

Dear Friends,

Wishing you a very Happy New Year!

We have had quite a year! Among hundreds of visitors, events, and meetings, the highlight was celebrating the 30th anniversary of the San Antonio Council for International Visitors (SACIV). The event was a wonderful evening of celebration with our many supporters and friends. We honored our founder, Irma Reyes, with a scholarship in her name. We owe a very special thank you to our Emeritus Board members and all those who have supported this organization over the years.



Our board has been hard at work. Our member engagement committee has been strengthening ties with our members and have been meeting with them regularly. We encourage all of our members to get involved not only in home hospitality, but in helping to escort our many groups as they attend their scheduled meetings. Members can serve as representatives of the organization when our staff is unable to attend meetings due to influx of many groups at one time.

I want to welcome our new incoming Board Members Ann Nguyen and Patricia Stout. Our board is very active and involved and we ended 2019 in an excellent financial position through the efforts of our Executive Director’s fiscal management. The board approved our 2020 Budget and we are looking forward to continued growth. Some of the goals we set for ourselves last year were to diversify and add to our membership, especially with the home hospitality program, an opportunity that is so critical in our mission. We are not yet at full potential but have made great strides in adding to our existing support group. I continue to ask that each of you consider telling a friend about our great organization and encouraging them to join.

Our staff and several board members are travelling to Washington, DC this month for the Global Ties US “National Meeting”, which is extremely important to our mission. It is important to remind ourselves that we are working with our Department of State as partners and citizen diplomats, sharing with our visitors many opportunities that San Antonio has to offer.

It is an exciting time at SACIV and we are all very enthusiastic about the coming year and the many visitors that are schedule to be with us. Special thanks to Cecilia and Tania, our incredible staff, and to my fellow Board Members for their support.

Best wishes and good heath in 2020!

Sincerely,

Jo Ann Andera
Chair, SACIV Board of Directors

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Message from the Chair
- 2 Announcements & Upcoming Programs
- 3 SACIV Welcomes Two Delegations
 Exploring Energy Issues
- 4 Global Leaders Examine Trade Policy
- 5 Kyrgyz Government Spokespersons
 Welcomed to San Antonio
- 6 European #ChangeMakers Exchange
 Cyber Security Strategies
- 7 Uzbek Visitors Explore the US Criminal
 Justice System
- 8 French Visitors Discuss Strategies for
 Integration of Immigrants & Refugees
- 9 Lithuanian Delegation Explores the US
 Immigration System
- 10 Visitor Quotes
- 11 Visitor Quotes
- 12 My Exchange Journey
- 13 Russian Entrepreneurs Share Best Practices
- 14 Saudi Officials Examine US Foreign Policy
- 15 Peruvian Digital Influencers Inspire Youth
 Engagement
- 16 SACIV Celebrates Three Decades at “30th
 Anniversary Dinner” Event
- 17 Photos from the “30th Anniversary Dinner”
 Event
- 18 Ukrainian Visitors Learn About Veteran
 Support & Advocacy
- 19 Reflections on the “Diplomacy Begins Here”
 Regional Summit; SACIV “Holiday Party”
 Celebrates the Season
- 20 Board of Directors & Staff



ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING PROGRAMS

January 22nd—28th

Volunteerism & Civic Action

Bangladesh, Dominica, Egypt, Latvia, Nepal,
Paraguay, South Africa, Turkey

February 2nd—8th

Police Professionalization Exchange Program

Mexico

February 5th—11th

Global Economic Cooperation

Colombia, Morocco, Turkey, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia,
Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, West Bank, Zimbabwe

February 6th—11th

Empowering Youth through Workforce Development

Chad, DRC, Djibouti, Haiti, Madagascar, Mauritania,
Morocco, Sierra Leone

February 11th—15th

NGO Management

Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco,
Yemen, Palestine, Saudi Arabia

February 20th—25th

Interfaith Dialogue & Religious Freedom

Belarus, Germany, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Greece, Norway

February 20th—25th

Countering Violent Extremism

TBD

February 22nd—26th

Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists

Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Kazakhstan, Nepal,
Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka

February 25th—28th

Cancer Care, Prevention, & Public Health Education

Russia

February 27th—March 3rd

US Trade Policy

TBD

February 28th—March 7th

***Open World Program: Urban Development
& City Planning***

Ukraine

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

The deadline to renew your SACIV
membership is **February 28th!**

Renew online at:

<https://saciv.wildapricot.org/membership>

OR

Send checks to:

PO Box 6088

San Antonio, TX 78209

Support a worthy cause...

RENEW TODAY!

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Student	\$15
Individual	\$30
Family	\$50
Sustaining	\$100
Corporate	\$500

SACIV Welcomes Two Delegations Exploring Energy Issues

On August 28th - September 1st, 2019, SACIV welcomed four international visitors from Japan for an IVLP single country project for Japan entitled "Energy Security." This program was planned to provide participants with the opportunity to explore U.S. energy policy making at the federal, state and local level. They also had a chance to observe how U.S. policymakers balance different energy sources (nuclear, coal, gas, renewables) to meet demand and ensure a stable supply.

On Thursday morning, our visitors met with the representative of the North American Development Bank, which role is to address economic and sustainable development issues in the U.S.-Mexico border region. The participants were inspired to learn about the environmental infrastructure projects that the NADBank financed along the border to preserve the environment and improve the quality of life of people on both sides of the border. There were 28 total projects that this bank financed. The meeting was quite helpful and informative for guests.

Later that day, our guests had a meeting with the representatives of the Joint Base San Antonio when they learned about the military challenges and plans for major renewable energy initiatives. IVLP visitors were specifically interested in learning about integrated renewable energy into the energy supply on a military base and decision-making on energy sources. Every participant agreed that the main tasks are resilience issues and conservation alternative resources for both countries.

In the afternoon, our delegation met with the Director, Dr. Krystel Castillo, in the Texas Sustainable Energy Research Institute (UTSA) where they learned about the expertise of the Institute and the sustainable energy research programs including microgrids, transportation electrification, wind and solar energy, as well as integrating technological innovation and policy deliberations. The delegation enjoyed the discussion and the tour of the Laboratories in the Institute.

On Friday morning, visitors met with the Deputy Chief Sustainability Officer of the City of San Antonio's Office of Sustainability. IVLP guests learned about the initiatives and programs to promote sustainability including their Energy Management Division, which is their newest program and represents an ambitious effort to reduce the city's annual utilities cost and minimize the energy and water performance of current and future city properties. There were a number of good questions and comments about the Japanese expertise in similar programs. But participants admitted that this is a hard and long-term work.

Next meeting was at the nation's largest municipally owned energy company provided both natural gas and electric service where participants learned about company's . The Executive Vice President shared about the local business landscape and current strategies used to make San Antonio economically competitive internationally.

After lunch, they headed to meet with the private sector representatives of Build Sec Foundation who shared about the long-term incubator which helps founders launch security product startups in Central Texas. Our visitors learned about their unique cases when they helped several companies to be recognized, tested, and deployed into the market. They also shared their experience in surrounding every startup with necessary resources and networking to excel.

