism on a daily basis,

our strategies embrace the opportunity for the concerned community to see a positive cultural and social change. Therefore they do not provide grounds for potential opponents to stand up against our project and thus minimize any form of opposition,

Our strategies directly reach our target population, that is to say students from the 3rd to 4th grade. Racism, intolerance and cultural ignorance are a general problem in society, and everyone is in some way affected by it in their daily lives, whether directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously (perpetuating, suffering, direct or news witnessing…). If we want to address this issue properly and successfully, it is important that our intervention has a direct connection with the people who will benefit from it. In our case, we have chosen children because they have been surrounded by a cultural context as soon as they were born; therefore cultural understanding is a fundamental topic that should be addressed as early as possible and in a way that will catch their interest. Our project will be directed at two different classrooms, namely 3rd grade (8-9 years old) and 4th grade (9-10 years old). Depending on the classroom capacity, we will either gather both classes in one room during the intervention, or plan different interventions for each class. Each classroom is typically made up of 20 to 30 students, as a consequence each of our intervention will concern between 20 and 60 students. Our first target school will be Bay Park Elementary School. We have chosen this school because it is part of the San Diego Unified School District (including more than 200 institutions) and located in the Bay Park neighborhood (city of San Diego) only three blocks away from the WVP office, making it easier and faster for us to be in touch with and work in the school.

Last but not least, our strategies have been developed on the basis of our mission and objectives; they should consequently be able to make a difference by contributing to their fulfillment. Since our mission is to prevent racism in our target school, our strategies aim at

changing accordingly the factors contributing to it (mainly ignorance) in order to progressively reduce and erase it from the school.

Every one of our steps is essential because they are all connected in a chronological way and could not be successfully established without the others. Our strategies are the necessary link between the selection of our objectives and the actions taken to fulfill them. In order not to waste time and make vain efforts, we need to have a clear idea of how we are going to carry out our project before we take any action.

Before the next step, the WVP will organize a brainstorming meeting at its office with its executive board as well as all volunteers who will take part in the organization and implementation of the project. First of all, it is important for the WVP that all members work in a relaxed and comfortable environment. We believe that our project will be even more successful if the members work in a positive atmosphere that motivates them. By organizing a meeting they will know that they opinions, ideas, suggestions and constructive criticism are always listened to, valued, and can be discussed. The WVP office is probably the best place to do it because all members are familiar with it. It is equipped with Wi Fi, computers, a fan, sofas and refreshments to make everyone feel comfortable. It could also be a good idea to bring homemade food to make the meeting even more friendly and enjoyable. Since volunteers come from different parts of the world, it would bring an additional cultural dimension to the project, and could maybe even bring more inspiration and ideas to "Cultures in the Classroom".

During this meeting, it is important that all attending members (from the WVP, the concerned school, The Center For World Music) review together the project. First, we should talk about the targets of change, namely all children in the classroom because they can all experience the issue of racism or intolerance, either by perpetuating it, suffering from it, being at risk of it or witnessing it. Consequently it is important that our project equally considers all pupils in the

classroom, not only those who seem particularly at risk, because the problem we are tackling is present at the level of society, so it concerns everyone. That also includes the children's parents because their actions or inactions might directly or indirectly contribute to the problem of cultural intolerance (racist statements, friends from limited backgrounds only, and so on). Since children tend to take their parents as a model to follow, their words and ideas as what they should say or think, it is important not to forget their roles and impacts in our project.

Second, we should not forget to mention the agents of change, that is to say those who can contribute to the success of our project, such as WVP volunteers, the school director and professors, members from our partner organizations, once again children's parents, and, if we later on want to extend our project to public schools, the California board of Education. The WVP members are the creators and main actors of Cultural Ties, as a result its success mainly depends on them. The school director also takes a crucial part in the success of this project because without their acceptance the project could never be carried out, and our efforts to create it would be vain. As for the school professors, they manage the class and their precious contribution will ensure that our interventions take place in an interesting, recreational, yet academic framework for the pupils. Our partner organizations will provide ambassadors from different cultures who will directly teach the pupils things about their culture; as a consequence the success of our project lays on them too. While some parents might be a barrier to the success of our project, others might as well contribute to it by supporting our interventions and enhancing the cultural knowledge and tolerance of their children. If our project in our target school is successful, the WVP will very likely extend it to other ones as we will have an example to demonstrate its success to the directors.

