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ID: DipLab170286

Memetic Warfare Tracker

Office of Analytics

International Information Programs

Overview:

Internet memes have a dark side. State and non-state actors use images, videos, gifs to spread disinformation and generally create an information environment hostile to the truth. Help us build a system for identifying and tracking malign memes targeting foreign publics, identify whether these malign memes belong to more comprehensive thematic efforts, and to whom these thematic efforts are directed.

Outcomes:

1. Understand the scope of memetic warfare and apply appropriate resources toward a solution
2. Acquire capability to track image-based communication
3. Integrate image-based communications into textual analyses
4. Develop ability to classify active digital information campaigns and their respective audience targets

Format of Final Project:

- A presentation based on:
- An academic paper describing:
- A working software prototype with:
- Examples of identified content classified into campaigns based on themes, languages, actors, and chronology.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Civil Society; Communications; Computer Science; Information & Communication Technology; International Relations; Marketing; Political/Military Affairs; Science and Technology

Comments:

This is part of an ongoing effort. We can offer research assistance and oversight by a full-time senior data scientist employed by the Department with experience in the related areas, who can help get the teams on track and make progress towards the goal. Several others in our office can also provide active feedback throughout the semester.

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

ID: DipLab170387

Measuring Embassy Activities for Successful Outcomes

Political/Economic Section

Western Hemisphere Affairs to Uruguay

Overview:

Objective:

Measuring the impact of outcomes (results) from efforts intended to shape or alter public policy, public opinion, or individual decision making is a universal challenge that crosses disciplines. In a business setting it is termed “measuring return on investment or ROI,” or in marketing/lobbying firms it is referred to as “measuring influence.” The U.S. Embassy in Montevideo is seeking to adapt existing influence measuring methodologies for its diplomacy activities through an improved understanding of analytical methodologies already in use in other areas. We also want a concise set of recommendations for measuring outcomes (not outputs) that may be used in setting Embassy priorities and designing new diplomatic activities.

Overview:

Embassy staff may be keen to claim that activities are successful while critics are more likely to frame activities as ineffective. The reality is that the outcomes of Embassy engagement activities are often somewhere in between these extremes. A primary challenge to evaluating policy effectiveness is the lack of an effective framework to gauge or quantify the impact of policy engagement. Lacking this mechanism to quantify causal impacts, embassies resort to measuring inputs (ex. one training session, two visits) or outputs (ex. training participants like the session; two visits were successfully concluded) that may or may not lead to desired movement on a policy objective (outcomes). An added difficulty is that activities have multiple dimensions, succeeding in some respects but not in others (ex. a training session helped us build those essential diplomatic relationships, but did it improve prosecutors’ abilities in an accusatorial trial system?). Embassy Montevideo is seeking a framework and methodology to measure policy outcomes in our three policy areas of Economic Prosperity, Democracy/Social Justice, and Global Security. Post will provide more specificity regarding policy objectives. The goal is to understand how successful activities (outputs) in each area have affected positive (or negative) change in projected policy outcomes.

Embassy Montevideo views an initial measurement framework in three dimensions: process inputs (events, activities, etc.), programs (strategic policy areas), and context [politics] (local public opinion, public policy). How do we measure policy success in terms of outcomes? Analysis of what may constitute success in Uruguay may involve the examination of a range of sources in the public domain such as government statements, newspaper editorials, nongovernmental briefings, polling data, and academic articles.

(Key words: measuring policy change, policy evaluation, empirical methods, and social sciences.)

Format of Final Project:

The final product format should be a memo or white paper (no more than 10 pages) that provides an executive summary with recommendations, highlights information analysis and recommends measurements of policy advancement for, e.g., the fight against transnational organized crime, spreading 21st century skills for greater prosperity, and preparedness for new criminal justice-sector procedures. The final product should also provide specific, real-world examples of how international affairs professionals measure success as they engage in advocacy activities for the sole purpose of affecting change in a specific government policy or a cultural change among the broader population.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

International Relations; Marketing; Sociology; Statistics; measuring policy change, policy evaluation, empirical methods, and social sciences;

Comments:

Comments: Foreign Service Officers, indeed USG officials, are not trained, equipped or funded to measure the effects of the programs and activities they implement. To make better use of limited resources and set priorities in the field, Embassies must be better equipped to measure local successes and failures. Embassy leadership may thus set priorities to engage in activities that have a higher chance of success and, with critical decision making data and measurements available, end those activities that may be exercises in futility while providing valuable feedback to the Department.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab170488

Evaluation of USNATO's Public Diplomacy Program

Public Affairs Advisor

U.S. Mission to NATO

Overview:

The U.S. Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (USNATO) is at the forefront of advancing our foreign and defense policies before the world's preeminent security alliance. USNATO's Office of the Public Affairs Advisor (PAA) operates several engagement programs. These public diplomacy programs explain to non-U.S. audiences how U.S. and NATO policies and operations are delivering peace and security. The PAA section employs different public diplomacy tools to accomplish this mission. One of our most important tools is a "tours" program that brings non-U.S. policymakers and foreign journalists to Brussels and other locations. During these visits, members of parliament, government officials, and journalists receive briefings from U.S. and NATO officials, engage in discussions, and visit facilities and military commands. The goal is to explain and highlight U.S. and NATO activities so these foreigners can better understand U.S. and NATO actions. We also hope these programs will blunt negative

These tours are a long term engagement tool. We do not expect immediate results when our participants return to their countries. However, we must evaluate our programs in order to understand their effects and generate feedback. While measuring the output of tours (number of participants, etc.) is easy, a harder challenge is to uncover their effectiveness. We are seeking assistance from students and researchers in the social sciences or other fields to develop quantitative measure(s) we could use to evaluate the effectiveness our tours program. We understand developing metrics and drawing relationships is a difficult task that requires long term careful study. In the short term, even simple tools that could suggest correlation between our programs and their effects would be useful.

Format of Final Project:

The final product should be a quantitative tool we could easily use with each tour group in order to evaluate how well the information was delivered and whether the program effectively imparted new and relevant information to the participants. In the longer term, we want to understand if there is a connection between USNATO's programs and positive actions or impressions by the participants.

The final form is up to the researchers, but the evaluation tool should be user friendly and not overly burdensome. We are looking for a tool that can provide prospective (pre and post) measures of the program.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; Education & Cultural Studies; International Relations; Psychology; Sociology;

Comments:

We expect this project to take 2-4 months.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab170991

An Examination of the Bureau of Public Affairs Reporting Capabilities

Executive Office

Public Affairs

Overview:

Examine the reporting capabilities of the Bureau to include conducting an organizational assessment and/or process evaluation exploring reporting capabilities in their current state and then further examining their efficiency/effectiveness/programmatic metrics to identify duplication of efforts and suggest areas of improvement.

Format of Final Project:

Final product report should not exceed 25 pages and the report should include the following details: project design, research methodologies applied, how recommendations support Public Affairs and Dept. of State's mission proposed. Accompanying processes maps and our visual illustrations should also be included in the report and can contribute to the page limit. Accompanying PowerPoint presentation is also preferred but not required.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Anthropology; Communications; Marketing; Sociology; Statistics; Data analytics experience, evaluation, case studies, Organizational design, project management, social science, research;

Comments:

- Data analytics experience (to include proficiency and/or working knowledge of sentiment analysis)
- Organizational design, project management, evaluation, research, and/or social science background(s).
- Proficiency and/or working knowledge of data analysis software's preferably based on examining communication engagement (e.g. software's such as Shared Count, Sysomos, Sysomos Expion, Crimson Hexagon, TrendKite, Crowd Tangle, SimilarWebb, Google Analytics (GA), GA-360, Hootsuite, Slack, etc.)
- *Additional Expertise* (preferred but not required): experience in communication planning, strategic planning, and/or public affairs.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab171093

Sentiment analysis of Foreign Policy Priorities Coverage in U.S. Domestic Media

Office of Strategic Planning

Public Affairs

Overview:

The Bureau of Public Affairs Office of Strategic Planning (PA/OSP) seeks 3-4 sharp and professional media, communications and/or social science students who are studying and have a good working proficiency of data analysis to perform sentiment analysis on domestic media coverage of key narratives which PA is responsible for amplifying, as the Bureau currently does not possess this capability for U.S.-based media outlets. Information gathered from this project will be used to better inform the PA Bureau of how well its outputs are influencing media reporting, which can help drive strategic planning decisions on how, when, and where the Bureau can best use its resources for maximum impact. For this project, sentiment analysis would be used to identify and categorize coverage of a specific foreign policy priority and decipher the tone (positive, negative, and/or neutral) assigned by the media outlet to the priority. Given the Diplomacy Lab project will occur in Spring 2018, a possible foreign policy priority of focus will be human rights and civil society, as the Department rolls out a number of reports (i.e. Human Rights Report) and initiatives (International Women of Courage) during the first half of the calendar year that can be routinely tracked for the project. In addition, the assessors will be able to use information and data gathered during 2017 on these same reports and initiatives that can serve as baseline for the analysis. The team would be responsible for tracking the narrative on this priority in the media through the semester, and particularly, how the media coverage changes and/or is influenced by major public events and activities in which the Department is engaged. The team may have regular opportunities to be included in strategic planning meetings PA/OSP leads to coordinate resources in support of major events and report rollouts.

Format of Final Project:

The Bureau of Public Affairs Office of Strategic Planning will expect the team to develop periodic snapshots of sentiment analysis of U.S. domestic media coverage throughout the semester. Such snapshots should be 1-2 pages in length, to include an overview of results and then details, including data that informs the analysis. Most likely, the team will produce a number of reports during the project time period, perhaps as many as 6-8. We would need a baseline report of domestic media coverage as it pertains to the key foreign policy topic within the first 2 weeks of the project timeframe, to be followed up with reports prior to and immediately after major events and report rollouts that succinctly summarize the media landscape prior to and after the event or rollout, and a final report that will summarize changes and trends in domestic media through the reporting period on the key foreign policy topic. Reports can be sent via e-mail. In addition, team members should expect to be engaged in regular contact, via conference call and/or Skype, with the PA/OSP and PA Evaluation team to discuss the scope and purpose of each

report, which will enable the team members to ask questions, clarify parameters and present report findings.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Civil Society; Communications; Democracy & Human Rights; Human Rights; International Relations; Marketing; Sociology; Statistics; Data Analytics, Evaluation, Organizational Design, Sentiment Analysis, Sentiment Analysis software experience;

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

The Role of STEAM Programming in Public Diplomacy

Bureau of International Information Programs, Regional and Functional Strategy

International Information Programs

Overview:

Science Diplomacy for Public Diplomacy is a new area for development requiring more baseline research. While diplomacy initiatives exist between scientists and governments, and between scientists and scientists, there are fewer efforts to engage foreign public audiences with Science Diplomacy for Public Diplomacy. Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) are universally perceived as apolitical providing an excellent vehicle for engaging societies on global, regional, and local problems, and providing a platform for the USG to promote its interests. The U.S. is a leader in the STEAM fields and should capitalize on this strength to further the goals of public diplomacy by strengthening people-to-people ties, increasing mutual understanding, and linking foreign audiences to U.S. foreign policy objectives. The UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals that address ending poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring prosperity, also represent key US foreign policy objectives that can be addressed through STEAM solutions.

No definitive study exists on the effectiveness of Science Diplomacy as Public Diplomacy. Anecdotal stories have surfaced on the use of science in public diplomacy, for example to change cultural behavior to stop the Ebola virus epidemic from spreading, or to change attitudes in Pakistan regarding the suspicion that vaccination programs were CIA plots to sterilize women. STEAM programming has been used to empower women in gender adverse societies, to crowd source a technological solution to an environmental or social problem, and to engage with youth through the Maker Movement and Innovation stimulation programs. Hackathons, Tech Camps, Math Olympics, Robot Games, etc., have emerged as fora for engagement with foreign audiences, and serve as excellent opportunities for crowd sourcing and collaborative projects.

Given that the field of Science Diplomacy is as large as science itself, this project can be divided into sections. University courses can tackle the history and application of Science Diplomacy, the Maker Movement and the emphasis on finding technological solutions and stimulating innovation to solve problems. Diplomacy courses can explore the best STEAM programming for foreign audiences given different regional and cultural environments. Education courses could tackle the development of popular science education through Science Centers, Science Museums, NASA's GLOBE program, Kahn Academy, MIT Open Course Ware, and other online STEAM education courses.

Methodologies to assess the impact of STEAM programming on foreign audiences can vary from bibliographic research, online searches, and social media interviews. IIP and ECA can provide support for guiding students to relevant sources and access to foreign audiences.

Format of Final Project:

The expected deliverables are:

1. A summary analysis of the key findings (5 pages max. plus appendix)
2. Bibliographic sources, studies, and interviews
3. Recommendations for the USG to promote and pursue STEAM programming for foreign audiences

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Science and Technology;

Comments:

This project requires students with competence in research techniques, surveying methodologies, and analytical tools. Experience in text analytics is not required but students should be able to learn Python and Natural Language Toolkit (NLTK) to conduct social media searches. Knowledge in data visualization is a big plus.

Students in the STEAM fields, Social Sciences, Science History, Science Education, and Public Diplomacy are preferred, although we welcome students from any discipline with solid technical background and strong willingness to learn.

This project is suitable for students who want to apply research and technical skills in finding insights on social issues.

About us:

The Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) supports embassies and consulates in their communications to foreign audiences, specifically through public diplomacy outreach in digital and physical platforms, including a network of 700 American Spaces in all six geographical regions. American Spaces serve as public engagement platforms with foreign audiences, many located in partner universities, libraries, and NGOs, as well as Bi-National Centers, and American Centers owned by the USG. Programming aims to promote English Language Learning, Study in the USA, Cultural Outreach, Alumni Networking, and Information about the USA. Dynamic programs engage various audiences from youth to professionals. A recent development is the emergence of “Maker Spaces” and “Science Corners” to introduce STEAM programming in pursuit of USG foreign policy objectives. Partnerships with local Science and Tech centers and school systems have also enlarged the potential for strategic public diplomacy.

Maximum Number of Projects: 5

ID: DipLab171722

Documenting Our Diplomatic Treasures at African Posts

Bureau of African Affairs, Office of Economic and Regional Affairs

African Affairs

Overview:

Join the Africa Bureau's efforts to document culturally significant U.S. embassies, chanceries, ambassadorial residences, and missions on the African continent. Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region of the world not yet represented on the Secretary of State's Register of Culturally Significant Property. The Bureau seeks historic preservation, architecture, museum studies, and conservation teams to assist in research and identification of properties eligible for the Secretary's Register.

The Secretary of State's Register of Culturally Significant Property uses criteria analogous to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. Criteria used to evaluate properties for eligibility for the Secretary of State's Register include acknowledgement by an African government as a significant property, or documentation indicating the property is integral to U.S. overseas heritage. Properties can also be listed based on association with a significant historical person or event, representation of an important architectural style or design by a noted architect, unique objects or visual features, distinctive themes or manufacture, and associated archaeological sites.

Project results will contribute to commemorating U.S. diplomatic heritage on the African continent and to preserving and promoting American history and architecture overseas. The project's evaluation of culturally significant U.S. properties in sub-Saharan Africa will contribute to our knowledge of historic U.S. diplomatic engagements on the African continent and bolster documentation of intersections in our shared past with African partners.

Format of Final Project:

A report documenting culturally significant U.S. properties in sub-Saharan Africa suitable for submission to the Department of State's Office of Overseas Buildings Cultural Heritage Office for review.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Historic preservation, architecture, archaeology, museum studies;

Comments:

Africa is the cradle of humanity with natural and cultural diversity matched only by its long history. Focused on pressing development and security concerns, many African authorities have not yet taken stock of cultural properties or identified mechanisms to protect those properties from loss or destruction. Without attention and mechanisms to classify and safeguard heritage, African countries are at risk of losing markers of cultural identities, material evidence of rich histories, and unique ties connecting

communities to landscapes. Efforts to document the significance of U.S. cultural properties in sub-Saharan Africa, some of which represent properties of importance to African governments, will provide a mechanism to engage authorities on heritage protection mechanisms such as the Register, and initiate a conversation on the connection between protecting heritage and combatting economic development and poverty issues.

The rich diversity of African cultural heritage and the intricate history of U.S. diplomatic relations on the African continent provide a lens to evaluate properties critical to our collective understanding of world history. The identification and protection of cultural heritage is a vector of development and social stability, both for present and future generations. These efforts can also serve as the baseline to initiating a conversation with African local authorities on the management of both tangible and intangible heritages, and fostering cooperation with African institutions dedicated to heritage protection and preservation including the School of African Heritage (EPA), the African School of Urbanism and Architecture (EAMAU) and the Center for Heritage Development in African (CHDA).

Information on the Secretary of State's Register of Culturally Significant Properties:
<http://overseasbuildings.state.gov/register/register/>

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab171723

Explain A Complicated Process - Passport Website Instructional Videos

Bureau of Consular Affairs, Passport Services, Community Relations (CA/PPT/S/PMO/CR)

Consular Affairs

Overview:

Travel.State.Gov is the only official resource customers can access to get the most up-to-date information on all things passport. The website tends to be text-heavy due to the amount of information that must be communicated to the customer, and a series of videos would help condense that information. This project seeks to develop a series of visually coherent videos that explain the complicated passport process in a way the public understands. The topics would likely include renewing a passport, applying for the first time, and minor passports, but are up for discussion.

Format of Final Project:

A series of 4-5 short videos explaining how to undertake basic passport tasks, such as renewing a passport, applying for the first time, getting a child's passport, etc. Ideal production would include a mix of animation, graphics, and text. Any sound would need to meet current 508 Compliance for the disabled or hard of hearing (example: closed captioning).

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Marketing, Graphic Design, Photography, Film, Advertising, Tourism Studies;

Comments:

We are very open to suggestions for how these videos might look- and we will provide you all of the content you need.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

To Be or Not to Be - How to Evaluate Decision Making in Visa Adjudications

U.S. Consulate General Sao Paulo, Brazil

Western Hemisphere Affairs to

Overview:

Consular management at the U.S. Consulate in Sao Paulo Brazil seeks best practices on measuring personnel for their decision making.

Consular officers for the U.S. Department of State conduct in-person interviews to make decisions on who is eligible to receive a visa. A typical consular officer conducts 15,000+ interviews per year and receives a yearly written evaluation.

Effectively and appropriately reviewing a consular officer's performance is challenging for a variety reasons, including:

- (1) Variation in the complexity of interviews;
- (2) The sheer volume of data points (number of interviews, foreign language use, unique circumstances)
- (3) Limited management opportunities to observe interviews; and
- (4) Necessary subjectivity of the decisions themselves

The goal of our proposal is to improve the way we measure officers making thousands of decisions in a fairly subjective environment by comparing the methods used by private industry/universities.

Format of Final Project:

2-4 pages describing the advantages and disadvantages of current employee evaluation models. Analyses of positions that perform tasks similar to visa decisions (i.e. subjective decisions, multiple variables, large number of decisions) will be especially useful.

For example: An Ivy League college admissions officer must select the best applicants from a large number of applications. They take many data points into account (SAT, GPA, essay, extracurricular activities) and make thousands of decisions. How is an admissions officer's performance evaluated with an inherently subjective process that has many different variables? What are the challenges?

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Management training, Human Resources expertise;

Comments:

We are in the process of implementing a feedback tool but it is still in the early stages of testing. If selected, we are interested in using knowledge gained from these studies to evaluate this tool.

Maximum Number of Projects: 4

ID: DipLab171725

Build the First "Electoral Violence Dataset" for Africa

**Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO), Office of Analysis, Planning,
Programming, and Learning (APPL)**

Conflict and Stabilization Operations

Overview:

There has been an increasing policy focus on electoral violence in recent years, yet there are no good datasets which capture the type and magnitude of electoral violence across space and time. This high-resolution dataset would be of similar quality to the Armed Conflict Location Event Dataset (ACLED) and would capture several main types of electoral violence (such as violent riots/protests, assassinations, harassment/intimidation) and for each event would include the date, location (including province and town), event type, perpetrator name, victim name, and total fatalities (if any). The dataset would include events at least 18 months before and six months after an election day (most datasets on electoral violence only include events within a few days of an election). The dataset would focus only on Africa, and could use existing ACLED data as a starting point, adding an additional event type or additional event types to capture those events which could be directly attributed to an electoral cycle. Ideally, the coding would differentiate those events related to national elections from those events related to sub-national elections.

Format of Final Project:

Deliverables would include 1) A complete dataset from 1997 – present 2) A clear, useable codebook that can be used by analysts in the USG to extend the dataset and keep it current.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Conflict, Stabilization, & Reconstruction;

Comments:

Knowledge of conflict datasets such as ACLED and MEPV will be helpful; knowledge of IR theory and conflict theory in particular would be helpful; knowledge of and experience using quantitative methods to investigate issues of conflict and crisis will be key, as will familiarity with electoral violence.