This visit in San Antonio couldn't be full without the meeting with private sector and valuable example of what it means to be an entrepreneur at the border. That is why on Wednesday morning the group met with the principal of J.Canavati & Co. LLC who runs a firm dedicated to the development of international logistics and trade projects. The participants could discuss the firm's work to drive international business and foreign direct investment into the region and help customers navigate the nuances of the global market.

On Wednesday afternoon, the IVLP guest took part in the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's International Business committee meeting. It was a practical meeting to observe when important decisions and plans were made to support international commerce and trade at the border.



The visit to San Antonio was filled with significant meetings and necessary discussions as the program highlighted the role of free trade zones and relationships in facilitating trade and how trade impacts and supports economic development of the community in San Antonio. IVLP guests learned how non-government and public-private partnership organizations work

together in San Antonio to promote local and regional economic development activities. 3

On October 30th - November 2nd, 2019, SACIV welcomed three international visitors from France for an IVLP project entitled "Next-Generation Energy Technologies and Efficient Resource Uses." This project was developed to demonstrate the role of public-private partnerships in energy research and development and to introduce the policies of U.S. states that have pledged to uphold the 2016 Paris Agreement on climate change within their borders, which City of San Antonio decided to support.

On Thursday morning, our French guests had a tour of an OCI Solar Power solar farm, where they learned about the equipment and land, history of the construction process, information about the communities it generates energy for, and economic impact in the area. This meeting illustrated the unique process of providing more renewable energy to the community and the infrastructure that allows the economic use of environmentally-sound technologies. It was helpful to see the acres of these batteries and hear about different testing projects this farm runs to grow their potential.

Later that day, our guests met with the representatives of the Texas Sustainable Energy Research Institute, which was created by the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). The delegation learned about the ways in which this Institute partners with the community and contributes to a new energy future that builds on a diverse resource base to position San Antonio as a significant contributor to the 21st century global energy economy. They also discussed its role as a center of intellectual creativity that promotes socio-economic development regionally, nationally, and globally.

In the afternoon, the delegation headed to the CPS Energy where they met with representatives of EPICenter. This Center propels energy innovation and thought for the global future with a think tank, incubator and accelerator, strategic partnerships, and critical conversations around energy. "EPI" stands for Energy, Partnerships and Innovation. The group learned about it's vision to be a hub for energy innovation and thought leadership driving profound global impact. They discussed their programs and events to accelerate start-ups, help find solutions and mentors, and enhance local businesses.

The day didn't finish with this meeting, the group still had more energy to meet with the founder of RangelRenewables. This discussion was helpful to understand the perspective of an entrepreneur who has a passion and desire to build a network to increase alternative energy generation and usage, not only in commercial, but also in residential areas of San Antonio and across Texas.

On Friday morning, the delegation met with the representatives of the Texas Energy Advocates Coalition, which is comprised of energy advocates who strive to educate the community, network with like-minded individuals, and promote the further advancement of the energy sector. The group discussed social events, energy education days, and advocacy for the energy sector, specifically when

legislators propose a bill that helps or hurts the industry. They also connect people to promote a better understanding of the energy industry and the benefit to the community. The discussion turned into exchange of expertise on the mission of educating and promoting information. It was obvious that neither in France nor in the US you can rely only on one perspective and that there should be open discussions involving different players of energy production and consumption. One of the delegates was invited to take part in such a discussion for the next event this Coalition will organize. These exchanges matter!

Next, our guests met with a representative of the Bi-National Energy Committee of AEM, which aims to connect the energy industry on both sides of the US-Mexico border and facilitate access for foreign direct investment and supply chain integration. Through this meeting, participants asked questions about the pros and cons of facilitating the exchange of opportunities and interconnectivity among companies in the US and Mexico doing business within the energy sector.

In the afternoon, the group headed for the City of San Antonio's Office of Sustainability. Through innovative programs focusing on energy efficiency, community and corporate sustainability, and sustainable transportation, the award-winning Office of Sustainability is working to make San Antonio a great place to live, work, and play while enhancing the environment, quality-of-life, and economic vitality of the city. They talked about their active work to reduce energy consumption within its municipal operations and within the community. French visitors learned about many initiatives and programs to promote sustainability including their Energy Management Division, which is their newest program and represents an ambitious effort to reduce the city's annual utility costs and maximize the energy and water performance of current and future city properties. It was amazing to learn that some of the program initiatives in San Antonio were taken from the Paris Program. Therefore, there was a lot of collaboration between San Antonio and Paris going on before this meeting even began.

Overall, the group from France found the visit to San Antonio very informative to meet their project objectives. They appreciated the opportunity to meet with partners, to see the solar farm in action, and to ask questions of counterparts who work and contribute to a new energy future. The visit made a significant impact on the visitors and their exchange experience. We greatly appreciate each partner, organization, and representative of San Antonio's community for their collaboration and partnership in furthering our mission.

Global Leaders Examine Trade Policy

On August 17th - August 22nd 2019, SACIV welcomed eight international visitors from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Djibouti, Israel, Moldova, Palestinian Territories, Sri Lanka for an IVLP multi-regional project for Europe entitled "U.S. Trade Policy." This program was planned to provide participants with the opportunity to examine current federal, state and local initiatives in international trade and export promotion. They also had a chance to explore the role of the U.S. in international trade and the impact of international trade agreements on US business and economy.

The IVLP guest started their working week with the



wonderful time touring Missions in San Antonio and learning about the history of our region.

On Monday, our visitors met with the representative of Haven for Hope, where they learnt about this non-profit organization and its expertise in providing a first-hand perspective of the importance of volunteerism in US society. They also had a chance to be involved in the community service activity and had a wonderful discussion with the manager of financial sustainability.

Later that day, our guests had a meeting with the Director of Public Affairs from the North American Development Bank when they learned about the mission and long-term approach towards infrastructure planning and project financing. IVLP visitors were also interested in learning the impact of the NADBank which is, in fact, the only one in the country. Moreover, the visitors met Deputy Director of Public Affairs, Gonzalo Bravo, who was once a part of the IVLP exchange program 20 years ago. It was a valuable discussion.

In the afternoon, our delegation met with the representatives of the International Trade Center at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) where they learned about the expertise of the university and the community to support economic, community and business development for the region. IVLP visitors discussed programs and other approaches to help companies enter new markets, create a more efficient supply chain, and become globally competitive.

Tuesday morning started with a practical meeting at the US Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service. IVLP guests learned about the services that create opportunities by supporting economic development in small towns and rural communities that stand as the backbone of American values. They met with the Officer in Charge USDA and saw the laboratory type space. Our 4

guests learned about the Specialty Crops Programs, Specialty Crops Inspection Division which facilitates the strategic marketing of fruit, vegetables and nuts while ensuring fair trading practices and promoting a competitive and efficient marketplace.