Third, this meeting at the office of the WVP would be the opportunity to review one last time our mission, vision and objectives in order to make sure that our strategies suit them perfectly.

Nevertheless our strategies are also open to constructive criticism, and we would like to discuss them with the other members and see if we can make them even better. Maybe a volunteer will offer some resources and assets we didn't count on and that would be very useful to carry out our project. Maybe another volunteer has more experience in the educational field and will point out more potential obstacles and a way to get around them. If there are parents among our members maybe some of them have the power to influence the implementation of our project in their children's schools; and they will also give us ideas on how to teach children in an entertaining and fun way in order to get their attention and interest. In any case, it is important that we discuss our strategies in general and how they will at the same time decrease the issue of racism and cultural intolerance in our target school and increase communication and friendships with classmates from different cultural backgrounds. Indeed, while our strategies seek to prevent racism (in the form of racial bullying) and enhance cultural knowledge, they also aim at enhancing positive relationships between all pupils, no matter where they come from.

Shortly after this first meeting among our members, the WVP should organize another one and invite the target school director and professors to join us in order to introduce them to our project. By welcoming them at our office they will feel that they can trust us, that nothing is being hidden to them and that, even more important, we want them to know that this project is also "theirs" and that it would make a big difference in their school. Homemade food will also make these people not familiar with the office yet feel welcome at the same time as it will give them a taste of what our intervention in schools would look / feel like. Their presence would play an essential role insofar as they would be able to make special enquiries and recommendations according to the situation and needs in their school.

However, we have to consider the probability that the school administration may not have the time or may not want to come to our office, in which case we would make an appointment at

the school for more convenience. The implementation of our project depends on their approval, that's why their participation in our second brainstorming session would be crucial. In a nutshell, this meeting would be the opportunity for us to convince the school board of the positive impact and all the benefits of our project and to prevent potential problems that we may not have thought of thanks to their contribution. If we want to put all the chances on our side, we need to demonstrate them that our project fits in the California Standards of Education and that it suits several subjects at the same time as it will have a positive impact on the social life of the pupils, which will be reflected on the final annual reports of the school. Based on the actual official documents from the California State Board of Education (1998, 2009), I will show that Cultural Ties goes in accordance with the federal standards in all their ways:

"*The standards that follow are intended to provide guidance to administrators and teachers in implementing a World Languages and Cultures program for a diverse student population at any point in the curriculum from kindergarten through grade twelve.* ***Communicative proficiency*** *is to be developed in* ***linguistically and culturally appropriate ways.***" (California State Board of Education, 2009, p.vi)

"*We must provide students with* ***opportunities to learn languages and cultures*** *by participating in* ***communicative interactions*** *that prepare for real-world language use and global citizenship.*" (California State Board of Education, 2009, p.vi)

As we can read in this introduction, the main directive is to teach pupils communication under the form of both languages and cultures. It is important that they take part in communicative interactions -which is exactly what our project is- in order to become good citizens who are adapted to the situation of the world they live in.

As the standards go on, we can read the following, which shows that Cultural Ties is very standard-appropriate:

"*The World Language Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve represents a strong consensus that the study of a wide variety of world languages and cultures is part of the core curriculum.*" (California State Board of Education, 2009, p.viii)

"*Because of the considerable number of languages in California [...] the content standards are not language-specific.*" (California State Board of Education, 2009, p.viii)
All along their scholarship, students need to learn about various cultures and languages. Our objective is precisely to introduce them to a culture and the language(s) associated during each intervention, which will be made by a person from this culture who will definitely know more about it than the school teacher. Moreover, there is no specific language requirement, which won't restrain us at the time of choosing our ambassadors.

"*Culturally appropriate language use requires an understanding of the relationship between the products and practices of the culture and its underlying perspectives. Students must acquire the ability to interact appropriately with target culture bearers in order to communicate successfully. This category allows students to make connections and comparisons between languages and cultures.*" (California State Board of Education, 2009, p.viii)

"*Language users need to carry out tasks in a variety of situations representative of those they will experience in the target culture. The success of learner communication will depend on the situation in which the language is used. Understanding social linguistic norms will assist learners in communicating effectively in real-world encounters.*" (California State Board of Education, 2009, p.viii)

As it is stated in the above standards, it is important that students learn about different cultures and languages in order to be able to communicate in an appropriate way with the persons from these cultures and languages. The more cultures they will be introduced to (thanks to us), the more persons they will be able to understand (hence tolerate) and communicate with (even if they only know a few words we will teach them, because these words will make the difference).