Extension of the dataset beyond just Africa would be beneficial, but is not likely doable in one semester. Follow-on projects could extend the dataset to additional regions.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

Build The "Diplomatic Exchange" Dataset - The First Dataset Recording Global Head of State Visits from 1950 - 2015

Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO), Office of Analysis, Planning, Programming, and Learning (APPL)

Conflict and Stabilization Operations

Overview:

The neo-realist concept of IR argues that structure (the distribution of material resources across units) drives outcomes in IR. The network approach, on the other hand, argues that a different kind of structure drives outcomes in IR – the structure of relationships and the property and patterns of those relationships between and amongst actors. In that vein, a global dataset recording all visits of heads of state would have great value. Head of state visits are the highest form of diplomatic exchange. As such, understanding the patterns and networks of head of state visits at the global level helps us to identify diplomatic power brokers and trace the flow of diplomatic influence around the world. There is currently no global dataset on head of state visits. Such a dataset would have immense value, especially for conducting classic Social Network Analysis.

Format of Final Project:

The deliverable would be a complete dataset, in matrix form, showing by year and country all visits, and recording the direction of the visit, the head of state doing the visiting, and the respective country and head of state being visited. A codebook will also be requested so that USG analysts could keep the dataset current.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Conflict, Stabilization, & Reconstruction;

Comments:

Experience with quantitative approaches to IR and IR datasets will be critical.

Suggest that this definition be used: “A head of state visit is defined as either a formal head of state visit or a meeting specifically between the two heads of state scheduled for that purpose. For example, a visit with a leader that takes place during an international conference or on the sidelines of one is not counted as a head of state visit. A visit by a head of state to an international conference where a head of state then holds separate bilateral talks with the head of state of the host nation is counted.

A visit by one leader to a country where the head of state is not met by his or her counterpart is not counted.”

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab171727

Finding More U.S. Host Families and Schools

Office of Public Affairs and Strategic Communications

Educational and Cultural Affairs

Overview:

Every year the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs seeks to find volunteer families and high schools for about 2,000 international high school exchange students studying in the US for an academic year through ECA's academic year inbound programs (Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange, Future Leaders Exchange, and Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study programs). As part of this process PASC organizes regular campaigns to spread the word about this unique program and opportunity, and encourage families to open their homes to these students and schools to enroll the students. Despite these efforts, the Bureau has come up short the last few years. Word of mouth remains the primary vehicle for reaching potential host families. In the absence of a robust marketing division, and plentiful resources, PASC has found it difficult to effectively reach this audience and promote this campaign. Moreover, in the absence of direct contact with host family alumni networks, we have found that our promotional efforts have been unproductive. Through this project we are looking for support in rebranding the hosting campaign to make it more appealing to outside audiences and looking for assistance in identifying alternate ways of promoting this program. We are also looking for ways to tweak and/or incentivize the program to families as they are not paid for hosting and must undergo a thorough vetting process. How can we better promote the value of hosting ECA-funded students over other exchange students and/or other exchange programs that pay its host families and schools, which we are prohibited from doing by J-1 visa regulations? What might make the program more appealing? How can we expand awareness of the programs and extoll the benefits of hosting. What new partners could we work with?

Format of Final Project:

Marketing Strategy

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Education & Cultural Studies; Information & Communication Technology; Public Affairs, Marketing, Communications;

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab171728

Finding The Lost Generation in the Central African Republic

Public Affairs Office, U.S. Embassy Bangui

African Affairs to Central African Republic

Overview:

The Central African Republic has been buried in decades of violence, turmoil, and political unrest. While the country's instability has impacted its economy and society, the most disturbing impact has been on the next generation of citizens and leaders. With the disruption of government operations and services, schools closed, and in the regular periods of violence, children stayed home instead of going to school. Worst of all, as the security situation declined and young people saw their role models giving up on the country or engaging in violence with militias, they began to follow in their footsteps.

Now, as the Central African Republic faces an important turning point--presidential elections in December 2015 and January 2016--and the country has an opportunity to move forward from the violence and instability of the past, there are few young leaders with the motivation and education to step forward. The Embassy wants to support democratic institutions, accountability, and transparency and believes that encouraging the participation of the next generation is the key to these concepts. Embassy Bangui seeks input on two major questions: how can the Embassy and the United States best invest in a new generation of leaders; and how can the Embassy engage and support the existing youth, who are ready to advance the country?

Format of Final Project:

Post would like to receive a memorandum from the university(-ies), which includes two parts:

1. The first part should be a list of recommendations of specific programs, initiatives, or investments, which would support the development, training, or education of the next generation of leaders. These recommendations could be program proposals that they Embassy would make to the Central African Republic government, or programs, which the Embassy would administer.
2. The second part should be a list of events, trainings, or platforms that the U.S. Embassy could use to identify and develop young leaders.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

African Studies;

Comments:

Students with French language ability will be able to communicate more easily with Central Africans, however, French language ability is not required. Embassy Bangui believes that persons from a range of disciplines from education to social policy to international affairs can each offer

extremely useful insights on this project.

Embassy Bangui encourages interested schools and universities to review the Embassy's Facebook page, which captures the outreach work currently being done (www.facebook.com/usembassy.bangui/).

Embassy Bangui is also prepared to host an in-brief session to provide context on the Central African Republic, and will also coordinate at least one session between the school/university and the English-

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Women Soldiers: The Case of Lebanon's Male-Dominated Army

U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Public Diplomacy Section

Near Eastern Affairs to Lebanon

Overview:

Women's enrollment in the Lebanese Army remains a highly controversial issue in the country. With women having pre-conceived stereotypes about the manner in which they will be treated within a male-dominated environment, coupled with the manner in which the army stigmatizes women, it is not anticipated that this dynamic will witness a shift anytime soon.

Moreover, their ranking, promotion, and issues related to their competencies and skills in high ranking positions remains a taboo subject within the army itself. There has not only never been a female army commander in the history of the institution, but women are most often placed within administrative positions, and within positions that do not capitalize on their potential physical capabilities, which they are usually not to possess in the first place. Taking into account the high levels of corruption and the overwhelming and constant political instability in the country, coupled with the country's social, cultural, religious, and patriarchal values, combatting the notions of gender stereotyping and sexism hardly stands a chance. The important role of women in the military has yet to be shed light upon in Lebanon, and has yet to be discussed in separate discourse from the study of the army as one homogeneous entity.

The project will focus on accessing as many women in the military as possible, through one on one interviews as well as the collection of testimonies in order to document this reality and come up with potential solutions. It will also focus on accessing: a sociologist, a psychologist, a historian/military expert, and a high-ranking male military official. The project will strike a comparison between the gender dynamic of the military in Lebanon and that of at least 3 case studies broad – namely one European Country, the US

Format of Final Project:

The final format of the project will be a 20 page research paper, complete with both the transcription of the highlights of the interviews as well as with recommendations and prospects.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Gender Studies; Middle East/North African Studies; Political/Military Affairs;

Comments:

The team must consist of the authors of the paper, the interviewers and a supervisor.

Initial Readings:

The Changing Role of Women in the Armed Forces by Nancy Goldman:

http://www.jstor.org/stable/2776610?seq=1_page_scan_tab_contents

Jamaican Lotto Scamming: Root Causes and Policy Alternatives

U.S. Embassy Kingston

Western Hemisphere Affairs to Jamaica

Overview:

Telemarketing fraud, known in Jamaica as “lotto scamming” because of the prominence of the tactic of the fraudsters’ luring American victims with tales of lottery winning, has grown dramatically in recent years. Anderson Cooper 360 did a segment on this crime in 2015 and CNBC’s “American Greed” will devote an entire show to it in 2016. Some of America’s most vulnerable citizens are losing significant sums of money – estimates range from \$300 million to over \$1 billion per year – and this has led to intense human suffering including a spate of suicides. This scourge is also damaging Jamaica’s international reputation and undermining Jamaica’s social stability and rule of law. Scammers are using their immense illicit gains on lavish lifestyles. This distorts the Jamaican economy writ large and serves as a major factor in driving up violent crime, specifically the homicide rate. The cultural justifications of lotto scamming – “Robin Hood”, informal “reparations for slavery” or victim blaming – are widely accepted, most disturbingly and increasingly among children in the regions of Jamaica with a high concentration of this fraud. Jamaican judges tend to give scammers suspended sentences, allowing them to go back to committing the crime. A professor of criminology in Jamaica projected that another major conflict, similar to the 2010 extradition operation in Tivoli Gardens that left 74 dead, could occur between authorities and criminals with lotto scamming ties in the phenomenon’s epicenter, Montego Bay, in western Jamaica.

What are the sociological factors driving this epidemic? What are the best policy alternatives, including but not limited to social marketing and economic development, to combat this scourge? What law enforcement practices work best to apprehend and prosecute criminals, deter future scamming, and eliminate this menace?

The answers to these questions will help inform the policy that Jamaican and U.S. officials implement to repair the severe damage it has done to Jamaican society and U.S. citizens.

Format of Final Project:

A four-page memo with a presentation and a data analysis describing research findings.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement; Sociology, Public Policy, Psychology;

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

ID: DipLab171731

Kuwaiti Land Use: Understanding A Distorted Market and Improving Efficiency in Land Allocation

U.S. Embassy Kuwait, Economics Section

Near Eastern Affairs to Kuwait

Overview:

In Kuwait, 95% of land is owned by the government or controlled by the oil and gas sector. Less than five percent of the country's land is available for other uses. With only a small fraction of the country's land area available for building, competition is fierce and prices are astronomical. A 400 square meter (4500 square foot, 0.1 acre) residential lot can cost more than \$1 million, even in outlying areas. Larger plots can sell for more than \$10 million per acre. At the same time, Kuwait is littered with old and abandoned buildings serving no productive purpose. With no land taxes, property owners can let a valuable plot of prime land sit undeveloped for decades, further restricting the limited supply of usable land. Disinterest in selling land makes it difficult to assemble larger parcels needed for commercial and industrial use. This makes it more difficult for the non-oil parts of the economy to grow and substantially raises costs for large construction projects.

Questions:

What can be done to make the Kuwaiti land market more efficient?
Could property taxes provide the impetus to return unproductive land to the market?
How can the government extract hydrocarbons without limiting access to the land above them?
Would a more efficient land ownership system increase investment and GDP?
Would such a system lead to lower costs for residential land?

Format of Final Project:

The final product would be a package of documents, including an analysis of pricing under various simulations (Excel workbook); a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the findings for an executive-level audience; a policy paper of 10-20 pages; and an executive summary of less than two pages.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; tax policy, petroleum exploration, Bedouin culture, Arabic language, land use, real property law;

Comments:

Government websites are not always kept up to date, so it might be difficult to get information or statistics.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab171732

Making Democracy More Compelling for at-Risk Youth

U.S. Embassy Madrid, Public Affairs Office

European and Eurasian Affairs to Spain

Overview:

Spanish youth drop out of high school at the highest rate in the EU (just under 22%) Additionally, Spain suffers from soaring unemployment among youth (over 47% and estimated at over 70% for second generation immigrant youth). Disaffected young people can be susceptible to extremist ideologies which provide a sense of purpose, inclusion and idealism. At a recent conference on countering violent extremism, one expert suggested that societies need to make the democratic experiment as compelling and motivational as building the caliphate. What can USG players do to help restore faith in a system, which by many indicators has failed in its promise? What are the narratives (inclusion, tolerance, rule of law) that could successfully counteract the allure of radical extremism? What are the best methods for engaging youth and involving them in democratic initiatives?

Format of Final Project:

Data analysis as to what might lure youth to the side of democracy, as well as options for programs that could effectively present democracy as a worthy project to disaffected youth.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Education & Cultural Studies; psychology, religious studies or foreign affairs;

Comments:

Public Affairs Officers, indeed USG officials, are not well-placed to counter extremist ideologies. Experts have suggested that we instead focus on our real areas of expertise – democracy, and promoting democratic values – when providing alternate narratives to youth audiences. What types of programs/messaging could we use to reach marginalized youth and present democracy as a viable and attractive project in which young people could become involved and through which they could build a better society?

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Azerbaijan's Political Past and Democratic Potential (Democracy Project)

Caucasus and Regional Conflicts (EUR/CARC)

European and Eurasian Affairs

Overview:

A comprehensive political and historical analysis about the factors that helped the New Azerbaijan Party and the Aliyev family stay in power since 1993. Through primary sources, it would examine the economic, social and cultural factors that have enabled the family to remain in control of the country without significant opposition. It would highlight the role charismatic politics and small populations have in such political situations, but also bring a region specific focus to improve the understanding about the drivers of Azerbaijani political influence.

This study would offer ideas about the potential for and limits of democracy in the region. Consequently, the US could more effectively encourage human rights and democracy not only in the country, but beyond.

Format of Final Project:

20-30 page research paper

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Political/Military Affairs; History;

Comments:

This would involve researchers in history or political science departments and should ideally include a native Azerbaijani speaker.

There are books about the Azerbaijan's political history, but not one that assesses potential for democratic reforms or political changes.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab171734

Azerbaijan's Political Past and Democratic Potential (Economy Project)

Caucasus and Regional Conflicts (EUR/CARC)

European and Eurasian Affairs

Overview:

Azerbaijan's economy is nearly completely dependent on its exportation of oil and natural gas. Since the decline of oil prices, the single-party ruled government has been struggling and has recently moved to diversify its economy.

This study would examine the efforts of Azerbaijan to expand its tourism and transport economic sectors. While the Azerbaijani government has spoken highly of these projects, this research would explore the extent of these changes and how they impact the people in communities where tourism is promoted and transportation hubs are being constructed.

Format of Final Project:

20-30 page research paper.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; Political/Military Affairs;

Comments:

This would involve researchers in economic or political science departments and ideally should include a native Azerbaijani speaker.

The public materials about the government's projects promote the construction, but neglect to mention the scale and impact of these efforts. The goal of this project is understand the scale of changes and what the local populations think about them.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab171735

Rebalancing Public Diplomacy in Asia

Office of Opinion Research, Asia (INR/OPN/ASIA)

Intelligence and Research

Overview:

The Office of Opinion Research has historically supported public diplomacy officers with empirically-based research on public views across a broad range of issues that affect U.S. political, economic, and strategic interests. Our research helps public diplomacy officers design messages and programming to engage the public. The proliferation of web-based platforms over the last two decades has fundamentally changed the nature of U.S. outreach, increasing the number of requests our office receives to assess how online engagement shapes public views, and this entails thinking about how to analyze text as data and work with BIG DATA.

Focusing on U.S. Embassy Tokyo (and depending on feasibility, building out to include other missions in Asia), OPN/ASIA requests research teams to scrape two decades worth of the Embassy's public webpages—available freely online through the Internet Archive's Way Back Machine is the name of the software—to identify dominant themes, analyze how they were/are presented for public consumption via messaging and programming, and assess how these themes and associated outreach efforts have changed over time. We are particularly interested in how Embassy Tokyo (and others in the region) has shifted its messaging following the White House announcement of the U.S. rebalance to Asia.

Format of Final Project:

One written report, not to exceed 10 pages, that presents key findings and data visualization in a format that is easily accessible to the layperson with a 1 page executive summary.

Syntax file with code/commands used to generate analyses.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Arctic Region Studies; Political/Military Affairs; computer science, communications;

Comments:

Political Science, computer science, communications, Asian studies, qualitative and quantitative methodology, proficiency with R and Python, data visualization, experience working with big data and conducting web crawls.

Useful Links:

<https://archive.org/>

<https://blog.archive.org/2013/01/09/updated-wayback/>

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/12/sunday-review/big-datas-impact-in-the-world.html?_r=0

<http://scholar.harvard.edu/msen/big-data-trends>

<http://blog.oup.com/2013/11/is-big-data-a-big-deal-in-political-science/>

http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our_journals/polana/bdpsvirtualissueintromonroerev.pdf

http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our_journals/polana/virtualissue4.html

http://stanford.edu/~jgrimmer/bd_2.pdf

ID: DipLab171736

Combating WMD Proliferation Databases

Office of Counterproliferation Initiatives (ISN/CPI)

International Security and Nonproliferation

Overview:

UN Security Council 1540 Committee monitors what measures all UN Member States take to implement the more than 200 obligations and recommendations of UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). These legally binding obligations require States to prohibit some activities and to control others related to combating the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery, especially to terrorists and other non-State actors. In December 2015, the 1540 Committee posted matrices, each with nearly 400 elements, of these measures for 183 of the 193 UN Member States on its website (see <http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/national-implementation/1540-matrix/committee-approved-matrices.shtml>). The Committee also publishes information on effective international and national practices and on offers of and requests for assistance.

The project seeks development of up to three searchable databases:

Legal Measures: A searchable database of measures taken by each State. This database should help the 1540 Committee, UN Member States, civil society and industry identify which States have taken which measures to implement the resolution. By including links to specific national laws, regulations, and guidance, it will help all parties understand the current legal framework of nonproliferation, provide examples to States seeking to develop new measures, and allow more complex analysis of the existing data.

Effective Practices: A searchable database of effective international and national “effective” or good practices associated with implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540. It will help States more readily identify well-recognized effective implementation practices.

Assistance: A searchable database of requests for and offers of assistance. This database will make it easier to match assistance offers and requests, as well more sophisticated analysis of requests and offers.

Format of Final Project:

1-3 searchable databases, in English (but preferably with compatibility for creating versions for the other five UN languages, i.e., Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, Spanish users), and ready for posting on the 1540 Committee or similar website.

Although each database need not capture all the relevant information held by the UNSCR 1540 Committee on implementation measures, effective practices or assistance, they should allow for easy expansion to incorporate the full scope of information and future expansion.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

International Relations, Non-Proliferation;

Comments:

Information technology skills, particularly searchable databases for web-based applications. Knowledge of international relations and nonproliferation helpful.

For more information on UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), see:
<http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/> (the UN Security Council 1540 Committee's website).

For a brief video from UN Messenger of Peace Michael Douglas on UNSCR 1540, see:

For PDF and Word templates of the new version of the 1540 Committee matrix, see:
<http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/national-implementation/1540-matrix/matrix-template.shtml>.

To see the completed national matrices, see:
<http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/national-implementation/1540-matrix/committee-approved-matrices.shtml>.

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Mapping Efforts to Combat WMD Proliferation

Office of Counterproliferation Initiatives (ISN/CPI)

International Security and Nonproliferation

Overview:

UN Security Council 1540 Committee monitors what measures all UN Member States take to implement the more than 200 obligations and recommendations of UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). These legally binding obligations require States to prohibit some activities and to control others related to combating the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery, especially to terrorists and other non-State actors. In December 2015, the 1540 Committee posted matrices, each with nearly 400 elements, of these measures for 183 of the 193 UN Member States on its website (see <http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/national-implementation/1540-matrix/committee-approved-matrices.shtml/>).

Mapping what these States have done could provide a powerful visual tool for the international community. In particular, it should help the 1540 Committee, UN Member States, civil society and industry visualize the status of implementation of different obligations of the resolution, including providing links to specific national legal frameworks and effective practices. In doing so, it will help States more easily understand how to implement the resolution domestically and how to promote implementation globally.

Format of Final Project:

One to five interactive maps (with compatibility for creating a single global), in English (but preferably with compatibility for creating versions for Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, Spanish users), and ready for posting on the 1540 Committee or similar website. The maps should allow users to choose a country in a region and see:

- Links to the information the Committee has for that State; and
- Whether or not the Committee has identified that the State has a relevant measure or measures in place for some obligations of the resolution (which obligations or an index of such obligations to be determined by project participants in consultation with the primary POC).

As important, the regional map or maps should allow users to see at a glance which States the Committee has identified as taken relevant measures for a set of obligations across the entire region.

Although a map need not capture all the information contained in the UNSCR 1540 Committee matrices, they should allow for easy incorporation of such information in the map in the future. Although geographic political mapping is preferred, alternative approaches to visualization could be considered.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Arctic Region Studies; International Relations, Non-Proliferation;

Comments:

Information technology skills, particularly data visualization for web-based applications. Knowledge of international relations and nonproliferation helpful.

For more information on UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), see <http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/> (the UN Security Council 1540 Committee's website).

For a brief video from UN Messenger of Peace Michael Douglas on UNSCR 1540, see <http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/transparency-and-outreach/un-multimedia.shtml/>.

For PDF and Word templates of the new version of the 1540 Committee matrix, see <http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/national-implementation/1540-matrix/matrix-template.shtml/>.

To see the completed national matrices, see <http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/national-implementation/1540-matrix/committee-approved-matrices.shtml/>.

Maximum Number of Projects: 5

ID: DipLab171738

Fostering Inclusion in the Workplace – Regional Survey

J/FO – Special Advisor for International Disability Rights (SADR)

Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights

Overview:

Despite progress made around the world towards advancing the rights of persons with disabilities, unemployment continues to be a challenge. Governments around the world have tried to address this challenge by promoting more inclusive work environments through a variety of programs including quota systems, incentive programs, public private partnerships, and awareness campaigns. The office of the Special Advisor for Disability Rights is interested in learning which countries have developed programs to support the employment of people with disabilities (and which ones haven't), if they have implemented these programs, and to what degree of success. SADR is interested in collecting information from comparable countries in the same region or economic community (for example, a survey of MERCOSUR members, Sub-Saharan African countries, or Gulf Cooperation Countries, or the MENA region).

The final report analyzing a region's efforts to promote employment and any particularly successful programs, will help SADR in promoting the employment of people with disabilities around the world by highlight gaps and providing best practices that can be scaled up or replicated elsewhere.