Later that day, they met with a representative from the San Antonio Development Foundation (SAEDF) where participants learned about San Antonio in a bigger scale and what its pros and cons are (which surely can be turned into opportunities). The Executive Vice President shared about the local business landscape and current strategies used to make San Antonio economically competitive internationally.

After lunch, they headed to meet with the private sector representatives of Build Sec Foundation who shared about the long-term incubator which helps founders launch security product startups in Central Texas. Our visitors learned about their unique cases when they helped several companies to be recognized, tested, and deployed into the market. They also shared their experience in surrounding every startup with necessary resources and networking to excel.

This visit in San Antonio couldn't be full without the meeting with private sector and valuable example of what it means to be an entrepreneur at the border. That is why on Wednesday morning the group met with the principal of J. Canavati & Co. LLC who runs a firm dedicated to the development of international logistics and trade projects. The participants could discuss the firm's work to drive international business and foreign direct investment into the region and help customers navigate the nuances of the global market.

On Wednesday afternoon, the IVLP guest took part in the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's International Business committee meeting. It was a practical meeting to observe when important decisions and plans were made to support international commerce and trade at the border.

The visit to San Antonio was filled with significant meetings and necessary discussions as the program highlighted the role of free trade zones and relationships in facilitating trade and how trade impacts and supports economic development of the community in San Antonio. IVLP guests learned how non-government and public-private partnership organizations work together in San Antonio to promote local and regional economic development activities.



Kyrgyz Government Spokespersons Welcomed to San Antonio

On September 26th - October 1st, 2019, SACIV welcomed seven international visitors from Kyrgyzstan for an IVLP single country project entitled "Strengthening the Capacity of Government Spokespersons to Handle Disinformation." This program was planned to foster greater understanding of the concepts of democracy, government, and citizenship, and their importance to U.S. civil society. Visitors also had a chance to learn about model programs and initiatives that promote civic engagement and youth leadership.

On Friday morning, our visitors met with the representatives of San Antonio Police Department where they had an open discussion about the community participation programs. The participants heard answers to their questions regarding the relationship between fighting crime and protecting the rights of the public and of alleged criminals. They also learned about transparency, accountability in the police force, interaction with different levels of government and the pertinent current issue of nondiscrimination.

Later that day, our guests met with the representatives of the UTSA's Dreamer's Center. During this meeting, our guests heard about its work in supporting the university's DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipients and other undocumented students. The delegation was specifically interested in the leadership strategies targeted for youth that facilitate social empowerment.

In the afternoon, the Kyrgyz delegation headed to CPS Energy for a meeting with representatives from their communications team, to discuss their communication strategies as well as their programs in the community. Our guests discussed a number of mutual issues and solutions.

The weekend started well for our guests as they also had a chance to explore Missions and learn about the history of San Antonio. Later that evening, they were welcomed by the members of SACIV for "home hospitality" experiences, where the guests learned about everyday Texan life. Each participant enjoyed these conversations in a friendly environment.

On Monday morning, the delegation traveled to Austin where they met with the representatives of the American

Civil Liberties Union of Texas and Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. Each of the meetings demonstrated the best practices in communicating with constituents and the media during times of trouble for their agency or ministry.

On Tuesday morning, the visitors met with a representative of the Homeland Security Investigations, a critical investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security and a vital US asset in combating criminal organizations illegally exploiting America's travel, trade, financial and immigration systems. Participants heard about the agency's investigations of cross-border criminal activities that concern national security along the South Texas border.

In the afternoon our guests had a productive discussion with representatives of the office of Texas State Representative Diego Bernal. This discussion helped the participants examine the similarities and differences of the political system and the ways in which pluralism, tolerance, and volunteerism are components of civic life in the United States.

Next, our guests met with representatives of Catholic Charities of San Antonio. During this meeting, our they learnt about the organization's work towards the successful community integration and resettled refugees and their families in San Antonio. The delegation was specifically interested in the youth services this organization offers refugees and immigrants as was impressed by many success stories.

Overall, this group enjoyed the rich history and diversity of San Antonio which provided them with a holistic view of the United States through the lenses of a unique southern city. We are very grateful for all our partnering organizations who welcomed guests and helped our further our important mission.



European #ChangeMakers Exchange Cyber Security Strategies

On September 18th - September 24th, 2019, SACIV welcomed eight international visitors from Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Slovakia and Tajikistan for an IVLP multi-regional project entitled "21st Century Change Makers: Information Technology Leaders Explore Cyber Security Strategies." This program was planned to provide participants with the opportunity to gain insight into the impact of cyber-connectivity on the social, economic and political fabric of San Antonio. They also had a chance to observe institutional and operational practices and standards for cybersecurity in San Antonio.

On Thursday morning, our visitors started their visit with a wonderful meeting at the Communication Arts High School where IVLP guests had an open conversation with students from a journalism class. The participants were excited to share about their professional experiences and present about their home countries during this meeting. Students' questions were sincere and quite practical for the role of a future journalist.

Later that day, our guests met with the Cybersecurity Reporter at the River Report who discussed the role of journalists in keeping the public up-to-date about technology and cybersecurity issues. He highlighted the challenges in providing comprehensive coverage of a complex topic that is often difficult for the public to understand.

That afternoon, our delegation had met at the Department of Information Systems and Cyber Security at UTSA. They learned about current programs and initiatives that are offered to students who are interested in becoming cybersecurity professionals. They also learned about best practices in the education of future cybersecurity professionals and what type of research and new trends are being explored by the university's experts. The delegation enjoyed the presentation and were inspired by its creative approaches for future generations.

The day of meetings ended at a round table meeting with the representative of the Office of U.S. Congressman Will Hurd, where IVLP guests discussed the work being done on cybersecurity policy. They also learned about the district office communication with constituents on this topic and the current cybersecurity concerns that Congressman's office is considering.

On Friday morning, IVLP guests met with the representatives of the Southwest Research Institute that works with government and commercial clients. Participants heard about the challenges currently facing government, private entities, and military clients related to cybersecurity and technologies.

Their next meeting was with the Executive Director of the CyberTexas Foundation, who

continued the conversation about how centralized expertise can lead to greater cooperation and breakthrough in the field, as this organization promotes cyber workforce development, strong academic programs in cybersecurity, efforts to attract and support cyber business to the region and attention to cyber awareness.

After lunch, they headed to meet with another school, the International School of the Americas, where both students and participants had profound conversations at about four main topics: government, IT, journalism, and law enforcement. Students were divided into smaller groups and had a chance to rotate and talk to every visitor. Both the staff of the school, the students, and our IVLP guests admitted what a fruitful learning experience this opportunity provided.

Their visit in San Antonio wouldn't be complete without cultural activities. Therefore, on Saturday, our guests had the opportunity to experience home hospitality as SACIV members welcomed participants into their homes or favorite restaurants for dinner and enlightening discussions. And on Sunday, they toured the beautiful surrounding Texas "Hill Country", including Gruene, Fredericksburg, and Bandera.