"*To understand the connection between language and culture, **students discern how a culture views the world. Students comprehend the ideas, attitudes, and values that shape the target culture**. Those shared common perspectives, practices, and products incorporate not only formal aspects of a culture such as contributions of literature, the arts, and science, but also the daily living practices, shared traditions, and common patterns of behavior acceptable to a society. As they progress along the Language Learning Continuum, **students demonstrate their understanding of cultural perspectives by behaving in culturally appropriate ways**.*" (California State Board of Education, 2009, p.7)

The consequence of adding our project to the already existing school syllabus will hopefully be as cited above. By being introduced to different cultures and new languages, students will understand better their behaviors, values and perspectives, and will hence be able to act appropriately with them.

These educational standards divide the cultural learning process of the students in four different stages and sub stages:

Stage I

1.0   Students use appropriate responses to rehearsed cultural situations.

1.1   Associate products, practices, and perspectives with the target culture.

1.2 Recognize similarities and differences in the target cultures and between students' own cultures.

1.3 Identify cultural borrowings.

Stage II

2.0 Students choose an appropriate response to a variety of situations.

2.1 Demonstrate understanding of the roles that products, practices, and perspectives play in the culture.

2.2 State similarities and differences in the target cultures and between students' own cultures.

2.3 State reasons for cultural borrowings.

Stage III

3.0 Students determine appropriate responses to situations with complications.

3.1 Use products, practices, and perspectives in culturally appropriate ways.

3.2 Describe similarities and differences in the target cultures and between students' own cultures.

3.3 Describe how products and practices change when cultures come in contact.

Stage IV

4.0 Students improvise appropriate responses to unpredictable situations.

4.1 Demonstrate culturally appropriate use of products, practices, and perspectives to others.

4.2 Explain similarities and differences in the target cultures and between students' own cultures.

4.3   Explain the changes in perspectives when cultures come in contact.

(California State Board of Education, 2009, p.7-8)

Our project will add a practical and real-world dimension to the school syllabus, enhancing and facilitating in this way the students learning process by giving them the opportunity to experience a cultural immersion in the classroom. Moreover, "*the content that students acquire in the classroom [will] enable them to make connections and reinforce knowledge from other content areas of the curriculum.*" (California State Board of Education, 2009, p.1)

Having said that, it is normally expected that as early as Grade One, "*Students [must be able to] **describe** the human characteristics of familiar places and **the varied backgrounds of American citizens and residents** in those places.*

1. ***Recognize the ways in which they are all part of the same community, sharing principles, goals, and traditions despite their varied ancestry; the forms of diversity in their school and community; and the benefits and challenges of a diverse population.***

2. *Understand the ways in which American Indians and immigrants have helped define Californian and American culture.*

3. ***Compare the beliefs, customs, ceremonies, traditions, and social practices of the varied cultures, drawing from folklore*.*"**

(California State Board of Education, 1998, p.6)

This section is one of the first things students should be taught at school, however we can see from the figures of bullying and racism that these standards are still not acquired by many students, and that ignorance about the different cultures is a major issue in society. That's why we hope to be able to make a change in at least one school and educate students about various cultures while making them understand that despite our differences we share many principles

and goals. Too many people do not realize that diversity has many benefits. The drawbacks that some may see in it have been created by ignorant people.

V- Action plan

The last step of our project is the action plan. This time, it is all about describing exactly how our strategies will be implemented in order to reach our objectives. The difference with the previous part is that now we need to work out the details and have a precise timeline for Cultural Ties that includes every action step we need to take in order to see the changes we want to see in the school (mentioned in the previous parts) that will contribute to our mission. By establishing an action plan, everyone will know who will do what, when, and with what resources.