Research for the report would seek to understand laws, policies and programs on disability and employment/labor rights and vocational training systems. Sample questions might include:

- What government institutions, if any, are responsible for promoting the employment of persons with disabilities?
- Does the government collaborate with businesses in promoting the employment of persons with disabilities? If so provide further details.
- Does the government collect data on persons with disabilities in the labor market? If so, provide details. (unemployment, type of work, education level or worker, salary compared to non-disabled)
- Is there employment data on students who complete higher education and vocational training programs that show the number of students with disabilities placed in integrated/mainstream employment?
- Does the government address disability in the context of occupational diseases and injury? For example, does the government promote "stay-at-work" and "return-to-work" programs to ensure that workers affected by occupational disease and injury can either stay on the job or return quick to work after illness/injury?

Format of Final Project:

A final report (up to 3 pages per country, not to exceed 40 pages total); a presentation of data; one- page case studies on success stories

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Comments:

The Special Advisor for International Disability Rights (SADR) leads the U.S. comprehensive strategy to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities internationally. The United States, as part of our foreign policy, works to remove barriers and create a world in which disabled people enjoy dignity and full inclusion. Discrimination against people with disabilities is not simply unjust; it hinders economic development, limits democracy, and erodes societies.

In pursuing diplomacy that is inclusive and empowering of persons with disabilities, the United States: opposes discrimination against persons with disabilities everywhere and in all its forms; urges foreign governments to combat discrimination, prejudice and abuse against persons with disabilities in their countries, and to protect the rights and ensure the dignity and inclusion of all persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others; encourages and assists governments to learn about the development and effective implementation of laws to protect the rights of persons with disabilities; encourages and assists civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities and their families, to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities; and encourages U.S. businesses operating overseas as well as domestic host country businesses to take into consideration persons with disabilities in relation to employment practices and local stakeholder engagement, including in their labor and human rights corporate social responsibility policies, programs, and practices.

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

ID: DipLab171739

Evaluation of Cybersecurity Public Awareness Campaigns

Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues (S/CCI)

Secretary of State

Overview:

Cybersecurity Awareness raising is a key part of both the U.S. domestic and international strategies for cyberspace. Around the world, we are promoting the use of public advocacy efforts to reach youth, employees, and the citizen user. STOP.THINK.CONNECT, OnGuardOnline, NetSmartz, FBI, Nova Labs, European Union Agency for Network and Information Security, Organization of American States, Government of Japan are examples of organizations that have versions of public awareness campaigns. In the United States, state and local governments and the private sector all have campaigns promoting the concept of safe and secure behavior online and when using tools connected to the Internet.

The U.S. Department of State's Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues (S/CCI) seeks proposals to identify effective cybersecurity public awareness campaigns implemented internationally and to develop outcome measurements for cybersecurity awareness programs. Cybersecurity awareness raising programs increasingly are a key part of building cultures of cybersecurity due diligence in places of employment, places of study, and in the daily lives of citizens and online users. Cybersecurity analysts assess that nearly 80% of cybersecurity breaches are due to the poor security practices of the end user. Hence the use of awareness raising campaigns is vital. With more and more of our lives connected to the Internet, cybersecurity is increasingly in the hands of users, not network administrators.

While, at times public awareness campaigns are splashy and attention-grabbing, the questions that are raised include: how effective are cybersecurity public awareness campaigns, how can we measure their effectiveness, what works and why, what are other mechanisms or approaches that could be used to increase public awareness, and what are the cultural and educational barriers that need to be addressed? S/CCI is seeking proposals to identify and develop outcome measurement tools to determine what programs work, and why they work, as well as recommendations on program replication around the world.

Format of Final Project:

Narrative, outcome matrix, suggested data collection points, case study/modeling using the proposed indicators and measurement tools

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Cyber Security;

Comments:

Given the international focus of the program, Russian, German, French, Spanish, Japanese or other language skills is beneficial. Public relations, communications and marketing, cybersecurity, information technology are useful disciplines – we suggest the team be interdisciplinary as the subject matter is.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab171740

Assessing the structure and impact of the Association of Bi-National Centers of Latin America – a 160 member English and cultural program network in the Western Hemisphere.

Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (WHA/PDA)

Western Hemisphere Affairs

Overview:

For over six decades, Binational Centers (BNCs) have been key program partners for U.S. Embassies throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. BNCs are private, non-profit, autonomous organizations. They were in most cases established by local leaders and resident Americans to promote mutual understanding between the two countries. Historically, the State Department provided direct support to BNCs, however, much of that funding is limited today. Many BNCs have flourished thanks to revenue from English teaching, but some have struggled and a number closed their doors entirely. The quality of service now varies from center to center.

As independent institutions, the BNCs established the Association of Binational Center of Latin America (ABLA). The ABLA network serves as an umbrella organization for the exchange of information, educational best-practices, curriculum development, planning and management. A group of 12 BNC directors form ABLA Steering Committee, which oversees the Association's annual conferences. The project will examine and assess the current ABLA structure to determine its organizational effectiveness, distill best practices to enhance its training capacity, student and community reach and sustainability. The research team should examine the role the Steering Committee plays in ABLA's management, the type of audience and marketing techniques.

Format of Final Project:

A five-page memo evaluating ABLA's capacity to serve as a best practice network of the BNC system in Latin America, and possible measures to strengthen its impact. Describe the current organizational strengths, evaluate if the current structure allow for innovation and provide the flexibility to meet the market demand. The conclusion should recommend ways to enhance the network, in addition to identifying strengths and weaknesses.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Marketing;

Comments:

Social sciences – data analysis, marketing, consultancy. Familiarity with the region, analytical skills; Spanish and Portuguese preferred but not required.

<http://www.ablaonline.org/bnc/a>

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab171741

The Risk Assessment Index for Security and Human Rights

Office of Security and Human Rights (DRL/SHR)

Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

Overview:

Military units, justice institutions, and law enforcement bodies that make up the security sector exist to maintain the rule of law, protect the autonomy of States, and prevent individuals or groups from compromising the rights of others. The collective body of evidence available to policy makers suggests that certain institutions of accountability and oversight, both within government and within civil society, are critical to preventing security force misconduct, but to date, there is no diagnostic tool available for making a preliminary determination of the risk of gross violations of human rights based on the presence or absence of any of these indicators. This project aims to collect and review the known indicators of risk in one place where policy makers can assign a relative risk profile to a partner nation's security forces based on an index that includes quantitatively sound data and equally sound qualitative analysis at its foundation. This index rating can help policymakers understand how to shape security force assistance and direct attention to areas of deficiency in preliminary planning processes, and so that later field assessments can benefit from early warning and areas of necessary attention.

The team will research the available body of literature related to security sector reform to inventory the institutional, technical, and societal variables that have been assessed by credible experts and institutions (to include commissions of inquiry and other investigative bodies) as important for the prevention of and accountability for gross human rights violations. Examples may include specific technical interventions, the role of internal investigative units or the importance of policies and regulations governing security force conduct. These criteria may be grouped into sets or scorecards for various themes (such as "internal accountability mechanisms", "regulations", or "public oversight mechanisms"). Teams may wish to consider information available from the World Bank, the Geneva Center for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces, Special Rapporteurs for Torture and Combating Impunity, and the UN and related agencies, and other credible research organizations that specialize in security sector issues. Based on initial findings, students will then assign a relative weighting to the variables to develop a scoring methodology that is easily disaggregated or analyzed for its constituent parts; i.e., a total index score should also provide clues for where the partner country has strengths and weaknesses. The total relative score should provide a basic risk profile of any country and/or its security forces. The team will then demonstrate the applicability of the index by using it to remotely assess the risk quotient of a selection of security forces in countries that represent different regions of the world.

This project will be used by the human rights officers in DRL and elsewhere in the U.S. government in an effort to inform policies related to security force assistance, security sector reform, and other areas of priority for improving and professionalizing security forces and related institutions. Teams may be divided into qualitative/research focus and a statistical/ quantitative tool focus.

Format of Final Project:

The final product should be a document, to be submitted in stages throughout the semester, including:

- a. A literature review with preliminary findings
- b. A qualitative description of a set of criteria to be used in an assessment index
- c. a matrix of indicators, or an indicator assessment tool or “index”, determined by the team to be related to the presence and persistence of civilian abuse by the security sector, with explanation
- d. a section which uses the matrix to analyze case study countries in order to demonstrate relevance and applicability

The complete document does not need to be of any particular page length, but should be sufficient to include the above portions.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Conflict, Stabilization, & Reconstruction; Democracy & Human Rights; Political/Military Affairs;

Comments:

Maximum of 4 – 6 teams that could share / divide work by research and literature review; primary analysis and variable weighting; quantitative index development; model testing; etc.

Maximum Number of Projects: 4

ID: DipLab171742

Organizational Network Analysis of OSAC Country Councils

Overseas Security Advisory Council (DS/TIA/OSAC)

Diplomatic Security

Overview:

The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) is the State Department's premier public-private partnership, promoting security cooperation between American private-sector organizations operating overseas and the U.S. Department of State. Through the Country Council program, OSAC provides the private sector with a forum to share security information with U.S. diplomats overseas and OSAC's Research and Information Sharing Center (RISC). RISC staff work directly with U.S. Embassy Regional Security Officers (RSOs) and Country Council leadership to administer more than 140 Country Councils globally, with over 4,000 registered U.S. private-sector organizations.

The objective of the organizational network analysis is to examine the way information is shared in OSAC Country Councils, consider strategies to optimize information flows, and consider other possibilities for sharing security information outside of our existing networks.

Format of Final Project:

Paper format (maximum 30 pages) with 1-2 page executive summary.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Arctic Region Studies; Public-Private Partnerships;

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab171743

Emerging Security Technology applications for Country Council

Overseas Security Advisory Council (DS/TIA/OSAC)

Diplomatic Security

Overview:

The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) is the State Department's premier public-private partnership, promoting security cooperation between American private-sector organizations operating overseas and the U.S. Department of State. Through the Country Council program, OSAC provides the private sector with a forum to share security information and network with industry counterparts and U.S. diplomats overseas. OSAC's Research and Information Sharing Center (RISC) staff work directly with U.S. Embassy Regional Security Officers (RSOs) and Country Council leadership to administer more than 140 Country Councils globally, with over 4,000 registered U.S. private-sector organizations.

By harnessing technology, OSAC continues to introduce digital communication tools that enhance and expand the way that security information is collected and shared within OSAC Country Councils. All of these tools are "out of the box" technology solutions aimed at optimizing communications between RISC staff, RSOs, and U.S. organizations operating overseas.

The objective of this research project is to examine the OSAC Country Council model and recommend five emerging technologies that can enhance information sharing and digital engagement for the program. Also propose strategies for introducing new technologies to OSAC constituents and RSOs.

Format of Final Project:

Paper format (maximum 30 pages) with 1-2 page executive summary.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Public-Private Partnerships;

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Hybrid Legal Systems: The Convergence of Common Law and Civil Law Legal

(INL/CAP), Office of Criminal Justice Assistance and Partnership

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

Overview:

Today most justice systems are best classified as hybrid legal systems. Although many were traditionally strictly civil law or common law systems, as a consequence of development these systems are converging in many areas around the globe. In the United States Louisiana provides a unique example of how a mixture of legal traditions can operate side by side with a state system rooted in the civil law tradition and a federal system based in common law. Louisiana's success in walking the common law civil law divide can serve as a great example to countries dealing with similar issues.

We request that a research team study hybrid legal systems where common law and civil law traditions successfully work in tandem. We request that the research begins by focusing on Louisiana and then chooses two examples of non-U.S. justice systems that have successfully integrated both civil law and common law components. We would like the team to examine these systems with a focus on how they can provide a model to other nations undergoing justice sector reform.

Specifically the research team should provide a brief overview of the examined common law-civil law hybrid systems and what characteristics permitted the two legal traditions to successful mix together. The research should focus on what implications these models have for other justice systems around the world with both common law and civil law influences that are going through reform.

CAP will assist in identifying countries currently seeking assistance in this area to help focus the research team's efforts.

Format of Final Project:

20 page paper- Must include 1-2 page executive summary

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

International Law;

Comments:

See references below for initial guidance:

http://weblaw.usc.edu/assets/docs/contribute/83_3KimforWebsite.pdf

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab171746

Diversification and Retention of the Police Work Force

Office of Criminal Justice Assistance and Partnership, (INL/CAP)

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

Overview:

Maintaining adequate police staffing and ensuring its diversification is a significant challenge currently facing law enforcement in the United States. Police are confronted by a complicated environment that involves a shrinking pool of applicants and an enlarging, mature workforce progressing towards retirement. Furthermore, law enforcement today struggles to achieve a diverse work force. A study conducted in 2008 women accounted for 11.2% of the total sworn law enforcement in the U.S. With the U.S. population comprised of 50.8% female, the number of women in law enforcement is woefully inadequate. Furthermore, in 2013 a survey showed that the total percentage of minority officers account for 27.3% of sworn law enforcement.

We would like a research team to tackle the issues of recruiting and retaining women and minorities from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective. Research methodology should include samples from federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, as well as, comparing and contrasting data from small and large jurisdictions. Key questions to be addressed:

- 1) What percentage of the force are women and minorities? What are the total numbers of each? What percentage of the applicants are women and minorities? New officers?
- 2) What are retention rates for police departments today?
- 3) What is the quality/size of the applicant pool?
- 4) What is the average tenure of women and minorities in the police departments?
- 5) What are the language capabilities of these police officers? Are their language capabilities utilized by the force in interacting with the community that they serve?

INL research coordination team can assist the research group as necessary in order to identify points of contact in police agencies and provide a letter of support for the project

Format of Final Project:

Comprehensive report utilizing uncovered data as basis (~25-30 pages) including an excel spreadsheet of all raw data collected and a summary of methodology used

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Comments:

[http://womenandpolicing.com/pdf/ NewAdvantagesReport.pdf/](http://womenandpolicing.com/pdf/NewAdvantagesReport.pdf/)

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab171747

True U.S. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows into Vietnam in 2015

U.S. Embassy Hanoi, Economics Office

East Asian and Pacific Affairs to Vietnam

Overview:

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is one of the most-discussed issues in our bilateral relationship, particularly Vietnam's interest in increasing U.S. FDI. Unfortunately, we don't have an accurate picture of how much the United States is investing in this country. Armed with better and more accurate numbers, we will be able to more clearly explain to our Vietnamese counterparts, U.S. businesses and third country diplomats the true size of the current American (economic) footprint in Vietnam.

1) Project: Determine as close as we can the true level of U.S. investment in Vietnam for 2015

Rational: While the U.S. is not the top FDI investor in Vietnam, TPP will attract more U.S. investment, so we need a better understanding of where the U.S. ranks in FDI

Goal: Report on the findings

Steps:

1) Pull out the U.S. invested FDI from other countries to figure out the true level of U.S. FDI in Vietnam in 2015

a) Send the student the list of 2015 FDI inflows to Vietnam.

b) Focus on inflows from: (2014 rankings)Hong Kong (2), Singapore (3), British Virgin Islands (6), Samoa

(11), and Caymen Islands (18) to back out U.S. FDI routed through these countries

Example: In 2014 Intel invested \$1 billion dollars in Vietnam through Hong Kong.

If you took out this investment, Hong Kong would stay at 2, but the U.S. would move up to 5 in the list, and that is one investment.

d) Create an Excel spreadsheet with the official 2015 FDI country ranking next to the project data

e) Spreadsheet with the list of projects and dollar amount invested organized by what country the FDI was routed through

Format of Final Project:

1) Executive summary of the findings

2) Excel spreadsheet comparing original with research numbers

3) Table with the U.S. company name, type of investment, and amount

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Comments:

This project should take one semester

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

ID: DipLab171748

Vietnam Visa Waiver Value

U.S. Embassy Hanoi, Economics Office

East Asian and Pacific Affairs to Vietnam

Overview:

General research suggests that visa requirements reduce trade and tourism. Vietnam allows citizens of a limited number of countries to enter visa free for 15-30 days. However, Vietnam requires U.S. citizens to have visas. This project would quantify the likely economic benefits to Vietnam if it would add the United States to its list of citizens traveling visa free.

Format of Final Project:

A research paper of no more than 20 pages providing an estimate of the likely economic impact, and a description of the method used to produce the estimate.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; Statistics;

Comments:

The annual report of the 2015 Vietnam Business Forum, available at vbf.org.vn, provides discussion of current visa policy and its impact on tourism in Vietnam.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Evaluating India's Role in the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime

Mission India New Delhi, Economic, Environment, Science and Technology (EEST)

South and Central Asian Affairs to India

Overview:

The U.S.-India cyber relationship represents one of the high-points of our bilateral diplomatic relationship as the two countries discuss strategic issues relating to digital development, internet governance, information sharing, and norms of state behavior in cyberspace. Despite the positive and wide-ranging cyber interactions, joint cybercrime investigations and access to digital information remains an open issue. While there is goodwill on both sides to improve the situation, the process to request and receive electronic information is complex, cumbersome, and involves multiple stakeholders – many of whom are outside of government. Identifying ways to improve cybercrime information sharing is an important element of the U.S.-Indian cyber relationship.

India Accession to the Budapest Convention could provide India improved access to electronic information in the United States and elsewhere, although many of the benefits may be indirect. The Convention is the first international treaty addressing Internet and computer crime by harmonizing national laws, improving investigative techniques, and increasing cooperation among nations. The Treaty is implemented by Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France, with the active participation of the Council of Europe's observer states Canada, Japan, South Africa and the United States. As of September 2015, 47 states have ratified the convention, while a further seven states had signed the convention but not ratified it. There are also additional countries involved in various ways, but Brazil and India have declined to adopt

This project will provide an independent assessment as to whether or not Indian accession to Budapest would help advance the country's efforts to request and obtain cybercrime information. The study should look at both the direct and indirect benefits of Budapest, as well as "soft power" aspects of the project to guide the world community going forward, e.g., be a party to future amendments. The project should also look at any potential negatives for India, as well as costs, resources. The effort should include perspectives from the Indian government (at both State and Federal levels) but also the pros/cons of other stakeholders, including those involved with other country's ascension experience.

Format of Final Project:

White Paper with One Page Summary of Findings and PowerPoint Presentation.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

International Law;

Comments:

The Council of Europe has developed a summary of why India should accede, but this is not an independent assessment. That document is attached.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab171750

Energy to Burn: Using Renewable Energy to Help Malaysia Meet Climate Change Commitments

US Embassy Kuala Lumpur. ECON

South and Central Asian Affairs to Malaysia

Overview:

Objective: This project would explore ways to help Malaysia meet its climate change commitments by increasing its use of renewable energies, such as solar and wind.

Background: At the Paris COP-21 conference, Malaysia pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions intensity by 45% by 2030. More significantly, it recognized the need to address climate change as part of its development strategy, and has enacted national plans aimed at sustainable, green development, such as its National Green Technology Policy. Malaysia is at a pivotal moment to pursue its aspiration of high-income status while striving for the greener development the country's leaders have pledged to pursue.

Malaysia is also one of Asia's largest oil and gas producers. Oil and gas contributes around 20 percent to the country's GDP and represent a major source of government revenue. The country has also turned to coal to meet its growing energy needs, with coal currently accounting for 45 percent of mainland Malaysia's energy supply. Renewable energy remains at a nascent stage due to a lack of government incentives and commitment; it is unlikely to take off in the current low oil price environment. Therefore, now is the time to get Malaysia to focus more on renewable energy and reduce its dependence on fossil fuels, especially coal.

Format of Final Project:

Research paper focusing on 1) the state of renewable energy in Malaysia; 2) ways to encourage renewable energy here (government incentives, policy tools, role of private sector); and, 3) recommended avenues of diplomatic engagement for U.S. policymakers to assist and encourage progress on this front.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; Energy Security;

Comments:

Some expertise in energy economics required.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab171751

Addiction Treatment Worldwide: Data Should Point the Way on US Foreign Assistance Across the Globe

Office of Policy Planning and Coordination (INL/PC) Drug Demand Reduction team and the Office of Resource Management (INL/RM) Program Assistance and Evaluation (INL/RM/PA&E)

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

Overview:

The mission of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) is to minimize the impact of international crime and illegal drugs. INL's Office of Policy Planning and Coordination (INL/PC) is responsible for strategic planning, all public affairs work within the bureau, policy formulation, and engagement with international organizations. PC's Drug Demand Reduction team fosters global public health by promoting access to addiction prevention programs and addiction treatment worldwide. The team leads efforts to develop global standards and norms, in addition to coordinating technical assistance.

INL seeks to maximize foreign assistance investments through data-driven strategic planning. The goal of this project is to collect data on the availability of addiction treatment globally. The data will subsequently be augmented with population estimates and where INL already has an intervention underway to identify underserved areas that would most benefit from U.S. foreign assistance.

The project will collect data on all addiction treatment centers around the world. The team will identify the locations that have been tagged in Google Maps as addiction treatment centers and extract the data from a Google API using a method of their choice, such as Python or R. The data for each treatment center should include the country, province, city, name, address, and contact information.

Format of Final Project:

The final product will be a single spreadsheet, preferably in Excel format, of all the treatment center data stacked by country.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Computer Science;

Comments:

This is an excellent opportunity for students in computer science or similar fields who want to practice collecting digital data from APIs for social science research, coding in a language of your choice, and creating data-driven policy recommendations. Additionally, the team would benefit from someone with a background in statistics.

We welcome additional data sources other than Google or suggestions for changing the methodology. We recognize that a single (or even multiple) source(s) will not include a comprehensive picture of all addiction treatment centers globally, but this will at least provide an indicator of availability.