On Monday morning, the IVLP guest took part in the community service in the San Antonio Food Bank. It was a practical time where our guests learned about this organization, its facilities and programs. Later the group went to Rackspace, where they were given a tour of the building. The delegation learned about corporation's history, mission, and world-wide work and met with the corporate counsel, who were able to answer their questions about international work. After this meeting, our group went to the Rackspace Open Cloud Academy at Geekdom, where they learned about the programs offered to the community and individuals who want to start careers in the tech industry. The delegation asked many questions about the details of the certification process heard about several student success stories. It was an inspiring meeting to see the collaboration between business and the community.

The visit to San Antonio was intense and busy for our guests, as the program highlighted the role of role of universities in research and education of cybersecurity experts, the role of journalism in educating and informing on technology and cybersecurity, and corporate perspectives on cybersecurity. Overall, our visitors were pleased with the opportunity to examine these themes firsthand and made good connections for future collaboration and research.



Uzbek Visitors Explore the US Criminal Justice System

On September 19th - September 24th, 2019, SACIV welcomed six international visitors from Uzbekistan for an IVLP single country project entitled "US Judicial System and Criminal Justice." This program was planned to provide midcareer Uzbek criminal and counterterrorism prosecutors insights into how counterterrorism is prosecuted in the United States. They also had a chance to learn about cross border policing and criminal investigations, as well as legal assistance to detained persons.

On Friday morning, our visitors met with the First Assistant City Attorney at the City's Attorney Office where they had an open discussion about the legal system in the US. The participants learned about the mission and duties of the Office and the First Assistant City Attorney also explained the office's relation to local law enforcement and the courts.

Later that day, our guests met with the representatives of Catholic Charities of San Antonio. During this meeting, our guests heard about their work towards the successful community integration and resettled refugees and their families in San Antonio who are primarily Muslims. The delegation was specifically interested in the legal aid and services this organization offers refugees and immigrants.

The weekend started well for our guests as they also had a chance to explore Missions and learn about the history of San Antonio. Later that evening, they went to the Tejas Rodeo, a hidden gem just outside San Antonio, which provided a true taste of Texas and its authentic Western-heritage.

On Monday morning, the delegation met with the representatives of the FBI Headquarters in San Antonio, where they learned about the agency and its function and work with other federal agencies. The participants learned much about the history and the reasoning behind the Bureau's strategy to prevent the capabilities of groups and individuals engaging in international and domestic terrorism and organized crime.

During lunch time, our group had a wonderful discussion with a former judge, where they were able to ask practical questions about the judicial system in the USA and work of judges in a local, state, or federal arenas.

That afternoon, our delegation met with students and representatives of the Warrior Defense Project at the St. Mary's University School of Law. The meeting highlighted this new program at the University

which, for example, provides representation to service members who have been wrongfully accused of violating orders or regulations. They also were able to have a discussion about how the legal research center is dedicated to the study of legal issues associated with both antiterrorism and counterterrorism.

The delegation enjoyed the presentation and were grateful for students' involvement in a productive two-way discussion.



On Tuesday morning, the visitors had enough time for one last meeting in San Antonio before they departed. They met with a representative of the Homeland Security Investigations, a critical investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security and a vital US asset in combating criminal organizations illegally exploiting America's travel, trade, financial and immigration systems. Participants heard about the agency's investigations of cross-border criminal activities that concern national security along the South Texas border.

In the afternoon our guests left San Antonio and headed to the next stop of their three weeks visit to the States. Their visit to San Antonio highlighted the complex approach and crucial aspects of counterterrorism in the criminal justice sector, also taking into account human rights and other key considerations of importance to the security of the nation. Overall, our visitors were pleased with the opportunity to examine the US judicial system and made strong connections with their American counterparts for further discussions.

French Visitors Discuss Strategies for Integration of Immigrants & Refugees

On November 9th - November 13th, 2019, SACIV welcomed two international visitors from France for an IVLP project entitled "Integration of Immigrants and Refugees." This project introduced the role of nongovernmental organizations in the refugee resettlement process. Moreover, during the meetings, the participants observed best practices of educational institutions in integrating refugees and immigrants.



The culture of our community. In the evening, our guests were welcomed in the homes of the SACIV members where they had conversations about differences and similarities of living in the US and in France.

On Monday morning, the IVLP group headed to the Mexican American Unity Council (MAUC) where they met with the President and CEO. They were fascinated by the services and guidance this Council provides in areas of education, housing, and community and economic development of the Mexican American population in San Antonio. The discussion was mostly concentrated on the perspectives of affordable housing for large Hispanic population as the Council is organized and run in such a way that it doesn't depend on donations from the community, but has a number of its own local businesses that are self-sustaining and this profit goes to affordable housing. The complex approach was well explained by the president and it inspired our IVLP guests.

Later that day, the delegation met with the Executive Director of Mexican and Americans Thinking Together (MATT). This non-profit organization was created with specific goals which were accomplished this past September. Therefore, the participants learned about the initiatives this organization developed for cultural interaction, education, and social outreach by working with government sectors, private organizations, academic institutions, and other civil organizations. Our visitors heard real stories about how Mexicans are integrating into the community and discussed general statistics and misperceptions that we sometimes see in media. The rest of the afternoon was free for our guests and they had a chance to see several parades and events commemorating Veteran's Day in the US.

On Tuesday morning, the IVLP group met with a representative of the Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) - San Antonio Field Office, a critical investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security and is a vital US asset in combating criminal organizations illegally exploiting America's travel, trade, financial and immigration systems. This meeting outlined the agency's practices on the ground in investigating cross-border criminal activities including national security, terrorism, export enforcement, money launder-

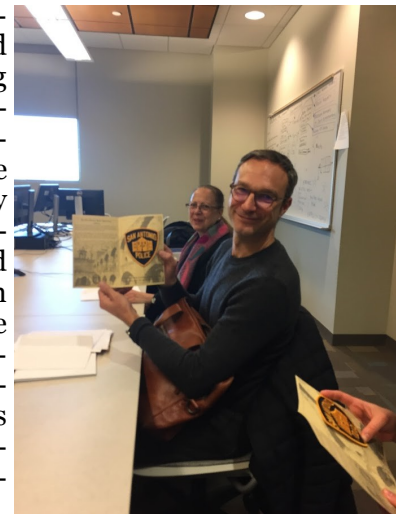
ing, drug and bulk-cash smuggling, human smuggling and trafficking, customs fraud, child pornography and other financial and immigration frauds. Our guests were very grateful a thorough presentation, which clarified the work and mission of the HSI.

Next, our visitors met with an attorney from the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES). This meeting demonstrated the best practices in promoting justice by providing free and low-cost legal services to underserved immigrant children, families, and refugees from Central and South Texas. They were also briefed on the recent history of immigration to South Texas and the roles of the various agencies involved in the complex debate, including their advocacy work.