The WVP action plan for Cultural Ties is divided into six main categories. The first and most important thing to mention are the action steps, that is to say what will be done (in a chronological order). They will help us determine the specific actions the WVP will take to contribute to making our vision a reality. Then I will develop each action step of the project by associating other components to it. The first one is the person or persons responsible for doing the concerned action step. The second one is the date to be completed, in our case an estimation of the timing necessary for each action step. There is no precise date for any because it all depends on the responsiveness of the numerous actors, their availabilities and their willingness to cooperate, making the plan action more or less easier and faster to coordinate. In the worst case it is possible that our project only takes place next academic year since the 2016-2017 one has already started and schools may not be flexible to alter their new program and adopt our project. The third component is the resources required; it includes what the persons responsible will need and what is available to them to carry out the action step. The fourth component is the potential barriers or resistance to the project that we have thought of, and what we will do as an alternative to overcome them in case we come up

against any. The fifth and last component are the collaborators, that is to say all actors who will not be responsible for the action step but who should nevertheless be aware of it and whose help and contribution will be precious in the process.

Action step	Persons responsible	Date to be completed	Resources required	Potential barriers or resistance	Collaborators
Design our project Cultural Ties in accordance with the education standards in California	Me	12th of September 2016	-3 months -the official education standards of California - a computer or laptop	-Education standards too restrictive ⇒ focus our project on what is clearly included in it - Not enough time to design the project ⇒ ask another WVP member for help / take more time to design it and postpone the following action steps	-WVP volunteers, -Center for World Music
Invite all WVP members to discuss the project at the office	The WVP executive director and myself	12th-18th of September 2016	-WVP office (sofas, chairs, tables, computers, water and food, A/C…)	- WVP members not available on the same weekdays ⇒ organize the meeting on a weekend day, an evening or on the following week	Center for World Music
Calculate the costs and available funds for the project	WVP treasurer	Middle - end of September	-a computer -financial records of the WVP	-More expensive than expected ⇒ spend more from the WVP funds -Not enough funds ⇒ apply for a federal grant, ask other partner organizations for help	WVP volunteers
Take an appointment with a local school director (Bay Park Elementary, located only a	WVP members including at least the executive director	End of September 2016	-a 1 hour appointment with the school director - relevant arguments -a nice and catchy	-Too late to present the project for the current semester / academic year ⇒ plan it for the next semester / academic year - The school director	-WVP volunteers, -school director - professors

| few blocks away from the WVP office) and present our project | and myself | | presentation | may see the project as unnecessary, may not have time to carry it out, may not have enough resources ⇒ convince them of all the benefits of the project for the children and the community as a whole, how well it suits education standards, precise that we will not ask for more materials than what the classrooms are already equipped with (we will bring our own resources) - The professors may have already established their classroom plan for the semester / academic year, may be reluctant to our intervention ⇒ discuss how our project suits the standards, how it would relieve them of the preparation of a class, how they would gain more attention and concentration from the students eager to take part in one-of-a-kind interventions | |
| Find ambassadors (send emails and call our partner organizations, relatives and friends) and agree on a class | -WVP members -cultural ambassadors | September / October 2016 | -contacts (cultural organizations, friends, relatives, acquaintances...) - a computer or laptop - a phone | -Potential ambassadors may require a salary ⇒ convince them of how beneficial their intervention would be to the community, negotiate some help with their organizations in | -WVP partner organizations (such as The Center for World Music) - WVP members' |

intervention plan			- intervention plans proposals	return, give them free tickets to events organized by us or our partner organizations, give the concerned organizations the table of their choice at our annual event Harmony In Action, let them have a booth at our events, spread the word about their mission and events on our website, etc… -Potential ambassadors may not agree with our intervention plans ⇒ discuss the proposed plans and modify it without forgetting our objectives, always focus on the students as the main beneficiaries of the project	friends and relatives
Organize another meeting with the school to set up dates and plans for the interventions	-WVP members including the executive director and myself - the school director	October 2016	everyone's agenda and availabilities	Agenda clashes between the WVP members, the school professors and the ambassadors ⇒ be open to interventions on any day of the week, morning and afternoon, at the 1st, 2nd and 3rd semesters	-the school teachers -the cultural ambassadors
Prepare and gather plans and materials for the agreed interventions	- the WVP -the school teachers -the cultural ambassadors	November 2016	-school materials available -WVP or partner organizations materials (books, photos, music, videos, games, typical	-Insufficient or irrelevant materials ⇒ buy material with the available funds of the WVP / borrow materials from partner organizations -No funds available ⇒ look up for online	-school teachers - ambassadors - WVP partners

			dishes…) -funds to buy additional material	materials (stories, photos slideshows, YouTube videos or music…) / focus on the non-material side of the cultural intervention -Hygiene or allergy issue of bringing homemade food ⇒ buy sealed packs and containers at stores such as World Market, on Amazon, etc.…	
Carry out the cultural intervention	-WVP members -cultural ambassadors -teacher	November 2016 - June 2017	-gathered plans and materials -classroom	Students do not seem interested ⇒ focus on the typical materials brought, play a typical game, show a video of typical dance or song with subtitles and let them dance and sing	-Center for World Music -school director
Test the students' cultural knowledge	-WVP members -teacher	June 2017	-prepared set of questions about their cultural experience -classroom		school director