ID: DipLab171752

International Best Practices of Peer Review

Office of Science and Technology Cooperation

Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs

Overview:

The question: What are the best current peer review systems for small/medium/developing countries that can be emulated across borders?

Background: Science and Technology is one of the tools the United States can leverage to promote foreign policy objectives around the world. Science and Technology is a great tool because American science relies on values that we use to form our view of the world. Believing in transparency and merit based systems are two examples among many. Many countries would like to learn from our science system which opens the door for these discussions and issues. However, our science system is neither user friendly for other countries to “plug into”

nor is it easily replicable which is an issue we wrestle with constantly. Also, building international collaboration relies on sharing some basic understanding of how our system compares to other systems.

Part of this is understanding how different countries conduct research, and a major part of science research is the mechanism of peer review. Peer review is how scientists check each other’s work to ensure the best science is published. The American system for this is we do all our own peer review within the American science community. The depth and breadth of our science community allows for this without conflict of interests. However, smaller and developing countries do not have this capability. Different countries tackle this problem in different ways. However, there is limited literature on the pros and cons of these different approaches. Yet, this is an important issue to the responsible conduct of research and building these scientific relationships across borders. This knowledge would allow for better science engagement across many countries and improve the effectiveness of science and technology as we use it to pursue foreign policy objectives.

Format of Final Project:

Presentation with informational paper

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Political/Military Affairs;

Comments:

This is a cross discipline project that requires an understanding of the scientific community and public policy.

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

ID: DipLab171753

Religion and Social Change in Global Affairs

Secretary's Office of Religion and Global Affairs

Secretary of State

Overview:

The Secretary's Office of Religion and Global Affairs (S/RGA) at the U.S. Department of State recognizes that religious actors across the globe drive and shape social change. What does this social change look like? Who are the different types of religious actors leading this work?

This Diplomacy Lab project will invite up to two university teams to partner with S/RGA to conduct research on present day and historic examples of social change led by religious actors (including non-clergy, women and youth) on a range of issues including LGBTI rights, women's advocacy, environmental sustainability, peacebuilding, social entrepreneurship and conflict mediation. This research will be drafted into a set of thematic case studies to be used by S/RGA as a training tool for the Department of State.

Format of Final Project:

A set of 7-10 case studies on thematic issues related to religion and global affairs. Length and format of case studies will be discussed with participating university teams.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Political/Military Affairs; Religious Studies, Anthropology, Sociology;

Comments:

- : Please read the following articles for more information about the Office of Religion and Global Affairs.
- The Central Role of Religion in Diplomacy
- What's Religion Have to Do with Climate Change?
- When Religious Leaders Fight for Social Justice

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab171754

The Global Impact of Interfaith Youth Work

Secretary's Office of Religion and Global Affairs

Secretary of State

Overview:

In 2015, the Secretary's Office of Religion and Global Affairs (S/RGA) at the U.S. Department of State launched a pilot initiative called the Days of Interreligious Youth Action (DIYA) which encouraged U.S. embassies and consulates to recognize the work of diverse youth leaders from religious and non-religious backgrounds to address local and global challenges. DIYA provided one model of engagement, but interfaith partnerships between youth groups and leaders can be found all over the world and include a variety of activities such as community action, dialogue, joint educational ventures, and visits to houses of worship or other interfaith and cultural exploration.

This Diplomacy Lab project invites university teams to help broaden the DIYA initiative by exploring a wider variety of approaches, models, and best practices for interfaith youth initiatives. Teams will develop research and analysis on methodologies for interfaith youth work from across the globe. Students will identify a set of approaches and methodologies in conversation with S/RGA and then conduct research and analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses of these approaches, as well as examples of these approaches from various countries and regions.

Format of Final Project:

A research and analysis paper on 10-15 methodologies and approaches to global interfaith youth work. Length and format of paper will be discussed with participating university teams.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Education & Cultural Studies; Political/Military Affairs; Youth Issues; Religious Studies, Anthropology, Sociology;

Comments:

Please read the following articles for more information about the Office of Religion and Global Affairs.

- Together, Interreligious Youth Take Actions to Change the World
- Interfaith Cooperation: Promoting Peace in the Middle East
- The Central Role of Religion in Diplomacy

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab171755

Bridging the Digital Gap: From East Timor to the

U.S. Embassy Dili, Public Affairs Section

East Asian and Pacific Affairs to Timor-Leste

Overview:

We would like to recruit various U.S. university teams to work with Timor-Leste's 1st American Space/cultural center, Uma Amerika at UNTL (the country's national university) and alumni of U.S. government exchange programs to dramatically increase the amount of information available online in English and Tetum on Timor-Leste/East Timor via the Wikipedia platform.

As one of the world's youngest and most geographically isolated countries, the amount of publicly available information about Timor-Leste (East Timor) is very limited, particularly in English (but also in the country's official languages, Portuguese and Tetum), including on comprehensive online platforms such as Wikipedia (which is free to access in Timor-Leste). At the current time, the largest number of articles in Wikipedia on Timor-Leste are written in German, a language that very few people in Timor-Leste speak or understand. Information about the United States in Tetum is equally minimal. Additionally, there is even less content on U.S.-Timorese relations or U.S. development assistance in Timor in all three languages, despite significant investments in Timor-Leste in the past two decades by USAID, USDA and the Defense Department.

Our aim is to change that equation through this Timorese-U.S. partnership. While the first priority for the teams would be to address the discrepancy of information about the United States and U.S.-Timorese relations, the overall project would have the following goals: Improving the public perception of the United States in Timor-Leste; Increasing connections between Timorese and U.S. universities; Increasing the visibility of the U.S. government assistance in Timor-Leste; Solidify Uma Amerika's reputation in Timor-Leste as an institution devoted to improving U.S.-Timorese ties; and Supporting free access to information in the country.

Format of Final Project:

Deliverable would be new publicly available content and updated content in Wikipedia in the focus areas listed below (in Comments section).

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

International Development; Anthropology;

Comments:

This project would allow for teams from a wide variety of academic disciplines, with our key interest being students interested in Timor-Leste, international politics, international development and anthropology. If possible, we would encourage the involvement of Timorese students studying in the United States to work as extra contributors to this project. While not essential, the ideal teams would also include students with Portuguese, German or Bahasa language skills, in order to help fact check and translate content only currently available in those languages.

: The main goal for the U.S. university teams would be to work with the Uma Amerika team to create English-language content on Timor-Leste in key focus areas, as well as assist the Timorese to create Tetum-language content on the United States. Additionally, we envision that both sides of the partnership could eventually work together to correct and update content in Portuguese, Timor-Leste's second official language, as well as other languages, depending on the linguistic capabilities of the respective teams.

Key areas of the interest for the U.S. mission in Dili: East Timor-United States relations + summary of relationship with U.S. on main Timor-Leste page; Foreign Defense relations; U.S. military assistance to Timor-Leste; Mission of U.S. Mercy in Timor-Leste; Foreign aid to East Timor; U.S. government assistance in Timor-Leste; Peace Corps in Timor-Leste; Seabees in Timor-Leste; U.S. Embassy in Timor-Leste; Economy of East Timor; Cooperativa Cafe Timor. Additional areas of interest: United States (Tetum); Uma Amerika at UNTL, UNTL

We foresee that the main portion of the project could be completed in one semester, but envision that there would be space for additional focus areas to be completed if the project would be extended to additional semesters.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab171756

Vietnam Quarterly Macro Report

U.S. Embassy Vietnam

East Asian and Pacific Affairs to Vietnam

Overview:

Produce a quarterly macro economic update for Vietnam based on open source information from the Government of Vietnam. The distribution is internal to the U.S. government, but the data is not sensitive, and the team working on the project does not have to generate any data. The ideal team or candidate is someone who understands macro economic data at a basic level and has an interest in understanding how macro data relates to overall economic performance. Vietnam is a fascinating case study in how to get the macro side right in order to sustain economic growth. The total time commitment per quarter is around 3-5 hours, depending on how fast the one page report can be updated. The person or team who generates the report should be ready to complete the report the first week after the end of each quarter.

Format of Final Project:

1 page Word document

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Macro Economics;

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab171757

The Economic Effects of Cross-Border Carbon Markets

Political and Economic Affairs Section at U.S. Consulate in Montreal

Western Hemisphere Affairs to Canada

Overview:

Many analysts believe that the ratification of the Paris Agreement is a sign of the global momentum in the fight against climate change. Across the world, jurisdictions have begun pricing carbon to generate revenues that are often reinvested in the economy. Some jurisdictions, like the province of Quebec and the state of California, have linked carbon-pricing mechanisms in particular an emissions trading system. The goal of this project would be to analyze the economic effects of linking carbon markets across jurisdictions based on the Quebec-California market, and forecasting what would happen if new jurisdictions joined the CA-QC market. What are the economic effects of creating a single large carbon market instead of many smaller isolated markets? How has the Quebec- California carbon market linkage affected the economies of both jurisdictions compared to what separate emissions trading systems would have accomplished?

Quebec launched a carbon market in 2013, which the province later linked with California's carbon market in 2014. The system requires each greenhouse gas emitter to own enough carbon allowances to cover the amount of emissions that the business reported for that year. In the carbon market, there are generally quarterly carbon auctions with participants from Quebec and California, and each business submits confidential offers for carbon allowances to determine the price that clears the market.

Format of Final Project:

Our office would be interested in receiving a research paper with a two page executive summary.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; Political/Military Affairs; Environmental Studies, Business Administration, Finance;

Comments:

Our Office: <https://ca.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/montreal/sections-offices/>

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab171758

Mapping the U.S. & UK Special Relationship

U.S. Embassy London Cultural Affairs Office: London/PA/CA

European and Eurasian Affairs to United Kingdom

Overview:

Twenty-First Century diplomacy is dependent on - and often shaped by - networks of non- governmental actors and institutions. The Special Relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States is made up of a variety of historical, academic, cultural, economic and other linkages. U.S. Embassy London would be interested in working with a U.S. based university and a UK based university to digitally map those linkages based on a series of themes. Thematically mapped linkages between the U.S. and UK would provide an enlightening portrayal of the networks and interdependencies that form the true Special Relationship. This digital map would serve as powerful tool for both government and non-governmental institutions to analyze and leverage existing relationships to address global challenges such as climate change or large scale human migration.

Format of Final Project:

The final product would consist of two parts:

1. An interactive digital map that would provide valuable information on existing thematic networks. Individuals working on a particular topic could view the mapped linkages between the U.S. and UK that are relevant to a particular topic. For example, individuals working on issues related to human migration could search for academic and non-governmental institutions that are actively engaged on this issue across the Atlantic.
2. A memo that provides recommendations on how this interactive map could be used as a tool to strengthen and leverage existing networks portrayed in the map to address particular challenges.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Political/Military Affairs; Geography, Sociology, Geographic Information Systems, History;

Comments:

The linkages between the U.S. and UK are extremely diverse and abundant. In order for this project to be realistic and achievable, U.S. Embassy London would work with the participating universities to outline particular themes and/or challenges to focus on. The creation of this type of interactive map would be the first prototype of a potentially powerful tool that can be applied in real-world 21st Century diplomacy.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab171759

The Effectiveness of Culinary Diplomacy

US Embassy Rabat Public Affairs

Near Eastern Affairs to Morocco

Overview:

Governments in countries as diverse as Peru, South Korea and Turkey have recently realized that they have historically neglected one part of their culture when trying to influence other nations's views of them: food. "Culinary diplomacy" or "gastrodiplomacy" has taken off in many countries because -- according to the first metrics -- food is one very effective way of changing other cultures' opinions of a government's own culture.

How effective have gastrodiplomacy campaigns been around the world -- quantitatively and qualitatively? How could the U.S. better harness its agriculture, restaurant sector, and cuisine writ large to make other cultures view the U.S. more positively? Which types of culinary diplomacy activities are the most effective ways of turning public opinion? What is the future of culinary diplomacy worldwide? If possible, how can U.S. Mission Morocco specifically engage with audiences using food to create more cultural allies of the United States?

Format of Final Project:

Research paper incorporating data analysis.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Anthropology, food studies, public policy;

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 4

ID: DipLab171760

Knowledge Management to Support African Union Peace Operations

United States Mission to the African Union (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

U.S. Mission to Ethiopia

Overview:

The African Union (AU) is one of the largest multilateral organizations outside of the United Nations system. As a Pan-African forum, the AU bridges regional divides through partnerships across its 54 member states and plays a leading role in the prevention, mediation, and management of conflict. The Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD), alternatively referred to as the African Standby Force Continental Planning Element, plans, sustains, monitors, and manages AU peace operations. For PSOD to be more effective, it must improve information sharing and application of best practices and international standards. This project will assist PSOD to develop frameworks to identify lessons learned, and preserve best practices gained from AU engagement with its member states and partners.

Our university partners would help us in the following areas:

I. Development of on knowledge management guidelines for PSOD to leverage the multiplicity of its operational and policy documents in ways that are systematic and accessible to all relevant stakeholders.

II. Creation of a systematic framework for PSOD to consolidate lessons learned and information relevant to the spectrum of peace support operations and policy implementation.

III. Identifying, consolidating, and classifying documents generated by entities outside of PSOD but with relevance to the peace support, such as early warning and situation reports and threat assessments/analysis not currently part of the PSOD information architecture.

IV. Development of an online portal to make all documents critical to achieving PSOD objectives available to all key stakeholders, thus facilitating communication and collaboration.

Format of Final Project:

Online Portal consolidating data from multiple sources

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Management, Information Technology, International Relations;

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab171761

Model Legislation to Advance Disability Rights Across the African Union

United States Mission to the African Union (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

U.S. Mission to Ethiopia

Overview:

The African Union (AU) is one of the largest multilateral organizations outside of the United Nations system. As a Pan-African forum, the AU is leading continental integration through partnerships across its 54 member states. However, many voices are left out of this dialogue and development process. Disabled citizens remain disenfranchised while the AU is creating frameworks to support the African renaissance. Member states would benefit by adopting legislation, based on the international best practices, to empower disabled individuals and advance human rights. This project would analyze legislation to advance disability rights and design a model law the African Union could offer as a framework for its member states.

Format of Final Project:

Draft legislation with hyperlinked references

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Human Rights; International Law; Political/Military Affairs;

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab171762

Song of the Sirens: Effects of New Media on the Recruitment of Peruvian Shepherders

U.S. Embassy, Lima, Consular Section (CONS)

Western Hemisphere Affairs to Peru

Overview:

Some of Peru's poorest citizens supply nearly 90 percent of the shepherding labor force in the United States. The recruitment processes to find these individuals are rapidly evolving. This project aims to shed light on those processes which help U.S. ranches find laborers for hard-to-fill jobs. Peruvian shepherders are vital to the American sheep and wool industry, and many western U.S. ranches are shutting down due to a lack of workers. The majority of Peru's herders come from tremendously impoverished rural areas, with limited to no access to modern amenities, including the internet. However, most of the information on work opportunities and the applications for visas themselves can only be found online. In a country where only 48 percent of the population aged 36-56 uses the internet, these herders are left to rely upon a relatively small number of sources if they want to find temporary work in the United States. This gap leaves them highly vulnerable to those looking to exploit their lack of knowledge of and access to the proper procedures for working legally the United States. Concordantly, predators and human smugglers charge exorbitant fees to fill out visa applications, or give job recommendations to those who are desperate for work. The negative consequences of these actions invariably fall on the intending laborer.

The purpose of this project is to analyze the recruitment process used by U.S. ranches, how much these strategies rely upon new media, and the methods used by predators and human smugglers to solicit the business of prospective herders. The research will begin with the U.S. ranches, mapping the online avenues they use to find quality workers, and seeing in what form these solicitations take in Peru. The most crucial aspect will determine exactly how Peruvian shepherders find these opportunities. An ideal project will completely detail the steps taken in bringing over migrant workers, from the initial communication of an offer to the acceptance by the herder, and that herder's process of obtaining a visa to come to the United States.

Format of Final Project:

Qualitative investigation and analysis of ranches' recruitment communications; Qualitative investigation and explication of how word is disseminated throughout the shepherding community; Qualitative investigation and report of avenues.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; Communication, Anthropology, Sociology, Human Migration, Social Justice;

Comments:

The rapidity of technological development in the modern world has myriad consequences, one being an increased amount of visa fraud as vendors and human smugglers take advantage of populations unfamiliar with digital communication. These criminal activities represent the use of technology to further marginalize an already disadvantaged population. To better understand this recruitment process is not just to better understand methods to prevent fraud and human smuggling, but potentially to help in the collective benefit of the bilateral relationship. The results of this project will strengthen Mission Peru's efforts by shedding new light on an important pattern of migration and improving our knowledge of social and economic inclusion. It will also inform policies on how to increase economic growth and social development in Peru's poorest region.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Morocco: Where have its grand sectoral development plans taken it?

Economic Section, U.S. Embassy Rabat

Near Eastern Affairs to Morocco

Overview:

In the 2000s, Morocco launched a number of five year sectoral development plans designed to spur growth in agriculture (Green Morocco Plan), industry (Industrial Acceleration Plan), logistical competitiveness (national development strategy for logistics competitiveness), tourism (Tourism Vision 2020), fisheries (Halieutus Plan), solar energy development, handicrafts (2015â€™s Vision for the Handicrafts Sector), mining (National Strategy for the Mining Sector Development), and exports (National Development Plan for Trading). Each of these strategies lays out a roadmap for the development of the sector, setting ambitious targets for their growth as well as their contributions to GDP. While some of these strategies have reached completion and are in their second phases, others are midstream.

The purpose of this project is to map out the goals of each strategy and the Government's progress towards achieving them. To complement this information, the team or teams should assess the appropriateness of the strategies and the progress made thus far in achieving their goals in terms of their impact on Morocco's economic growth and development, broadly speaking.

Format of Final Project:

A chart mapping each sectoral plan's goals/projects to its accomplishments/achievements as well as an analysis of the efficacy of these plans in advancing development in each sector and Morocco's economic development more broadly.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; Middle East/North African Studies;

Comments:

It would be helpful for team members to have an interest in economics as well as background in one or more of the sectors in question. French and/or Arabic language skills are critical.

Please see marocexport.ma/eng/content/strategies-sectorielles for more information

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab171764

Social Media Wars: The Battle for Influence in Bulgaria

U.S. Embassy Sofia, Public Affairs Section

European and Eurasian Affairs to Bulgaria

Overview:

by embassies around the world to spread influence, harness support, disseminate information and launch debate. In Bulgaria, the American, Russian and Chinese embassies vie for influence and public support via social media. But who is winning the social media war?

At present, insufficient data exists on the topic. We are seeking a comparative analysis of U.S Embassy, Russian Embassy and Chinese Embassy social media outreach in Bulgaria. The study would focus on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube posts by these three embassies to track engagement on various post types and topics to see what works in Bulgaria and where our competitors are besting us. We plan to use this data to better target our outreach and to arm ourselves for the revised diplomacy game of the 21st century.

Format of Final Project:

We are looking for a comparative analysis that will include a high-level overview of the findings as well as the raw, collected data tracking post types by embassy and their effectiveness. We would also like to see proposals on how to attract a wider audience in Bulgaria using social media. This can be in the form of a final paper, presentation or video report.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

European & Eurasian Studies;

Comments:

A basic understanding of social media, search engine optimization, web navigation and institutional marketing is a plus. While language skills in Russian, Bulgarian and Chinese would be helpful, they are not required as translation software can assist the avid researcher sufficiently for the parameters of this project.

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

ID: DipLab171765

Analysis and recommendation on training satisfaction surveys to law enforcement personnel

Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, INL Mexico

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

Overview:

INL Mexico is conducting satisfaction surveys to around 7,000 law enforcement officials per year participating in training events, conferences and study tours. We look for a motivated team of students with experience in psychology, statistics and survey design that could help us review the current survey instrument and propose recommendations to improve it. This survey provides important information to decision makers on security cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico.

Format of Final Project:

20 page research paper, data analysis of 2016 and recommended survey instrument

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Psychology, statistics, survey design, Spanish;

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

ID: DipLab171766

Digital Literacy and Good Governance

U.S. Embassy Nairobi Economic Affairs Section (ECON)

African Affairs to Kenya

Overview:

The fight against corruption is a constant battle in many countries with no shortage of divergent views on the most effective strategies for effecting lasting, positive change. This project will look at the correlation between digital literacy and a government's ability to manage good governance. In an increasingly online world, this report will be an insightful look into how digital literacy makes it easier for a government to implement good governance measures or possibly if digitally literate populations place governments in a place of increased accountability. A positive correlation would then require a further look into the most effective forms of digital literacy as well as educational techniques that could help improve good governance.

Format of Final Project:

Research Paper

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Political/Military Affairs; Democracy, ICT, Digitization, Digital Literacy and Education, International Relations;

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab171767

Effective Tools in the Fight against Corruption - Government Digitization

U.S. Embassy Nairobi Economic Affairs Section (ECON)

African Affairs to Kenya

Overview:

Many believe the best way to tackle corruption is to simply remove opportunities for corrupt behavior. This analysis and presentation will look at the validity of this line of thought by evaluating if the digitization of government systems, which should effectively limit the amount of cash handled by public employees thus removing opportunities for corrupt practices, is an effective tool in fighting corruption. From online payment of traffic tickets, to online registry of land transactions and public listing of government accounts, government digitization appears to close many of the open doors to corrupt behavior, but is it effective in lowering the corruption profile of a country. Kenya's efforts in digitization present an excellent case study for such research and analysis.