In the afternoon, they continued their discussions during a meeting with the Criminal District Attorney of the Bexar County District Attorney's Office. The attorney shared her experience in working with the DA-lead Bexar County Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force. Our guests learnt of the attorney's perspectives on migrants' vulnerability in being trafficked, as well as the kinds of outreach, awareness-raising, and support services that they provide to victims who are reluctant to ask for help because of their immigration status. The delegation heard real-life stories and examples of how to get the best from engaging different organizations and federal agencies.

Later on, Tuesday afternoon, the IVLP group had their last meeting at the San Antonio Police Department where they discussed community participation programs and San Antonio's status as a sanctuary city. Our guests learnt about the relationship between fighting crime and protecting the rights of the public and of alleged criminals. They also discussed transparency, accountability in the police force, interaction with different levels of government and the pertinent issue of nondiscrimination.

Overall, this French delegation found the visit to San Antonio quite informative and helpful in understanding the diverse perspectives in the debate over reforming US immigration laws. They enjoyed open conversations, sharing experiences, and learning life-long lessons of integrating refugees and immigrants. The visitors were particularly amazed by observing the mutual support provided and community involvement with this important issue. We greatly appreciate each partner, organization, and representative of San Antonio's community for their collaboration and partnership in furthering our mission.



Lithuanian Delegation Explores the US Immigration System

U.S. immigration law is complex, and there is much confusion as to how it works. Immigration law in the United States has been built upon the following principles: the reunification of families, admitting immigrants with skills that are valuable to the U.S. economy, protecting refugees, and promoting diversity.

On November 20th - November 23rd, 2019, the San Antonio Council for International Visitors welcomed four international visitors for an IVLP program entitled "Administering an Immigration System and Adjudicating Requests for Immigration Benefits." The visitors' objectives were to discuss best practices of migration policies and interviewing techniques, to observe data management systems that link all migration office sites, and to review training programs for personnel to enhance interviewing skills and fraud prevention measures.

On Thursday morning, our visitors met with representatives of the San Antonio Police Department, where they learnt about the Department's relationship with immigrant population and federal immigration authorities. The Lithuanian participants also asked questions about the process of becoming a policeman which requires steps to be accepted into the Police Academy program. They also discussed the roles of police on the front lines of public safety and the importance of maintaining trust in the communities they serve.

Their next meeting was with a representative from the City of San Antonio's Migrant Resource Center. Mr. Tino Gallegos explained how, since March 2019, the City's Department of Human Services has coordinated the Migrant Resource Center to support migrants arriving in San Antonio as they continue their journeys to sponsors across the country. As an Immigration Liaison for the City of San Antonio, he presented his experience of data collecting and coordinating services provided by government entities, non-profit organizations, and interfaith organizations.

After lunch, the IVLP group met with representatives from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) at their San Antonio Field Office. At this meeting, they discussed the process the Office uses to handle scheduled interviews on non-asylum related applications and how they provide information and applicant services to those seeking to immigrate to the United States. The representatives also talked about local realities and their coordination with national systems and databases.

Later on, Thursday evening, our guests from Lithuania were welcomed in homes of the SACIV members where they shared with hosts about their home country and learnt from hosts about American culture and society.

On Friday morning, the visitors attended a Naturalization Ceremony, a public event in which new US citizens take the oath of allegiance, completing the process of becoming an American citizen. The Ceremony was quite solemn and included a welcome speech, a talk about the responsibilities of US citizenship, taking the naturalization oath, the pledge of allegiance

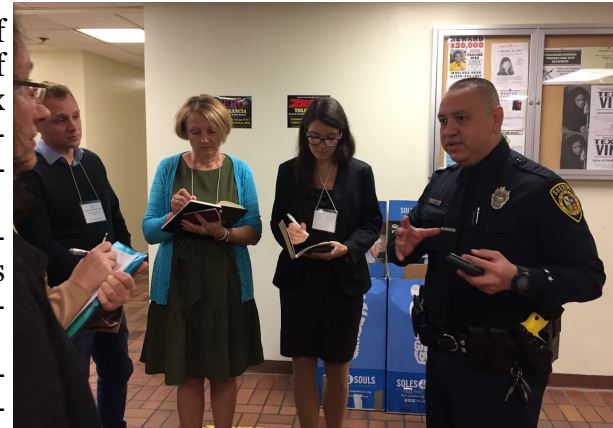
and the singing of the national anthem.

Next, the delegation discussed the Sheriff's Office role in addressing border security challenges on a local level at a meeting with officers of the Bexar County Sheriff's Office. Our visitors were given a tour of a Bexar County Jail facilities. During the tour, they compared responsibilities and jurisdictions between the Sheriff's office and other law enforcement agencies (including communication and systems for information sharing).

The last meeting on Friday was with an attorney of De Mott, McChesney, Curtright, & Armendariz, LLP who provided a brief review of the complex legal process of immigration and the required steps that are coordinated by immigration attorneys.

The IVLP group learnt much about the administrative procedures for supporting clients through the immigration process. Additionally, they talked about the interview process and challenges that attorneys might face in fraud cases.

The San Antonio Council for International Visitors was honored to host the IVLP guests to study the best practices for migration policies. We hope these meetings helped Lithuanian representatives to find their counterparts with whom they connect and can work together towards new solutions and ways to navigate through complex issues of migration.



Visitor Quotes

Addressing the Needs of Underserved & At-Risk Youth

"The meetings met my professional objectives. I wish the meetings would have been longer than just an hour."

- Ms. Tatiana Lariza Romeo Fonseca (Mexico)

"All the meetings absolutely met my expectations; they were different and innovative with approaches on how to help at-risk youth and/or their families in disadvantaged areas."

- Ms. Vinka Valdivia (Mexico)

US Trade Policy

"I enjoyed home hospitality very much, our host was fantastic!"

- Mr. Bernard Egger (Austria)

"I was positively surprised how San Antonio organized support to companies and its economic and industrial progress."

- Ms. Nina Pobric (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

"I had no idea about San Antonio and it is a very friendly, interesting, and tasty city!"

- Mr. Raz Hillman (Israel)

"It was an amazing experience home hospitality. I enjoyed it a lot and I felt at home with a lot of care, generosity, and kindness."

- Ms. Amani Hassona (Palestine)

Energy Security

"I knew about Texas and San Antonio from the Internet, but now I like San Antonio even more."

- Mr. Seiichiro Kimura, PhD (Japan)

"I really enjoyed the dinner hospitality and the conversation with the host and his friends, as well as the 'tour' of his house and pottery factory. Our host was so kind to offer some pieces of his artwork as a gift."

- Ms. Mika Kodo (Japan)

Strengthening the Capacity of Government Spokespersons to Handle Disinformation

"The home hospitality dinner was a wonderful experience. The hosts were kind and opened to talk about their lives, and I told them about my country too."

- Ms. Makhabat Mamatova (Kyrgyzstan)

"I wanted to thank the organization and coordinator for such a wonderful program. It was very helpful and I hope to welcome you in my country."

- Ms. Elmira Sheripova (Kyrgyzstan)

21st Century Change Makers

"I participated in home hospitality and was lucky to meet a very interesting and friendly couple with rich professional and travel experiences. I've learnt so much and practiced what American hospitality means. Wonderful experience!"