Our intervention plan proposal is the following:

The class unit will be discussed with the school and will depend on the number of interventions we are granted as well as on the number of ambassadors we find. Our initial idea is to organize 10 sessions (at least 5) of one hour each between November and June, plus one session to test the students at the end. If we have the possibility we would like to give a special focus on countries that are often seen in a negative way and whose people suffer the most from intolerance (for instance countries from the Middle East, Africa or also Latin America). The cultural interventions of our project will take place during regular school time at an hour that will be convenient to all actors (especially the teachers). These activities are

cross-curricular in the sense that they focus on important aspects of different subjects, namely the World Language Content Standards (2009) and the World History - Social Science Content Standards (1998) (as seen earlier) in a more dynamic way preparing the students to the real-world life under the form of a cultural immersion within the classroom. In other words, our project will be an intra-curricular way to illustrate the teachings included in the syllabus and give the students a more realistic view of what they have previously learnt. To give a comparison, our project will serve the teachings in the same way as a visit to the Natural History Museum would do after a class about natural sciences.

In order to make sure the intervention runs smoothly and meet our objectives, we have prepared a set of questions that students (guided by their professor) will ask the ambassador. These questions encourage them to give a complete answer that will draw the students' attention and will be interesting for them. It is not necessary to stick to these precise questions which are just a guideline to keep things flowing in case the discussion is not very active or if people go off track. If the pupils are particularly interested in a specific point they will naturally ask more questions about it and the ambassador is very welcome to go into details. The most important thing is to keep the children's attention and interest at the same time as they get to know a different culture. We will send the questions we have prepared to both the professor and the ambassador before the intervention. We know that not everyone is good at speaking or improvising in front of a group, so we want to make the intervention as comfortable and enjoyable as possible for all parties.

Before starting with the proposed questions it is fundamental that ambassadors introduce themselves to the class and give them the following information (write it on the blackboard as well as the visual aspect is one of the most effective parts of learning):

- Their name.

- Which country and city they come from (show on a world map and then on a country map that will be visible the whole time and will be kept displayed in the classroom for the academic year as a reminder).

- How to say "hello" and "thank you" in their language (practice with the students by telling them one by one "hello" in the target language, asking them their name and then say "thank you" in the target language).

Following this short introduction the questions can start. It is important that all themes tackled are illustrated with photos from the culture (brought by the ambassador and the WVP), typical objects (especially games but also books or art), videos (personal videos or from different websites), songs (the Center for World Music will be very helpful on this one) and food. It would also be a great idea to create a poster or slideshow gathering all these elements on photos and display it in the classroom. Students will be much more likely to learn if they see things, images and videos about what they are being told. Children are always interested in games and in a way this is how they should see our intervention.

Our suggested and absolutely not exclusive questions are the following:

- How long have you been in the USA?

- Where did you live as a child? City / countryside?

- Did you grow up in an area with a lot of different people?

- What kind of house? Did you have your own room?

- Did you live with your family?

- What did you call your parents / grandparents?

- Do you have brothers and sisters? How many?

- Did you have chores to do when you grew up?

- Did you have pets?

- Do you have special cultural rituals?

- Did you have a best friend?

- What games did you play with your friends? Which on was your favorite? What did you play with? (teach pupils)

- When is the first time you met somebody from a different country?

- How old were you when you first went to school?

- How was a typical day at school?

- How did you go to school? (Bus, walk, car…)

- How many days a week / hours a day did you go to school?

- Did you have lunch there or at home?

- Which subjects did you have? What was your favorite one?

- Did you have a lot of homework?

- Where you a good student?

- Did you get into trouble a lot?

- How much freedom did you have?

- Is there something special you did at the end of your school year? (ceremony / trip)

- Did you have long summer vacation?

- Did your family go on vacation? Where?

- What is your best memory of going to school? Vacation?

- Did you do sports as a child?

- Did you have a favorite childhood song / dance?