Format of Final Project:

Report with data analysis and presentation

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Political/Military Affairs; Good Governance, ICT, Computer Systems, International Relations;

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

How Can ASEAN Develop Bankable Projects and Better Access Private Financing?

East Asia and Pacific Bureau Office of Multilateral Affairs EAP/MLA

East Asian and Pacific Affairs

Overview:

ASEAN countries (Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) have over 640m people and pressing needs for soft and hard infrastructure development. Nevertheless, ASEAN nations sometimes face challenges in developing bankable infrastructure projects, which in turn creates challenges in attracting financing. While the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has filled some of the financing gap, many Southeast Asian countries seek to diversify their partnerships in the economic realm. EAP/MLA seeks concrete advice on 1) ways that ASEAN can more effectively develop bankable projects (independently, or with capacity-building support from ASEAN Dialogue partners), and 2) ways that ASEAN can better access private financing for hard and soft infrastructure projects; and 3) ideas for innovative models or public-private partnerships that the U.S. government could spearhead to increase opportunities for and the competitiveness of U.S. firms.

Format of Final Project:

EAP/MLA would prefer a concise scoping statement followed by a menu of options for both questions 1) and 2) above, ranked in terms of feasibility.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Public-Private Partnerships; International Finance, , infrastructure development, U.S. government financing (EXIM, OPIC);

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab171770

Exporting the American Entrepreneurship Mindset: Developing Entrepreneurship Education in Africa

Bureau of African Affairs, Office of Economic and Regional Affairs (AF/ERA)

African Affairs

Overview:

In order to expand opportunities for U.S. enterprises in Africa as well as to support the next generation of African leaders and makers, it is imperative that African entrepreneurs learn an American model of entrepreneurship education. This proposal calls for the collection and analysis of data on the state of African small business creation, ownership, and sustainability, as well as the development of an entrepreneurship curriculum to be incorporated into an African secondary school or university. While the United States remains a global leader in entrepreneurship education and the development of entrepreneurship ecosystems, U.S. enterprises lag behind other nations (Europe and China) in business on the continent. One way to increase the competitive advantage of U.S. enterprises in Africa is to encourage African entrepreneurs to embrace American models of entrepreneurship and business development. In fact, the President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa (PAC-DBIA) has made the recommendation that in order to facilitate U.S. business in Africa, the United States has to teach African entrepreneurs how to do U.S. business and increase the supply of entrepreneurship education in Africa - in collaboration with U.S. business schools. Structural problems affecting African education systems continue to be a stumbling block in the region's efforts to stimulate sustainable entrepreneurial activity and improve business productivity.

Additionally, with 200 million people aged between 15 and 24, Africa has the youngest population in the world and by 2040, Africa's young workforce will be the largest in the world, surpassing that of both China and India. The formal sector is unable to meet current and growing employment demands and for many young Africans, entrepreneurship is the only avenue for employment. Generating jobs and harnessing the potential of Africa's youth remains imperative in order to sustain the continent's economic development as well as for the sustainment of our collective global security.

Entrepreneurship education is a low cost, high impact way to support U.S. commercial interests, economic and social development, and national security goals on the continent.

Format of Final Project:

Data Analysis, University-level curriculum

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Comments:

http://www.trade.gov/pac-dbia/docs/PAC-DBIA-Report_Final.pdf/

Maximum Number of Projects: 4

The Effects of Natural Hazards on Migration and Remittances

Office of the Chief Economist (E/OCE)

Economic Growth, Energy, and Environment

Overview:

Unexpected changes in climate conditions, such as substantial variations in rainfall, degradation of soil conditions, and natural disasters, affect working conditions and poverty in local areas and could raise pressures to migrate abroad. Such pressures are likely to increase as extreme weather patterns rise as a result of climate change. Migration is a means of reducing localized impacts on poverty, while ensuing remittance payments from migrants can mitigate reductions in incomes among those who remain behind.

The project would use available data on bilateral patterns of migration and remittances to investigate the extent to which natural hazards affect decisions to migrate and send money back home. Research teams could use existing databases on the timing and location of natural hazards in recent years and supplement these data with additional research. Teams would be expected to formulate appropriate econometric models that can be used to explain the causal effects of climatological events and hazards on pressures to migrate and the availability of remittances. The research should be careful to control for other factors determining migration and remittances. The results could help fill gaps in knowledge about these fundamental relationships and could inform national and international policies in the future.

Format of Final Project:

Research teams would be expected to deliver a final oral presentation (either online or at the State Department) of results, along with a prepared paper of approximately 20 pages. To the extent possible the paper should address potential international policy implications based on the data and findings.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues;

Comments:

The research requires prior training in econometrics, data collection and manipulation, and some familiarity with standard econometric packages, such as STATA. Thus, the project is targeted toward students in advanced undergraduate courses or MA courses in economics, business, and international relations, in which a course objective is hands-on training in data-based policy analysis.

The Office of the Chief Economist provides immediate and longer-term analysis and policy advice about key areas of economic diplomacy to the Secretary and top officials of the State Department. This project offers a unique opportunity to participate in developing the knowledge needed for policy formulation in a critical area of interest.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab171772

Seeking Synergies in the U.S. and Brazilian Defense

Political Section, U.S. Embassy

Western Hemisphere Affairs to azil

Overview:

The United States and Brazil both possess vibrant and innovative defense industries, including some of the principal defense firms in the world. The strengthening political and military relationship between the two countries could create opportunities for partnership and technological collaboration between U.S. and Brazilian defense firms, whether for eventual sale to one or both militaries/governments or for export to third countries. This project would seek to analyze the two countries' defense sectors with the goals of:

- 1) Conducting a broad market overview and identifying areas of comparative advantage in defense innovation and production for each country;
- 2) Examining specific opportunities for commercial partnership, supply-chain integration and co-development that would leverage the comparative advantages of the two defense sectors; and
- 3) Identifying legal or regulatory barriers in each country to further defense industry cooperation (export control restrictions, local procurement requirements, etc.)

The results of this analysis could be used in direct support of ongoing bilateral efforts to deepen defense industrial cooperation through the Brazil-U.S. Defense Industry Dialogue and possibly in

Format of Final Project:

The ideal deliverable would take the form of a 10-15 page analysis paper and accompanying presentation that could be used to summarize the findings and recommendations, both products oriented toward industry and government decision makers.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues;

Comments:

This project would be most directly aimed at students engaged in studies of business/market research analytics, economics (macro or micro), international relations/security studies, law, or policy analysis. A combination of those fields would most likely be best positioned to address the full scope of the project. Portuguese language skills would be helpful in doing primary research or literature review for the Brazil-focused aspects of the project.

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Help or hindrance? Legislation and support for micro, small and medium enterprises in the state of Chihuahua

Consulate General, Ciudad Juarez, Mexico

Western Hemisphere Affairs

Overview:

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) play a critical role in economic growth. In the Mexican state of Chihuahua, the growth of small businesses has not kept pace with the growth of the maquila (factory) industry. Foreign direct investment in maquilas plays a critical role in the state's economy. However, local MSME development has not kept pace despite the presence of federal and state policies intended to encourage the growth of small and medium enterprises.

The purpose of this project is to gain a better understanding of the environment in which micro, small and medium enterprises operate in Chihuahua, the challenges small business owners face, and what support networks are available to them. Students will review legislation established by the Chihuahua state government that relates to the development and support of micro, small and medium enterprises in the state and compare it to legislation from other Mexican states as well as that of the federal government. Students will analyze legislation to highlight what is working well in Chihuahua and identify ways that micro, small, and medium enterprises could be better supported. In addition, students will examine the ease with which entrepreneurs can gain access to capital.

Format of Final Project:

Students should submit a 10-15 page written report with recommendations of ways to encourage micro, small and medium enterprises in the state of Chihuahua.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; Business, Spanish;

Comments:

Article about small and medium enterprises in Ciudad Juarez:
www.eujournal.org/index.php/esj/article/download/2260/2143/

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

When Cruise Control Fails: How to Accelerate Trade After Conflict Brakes

Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, Africa Operations

Conflict and Stabilization Operations

Overview:

Trade forms an intrinsic part of livelihoods and social welfare across Africa's arid Sahel. Armed parties across the region have both capitalized upon and destroyed existing trade networks. As major armed conflict subsides, rural population returns will require the re-establishment and strengthening of trade and trade networks to meet immediate community need and revive economic activity. At the same time, illicit trade must be minimized. This project asks you to explore how to restart legitimate trade during low-level intensity conflicts or in fragile-security environments after conflicts, particularly for application in the Sahel.

Subject to consultation between the university and our office, the final product, taking into consideration the impact of ethnic relationships on commerce, should synthesize the following:

- Identification of key, relevant examples from the past 30 years of how informal, inter-ethnic trade networks were re-established in post-conflict environments;
- Explanation of how modern Information Communication Technologies can strengthen trade networks and accelerate their establishment/re-establishment after conflict over remote, sparsely populated areas;
- Comparison of how local and/or national governments in Africa have either supported or hampered the recovery of trade networks in post-conflict areas;
- Analysis of how illicit trafficking has been curbed while legitimate trade promoted in post-conflict environments;

Identification of any specific creative projects or organizations that have led efforts in any of the above areas.

Format of Final Project:

A final report (please limit to a maximum of 20 pages) containing a 1-2 page executive summary, a detailed bibliography of relevant sources, and appendixes with visualizations demonstrating findings (e.g. process mapping, network mapping, geographic routes, etc)—with the exception of data heavy tables.

The bibliography and appendixes do not count against the 20 pages.

The report and conclusions should be presented in person or via video conference to the requesting Bureau.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Sub-national Conflicts, Social Psychology, Graphic Design, Anthropology, International Relations, Sociology;

Comments:

French or Arabic proficiency a plus.

The Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) advances the Department of State's understanding of violent conflict through analysis and planning; monitoring, evaluation, and learning; and targeted, in-country efforts that help the U.S. government anticipate, prevent, and respond to conflict and promote long-term stability.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab171777

The Community is Central: Developing More Effective Community Security Mechanisms for Central Africa

Africa Bureau Office of Security Affairs (AF/SA)

African Affairs

Overview:

Addressing community concerns will be crucial to creating secure environments in Central African countries that have been destabilized by violence. Getting combatants to renounce violence and give up their weapons is necessary for creating peace, but people who resisted joining armed or violent extremist groups also need to know that they will be protected, and have not missed out on reconstruction resources because they don't have weapons to give up. Likewise, communities must be equipped and empowered to resist the presence of armed groups and spoilers, particularly in areas with little central government presence or provision of services – after all, armed actors can only continue to thrive in communities that tolerate them. The U.S. Government wants to know how to constructively include communities in Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), as well as longer term Security Sector Reform (SSR), programming in Central Africa, based on data from past DDR and SSR efforts.

Many countries in Central Africa could benefit from SSR and DDR support. For this research project we would like to focus on two separate case studies: Central African Republic (CAR) and the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) countries affected by Boko Haram (Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria). In CAR, we would like to use the research conducted in this study to improve post-conflict DDR (and longer-term SSR) programming so that communities are empowered to understand, implement, and support peacebuilding and reintegration processes for all conflict-affected individuals, and to build resilience against the prevailing economy of violence in CAR to minimize risk of spoilers seeking to undermine peace processes or reforms. In the LCB countries, communities have been traumatized by Boko Haram and are largely unwilling to accept former fighters, even those who were forcibly recruited, back into their communities. We would like this research to focus on how the U.S. Government could support the LCB governments, through a regional approach, to encourage Boko Haram fighters to defect from the group, while being sensitive to the communities that have suffered through years of the Boko Haram's brutality. Research related to Boko Haram should consider the impact and potential restrictions of working with former combatants of a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO).

In both cases, we would like research to identify successful models of Community Violence Reduction (CVR) and DDR, which have ideally supported broader SSR over the long-term. Where have CVR and DDR worked and why? What interventions actually increase community security, increase local ownership of national and/or international CVR/DDR programs, and reduce risk of relapse into conflict?

Format of Final Project:

10-15 page research paper with 1-2 page executive summary. Each paper should include up to 10 concise programmatic and/or policy recommendations based on best practices, suggestions and recommended literature (works cited). Final oral presentation (in person or by video conference) is welcome.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

African Studies; Political/Military Affairs; Social Science, International Studies, Security Studies, Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding, Research experience;

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Multilateral Nuclear Stability: Potential Contributions from Game Theory

Office of Verification, Planning, and Outreach

Arms Control, Verification and Compliance

Overview:

The primary objective of this project is to assess the potential of game theory to make significant contributions to analyzing multilateral nuclear stability. Drawing from the lessons learned from the large body of analysis that applied game theory techniques to the bilateral arms race and first-strike balance between the United States and the former Soviet Union during the Cold War, identify promising directions for research using game theory in a multilateral context.

At this juncture, we are not seeking a thorough analysis of multilateral nuclear stability, but to learn the following: 1) whether insightful multilateral nuclear stability games are possible, 2) to which multilateral strategic stability problems can game theory analysis be applied, and 3) which unique set of issues or challenges would need to be addressed in such multilateral games. On a more technical level, how would such a game be validated and how would the results be presented?

In a similar vein, game theory might also prove useful as an analytical tool for understanding motivations that might drive nuclear competition, and therefore help anticipate certain challenging verification and compliance scenarios, as well as identify mechanisms that could deter cheating.

Format of Final Project:

10 page paper

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Conflict, Stabilization, & Reconstruction; International Relations, Technology,;

Comments:

Expertise in the following disciplines and skills will be useful: 1) Stability, Deterrence and Reassurance; 2) International Relations and nuclear security policy; 3) Game Theory and Information technology.

Here is some background reading to get the groups started:

J. Scouras, "Multilateral Nuclear Arms Control: Can Game Theory Contribute?," JHU/APL, October 2012

D. McGarvey and J. Scouras, "Multilateral Nuclear Arms Control and Game Theory," JHU/APL, May 2013

The White House Office of the Press Secretary, Remarks by President Barack Obama, Prague, Czech Republic, 5 April 2009 (http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered)

K. Leyton-Brown, and Y. Shoham, "Game theory is the mathematical study of interaction among independent, self-interested agents," Essentials of Game Theory: A Concise, Multidisciplinary Introduction, Morgan and Claypool Publishers, 2008, p. xv

The Nobel Foundation, The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, 2005 (http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/economic-sciences/laureates/2005/)

S. J. Brams and D. M. Kilgour, *Game Theory and National Security*, New York; Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1988

S. Plous, "The Nuclear Arms Race, Prisoner's Dilemma, or Perceptual Dilemma?" *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 20, No. 2, May 1993

R. Hardin, "Unilateral Versus Mutual Disarmament," *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Summer 1983

C. Nemeth, "A Critical Analysis of Research Utilizing the Prisoner's Dilemma Paradigm for the Study of Bargaining," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 6, L. Berkowitz (ed.) New York: Academic Press, 1972, pp. 203–234

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

ID: DipLab171779

Designing for Diplomacy: Informing U.S. Embassy Design through the Study of Foreign Embassy Architecture

Office of Design and Engineering (OBO/PDCS/DE)

Overseas Buildings Operations

Overview:

A U.S. Embassy is the first encounter many people around the world have with the United States. While an embassy is a symbol of civic engagement, it also serves as an inspiring platform to conduct diplomacy. U.S. embassy designs must represent transparency, connection, and the values of our nation while balancing the need for a secure work environment. The Department's recent Excellence initiative has committed the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) to producing embassy designs that are safe, secure, welcoming, and contextually responsive buildings.

Designs for foreign diplomatic missions face many of the same opportunities and constraints as U.S. embassies. The tension between requirements for an open and a secure campus, and desire to strike a balance between the local cultural and the mission's native culture create exciting design opportunities. OBO seeks architectural studio projects to design a U.S. embassy that incorporates lessons learned from the study of how contemporary embassy architecture of other nations has addressed design constraints in order to create design opportunities.

Format of Final Project:

The final product will be a studio project including a physical model, renderings, vignettes, and a design narrative.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Architectural Design, Architectural History;

Comments:

Loeffler, Jane C. (2010). *The Architecture of Diplomacy: Building America's Embassies*, 2nd Revised Edition. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Gill Lui, Elizabeth. (2004). *Building Diplomacy: The Architecture of American Embassies*. Four Stops Press.

Excellence in Diplomatic Facilities, U.S. Department of State

OBO Press Kits Online, U.S. Department of State

Discovering Diplomacy, U.S. Department of State

Designing Diplomacy: 10 Modern Embassy & Consulate Buildings Architizer
Fortress

New design unveiled for Australian embassy in Washington DC, The Sydney Morning Herald
Nordic Embassy Complex,

ArcSpace.com

90

Perkins Eastman reveals renderings for Turkish Consulate building across from the UN, The Architects Newspaper

Denton Corker Marshall completes "expressive yet dignified" Australian Embassy in Jakarta
Dezeen

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Successful Pre-Trial Detention Models for Counties in Transition - Recommendations for Haiti's Judicial Reform Policies

**Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement- Western Hemisphere Program-
Haiti**

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

Overview:

INL works with over 100 law enforcement, criminal justice and academic institutions in the United States through both formal and informal partnerships. INL's partners have over the past decade provided significant support to INL programs all over the world, from assisting in the development of law enforcement programs in Haiti (New York Police Department) to training Central American police forces (Miami Dade Police Department) to seaport security support (Port Miami). One of the difficulties of this kind of assistance is translating domestic law enforcement experience and good practices to the international setting, often in societies that have undergone significant conflict and are emerging into fragile states. In Haiti, one of the main judicial system challenges the country faces as it transitions from the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti to a traditional development oriented partnership is to reform its pretrial detention practices. INL's challenge will be to encourage a system that follows international standards while taking into account limits in local capacity to meet those objectives.

This project will try to identify successful models for pretrial detention reform from other countries that have undergone a similar transition that can be applied to Haiti as best practice. The research team can address this question in multiple ways and INL will work with the group to identify a suitable research methodology, set of domestic agencies that work on pretrial detention and country case studies. This project will assist in refining INL's work in Haiti to encourage the government to take a practical approach to pretrial detention reform that has been applied in other countries. It is possible such a model cannot be identified for Haiti, in which case the research team should recommend steps it believes could be successful in Haiti based on elements drawn from the different case studies it finds.

Format of Final Project:

The final product should be a paper, no more than 15 pages, with description of case studies reviewed and recommendations for application in Haiti.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement;

Comments:

Below are several websites featuring pretrial detention. The video on pretrial detention requires registration, but is worth the effort as it gives an excellent overview of the problems that Haiti faces regarding pretrial detention.

- Excellent video on pretrial detention problems at National Pen in

Haiti: <http://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreported-world/on-demand/63201-014>

- Case Studies in Pretrial

Detention: https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/Justice_Initiati.pdf

- World Prison Brief: <http://www.prisonstudies.org/>

- International Centre for Prison

Studies: http://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/world_pre-trial_imprisonment_list_2nd_edition_1.pdf

American Bar

Association: http://www.americanbar.org/advocacy/rule_of_law/thematic_areas/judicial_reform.html

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab171781

Women in Science (WiSci) What Have We Learned: Using P3s to Advance Girls' Participation in the STEM fields

Secretary's Office of Global Partnerships

Secretary of State

Overview:

Travel.State.Gov is the only official resource customers can access to get the most up-to-date information on all things passport. The website tends to be text-heavy due to the amount of information that must be communicated to the customer, and a series of videos would help condense that information. This project seeks to develop a series of visually coherent videos that explain the complicated passport process in a way the public understands. The topics would likely include renewing a passport, applying for the first time, and minor passports, but are up for discussion.

Format of Final Project:

A series of 4-5 short videos in Spanish explaining how to undertake basic passport tasks, such as renewing a passport, applying for the first time, getting a child's passport, etc. Ideal production would include a mix of animation, graphics, and text. Any sound would need to meet current 508 Compliance for the disabled or hard of hearing (example: closed captioning).

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Spanish, Marketing, Graphic Design, Photography, Film, Advertising, Tourism Studies;

Comments:

We are very open to suggestions for how these videos might look- and we will provide you all of the content you need.

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

"An App for That!" - Mobile app design for Antibiotic Lifecycle Mapping

Office of International Health and Biodefense

Administration

Overview:

This Diplomacy Lab project focuses on designing informatics tools for “citizen science” to facilitate public data gathering regarding the sources and sinks of antibiotics in the environment as a major part of the global antibiotic lifecycle, particularly in low resource, low infrastructure regions. The production, distribution, usage, disposal and environmental fate of antibiotics cut across many different sectors of society. Engaging the public sector through broad participatory methods is essential. Selected project participants are requested to design the features of a user-friendly mobile-phone app for public participation in the fight against antibiotic pollution.

For example, such an app will enable (1) farmers to contribute needed data to identify the types and amounts of antibiotics used in agriculture, how antibiotic-contaminated wastewater is disposed-off, and how residual and expired antibiotics are processed; (2) consumers to contribute needed data on the domestic use of antibiotics, including access to counterfeit antibiotics, off-label usage of legitimate antibiotics, and disposal of antibiotic-contaminated wastewater and expired antibiotics; Scientists to identify and map hotspots of antibiotic pollution, and to develop intervention strategies at the time and place where high levels of antibiotics breed resistance among potential human pathogens.