- Ms. Daniela Pachemska (Republic of North Macedonia)

"The meetings were definitely great. I was so happy to meet with the professor from UTSA and the representatives from CyberTexas and Rackspace. I talked to them and asked questions. It was excellent."

- Mr. Daniel Vetter (Hungary)

"During our visit to the International School of Americas, we saw a tremendous commitment from the professors. It is the detail that will remain in my memory forever."

- Mr. Tomas Volny (Slovakia)

Next Generation Energy Technologies and Efficient Resource

"I didn't know much about San Antonio, but to me it has a Latin feel. I loved the Mexican food and some amazing restaurants for meat eaters. La Dia de los Muertos was a surprising experience! The city center is very pretty and walkable, the Riverwalk is truly gorgeous. This is a city of many different cultures."

- Ms. Nina Lucie Chini (France)

Entrepreneurship 101

"I wish we could have stayed in San Antonio longer!"

- Ms. Olga Kizeeva (Russia)

"I had some ideas about San Antonio, but it changed during my stay. There is safety and order here and the government is very helpful for businesses development. I was inspired by this place."

- Ms. Alexandra Rodina (Russia)

US Foreign Policy Decision Making

"All appointments were effective in the way that we understood how the State of Texas and City of San Antonio work with immigrants and refugees, the support from communities, the government support of small businesses, and the schools preparing students to engage into foreign affairs experiences."

- Ms. Taif Kadash (Saudi Arabia)

Integration of Immigrants & Refugees

"I had a wonderful dinner with members of SACIV, Brant and Louise. The evening was a great opportunity for me to discuss different topics with them and to discover about different aspects of the American way of life. Thanks a lot, to both of them!"

- Ms. Fanny Ruinart (France)

"I had no idea about San Antonio, but it is a nice city. All the meetings and activities allowed me to understand the local history."

- Dr. Fabrice David Bizet (France)

Military Veterans Support & Advocacy

"The home hospitality dinner was well organized with a great professor, researcher, and military veteran. We had a lot of topics to discuss and talk about. We also tried Mexican food, which was a great cultural experience!"

- Mr. Valery Yegorov (Ukraine)

Administering an Immigration System & Adjudicating Requests for Immigration Benefits

"I had new and useful experiences in San Antonio and I will use this in my future work. This city is so nice and has hospitable people."

- Mr. Arturas Gromovas (Lithuania)

"The meetings were informative. It will be useful to improve Lithuanian's important procedures and to share about the procedures in the US with colleagues back at home. Thank you!"

- Ms. Lucija Voisnys (Lithuania)

My Exchange Journey

To celebrate International Education Week, Global Ties US launched a digital campaign that showcases the lifelong impact of international education and exchanges.

The campaign, called *My Exchange Journey*, traces the international experiences of the Network from the time they first became interested or exposed to the world of international education and/or exchanges, to what they do now to facilitate and support global engagement.

SACIV's Executive Director, Cecilia Cross, shares her story:



World flags fly high at the Tower of the Americas in San Antonio, TX.

SAN ANTONIO, TX

December 1989 - August 2008

I grew up with an intense curiosity about the wider world. My father is originally from the UK (I hold dual citizenship in the U.S. and the UK), so we spent time visiting family "across the pond" in England and traveling throughout Western Europe.

I also have always had an interest in foreign languages, in part influenced by my mother, a professor of French at a local university, and the cultural heritage of my predominantly Hispanic hometown, San Antonio, TX.

This exposure was further developed through my high school experience, attending the International School of the Americas (ISA) in San Antonio, a magnet school with a focus on international curriculum, where I was very active with the Model United Nations team.



Cecilia at the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France.

PARIS, FRANCE

2009

I chose to further my education at Dickinson College, in Carlisle, PA, where I majored in International Studies.

My collegiate experience led me overseas and across the country for several study abroad and internship opportunities, beginning with Paris, France where I studied French for a summer.



Cecilia has henna applied to her hand in Morocco.

RABAT, MOROCCO

2010

As an International Studies major at Dickinson College, I focused my area concentration on the Middle East and North Africa.

This led me to Rabat, Morocco, where I studied languages, explored the region, and taught English for a semester.



A delegation of International Visitors pose with Folkloric Dancers in San Antonio, TX.

SAN ANTONIO, TX

2012 - Present

I have been the Executive Director of the San Antonio Council for International Visitors (SACIV) for the past five years. As an avid world traveler and a lifelong global learner, I know how fortunate I am to be able to meet distinguished international leaders from around the world and introduce them to the city I love.

The best part of my job is having shared experiences with new friends around the world, through home hospitality, professional meetings, and more. I know that the cross-cultural exchange of ideas that transcends borders and differences in backgrounds is what will continue to make our world a more peaceful place. That is why I am proud to consider myself a true citizen diplomat!



Cecilia in Amman.

AMMAN, JORDAN

2011

Many of my closest friends in college were international students, further fueling my interest in all things international.

In 2011, I had the opportunity to visit Amman, Jordan, where I studied Arabic and interned for a semester under the tutelage of a Jordanian government official.

In France, Morocco, and Jordan, I lived with host families and interacted with local students. I was as eager to learn more about their cultures through these interactions as they were for me to share more about American society with them.

Russian Entrepreneurs Share Best Practices

On November 2nd - November 6th, 2019, SACIV welcomed eight international visitors from Russia for an IVLP project entitled "Entrepreneurship 101." This group of young and enthusiastic entrepreneurs were invited by the Department of State from different parts of Russia to experience the latest trends in small business and start-up development in the US. The most important component of this program was to interact with those small business community members to share experiences.

The IVLP group arrived on Saturday evening and on Sunday, started with a tour to the San Antonio Missions, where they learned about the significant role which these places play in the history and culture of our community. In the evening, our guests were welcomed in the homes of the SACIV members where they had heart-filled conversations about differences and similarities of living in the US and in Russia.

On Monday morning, the IVLP group headed to the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) where they met



with a representative of the Institute for Economic Development, which encompasses a variety of centers and programs that facilitate economic, community, and business development at the local, regional and national levels, including the Small Business Development Center. Our guests

had a two-hour training session on topics such as financial management, marketing, leadership skills, and developing effective communication skills.

Later that day, the Russian delegation met with the founder and director of Stepping Stones Pediatric Feeding and Speech Therapy Clinic. The participants of this program learned about the challenges and success she faced while developing a business. They also discussed the local entrepreneurial support mechanisms which helped her achieve goals and her advice on ways to develop and sustain a successful health care business in San Antonio.

Tip #1: Have a plan for your dream and structure your day accordingly.

In the afternoon, this delegation headed back downtown to meet with a family-run business, BethanyEastPR. The group learned about various sides of public relations and marketing expertise. The founding couple has managed to help small and minority businesses with less know-how follow their footsteps. The participants asked many questions about new and growing small businesses in San Antonio, as Russian small businesses have just started exploring different ways of incorporating public relations, branding & design, social media management, and event management. The presenters shared their experiences and perspectives on helping San Antonio small, medium, and large businesses increase their bottom-line while making their voices heard.