- What are the special meals in your country? Which one is your favorite? One you hate?

- Who was involved in the cooking? Was it a big social time?

- Who told you stories when you were young? Do you remember any in particular?

- Did you have a specific bedtime?

The ambassadors shall give elements about their country that are mainly descriptive. Even if they are excellent patriots or do not want to go back to their country ever again, their speech should be neither apologetic nor too negative. The WVP understands that some people may have experienced dramatic events in their country and may have strong opinions, but it is important for the objectives of our project that they try to speak as objectively as possible. We do not want students to adopt the ambassador's point of view or feelings. Indeed children tend to repeat and take for granted what they hear. Our aim is to teach them tolerance, peace, and to think without judgement.

To finish with, the ambassador will teach the students how to say "goodbye" in the target language and will tell them "goodbye" one by one and make sure each answers "goodbye" properly.

Our action plan has a good potential because it is at the same time complete, clear and current. Indeed all the action steps needed for a successful project are listed in an understandable way for all actors to know the timeline of our project. It is also reasonable because it prepares for potential barriers while taking advantage of existing opportunities. It is up-to-date because all elements considered are current. If our project cannot be carried out this academic year, we will update it before the following one and may need to make some changes.

The main reason why it is fundamental to come up with such an action plan is that we need to be prepared for a potential failure or obstacles in order to be able to bounce back with solutions to ensure prosperity. By developing an action plan that considers the obstacles we may find on our way and their respective alternatives, the odds of carrying out a successful project will be much better.

There are other reasons why it is preferable to get into details at this stage. First, a detailed action plan is the proof that the WVP is devoted to get things done as planned and in an ordered way. To the eyes of the community and potential donors it will give us more

credibility and reliability. If things go as anticipated it will give as an advantage for future projects, because we will be known to a larger public and will have the references of Cultural Ties in hand to give people more trust and ambition. Second, elaborating a detailed action plan will save us time, energy and resources since things will already be discussed and anticipated to counter potential barriers in a fast and effective way without getting too late on our timeline or have to spend unexpected last-minute amounts of money. Third, an action plans is preferable in terms of accountability because it will increase the chances that all concerned actors do their parts within specific timeframes. People tend to work better when they have deadlines that guide them precisely because it gives them specific objectives to accomplish without overlooking any of the details.

During our regular meetings at the office we will follow up on the action plan. In any case, as the project goes on we may need to revise the former at any time in order to fit its course and the changes that may occur. For instance if an action step takes more time than expected we will need to modify all following steps. To give another example if one of the main actors has to leave the project before the end some persons may end up responsible for more steps than it was planned.

Before implementing our action plan we will gather the members of the WVP at the office in order to review it carefully and make sure that it suits our mission and will contribute to the fulfillment of our goals without going off the rails. Once the initial action plan is agreed and official, we will send it by email to all members so that they can keep track. Then, it is important that all along the implementation of Cultural Ties every member of the project stays informed about how things are going on and how their input was incorporated and beneficial to the success of the project. In order to do so, I will keep track of what has been accomplished thanks to the effort of the group. Depending on how often each member comes to the office or actively takes part in the project, the executive director and I will personally or

by email thank them for what they have done, give them an evaluation of the current stage of the project (how the latest action step has gone, including positive and negative feedback if needed, and how things could be done better if that is the case) and indications for the following steps to take (what resources will be needed, what changes shall be made, among others). In order to do ensure the success of our project we also need to keep several questions in mind, like: Are we doing what was planned? Are we doing it well? Do our actions contribute to the achievement of our mission? These questions should be asked to all members at both a group and personal level, through evaluation methods such as surveys (face to face, online or on paper). Since we want continuity in our project we ask members to be accountable and to get things done on a regular basis. If they have agreed, we will help them fulfill their commitment as best as we can. Everyone who wants to say something will be carefully listened to and all suggestions and constructive criticisms will be discussed in the interest of a successful project.

During the project, it is important that accomplishments actually mean something and are recognized by the group as a whole; as a result the WVP will not forget to celebrate them with all our dear members. Every single contribution gives form to a group work, and every success is everyone's! Since it is vital for the WVP that everyone stays interested and excited in the mission of the organization, the accomplishment of tasks will be celebrated over homemade food, friendly meetings in bars or day trips to nice places around San Diego (like it is the WVP's tradition).