WHY THIS PROJECT IS NECESSARY AND HOW IT IS RELEVANT TO DIPLOMACY:

“Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria” - the U.S. Presidential Executive Order issued in September 2014 focused national attention on a new and growing threat to human health and the environment by noting that the “Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that annually at least two million illnesses and 23,000 deaths are caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria in the United States alone.” The order noted further that “Detecting, preventing, and controlling antibiotic resistance requires a strategic, coordinated, and sustained effort. It also depends on the engagement of governments, academia, industry, healthcare providers, the general public, and the agricultural community, as well as international partners.”

Consequently, at the 2016 United Nations General Assembly meeting, all nations committed to address the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which is increasingly responsible for premature deaths worldwide, while also increasing the cost of treating common infections. Environmental pollution by antibiotics is a driver of resistance among pathogens; however few existing interventions address the pathways of antibiotics into the environment. The reason: our inability to satisfactorily answer fundamental questions about the sources, fate, and impact of antibiotics in the environment. This diplomacy lab project will contribute to U.S. leadership on using scientific data to inform policy, and to support knowledge sharing toward the development of action plans to combat antibiotic resistance in other countries.

Specifications for a mobile-phone app that is deployable on all major ands such as iPhone, Samsung, and Google-phone. If time and resources allow, a prototype app that is pilot tested among students or a local community.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Environment, Health Informatics, Computer Science, Geography;

Comments:

At the U.S. Department of State, the Office of International Health and Biodefense (IHB) is the primary office responsible for a variety of international health issues. IHB takes part in U.S. Government policymaking on infectious disease, environmental health, non-communicable disease issues, global health security, antimicrobial resistance, and counterfeit and substandard medications. Therefore, this Diplomacy Lab project will contribute to the major international effort by the United States government toward global strategy for reducing the antibiotic resistant infections to the global burden of disease. Project participants will be benefit from the expertise of teams of experts who are working on the technical and policy dimensions of antibiotics as environmental pollutants. In September 2016, the team at IHB hosted an international workshop on antibiotic lifecycle mapping in the Lower Mekong Region, with participants from several countries, the Society for Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry, and the United States Geological Survey.

The primary contact for this diplomacy lab project is a Jefferson Science Fellow of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, while working as a Foreign Affairs Officer in the Bureau of Oceans, Environmental and Scientific Affairs' Office of International Health and Biodefense (OES/IHB).

For additional information on the State Department of International Health and Biodefense, see: <https://www.state.gov/e/oes/intlhealthbiodefense/>;

For additional information on the U.S. President's Executive Order on “Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria”, see: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/18/executive-order-combating-antibiotic-resistant-bacteria>.

For additional information on the United Nations High Level Meeting on Antimicrobial resistance, please visit: <http://www.un.org/pga/71/2016/09/21/press-release-hl-meeting-on-antimicrobial-resistance/>.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Impact of Confucius Institutes in Sub-Saharan Africa

Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

African Affairs

Overview:

Diplomacy Lab Proposal – Confucius Institutes

“The Confucius Institute programme was founded in 2004 to promote Chinese culture on the international scene. It draws its values from the Communist Party of China and has seen its presence throughout the world surge to about 480 schools as of December 2014, representing nearly half of its target of 1,000 institutes by the year 2020. This rapid expansion within a short period has coincided with the steady rise of China as an emerging global superpower and reflects a long-term strategy aimed at securing the country’s growing influence abroad and fashioning its cultural imprint into the world order.” – Sishuwa Sishuwa, *New African Magazine*.

China’s growing geopolitical influence in Sub-Saharan Africa is well-documented in its investment in the economic sector and in the expansion of its military role in the region. The Chinese government is also seeking to increase Chinese cultural influence by hosting exchanges for Sub-Saharan African political leaders, and by establishing Confucius Institutes on the continent. The Economist reported China “has established some 46 Confucius Institutes in Africa to teach Chinese language and culture. China also flies thousands of Africa’s ruling-party officials, civil servants and trade unionists to attend political-training schools in China. This has worked so well in South Africa that the ruling African National Congress last year published a foreign-policy discussion document suggesting that China’s Communist Party “should be a guiding lodestar of our own struggle.”

This proposal seeks accurate quantitative data on the number of Confucius Institutes, the size of the presence, the names of host universities, and the estimated number of students affected. It would also be useful to know the type of courses offered, such as Chinese language, history, philosophy, medicine, etc. There is some USG level of concern about the kind of influence these Institutes are wielding, so information on what kinds of things are addressed at the Institutes will be useful. For example, are there trainings for youth in China’s approach to the world economy/trade? Are there training in China’s political ideology? Is there evidence China using these institutes increase and/or deepen business contracts and political influence within governments?

Format of Final Project:

Data analysis and research paper

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

African Studies; International Relations;

Comments:

Not applicable

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Inclusive Legislation: Advancing Disability Rights – Regional Survey

MLGA/International Disability Rights

Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

Overview:

According to the 2011 World Report on Disability, jointly issued by the World Health Organization and the World Bank, the population of persons with disabilities worldwide exceeded 1 billion, accounting for 15% of the global population. Of these, approximately 650 million persons with disabilities live in the Asia-Pacific region. The number of people living with disabilities worldwide continues to grow, along with the aging population.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol was adopted in 2006. As a legally binding international human rights treaty, the CRPD advances the movement from viewing persons with disabilities as “objects” of charity, medical treatment, and social protection towards viewing persons with disabilities as “subjects” with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as active members of society.

Although over 170 countries have ratified or acceded to the Convention, many countries also need to more effectively implement and enforce the CRPD through domestic legislation. The State Department’s International Disability Rights Team requests university professors and students concerned about human rights to determine which CRPD parties have enacted and effectively enforced laws upholding the rights of persons with disabilities (and which countries have not). This initial research will target two regions and 44 countries: the East Asian and Pacific Region (31 countries) and South and Central Asian Region (13 countries).

Research for the report would seek to understand laws, policies and programs on disability, as well as the inclusion of persons with disabilities in other relevant laws, policies and programs.

Format of Final Project:

The final report analyzing the regions’ efforts to promote laws and legal enforcement, and any particularly successful programs, will help the State Department to promote the rights of people with disabilities around the world by highlighting gaps and identifying effective practices that can be scaled up or replicated elsewhere.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Democracy & Human Rights; East Asian/Pacific Studies; Global Health; Human Rights; International Law; International Relations; South/Central Asian Studies; Disability Rights;

Comments:

The International Disability Rights Team leads the U.S. comprehensive strategy to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities internationally. The United States, as part of our foreign policy, works to remove barriers and create a world in which disabled people enjoy dignity and full inclusion. Discrimination against people with disabilities is not simply unjust; it hinders economic development, limits democracy, and erodes societies.

In pursuing diplomacy that is inclusive and empowering of persons with disabilities, the United States: opposes discrimination against persons with disabilities everywhere and in all its forms; urges foreign governments to combat discrimination, prejudice and abuse against persons with disabilities in their countries, and to protect the rights and ensure the dignity and inclusion of all persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others; encourages and assists governments to learn about the development and effective implementation of laws to protect the rights of persons with disabilities; encourages and assists civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities and their families, to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities; and encourages U.S. businesses operating overseas as well as domestic host country businesses to take into consideration persons with disabilities in relation to employment practices and local stakeholder engagement, including in their labor and human rights corporate social responsibility policies, programs, and practices.

Maximum Number of Projects: 5

ID: DipLab172183

Blockchain for the unbanked

International Labor Affairs

Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

Overview:

The team that chooses this project will be asked to produce a prototype or white paper on blockchain as a solution to payment tracking for unbanked low wage workers.

Blockchain, a public, distributed ledger that records transactions in a verifiable and permanent way, is a relatively new technology that has the potential to solve a range of problems including some of the challenges faced by low wage workers. One issue faced by low wage workers around the world is that they are not paid on time or in full. These workers often do not have bank accounts and thus electronic payment systems that have been successful in addressing the issue have been unavailable as a possible solution. Blockchain has the potential to address this through a verifiable, permanent record of payment for the unbanked.

Format of Final Project:

Ideally a prototype, but possibly a white paper

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Computer Science; Democracy & Human Rights; International Relations;

Comments:

www.state.gov/j/drl/ila/index.htm/

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab172197

Digital Storyteller – Social Media and Blog Contributor for International Youth Networks

HP/PR/PE

International Information Programs

Overview:

Our office manages the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Network and the Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative (YLAI) Network. These networks are part of the State Department's digital outreach efforts to engage foreign audiences. They are vibrant communities of over half a million young African, Latin American, and Caribbean leaders. We are looking for student teams who can help us produce creative and innovative multimedia (audio, visual, written) content for engaging YALI and YLAI Network members. Some content may be more generic in nature but we are also looking for teams to research what's trending for young African and young Latin American online users to make sure our content responds to the needs and interests of our audiences. Content will also focus on key U.S. policy priorities for these regions (e.g. human rights, transparency, economic prosperity, security, etc.). The content will be posted on our websites, social media platforms, and other digital platforms as appropriate. This is an opportunity to help the State Department's public engagement be cutting edge and digitally- innovative!

Some examples of requested tasks are:

Social media engagement (currently we are on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn):

- Research and draft social media content relevant to young African and Latin American leaders, highlighting both State Department resources and third party resources they can use to make change in their communities and succeed professionally.
- Review network member submissions about their experiences in the Screendoor and Google Forms platforms and draft social media and blog content highlights.
- Assist with the planning and monitoring of social media chats (Facebook or Twitter) with experts. Assist with follow-up by drafting social media and blog content highlights from the chat.
- brainstorm ways we can engage network members on social media platforms.

Blog posts and videos:

- Research and draft/film blog posts and videos on policy issues, professional development resources, and other topics.

Graphic design:

- Create engaging graphics for social media and the websites as needed.

Format of Final Project:

Multimedia content (audio, visual, written) to post on the YALI and YLAI Networks website and social media platforms.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

African Studies; Civil Society; Communications; Democracy & Human Rights; Education & Cultural Studies; Gender Studies; Global Health; Human Rights; International Development; International Relations; Marketing; Public-Private Partnerships; Sociology; Western Hemisphere Studies; Youth Issues

Comments:

We are looking for a creative, proactive students who can help us brainstorm and innovate interesting ways to engage foreign audiences using digital tools. For YLAI: Spanish preferred but not required Fo YALI: French or Portuguese preferred but not required The project requires the use of Google docs and Slack. For more information on the YALI Network, visit yali.state.gov. For more information on the YLAI Network, visit ylai.state.gov.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab1722100

Can You See Me Now? – Identifying Camera Problems Autonomously

DS/STO/QAL

Diplomatic Security

Overview:

Over 300 U.S. diplomatic buildings in almost every nation in the world rely on closed-circuit television systems (CCTV) as part of their physical security apparatus. Many video cameras are installed outdoors in harsh conditions of sand, sun, and salt spray and suffer from a range of maladies.

Dust, dirt, salt, lichen, and atmospheric pollution on the camera bubble degrade the quality of an image. A camera that is out of focus suffers a similar loss in quality. A broken camera may not produce an image at all. Pan, tilt, and zoom (PTZ) functions may not function. Over time, foliage can grow to block key parts of a camera view. Each of these situations degrades our ability to protect the people who work at

Since dirty camera bubbles are the biggest problems, proposals must address this issue at a minimum. Teams can choose to address problems of focus, foliage, missing images, and PTZ functionality, as desired. Teams can also choose to use analog cameras, digital cameras, or both. If requested in the proposals, ST may loan the actual cameras and control systems that we use. Since we are looking for autonomous problem detection, the outcome must notify a person who is sitting at a computer. This could be done through email, SNMP trap or table, or any other method teams come up with.

Format of Final Project:

Teams can choose how they will communicate the results of their research. Keep in mind that the project's sponsor only has about 15 minutes to dedicate to understanding your efforts, as she has several solutions to review. You can provide an in-person demonstration -- recorded on video -- write a short paper, provide a dissertation with an executive summary, or come up with your own way of presenting your results. You must both communicate your results and document your project well enough that someone else can reproduce it.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Science and Technology;

Comments:

For proposal purposes, teams can plan for Samsung SNP-6320H cameras for IP-based systems and SCP-2373 for analog. Both of these are capable of pan, tilt, and zoom; teams can use these features or not. Proposals can request additional hardware to build a system. When a proposal is accepted, ST will provide current hardware from our stock, which may differ from what is requested.

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

ID: DipLab1722101

Road Well Traveled: History of U.S Economic Sanctions on Nicaragua since 1979

Economic Section

U.S. Mission to Nicaragua

Overview:

US Embassy Managua requests a catalogue and description of U.S. economic restrictions against Nicaragua since 1979. These will primarily be economic sanctions, but could also include other restrictions such as limitations of the sale of U.S. military equipment to Nicaragua. Since 1979 with the fall of the Somoza dictatorship and the rise of the Sandinista party (FSLN) headed then and now by Daniel Ortega, the United States has frequently turned to economic sanctions or other restrictions to attempt to influence Nicaraguan decisions. Some of the actions since 1979 include the trade embargo of 1985, the 1994 FRAA Section 527 which threatened the elimination of bilateral assistance programs unless the Secretary of State issued a waiver stating that Nicaragua was compensating American citizens for expropriated property, and the Fiscal Transparency law which resulted in US assistance being restricted in FY2011 and FY2012, the elimination of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact due to concerns about Nicaragua's presidential and municipal elections, and other actions. Since the resolution of the last 1994 FRAA Section 527 case in August 2015, there have been no active sanctions program directed at Nicaragua. However, this may change with the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (PL 114-328) signed in December 2016 which include sections 1261 to 1265 related to the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 (PL 115-31) signed in May 2017 which include Section 7070 provisions related to Georgia and Crimea, and with the pending NICA Act (H.R. 1918 and S.972) which is directed at Nicaragua. The project will inform US government officials about the history of our economic restrictions against Nicaragua which will influence ongoing engagement with Nicaragua.

Format of Final Project:

Information about the beginning, end, scope, and (if possible) impact of the restriction would be helpful, including links to public (open source) information about those restrictions, such as links to U.S. legislation or regulations. This should take the form of an easy reference chart with the key information followed by a report with additional details of the actions.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic Sanctions; International Relations; Western Hemisphere Studies;

Comments:

Thanks and we look forward to working with you!

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab1722102

Building Automation Systems (BAS) Secure Envelopment Study

Cyber and Technology Security Directorate/Office of Technology Innovation and Engineering/Facility Technologies Division

Diplomatic Security

Overview:

Current technical solution sets for the securing and monitoring of dissimilar Building Automation Systems (BAS) and related Industrial Control Systems (ICS - i.e.: Embassy power, water, and waste processing plants) are lacking scientific study and research to improve these systems' secure operations. Often, each BAS/ICS has an operating system with differing levels of configurable security parameters (which must be assumed weak) used to fend off cyber-attacks; these systems also have sparse/non-existent remote off-site connectivity.

This project seeks solutions that addresses networking access, prevents cyber intrusions and manipulation of BAS/ICS, and that can be used across any system. The study should focus on innovations and possible scientific research models that could be applied to this long standing security risk set. The study must include cost effective and simple to implement processes and/or hardware solution sets.

Format of Final Project:

Final products can be presented in the following formats: scientific results study, recommended solutions sets, or possible beta hardware/software solution feasibility testing/results

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Science and Technology;

Comments:

This project must be field implementable in harsh overseas environments where stable power and network-internet connectivity are not always reliable and bandwidth is limited.

Maximum Number of Projects: 5

ID: DipLab172298

International Efforts in Worksite Health Promotion

Occupational Health/Wellness

Medical Services

Overview:

We would like to explore how multi-national and national companies promote health both within their organization and throughout the community(s) in which they are involved. How can the Dept. of State build relationships with these companies to improve our own efforts with wellness programs, innovations, and initiatives at our international posts.

Format of Final Project:

Research paper or data analysis of what is out there...what are multi-national companies doing in regard to worksite health promotion to improve the health and wellness of their employees AND the communities with which they could have an impact... are they involved with the State Department Posts in their country of operation? If so, how? If not, why not? Have they formed partnerships with the State Department to improve the health and wellness of the community around the Post?

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Education & Cultural Studies; Food Security; Global Health; International Relations; Public-Private Partnerships; Health Promotion;

Comments:

I realize that this is probably a new, and rather unique area of study. The International Assn. of Worksite Health Promotion is planning to conduct a global conference about this subject in the Spring of 2018. It would be an opportunity for the information found by this project to be presented there...

Maximum Number of Projects: 10

ID: DipLab172299

Improving PD Messaging

Cultural Affairs

Public Affairs to Guatemala

Overview:

How can PD messaging effectively counter reality of migration (positive impact of remittances, stories of success, anything is better than the life I have now)

How to reach youth and parents in agricultural communities?

The messaging from PD has focused on the dangers people will face on the road from Guatemala to the U.S. and how it has been quite destructive for people as well as for their local communities. The personal dangers range from losing significant amounts of money to death itself. Communities lose their labor force and cultural integrity. However this message is weakened by the many signs of wealth that come from remittances such as multiple story houses and new vehicles that show up in the most remote villages. People are receptive to the message of the dangers of travel since they know someone who has not made it across, but they see those who have as fortunate and prosperous stories that make the risk worth the while. One of the challenges PD faces in countries like Guatemala is how to optimize the message we are sending without losing credibility on the face of construction work and other luxuries that motivate locals to migrate. How do we improve our reach of youth and parents in agricultural communities?

Format of Final Project:

4-page options memo

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

International Relations;

Comments:

You may compare data from Mexico, El Salvador and Honduras to make suggestions of success stories and lessons learnt.

Maximum Number of Projects: 5

ID: DipLab1724103

The Role and Influence of Diaspora in the U.S.-India Relationship

The Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

U.S. Mission to India

Overview:

Recent government indicators point to an Indian diaspora of as many as 27 million individuals worldwide. Diaspora engagement policy seeks to define these individuals as potential national assets rather than as "ex-pats". Fifteen years ago, in 2002, India published the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora. The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has been incorporated as a part of the Ministry of External Affairs. The proposed research will investigate India's relationship with its diaspora, the United States' relationship with its own American Citizens on the subcontinent, and how these respective communities impact bilateral relations and domestic policy back home. The research will consider the mandate and effectiveness of governmental diaspora engagement and the influence of these publics on commercial, diplomatic, political, and economic policies and practice in India and the United States.

Format of Final Project:

Six to ten page executive summary (we would appreciate visibility on any publications that come out of this research) including relevant data analysis.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Civil Society; Communications; Democracy & Human Rights; Economic & Finance Issues; Education & Cultural Studies; Gender Studies; International Relations; Sociology; South/Central Asian Studies; Diaspora Issues;

Comments:

The Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs at U.S. Consulate Chennai is headed by a career Foreign Service Officer and staffed by Americans and locally employed staff with significant IR research experience. The proposed research question stems from the literature, e.g. "The Other One Percent: Indians in America" as well as ongoing efforts world-wide to understand the role and influence of diaspora populations on bilateral relations and domestic policy.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab1724106

Effective Anti-corruption Reforms

Office of Political and Economic Affairs

Western Hemisphere Affairs to Guatemala

Overview:

In recent years, Guatemala has made progress in its efforts to eradicate pervasive corruption that has long affected the country. In 2015, after weeks of large public protests against official corruption, the then-sitting president and vice president, along with other high-level officials, were jailed on corruption charges. Fighting corruption became a primary theme of the 2015 presidential election and the winner, Jimmy Morales, has reiterated anti-corruption and accountability as key issues for his presidency. The government has since brought corruption charges in a number of high profile cases against both government officials and powerful private sector actors. To date, however, none of these cases has resulted in a conviction.

While the government acted decisively to bring charges of corruption against individuals, it has been less successful at implementing systemic reforms to strengthen public institutions. This could result in a return to the previous corrupt practices by powerful individuals once high profile cases cease to dominate the news and public interest in anti-corruption efforts diminishes.

Project Proposal: Identify and characterize successful examples of anti-corruption and institution strengthening reforms that have been implemented in other countries. Using the examples of successful action in other countries, recommend reforms that could be implemented in Guatemala to reduce corruption.

Format of Final Project:

As the team feels appropriate.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement; Democracy & Human Rights; Economic & Finance Issues; International Development; International Law; International Relations; Narcotics & Law Enforcement; Western Hemisphere Studies;

Comments:

n/a

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Survival After LDC Graduation: Cabo Verde's Long Fight for Sustainability

Political/ Economic Affairs

Economic and Business Affairs to Cabo Verde

Overview:

Thanks in part to a locally peaceful transition from colony to independent country in 1975 and an educated and capable workforce, Cabo Verde graduated from the World Bank's list of least developed countries (LDC) in 2007. It is one of only four countries (Botswana, Maldives, and Samoa) to do so. While the development that leads a country to graduation is clearly beneficial, the loss of LDC status at graduation may result in important economic costs due to the loss of access to the International Support Measures (ISM) such as bilateral development assistance and technical assistance.