Tip #2: Experiment with ways you communicate to your customers. They will tell you what they like and what they don't like.

On Tuesday afternoon, the delegation met with representatives of LiftFund, which provides credit and services to small businesses and entrepreneurs who do not have access to loans from commercial sources and offers leadership and innovation to the microlending industry. This meeting provided the visitors with information about the "giving back" component, in which alumni of LiftFund's programs, who have established successful small businesses, shared how their participation with LiftFund positively impacted their business growth and how they now mentor others.



Tip #3: Community is a strong power which is built out on everyone's involvement.

In the afternoon, the group had an interactive final meeting with a member of SACIV and the founder of the Alamo Travel Group (ATG). She discussed challenges and successes of a woman business owner and shared her insight into how women can be successful entrepreneurs, as well as the importance of helping others succeed. This final San Antonio meeting also served as an informal synthesis session and an opportunity for participants to pose questions based on their visit.

Tip #4: Never stop learning and asking questions to grow.

Overall, this Russian delegation found the visit to San Antonio very interactive and enjoyed open conversations, sharing experiences, and learning life-long lessons of building businesses. The visitors were particularly amazed with the diligence and hard-working ethics of every entrepreneur they met during their meetings and this experience made a significant impact on the visitors. We greatly appreciate each partner, organization, and representative of San Antonio's community for their collaboration and partnership in our furthering our mission.

Tip #5: #ExchangesMatter



Saudi Officials Examine US Foreign Policy

On November 2nd - November 6th, 2019, SACIV welcomed six international visitors from Saudi Arabia for an IVLP project entitled "US Foreign Policy Decision Making." Their program in San Antonio provided insight into one of the country's most pressing foreign policy issues, which has profound implications for domestic and foreign policy. The debate over immigration, and the related human rights concerns surrounding refugee and asylum rights, has been a part of the national conversation for some time and is especially contentious in the present administration. The schedule offered examples of how immigration debate is experienced in our part of the country and in the state (once a part of Mexico) increasingly flavored by Hispanic culture.



Our guests arrived on Saturday and on Sunday, had a great time exploring places of historical significance in San Antonio, including the Missions.

On Monday morning, our visitors met with the Executive Director of Mexican and American Thinking Together. This non-profit organization was created with specific goals which were accomplished this past September. Therefore, the participants learned about the initiatives this organization developed for cultural interaction, education, and social outreach by working with government sectors, private organizations, academic institutions, and other civil organization. Our visitors heard real stories about how Mexicans are integrating into the community and discussed general statistics and misperceptions that we sometimes see in media.

Later that day, our guests met with the representative of the City of San Antonio's International Relations Office. During this meeting, the delegation learned about work this Office does to attract global trade and foreign investments as well as to provide protocol services for the San Antonio community. The delegation was specifically interested in the development process of Sister City relations and how foreign policy with Mexico has impacted the business environment in the region.

In the afternoon, the Saudi Arabian delegation headed to UTSA's Institute for Economic Development to learn about a variety of centers and programs that facilitate economic, community, and business development at

the local, regional, and national level. Our guests talked about those approaches, which serve as a catalyst for the regional entrepreneurship ecosystem, with a focus on their work strengthening trade relationships between San Antonio's businesses and the rest of the world.

On Tuesday morning, the group met with the representatives of the Refugee and Immigration Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES). This meeting demonstrated the best practices in promoting justice by providing free and low-cost legal services to underserved immigrant children, families, and refugees from Central and South Texas. Our guests learned about the recent history of immigration to South Texas and the roles of the various agencies involved in the complex debate, including their advocacy work.

In the afternoon the group had an interactive tour with staff and students of the International School of the Americas (ISA). This tour and informative presentation helped the participants examine programs that focus on engaging students through a multicultural curriculum. It was exciting to hear about how the school emphasizes learning from a global perspective rather than a US-centric view.

Next, our guests met with representatives of District Office of Representative Joaquin Castro. During this meeting, they learnt about this district's work on issues of immigration, national security, and international relations. The delegation was specifically interested in discussing policy-making at the national level and this district office interaction with constituents on these topics.

Overall, this group enjoyed the rich history and diversity of San Antonio which provided them with a holistic view of the United States through the lenses of a unique southern city. We are very grateful for all our partnering organizations who welcomed these guests and helped in highlighting the increasingly intertwined binational economy in the region and illustrating the role of trade as a factor in foreign policy decision making.



Peruvian Digital Influencers Inspire Youth Engagement

On November 6th - November 9th, 2019, SACIV welcomed five international visitors from Peru for an IVLP project entitled "Digital Influencers Inspiring Youth Engagement." The main objectives of this program were to provide participants with opportunities to explore how digital tools have given rise to citizen journalists and have allowed young people to connect with each other, exerting an influence on their communities. It was helpful to set-up meetings with US counterparts who use YouTube



channels, blogs, video games, and other platforms to make a positive contribution to their communities.

On Thursday morning, our visitors met with the founding partner and creative director, Mr. Sho Nakpodia, who runs two agencies: the MightyGroup and the DreamVoice. This meeting illustrated a unique event which is called DreamWeek. This annual summit of speakers, artists, and educators gathers everyone to promote tolerance, equality, and diversity and advance the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He also shared engagement strategies for building partnerships and support for more inclusive communities and the role that media and communications strategies can play in promoting diversity initiative.

Later that day, our guests met with the faculty of Our Lady of the Lake University's Mass Communication Department which prepares students for professions in film, television, journalism and public relations as well as for admission into graduate programs. The delegation learned about the program's hands-on experiences in writing, directing, producing, digital editing, print editing, web publishing and more, preparing students for internships and jobs. They discussed the current trends in media education and also visited the Veronica Salazar Media Center, a new facility with state-of-the-art media production equipment that expands undergraduate and graduate program in communications, journalism, and digital media.



In the afternoon, the Peruvian delegation headed to the MOVE Texas headquarters, which stands for Mobilize, Organize, Vote and Empower. The group learned about many ways this organization ensures youth voices are heard and considered in the policy-making process. The representatives of this office described the events and programs they run in order to engage young voters to make a crucial decision for the future. Our group asked poignant questions about the organization's effort towards civic mobilization among youth and how to make sure they are well informed. They also shared with the speakers that their problem was not the number of voters in Peru, as it is mandatory to vote in their country, but in fact the level of interest, engagement, and information shared, that they need to address.



On Friday morning, the delegation took part in the interactive roundtable with students and staff of Communication Arts High School. They promote rigorous, foundational learning in a personal, supportive environment where students develop skills in communications and technology and in which courses emphasize collaborative choice and fluidity between disciplines. The meeting room was filled with students who wanted to share their experiences in becoming responsible, accountable journalists and discerning consumers of media. Moreover, guests also shared their stories of working as journalists and shaping new generations.