The WVP will send regular emails or phone calls to the cultural ambassadors to ask them how they are doing with their "tasks". For instance, when it comes to the action step of preparing and gathering plans and materials for the class intervention, some ambassadors may want to add a personal touch to the basic intervention framework we already have prepared. Most ambassadors have typical objects (photos, books, games, art, food…) from their cultures.

Some may not possess any of those but may have some relatives or friends who do and are willing to lend them some. In any case we will keep in touch with them in order to know how they are doing with the gathering of such materials, if they need assistance, support or ideas. We will give them friendly calls or messages with the aim of being seen as helpful and make them feel that they are very important to the project, as the same time as it will serve as a reminder to them to do what they are responsible for in the project.

Conclusion: Evaluation

In this last section I will establish an evaluation plan for Cultural Ties. This will be a way for the WVP to follow the development of our project, measure its impacts and see if our objectives have been accomplished. Here is the monitoring plan of Cultural Ties:

Indicators	Means of verification	Actors responsible	Frequency / time needed
Awareness raised about 5 different cultures	Observation of at least 5 different interventions with a new ambassador according to our plan	the school teachers (for leading the students' participation), the WVP executive director and myself (for making sure the intervention goes well)	During every planned intervention (1 hour each)
Children know 3 words (Hello, Thank you, Bye) in the language of each target culture	Oral test	School teachers	On a regular basis between the interventions (each day after the intervention the students will have to say Hello, Thank You and Goodbye in the target language in the classroom until the next intervention, and so on…)
Over 75% students pass the cross-cultural test	Written test	School teachers (for giving the exam), WVP executive director and myself (for preparing and correcting the exam)	Once at the end of the project (1h given to the students)

50% less cultural harassment and bullying in the classroom	School reports of harassment and bullying	School administration (for receiving and collecting the reports) and myself (for comparing the reports with the previous years)	Once at the end of each semester (1h to go to the school and collect the information)
Increased popularity of the WVP (at least 300 more sign ups)	Sign-up sheets, Facebook notifications and reports, emails and phone calls	WVP executive director (for collecting sign-up sheets, receiving emails and phone calls), WVP community outreach and media coordinator (for Facebook and website notifications)	On a regular basis during the project, plus at the end to evaluate the impact of the project on the evolution of the WVP popularity
Strengthened ties with at least 4 partner organizations	Emails, phone calls (more invitations to events, more responsiveness to our messages and calls, more active participation in our annual fair…)	WVP executive director, WVP outreach coordinator, partner organizations' executive directors and coordinators	On a regular basis after the concerned organization's contribution in our project

Here is a draft of the cross-cultural test the students will take at the end of the project that will evaluate what they have learnt from the cultural interventions and how successful it was:

- What intervention did you like the most? Why?

- Which of the countries introduced would you like to visit? Why?

- Can you name 3 countries you have learnt about?

- How do you say "Hello" in the language of these countries? (phonetic writing is ok)

- Can you name a typical dish and where it comes from?

- Can you name a country where school is very different from here? Why is it different?

- Which games do children play in other countries?

- Which ambassadors did you feel very different from? Why?

- Which ambassador did you feel closest to? Why?

- Can you describe the family and house of one of the ambassadors?

These questions are very broad and allow students to write about what they most liked and why. When reading their answers we will be able to evaluate the impact of our project on them and what needs to be changed if their answers are too negative.

If our objectives are fulfilled then Cultural Ties will be successful. The first year of implementation will allow us to see if such a project can make a change and contribute to our mission, and if any modification need to made in order to make it work better and create a bigger impact. If it is successful, we would love to keep on working on Cultural Ties for the next years (the future 3rd and 4th grades of our target school) and even expand it to other schools in the San Diego region. This would require more funding that we plan on getting through federal grants and interest donators. Indeed the success of our project during the first year would become proof of reliability and would make it much easier for us to get funds or contribution from other parties in the future. In the long run, our ideal would be to see a safe and peaceful framework free of racism, cultural harassment and bullying for all children in their classroom. As popular as our project might become, we know it won't be enough to make this ideal happen; nevertheless it will contribute to it by creating peaceful conditions of education for a few students. As the famous 1991 Nobel Peace Prize Winner stated:

"*Every thought, every word, and every action that adds to the positive and the wholesome is a contribution to peace. Each and every one of us is capable of making such a contribution*" (Aung San Suu Kyi, 2012).

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