Cabo Verde remains heavily dependent on external financing such as official development assistance and remittances. While graduation may indicate greater resilience and/or reduced exposure to structural vulnerabilities, Cabo Verde remains particularly vulnerable to exogenous shocks. Moreover, the loss of eligibility for Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) provisions resulting from the graduation process has narrowed the policy space available to address these challenges. As a result indebtedness has increased substantially and debt has tripled, accelerating the increasing trend of the previous decade, to reach 128% of GDP in 2016. This partly reflects increased expenditure for compensating for the effects of the international financial crisis and the loss of donor aid. Cabo Verde runs structural current account deficits and relies heavily on external finance to support its capital accumulation.

Cabo Verde is a small archipelago with minimal natural resources and a population of only 550,000. At least as many Cabo Verdeans live in the diaspora, mostly in Portugal and the Boston area. There was no indigenous population when the Portuguese colonized in the 15th century. The climate is arid, and only around 10% of the land is arable. It enjoys a stable economy with the escudo pegged to the euro and a stable democratic government. Approximately 25% of Cabo Verde's GDP comes from tourism, mostly Europeans coming for the beaches. Another 15% comes from family remittances. Cabo Verde will be the first country in the world to complete its second Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact.

Although the country has advanced remarkably on the development trajectory, it suffers from a number of serious problems. Growth is estimated at over 4% in 2016, a recovery from 1.5% in 2015, but that is not enough to bring down the debt (128% in 2016). For 2017 and beyond, debt is likely to continue increasing from government liabilities for largely insolvent state-owned enterprises. Official figures put unemployment at 15%, and most observers believe that youth unemployment is close to 40%. Nearly 30% of the population lives in poverty.

Consolidating its achievements as a middle income country and strengthening the conditions for poverty reduction and shared prosperity will be key challenges for Cabo Verde. Given the strengths and weaknesses, what strategy can the country develop to overcome the debt issue and lack of financing?

Format of Final Project:

Strategy paper with actions and actors identified

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

African Studies; Economic & Finance Issues; International Relations; International Finance;

Comments:

This question is, clearly, broader than Cabo

Maximum Number of Projects: 4

ID: DipLab1724108

Defining IoTs and Their Secure Operation

Cyber and Technology Security Directorate/Office of Technology Innovation and
Engineering/Facilities Technology Division

Diplomatic Security

Overview:

The scientific description and constitution of an Internet of Things (IoT) device are not well defined for the U.S. Government (USG). Without definition, the transmissions and connectivity of such devices cannot be properly secured. Currently the only published standards to improve upon this realm of pervasive computing is published by Underwriters Lab (UL2900-1,2).

The primary goal of this project is to define in simplified language what constitutes an IoT device in the government realm (not a straight forward issue). The second goal is to determine what scientific research and current solution sets (in combination) can be used to detect, segregate, and protect from compromise rogue and legitimate IoT devices on Department of State wireless networks. The solution set must be scalable across the world, back feed into a dB crawling tool (e.g., Splunk dB) to provide detection and after-the-fact forensics, and not be cost prohibitive. The third goal is to define IoT network characteristics that can be keyed in a dB crawling tool (e.g. Splunk) to provide insight and detectability of IoT connectivity and creative location correlation methodologies. The fourth and final goal is to research/develop low cost methods/field tools to perform spot checks and detect IoT presence, log characteristics, and determine IoT type (refrigerator, coffee maker, LED light etc.) within a building, office suite, and/or single room. The method/tool needs to have a small form factor so as to be easily transportable by a single individual.

Format of Final Project:

Information report outlining solutions to the four parts of this project, review of current IoT security standards – which are best for State Department adoption, testing results for the research/proof of concept for 1) dB detection characteristics and 2) the low cost IoT discovery method/tool.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Science and Technology;

Comments:

N/A

Maximum Number of Projects: 5

Countering Violent Extremism and Youth Radicalization in Universities

Political Section of the U.S. Consulate General of Karachi, Pakistan

South and Central Asian Affairs / Embassy: Pakistan

Overview:

Senior officials from universities, government, and security agencies have acknowledged growing radicalization on university campuses across Pakistan, particularly in the fifth largest city of the world (Karachi). The U.S. government's efforts to increase the capacity of universities – as well as civilian institutions, government, military, and NGOs – to counter violent extremism and strengthen the government's counterinsurgency and counterterrorism capabilities are critical to our efforts against militancy and radical messaging. No single factor explains the growing lack of tolerance on Pakistan's campuses, which have been ascribed to political, ethnic, and sectarian tensions. Historically, political parties and other international groups started influencing Pakistan's student unions and councils in the 1970s and 1980s, changing heated intellectual debates into violent clashes. In terms of "hard" strategies, universities have since turned to constructing boundary walls, installing barbed wires, relying on CCTV cameras, and buying weapons to secure universities. In terms of "soft" strategies, universities have focused on sports, arts, and alternative messaging. This comparative project will be used by political officers and USAID development officers to inform policies related to countering youth radicalization.

Key questions include:

- How have universities responded to violent extremism (CVE) and youth radicalization on multicultural university campuses?
- How have universities defined "success" and "failure" of CVE programs?
- What specific policies have led to "success" in the short-, medium-, and long-term?

Format of Final Project:

One-page summary of key findings, twenty-page research report, and 10-minute PowerPoint presentation (via DVC) for an executive-level audience. Ideally, the research report would include: a. A literature review with preliminary findings; b. A qualitative description of specific CVE strategies on university campuses; c. A matrix of indicators, or an indicator assessment tool or "index", determined by the team to measure outcomes of CVE strategies; and d. A section analyzing case studies and their potential relevance and applicability to Pakistan.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Civil Society; Conflict, Stabilization, & Reconstruction; Counter Terrorism; Democracy & Human Rights; Human Rights; International Development; International Law; International Relations; Narcotics & Law Enforcement; Public-Private Partnerships; Psychology; Religious Studies; South/Central Asian Studies

Comments:

This project is best suited for students in public policy (counter-terrorism security, human rights, and qualitative assessment methodology) and political science (comparative politics, international relations, or political psychology). We are open to innovative methods to address the research questions and will work with the research team to refine methodology.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab1725110

Foreign Investment in Czech Republic/Czech Investment in the United States

Political and Economic Section

European and Eurasian Affairs to Czech Republic

Overview:

Embassy Prague is requesting help in researching Czech investment in the United States and U.S investment in the Czech Republic. Our new Ambassador Designate Stephen King has said that promoting these two types of investments will be one of his top priorities.

Team

1:/strong> Embassy Prague would like help assessing the impact of American foreign Direct Investment in the Czech Republic. Unfortunately, the Czech government only keeps figures on business deals that involve Czech Investment, their economic development arm. We would need someone to take these figures and utilize other open source materials to gather an accurate assessment. We would also ask them to compare this to Chinese and Russian investment in the country. The Czech government has made it a priority to attract investment from both Beijing and Moscow.

Team

2:/strong> The other team would be tasked with looking at Czech investment in the United States. The Czech economy has matured over the last 25 years and companies are now looking for new opportunities outside the country and the European Union. Right now, the number of investors in the United States is quite small. However, we expect this number to grow over the next few years. We would like them to look at who is investing, what the impact has been on the United States, and help conceptualize what we can do to increase Czech investment in the United States.

Format of Final Project:

Final products would be a short port. Details would be discussed with the team.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

European & Eurasian Studies; International Development; International Relations;

Comments:

Thanks!

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

The Impact of English on Violent Extremism

Regional English Language Office for Central and East Africa

Educational and Cultural Affairs to Tanzania

Overview:

The U.S. State Department's Office of English Language Programs, through its Regional English Language Offices (RELOs) and U.S. Missions around the world, offers after-school English classes to at-risk youth in over 80 countries as a means of introducing U.S. culture, fostering mutual understanding between these host country nationals and Americans, and enhancing eligibility for educational and employment opportunities. Many of these English Access Microscholarship classes are Muslim-majority. Other English language learning programs, including English for imam classes and English/book clubs, are offered to Muslim populations as a way of promoting interfaith dialogue and tolerance. While it can be relatively easy to assess language progress in these programs, measuring changes in attitudes and behaviors—such as radicalization and participation in violent extremist activities—poses greater challenges. While there has been a good amount of research conducted on the correlation between education and radicalization, there is little exploring the effectiveness of language programs in countering violent extremism, one of the department's predominant foreign policy goals.

We propose a project that explores this relationship. Is there any evidence that programs advancing language and cultural proficiency can have a tempering effect on radicalization and violent extremism? What realistic ways of measuring changes in attitudes and behaviors of participants in the aforementioned programs are available? Are there successful examples of language/cultural programs from other countries being used to counter violent extremism? Which language and cultural content is most likely to lead to changes (i.e., foster empathy, develop tolerance, build resilience to extremism)? What factors made them successful? Are there successful examples of virtual or online language/cultural programs or exchanges aimed at preventing online radicalization? Are some marginalized populations, such as girls, refugees and internally displaced persons, more likely to benefit from such programs than others? The answers to these questions and more can help inform and shape the development of the department's language and cultural programs—its soft power—so as to be more effective in addressing one of the most prominent issues it faces: Radicalization and violent extremism.

Format of Final Project:

The ideal deliverable is a 20-25 page research paper.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Counter Terrorism; Education & Cultural Studies; English Language Learning;

Comments:

Office of English Language Programs: <https://eca.state.gov/about-bureau/organizational-structure/office-english-language-programs/>

Regional English Language Office for Central and East Africa:
<https://tz.usembassy.gov/education-culture/regional-english-language-office/>

'Access' Program: <https://exchanges.state.gov/non-us/program/english-access-microscholarship-program/>

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab1725112

Reengaging: Romanian-American Jurists in Diaspora

Public Diplomacy

U.S. Mission to Romania

Overview:

PAS Bucharest proposes that students create a database of first and second generation Romanians in the United States that work in the judicial system (e.g., judges and others involved in the administration of justice - prosecutors, public defenders, cops, justice-focused civil activists, probation officers, private trial attorneys, corrections officers etc.). The purpose of identifying these professionals is to create a line of communication for potential future partnerships and prospective speakers. These Romanian-Americans have the potential of supporting efforts to strengthen the rule of law in Romania, increase international cooperation.

Format of Final Project:

Public Diplomacy is looking for a data base to draw contacts and their information from. We hope it will include contact information and a detailed bio. In the bio we would like each contact's background, involvement in the judicial system, current ties to Romania, personal experience in diaspora, etc.)

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

International Law; International Relations; Diaspora;

Comments:

Firstly, thank you for choosing to work on our project. We are truly grateful to have your help with this project.

To get you started, please see the first link to an article on Romanian- Americans. The second, is from Embassy Bucharest's website and is about the U.S. Romanian strategic partnership. We look forward to working together!

<http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Pa-Sp/Romanian-Americans.html/>

<https://ro.usembassy.gov/20-years-strategic-partnership/>

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

ID: DipLab1725113

Somalia Peacekeeping Analysis

Bureau of African Affairs, Office of Security Affairs

African Affairs

Overview:

The current political and security landscape in Somalia has been shaped in large part by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which has spent more than 10 years in the country. The mission has changed Somalia, but has also had a profound and complex effect on the countries taking part. Some troop contributing countries (TCCs) have strong domestic security considerations, including shared borders with Somalia. All TCCs derive varying levels of income from the support provided by international partners in order to take part in the mission. In 2014-15, the estimated income derived from EU salary payments was equivalent to 6% of Kenya's total defense budget, and 131% of Burundi's total defense budget. TCCs have paid a heavy price in casualties, which are often not publicly disclosed. The TCCs themselves have varied and complex domestic political situations, which range from democratic to highly autocratic. Why do TCCs choose to participate in AMISOM? How has participation in peacekeeping missions affected the domestic politics of TCCs? What are the risks to successful transition of security provision to Somali Security forces? What are the possible domestic effects of withdrawal of AMISOM TCCs?

Format of Final Project:

Resultant analysis should be a 5000 word paper with key findings, and recommendations for both U.S. diplomatic engagement efforts and foreign assistance programming that will enable effective transition of security responsibilities from AMISOM to Somali security forces.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

African Studies; Anthropology; Arms Control/Non-proliferation; Counter Terrorism; International Development; International Law; International Relations; Political/Military Affairs;

Comments:

Research paper should include analysis of each of the AMISOM TCCs, as well as analysis focused on African Union.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab1725114

Disarmament and Defections in Somalia

Bureau of African Affairs, Office of Security Affairs

African Affairs

Overview:

Disarmament, demobilization, reconciliation and reintegration (DDRR) activities are crucial aspects of how conflict can end and post-conflict spaces can encourage peace. Is disarmament possible in the Somali context? Which aspects, particularly with regard to reintegration, must be accomplished in order to allow for ex-al-Shabaab fighters to re-join Somali civil society? How can DDRR activities be established so that there is harmony between the reintegration of a Somali National Army (SNA) member and an al-Shabaab member? How does the clan fabric of Somalia affect this transition?

Format of Final Project:

Resultant analysis should be a 5000 word paper that 1) cites key case studies of DDRR efforts around the globe that would be relevant for consideration of lessons learned/best practices for Somalia, 2) includes key findings, and 3) recommends U.S. foreign assistance programming that could advance DDRR goals in Somalia.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

African Studies; Anthropology; Arms Control/Non-proliferation; Conflict, Stabilization, & Reconstruction; Economic & Finance Issues; International Law; International Relations; Political/Military Affairs;

Comments:

The Bureau of African Affairs, Office of Security Affairs (AF/SA) has a draft paper with some case studies for review by chosen Diplomacy Lab team.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab1725115

Retirement from the Somali National Army: What would a pension program look like?

Bureau of African Affairs, Office of Security Affairs

African Affairs

Overview:

How do Somalis establish their identity with regard to conflict? How do different entities, such as the Somali National Army (SNA), the Federal Member State (FMS) forces, and al-Shabaab, forge their sense of duty as custodians of what it means to be 'Somali,' and what happens to that identity when fighting stops? How can the SNA and the FMS' transition their security actors in a manner that maintains their commitment to a social compact? What does it mean for security actors to 'retire' in Somali society writ large?

Format of Final Project:

Resultant analysis should be a 5000 word paper that 1) cites key case studies of military pension programs around the globe that would be relevant for consideration of lessons learned/best practices for Somalia, 2) includes key findings, and 3) recommends U.S. policy and/or foreign assistance programming that could help Somalia provide an appropriate offramp for aging members of its military force.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

African Studies; Anthropology; Arms Control/Non-proliferation; Conflict, Stabilization, & Reconstruction; Counter Terrorism; International Relations; Political/Military Affairs; Sociology; Statistics;

Comments:

The Bureau of African Affairs, Office of Security Affairs (AF/SA) has a draft paper with some case studies for review by chosen Diplomacy Lab team.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

A Study on Volunteer Service - Does It Really Make Better Citizens?

South Central European Affairs

European and Eurasian Affairs to Serbia

Overview:

Volunteer programs are increasingly popular means of engaging young people in civic activities, with the theory that they provide skills, leadership opportunities, and a broader perspective. Embassy Belgrade would like to explore the possibility of developing durable volunteer programming to Serbian youth as a way to develop civic engagement and constructively occupy their free time. Extracurricular programming is notably minimal for young Serbians, while unemployment rates are high, and the lure of quasi-criminal soccer fan clubs can be very powerful for young men. These factors contribute to a culture of violence and organized crime, as well as the threat of violent extremism in certain populations.

Members of the international community based in Belgrade have identified long-term volunteer programs (such as AmeriCorps and PeaceCorps) as a potential means of combatting youth discontent that both feeds into and stems from these social concerns. As funding and program longevity are always concerns, an ideal solution would involve some kind of durable program within the government, education system, or some other institution.

Embassy Belgrade is looking for research on the following topics:

1. Evidence that long-term volunteer programs provide improvements in social markers such as civic engagement, education, employment, decreases in crime, general satisfaction with government and society, and involvement with community groups.
2. Examples of national or local volunteer programming in other countries (U.S.-sponsored or otherwise). Examples can range from mandatory service hours for high school graduation to multi-year “service-corps”-style employment.
3. Examples of low-cost programming and suggestions for implementing self-sustaining programming in Serbia.

Format of Final Project:

Final product will be a 10-15 page research report.

Civil Society; International Relations; Youth Issues; Countering Violent Extremism;

Comments:

For additional information about Embassy Belgrade, please visit our website:

<https://rs.usembassy.gov/>

Additional resources of interest include:

- RCC Report: “Initiatives to Prevent/Counter Violent Extremism in South East Europe: A Survey of Regional Issues, Initiatives and Opportunities” http://www.rcc.int/docs_archive/
- The Helsinki Committee’s “Opinion poll conducted among the Sandžak youth: How Susceptible are the Youth to Islamic Extremism” <http://www.helsinki.org.rs/doc/files35.pdf/>

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab1725117

Identifying and Assisting "Tipping Point Countries" for Internet Freedom Globally

Multilateral and Global Affairs, Internet Freedom, Business and Human Rights Team

Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

Overview:

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor's Office of Multilateral and Global Affairs' Internet Freedom and Business and Human Rights Team is looking for a dynamic team of students to help us identify "tipping point" countries globally in the area of internet freedom. These are countries that are showing a negative trend/decline in internet freedom, but have not yet become truly repressive internet environments like Russia or China. Ideally 2-3 countries from each geographically region (the Western Hemisphere, Africa, Europe, East Asia and the Pacific, South and Central Asia, and the Near East) will be identified.

Once tipping point countries are identified and agreed upon, part two of this project would seek to develop a comprehensive strategy approach for each country and/or region for USG engagement in both multilateral and bilateral fora aimed at pulling back these countries from the ink.

Format of Final Project:

In phase one, we envision the students producing a research paper detailing their analysis in determining which countries are at the "tipping point" on internet freedom. In the second phase, we would be looking for shorter strategy and options papers on each tipping point country, or each geographical region if the recommended strategies are sufficiently similar.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Democracy & Human Rights; Human Rights; Information & Communication Technology; International Relations; Science and Technology; Law;

Comments:

Freedom House's annual Freedom of the Net Reports would be an excellent starting point for this research project.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab1725118

Mitigate the Violent Peace in the Great Lakes region of Africa - The Small Arms and Light Weapons (SA/LW) and Conventional Ammunition (CA) threat.

PM/WRA

Political-Military Affairs

Overview:

Goal

Implement effective and efficient Conventional Weapons Destruction (CWD) activities in the Great Lakes region of Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The Threat

Stockpiles of excess SA/LW pose a range of security-related and humanitarian threats. Terrorists, insurgents, and criminals exploit poorly-secured munitions to fuel instability and violence that imperil U.S. security interests. Where poorly-secured stockpiles include MANPADS, the consequences of theft or loss could have wide-ranging, catastrophic outcomes. Further, poorly-maintained stockpiles may explode without notice, devastating nearby civilian populations. CWD programs assist partner countries with destroying their excess, unstable, and at-risk munitions (including MANPADS); improving physical security at munitions storage facilities; and bringing stockpile management practices into line with international standards.

Format of Final Project:

Five-page research paper that includes information and options for prospective approaches to implementing effective and efficient CWD activities in the African Great Lakes region. Since PM/WRA is a DC-based program, an oral presentation of the findings is possible, depending on the schools location relative to Washington, DC.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

African Studies; Arms Control/Non-proliferation; Conflict, Stabilization, & Reconstruction; International Relations; Political/Military Affairs;

Comments:

PM/WRA Background

The mission of the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) is to reduce the threats posed to civilian security by at-risk, illicitly-proliferated, and indiscriminately-used conventional weapons. PM/WRA manages the U.S. Conventional Weapons Destruction (CWD) program by assisting countries around the world with destroying and securing vulnerable stockpiles of SA/LW (including man-portable air defense systems, or MANPADS) and remediating landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW).

PM/WRA has provided over \$2.8 billion in CWD assistance to over 95 countries across the globe since 1993. To date, PM/WRA has supported a wide range of programming including humanitarian demining, SALW threat reduction, victim assistance, and mine risk education.

For more information on PM/WRA, please visit: <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/wra/>.

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Assessing the Impact of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

Multilateral Nuclear and Security Affairs

International Security and Nonproliferation

Overview:

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) entered into force in 1970 and is approaching its 50th anniversary. Since that time it has become nearly universal. Before the NPT some projected that 15, 20, or 25 countries would soon have nuclear weapons. That hasn't happened. While it is widely believed that the NPT is responsible for this development, causation is hard to prove. One research question is whether, building on past academic work, more evidence, including case studies, can be developed to assess causation.

Another potential impact of the NPT involves efforts by NPT Parties to enforce compliance with its terms. Several countries (Iraq, North Korea, Iran) were found in non-compliance with their safeguards obligations under the NPT, and were subject to concerted international pressure to return to compliance and eliminate their nuclear weapons programs. However, this pressure was generally exerted outside of NPT processes and relied on the UN Security Council to enforce the norms of the NPT. A second research question is whether and how the NPT influenced the ability of the international community to exert effective pressure on states in order to enforce compliance and roll back threats to international peace and security.

Format of Final Project:

The final product(s) would be academic papers and/or powerpoint presentations, building on international relations theory and political science methods for testing hypotheses, that lay out evidence regarding the practical impact of the NPT. These might be cited or drawn on in official U.S. activities to commemorate upcoming NPT anniversaries.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Arms Control/Non-proliferation; International Relations;

Comments:

Here are references to relevant studies by Jim Walsh and Frank Gavin:

<http://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/files/publication/wmdcno41.pdf>

http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/ISEC_a_00205

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

Europe and Eurasia: Foreign Assistance in Context

EUR/ACE

European and Eurasian Affairs

Overview:

Goal: Identify possible duplication by other actors in the field, leverage points, cooperation spheres, and coordination ideas for U.S. Government funding; Identify creditable U.S. assistance in multilateral pass through in the field; Be able to encourage (and cite when appropriate) indirect programs with benefits for the United States and in line with U.S. policy goals.

Explore and source foreign assistance that flows into Central Asia and into Europe in the form of preferential loans targeting development, bilateral assistance, regional assistance, technical expertise, and additional assistance filtered through IFIs, regional organizations, and multilateral institutions. Note best practices in implementation successes.

Answer questions such as: What does the matrix look like? Who controls the goals? Who controls the purse? Who controls the implementers? What impact does assistance have locally? Who does the United States align with and who does the United States compete with for influence? Who benefits? What standards get set? What are the indicators and who reports them? How do donors coordinate with one another? Is donor coordination better in some sectors than others?

Format of Final Project:

Final project format could include a dataset of financial assistance projects found, monetary size, donor, implementer, beneficiaries, and time period of work, coupled with a white paper analysis that answers some of the questions posed about impact and political reach based on the data. A presentation summarizing what the researchers found would be helpful and welcomed.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; European & Eurasian Studies; International Development; International Relations; South/Central Asian Studies;

Comments:

Suggestion: The project could be divided. One team could focus on Europe and one team could focus on Eurasia/Central Asia.

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

Beyond the Sage on the Stage: Adapting Experiential Learning to the Criminal Justice Sector

Office of Africa and Middle East Programs

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

Overview:

Experiential learning, especially when related to group dynamics, is a powerful concept. It provides opportunities for self and group exploration and experimentation that are not present through traditional learning methods like expert lectures. It offers an environment where participants can try new roles and behaviors that can be applied back to practical problems. It places responsibility and accountability with the students by giving them a personal stake in and ownership of the learning process. In the context of foreign assistance designed to alter the behavior of both individuals and groups, however, experiential learning has been underutilized.

The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs provides policy and programming support to improve the effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness of law enforcement, justice, and corrections institutions abroad. This project is supported by the Africa and Middle East Office and will focus on the Sahel region of West Africa.

INL has traditionally focused on skills transfer to support program and policy goals. This format often relies on subject matter experts or mentors to facilitate classroom lecture for trainees. INL has found that this application of learning often falls short. This is, in part, because we have not adequately addressed attitude and behavioral drivers of performance and included them as explicit learning outcomes. In addition, we have not sufficiently addressed the role group dynamics play in the success or failure of our program and policy goals, as group dynamics play a huge role within hierarchical organizations, between organizations, and between law enforcement and communities.

INL is interested in exploring what a more experiential approach to this work would look like. Through this partnership, the Diplomacy Lab team would first need to understand INL's policy goals, approach, and traditional models of engagement. With this knowledge and its own knowledge and research around education and experiential learning, the team would work collaboratively with INL and its implementer(s) to provide guidance on how to better incorporate experiential learning into its programming. Finally, the team will, context permitting, design an actual experiential learning – focused training in West Africa in collaboration with an INL implementer.

Format of Final Project:

- (1) A final report not to exceed 20 pages (not including annexes) and presentation to INL.
 - a. Summary of experiential learning theory, including group dynamics, and its benefits
 - b. Analysis of where current INL methods of training fall short in advancing learning outcomes through an approach not focused on experiential learning
 - c. Analysis on application of experiential learning to the criminal justice sector foreign assistance
 - d. Design of pilot experiential learning program
- (2) A two-page quick reference guide for incorporating aspects of experiential learning

(3) Context permitting, the team will participate in the design of an actual workshop to pilot experiential learning in an INL program. The parameters of this engagement, including potential participation of the University in the workshop, will be determined through consultation with INL, the University, and implementer.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Anthropology; Communications; Education & Cultural Studies; International Relations; Narcotics & Law Enforcement; Psychology; Sociology;

Comments:

The experiential learning literature is vast. INL encourages interested universities to contrast these approaches with the current mainstream technical assistance model in foreign assistance programs.

Group dynamics are a topic of interest, including the role of individuals and self-awareness in contributing to and shaping group performance.

The AK Rice institute has pioneered creative approaches to experiential learning, including group relations conferences (<http://www.leadershipakrice.org/approach/>).

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab1725122

Western Balkans: Understanding the Role of Muslim Ideologies and Actors in Promoting and Combatting Violent Extremism

EUR/ACE

Administration

Overview:

Western Balkans: Understanding the Role of Muslim Ideologies and Actors in Promoting and Combatting Violent Extremism

Goal: Explore the role of particular interpretations of Islam and Islamic ideology and various religious actors in radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism, as well as preventing and countering violent extremism, in the Western Balkans region. Provide concrete recommendations for how research on actors and ideologies can be incorporated to improve the effectiveness of public diplomacy and outreach programs; community dialogue, social inclusion, and minority rights programs; leadership training and exchange programs; and other initiatives to counter and prevent violent extremism.

- Compare the role of Albanian-speaking, violent extremist figures online and on the ground with the role of longer-standing ethnic/communitarian conflict/tensions in Bosnia, Albania, Macedonia, and other Western Balkans countries.
- What efforts are official and unofficial religious communities on the ground taking to counter violent extremism, and how effective are these efforts? What effects do external influences, for example textbooks and proselytization originating outside the region, have on violent extremism?

Note: This project requires Albanian language proficiency among at least some research team members.

Format of Final Project:

Research paper (app. 20 pages) and options memo (app. 3 pages), other deliverables as appropriate

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Counter Terrorism; European & Eurasian Studies; International Relations;

Comments:

This project requires Albanian language proficiency among at least some research team members.

ID: DipLab1726123

The economic impact of ‘green energy’ in the U.S. – what’s next for U.S. businesses?”

Political Economic Section

European and Eurasian Affairs to Germany

Overview:

Rapidly changing energy markets and technological innovation mean that states, cities and private companies are taking the lead in the clean energy transition in the U.S. Declining price curves in wind and solar generation contribute to the diversification of energy generation in the U.S., e.g. regarding clean energy sources, modernizing energy infrastructure, and encouraging clean modes of transportation. In order to fulfill their corporate targets and to sell new technologies, business leaders increasingly look to new markets, new technologies, and new solutions.

Where – in which markets (domestically and internationally) and in which technological areas – do U.S. companies see the biggest potentials for future growth? Ideally, research would highlight illustrative examples and look more closely into different types of businesses (e.g., large and small) from different sectors (e.g., new and old economy).

Format of Final Project:

Data Analysis and/or presentation

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; International Relations;

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab1726124

“What are U.S. business experiences with the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework?”

Political Economic Section -- US Consulate Munich

European and Eurasian Affairs to Germany

Overview:

The EU-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework (PSF) was designed by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the European Commission to provide companies on both sides of the Atlantic with a mechanism to comply with data protection requirements when transferring personal data from the European Union to the United States in support of transatlantic commerce. To join the PSF, a U.S.-based organization is required to self-certify to the Department of Commerce and publicly commit to comply with the Framework's requirements. While joining the Privacy Shield is voluntary, once an eligible organization makes the public commitment to comply with the Framework's requirements, the commitment will become enforceable under U.S. law.

While we in Munich can ask European companies present here about their experiences with the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework, we don't know a whole lot about the state of affairs on the other side of the Atlantic: Which (types of) businesses have sought self-certification under the PSF? What were the motivating factors for these businesses to seek self-certification, and how satisfied were they with self-certification process? Ideally, research would highlight illustrative examples and look more closely into different types of businesses (e.g., large and small) from different sectors (e.g., new and old economy).

Format of Final Project:

Research Paper and/or presentation and/or data analysis

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; European & Eurasian Studies; International Law; International Relations;

Comments:

None

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab1726125

German Youth Social Media Opinions

Public Affairs Munich

European and Eurasian Affairs to Germany

Overview:

What aspects of the German-American relationship positively resonate most in the minds of German youth as related to social media? What can we message to those positive thoughts and what social media format would be best to message and expand that messaging.

Format of Final Project:

data analysis or presentation or options memo

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Communications; International Relations; Marketing; social media;

Comments:

Thank You!

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab1726126

Countering Russian Propaganda and Increasing Appreciation for US in Germany

Public Affairs Munich

European and Eurasian Affairs to Germany

Overview:

In Germany, according to opinion polling, Russia has almost the same popularity as the U.S. What factors have caused German public opinion to equate the two countries as equal despite the values and long positive history that the U.S. and Germany share and the fact that Russia is more of a threat to Germany than an ally? How can we counter Russian messaging and increase positive appreciation for the US in Germany especially in messaging to the 18 to 35 year olds.

Format of Final Project:

Presentation or Data Analysis or Options Memo

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Communications; Information & Communication Technology; International Relations; Marketing; Science and Technology; Social Media;

Comments:

Thank You!!

Maximum Number of Projects: 2

ID: DipLab1728127

Preventing atrocities: the role of law enforcement

Office of Criminal Justice Assistance and Partnership

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

Overview:

Mass atrocities -- large-scale, deliberate violence against civilians -- have devastating human impacts, and make peace and reconciliation more difficult to achieve. In order to effectively respond to potential mass atrocities, we must focus on and understand this type of violence, and ensure that our diplomatic approaches and programs address it. By engaging experts, improving our analysis, building the knowledge of staff and partners, and developing our understanding of the most effective diplomatic and programming responses, the Department is improving its ability to respond to potential mass atrocities. The Atrocities Prevention Board (APB) is a mechanism chaired at the National Security Council that involves senior officials from agencies and offices across the U.S. government, to support more focused monitoring and response to potential atrocity risks. The Department of State supports the work of the White House-led APB to identify priority countries, monitor emerging situations, coordinate with interagency regional and functional offices to monitor risk, develop and disseminate tools, and ensure that agencies utilize the full range of prevention or response capabilities. The APB, in turn, complements ongoing work of the State Department to address mass atrocity risk. The Department of State is honing its ability to effectively intervene at three stages: (1) Prevention: a long-term approach to countries at risk of developing characteristics associated with atrocities; (2) Mitigation: a focus on countries where atrocity risk is high, violence is escalating, and international attention is relatively low; and (3) Response: timely use of expertise, diplomatic outreach, programs, political will, policy and media attention, and leadership to interrupt the imminent or ongoing threat of mass atrocities.

INL administers criminal justice reform policy and programs that can support the primary aims of the APB to prevent, mitigate, and respond to mass atrocities. INL is interested in working with an advanced research team composed at a minimum of masters or PhD level students to identify practical criminal justice approaches that have been or are likely to be effective in addressing the three pronged APB strategy of prevention, mitigation, and response to mass atrocities. This analysis will require a familiarity with criminal justice practices that have been successful in mitigating or deterring atrocities.

Format of Final Project:

Report of findings

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement; International Relations;

Comments:

Genocide prevention taskforce:

<https://www.usmmm.org/confront-genocide/about/initiatives/genocide-prevention-task-force/genocide-prevention-task-force-view-and-download-the-report/>

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab1728128

Assessing CT/CVE Strategies in the G5 Sahel

Public Affairs

African Affairs to Burkina Faso

Overview:

The research project would entail conducting a comparative study of the different countering terrorism and countering violent extremism (CT/CTE) policies and strategies in the G5 Sahel countries (comprising Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad), highlighting those with the most successful results, and those with perhaps less than purposeful results.

The conclusions would then make specific policy recommendations for the Burkina Faso Government for the purpose of CT/CVE efforts based on best practices and lessons learned from countries in similar situations. The project could include a specific focus on how some vulnerable communities and ethnic groups need the Burkinabe government to pay closer attention, and also include an assessment of whether adding targeted deradicalization and rehabilitation programs as part of broader counterterrorism and counter

Format of Final Project:

20 page research paper that includes recommendations on actions as well as data analysis (where data and/or statistics are available).

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

International Relations;

Comments:

Embassy Ouagadougou works as a team in our CVE Working Group which includes DoD, Political and Public Diplomacy. We have a number of Public Diplomacy grants targeting civil society in Burkina Faso, especially areas that are off limits to Americans due to security concerns.

This project could take more than 4 months, depending on how in-depth the students do research.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab1728129

Chinese Investment in Europe

Policy and Global Issues

European and Eurasian Affairs

Overview:

In order to understand the nature of Chinese investment in Europe it would be worthwhile to gather data tailored to answer the questions cited below.

- 1) What are the 15 year trends and forecasts of Chinese investment and trade broken down by sector and country in Europe? How does the investment and trade data compare with stated goals in prior CPC 5- year plans (11th-13th)?
- 2) What are the sub-regional trends and forecasts for Chinese investment in Europe (e.g. EU, Central, South Central, and Eastern European Countries, Eurozone, and former U.S.S.R)
- 3) What is the nature of Chinese motivations/decision-making process in these investments (i.e. are decisions based on private sector/profit motivation or government-directed strategic goals?)
- 4) What is the nature of Chinese participation and leadership in multilateral economic fora (e.g. World Trade Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization)

Format of Final Project:

Please present the information with these four elements: As a 20-50 page research paper Graphics to illustrate important points Data analysis In the form of a presentation synthesizing the major finding.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Cyber Security; East Asian/Pacific Studies; Economic & Finance Issues; Energy Security; European & Eurasian Studies; Information & Communication Technology; International Development; International Law; International Relations; Marketing; Oceans; Public-Private Partnerships; Science and Technology; Statistics; Water Security; Business, Finance, and Investment

Comments:

Please include detailed information on the resources upon which the research is based.

Maximum Number of Projects: 5

ID: DipLab1728130

Commercial Diplomacy: Better Partnerships with U.S. Industry to Organize against Unfair Commercial Advantages

Econ

Western Hemisphere Affairs to Uruguay

Overview:

Objective:

The Embassy's objective of this proposal is to engage Diplomacy Lab resources to assist the Embassy in developing locally relevant strategies with practicable approaches to help U.S. commercial interests effectively compete with foreign competitors.

Overview:

The global market place has undergone fundamental changes this century already. Competitor governments in Europe and Asia have enhanced their efforts to engage worldwide foreign markets commercially. In many cases, foreign competitor companies are backed by significant resources and political commitments of their home governments or are in fact state-owned enterprises. The United States Government is working from a different playbook and cannot advocate on behalf of or represent specific business interests directly – U.S. businesses often do not have the same level of government support and/or sponsorship enjoyed by their foreign competitors. New approaches to commercial diplomacy are needed now more than ever for U.S. commercial interests to remain competitive.

The Embassy has identified three priority economic policy objectives:

1. Promote commerce - partner with Uruguayans in the business, economic and political sectors to promote U.S. commercial activities & trade;
2. Support entrepreneurship - bolster support of women's entrepreneurship; and,
3. Support education and work skills - build interest in 21st century education, knowledge, and skills for greater likelihood of personal advancement and access to international opportunities.

These three policy objectives have great potential for commercial partnerships. The Embassy already makes ample use of the prescriptive, global Department of State and Department of Commerce programs and resources to support U.S. business interests in Uruguay (ref: Department of Commerce, Department of State). However, the Embassy is seeking approaches that take into account local U.S. firms and resources and the socio-economic and political dynamics of Uruguay.

(Key words: international business, business value, commercial diplomacy, public private partnerships, corporate social responsibility, commercial advocacy, national competitiveness.)

Format of Final Project:

The final product format should be a memo or white paper (no more than 10 pages) that provides an executive summary with recommendations for enhanced commercial engagement given the limitations of locally operating U.S. companies and the U.S. Embassy. The final product must not only take into thorough account existing commercial advocacy strategies and tools publicly advertised by the U.S. State Department and the Department of Commerce, but also consider the local cultural, business, and political context in South America.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; International Relations; International Business and Commerce;

Comments:

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

The Embassy is interested in, but not restricted to, identifying potential collaborations with locally operating U.S. business entities in two ways to promote U.S. commercial interests in Uruguay:

- 1) Enhance corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts; and/or,
- 2) Serve as a catalyst for robust public-private partnerships.

Areas of research may also focus on best practices published by U.S. firms in Latin America; it is critical to identify and consider U.S. business value propositions. Relevant business sectors in Uruguay include agriculture, information and communications technology, and energy (renewables) and electric transport. Other sectors may include public health and education, among others.

Relevant Commercial Diplomacy Background:

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): The Embassy last surveyed all 120 U.S. companies in Uruguay regarding private CSR initiatives in 2015. Thirty-seven companies responded of which twenty-six had active CSR activities. The goal of the survey was to identify collaborative opportunities for Embassy engagement. While all of the companies expressed interest in working with the Embassy at the time, the Embassy did not identify or engage in any collaborative activities.

Public Private Partnerships and Trade Missions: Several European Governments have Government-to-Government MOUs for infrastructure projects in Uruguay – the United States does not. Several European Governments also sponsored reverse “trade-missions” sending Uruguayan interests to the EU] to showcase EU products that could be used in Uruguayan public tenders. While the Trade and Development Agency (TDA) funded such reverse trade missions to the United States in the past, they were not intended for a specific opportunity or project. Also, because of Uruguay’s “high income” status, the TDA no longer operates in Uruguay.

Comments:

Although commercial diplomacy as such is not new, research on commercial diplomacy is a relatively recent phenomenon – the direct causal relationship between diplomatic representations abroad and trade volumes is unclear. However, a popular definition states that:

“Commercial diplomacy is the application of tools of diplomacy to help bring out specific commercial gains through promoting exports, attracting inward investment, and preserving outward investment opportunities, and encouraging the benefits of technological transfer.”

Commercial diplomacy is often conflated with economic diplomacy and other types of diplomacy such as trade diplomacy and financial diplomacy. While economic diplomacy is concerned with general economic policy issues and trade agreements, commercial diplomacy is much more specific – “business support” may be the most concise, common term in use.

Maximum Number of Projects: 1

ID: DipLab1728132

Modeling the Market for Chilean Lithium

Economic-Political Section

Western Hemisphere Affairs to Chile

Overview:

Chile has the world's largest reserves of lithium, but has traditionally fallen behind other countries in its pace of extraction due to extensive regulatory requirements. Chilean policymakers have grown increasingly cognizant of rising global demand for lithium, and in January 2016 the Government of Chile (GOC) published a new national policy for the development of Chile's untapped lithium reserves. Under the new policy, the government relies on public-private partnership concessions to exploit untapped lithium reserves aggressively and has pursued exclusive supply agreements with international companies such as U.S. automaker Tesla. It has also sought to incentivize research and development and other value-added activities related to lithium in Chile via a 2017 tender opportunity in which the company with the winning bid would have guaranteed access to a continuous supply of Chilean lithium at preferential prices, provided the company develops capacities in Chile to produce lithium value added products and uses the preferentially priced lithium as an input in the production process. International companies, including those from the United States, have submitted their bids.

Some industry experts have approached Chile's newfound eagerness to capitalize on its lithium wealth with skepticism, noting that the political excitement about lithium as the "next big thing" and source of economic development may have run ahead of level-headed analyses of all the inherent risks involved in projecting the growth in the global lithium market. Embassy Santiago proposes that Diplomacy Lab team(s) develop a quantitative model for the Chilean lithium industry. Specifically, we are interested in sensitivity analyses to evaluate how responsive the model is to demand-side and supply-side risk factors and assumptions. On the demand side, key factors include the development of the electric car industry. On the supply side, the analysis should incorporate geological factors. We are particularly interested in how sensitive demand for Chilean lithium is to Chilean regulatory policies and price incentives.

Format of Final Project:

We would appreciate a detailed research paper as well as a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the university team(s)' research methodology and key findings. We would also appreciate access to the datasets and models developed by the research team(s).

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Economic & Finance Issues; Energy Security; Geography; International Relations; Public-Private Partnerships; Science and Technology; Statistics; Mining Engineering, Industrial Engineering;

Comments:

Chilean government proposal for development of value added lithium projects:

<https://lbtest.corfo.cl/sites/cpp/convocatorialitioen;jsessionid=8SYEambEnWi-2N23dyVeySiZWsm22sBpbf5XcXjdITN0OfRjJGrn!1478186680?resolvetemplatefordevice=true>

American Chamber of Commerce report on the Chilean lithium industry:

<https://www.amchamchile.cl/en/2017/04/litio-el-desafio-de-generar-una-nueva-industria-2/>

Maximum Number of Projects: 3

ID: DipLab1701133

DPU: Diplomacy Processing Unit

Office of Global Partnerships

Secretary of State

Overview:

Despite the innovative nature of the Diplomacy Lab program, we're stuck in the past when it comes to the technology used to manage the partnership. Right now, an unnecessarily complicated web of Word Docs, Excel Sheets, and cluttered inboxes are used to manage project proposals, facilitate the bidding process, and oversee the projects in motion.

We're hoping to streamline the entire process by building a platform where State Department offices can submit projects and DipLab partner institutions can review these proposals, bid on them, and track their progress throughout the semester. Rather than work with an outside organization to build this platform, we'd like to work with a team of computer science students to get this up and running.

We don't plan to be prescriptive about the platform - we want to collaborate with you to come up with something that will be useful to all parties involved.

Format of Final Project:

Prototype of new Diplomacy Lab platform.

Potential Areas of Useful Expertise or Interest:

Computer Science;#

Comments:

N/A

Maximum Number of Projects: 1