In the afternoon the IVLP group met with the representatives of the Graduate School and the US Department of State for a Project Evaluation Session.

Overall, the group found the visit to San Antonio very supportive of their project objectives and appreciated the opportunity to meet with partners who are working with digital influencers to empower and engage youth. The visit made a significant impact on the visitors and their exchange experience. We greatly appreciate each partner, organization, and representative of San Antonio's community for their collaboration and partnership in furthering our mission.

SACIV Celebrates Three Decades at “30th Anniversary Dinner” Event

On October 16th, SACIV celebrated three decades with our “30th Anniversary Dinner”. At this milestone event, hundreds of guests gathered to listen to remarks from our Keynote Speaker, Mayor Ron Nirenberg, on the importance of citizen diplomacy and the value of our work in the community, as well as honor our 2019 “International Leadership Award” recipient, Ms. Betsy Erne Cameron, for her contribution to SACIV. They enjoyed the international entertainment, which included several performances by local cultural groups, while sampling a variety of global cuisines. Additionally, the SACIV Board of Directors was delighted to announce the creation of the “Irma Reyes Citizen Diplomacy Scholarship”.

The evening brought together members of San Antonio’s internationally-minded community to exchange ideas, enjoy a meal while watching cultural dances, and recognize SACIV’s accomplishments in citizen diplomacy. The event took place at the University of Incarnate Word’s Rosenberg Skyroom, where guests engaged in cross-cultural dialogue and discussed their own experiences forging international friendships.

As the program began and everyone took their seats, SACIV Executive Director, Cecilia Cross, thanked the SACIV Board Members for their contributions and commitment to the organization. Additionally, the event sponsors were recognized for their support in making the event possible.

After a thoughtful invocation from Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, the meal began and as attendees sampled various international entrees, including Italian, Vietnamese, French, and Thai cuisines, several Texas Folklife Festival musical and dance groups performed for guests as part of the “cultural extravaganza”.

Chair of the SACIV Board of Directors, Jo Ann Andera, recognized the past recipients of the “International Leadership Award”, thanking these individuals and groups who have worked tirelessly to promote citizen diplomacy, in its many forms, in San Antonio and to our community for many years.

Next, Janet and Sam Scott presented Ms. Betsy Erne Cameron with this year’s “International Leadership Award”, honoring her for her work to promote and support international relations, business, and education in San Antonio.

Later, Dr. Barbara Aranda-Naranjo, Provost of the University of the Incarnate Word, introduced the night’s Keynote Speaker, Mayor Ron Nirenberg. Mayor Nirenberg shared his commitment to nurturing San Antonio’s diverse economy, promoting its leadership on an international stage and pursuing strategies that foster resilience and equity in all sectors of the city. He highlighted the importance of international ties for the betterment of the San Antonio community at large and for the enrichment of all residents. He congratulated SACIV for its thirty years of building international bridges, fostering global friendships, and making San Antonio one the most welcoming cities in the nation!

The evening concluded with a special announcement from the SACIV Board of Directors, who were pleased to share with the community the creation of the “Irma F. Reyes Citizen Diplomacy Scholarship”, established to honor all the work, support, and dedication of Irma Reyes to SACIV for the past thirty years. This scholarship will support the education of students interested in pursuing an international related degree.

The event was a tremendous celebration of citizen diplomacy and SACIV is grateful for all those who made night such an extraordinary success!





Ukrainian Visitors Learn About Veteran Support & Advocacy

On November 13th - November 19th, 2019, SACIV welcomed six international visitors from Ukraine for an IVLP project entitled "Military Veteran Support & Advocacy." As San Antonio is well recognized as "Military City, USA", we arranged a vast number of meetings to highlight the ways and approaches of supporting military veterans. These meetings helped the group increase their understanding of the development and management of rehabilitation and reintegration processes, especially those dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

On Thursday morning, our visitors met with representatives of Greater San Antonio's Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Council, a committee which focuses on building ties between the business community and local military organizations; supporting the many military missions accomplished in San Antonio; and providing support for service members, retirees, and their families. Mr. Dave Petersen, Chamber Executive Vice President, and Ms. Lori Stinson, Vice President, Military Affairs & Leadership Development, talked about the Council's work to promote and



enhance military-local business and community relations, as well as conduct programs, events, & initiatives to celebrate, support, maintain, and grow the military presence in San Antonio, though key engagement programs like

the Chamber Liaison Program, the Senior Enlisted Advisor Committee, the Woman to Woman, Leader to Leader Committee, the Celebrate America's Military Committee, and the Military Transformation Task Force. This meeting illustrated a unique program that supports the business efforts of the veteran community.

Later that day, our guests met with the Commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 76, a local non-profit service organization for US military veterans' benefits and programs, located in a historic building along the Riverwalk. The delegation learned about the ways how this membership veterans' organization advocates for the rights and services of veterans. They also discussed the local chapter's advocacy efforts and touch on the activities that the Veterans of Foreign Wars has been doing to particularly support women veterans.

In the afternoon, the Ukrainian delegation headed to the City of San Antonio's Office of Military Affairs, which provides services to local veterans and their families and includes a Veteran's Affairs Commission, the Military Transformation Task Force, and the Military Economic Impact Study. The group learned about many of the military-related organizations in San Antonio, about their partnership with Joint Base San Antonio to support the base's military readiness. The representatives at this office described the services that local government provides to veterans. This group also discussed the city's unique relationship with the many military installations in the region which led to the city being branded as "Military City, USA".

On Friday morning, the delegation took part in an interactive roundtable discussion to explore various perspectives on the mental health challenges that many veterans face such as PTSD. Mr. Gilbert Gonzalez, Director of the Bexar County Mental Health Department, Dr. Alan L. Peterson, Professor and Chair at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, Dr. Chrys L. Parker, Author, Professor and Director, joined this discussion panel to share their experiences and highlight projects, initiatives, and experiential programs of PTSD intervention in the combat theater and the homeland in San Antonio and throughout the US. This meeting demonstrated the best practices in development and management of rehabilitation and reintegration centers.

In the afternoon, the group had an interactive tour with staff and students of San Antonio College's Victory Center, a new veterans affair building on the San Antonio College campus, which was designed to better serve veterans and help them into the classroom. Annually, SAC serves more than 3,000 student veterans and has been designated a Military Friendly School for several consecutive years. There, they learned about a local community college approach to serving veterans and making education accessible.

On Saturday evening, our guest experienced Texan hospitality and met with the members of SACIV in a friendly environment. Some of the guests were welcomed to the early Thanksgiving Dinner where they learned about the history and culture of South Texas. On Sunday the IVLP delegation had an outing to the beautiful surrounding of Texas "Hill Country", which is one of the most popular regions in the Lone Star State for visitors. Among the rolling hills and between expansive rivers they found a number of quaint cities and small towns which offered our visitors the opportunity to explore some of the diverse cultures of Texas through a variety of unique attractions.

On Monday morning, the Ukrainian delegation visited the Brooke Army Medical Center, the United States Army's premier medical institution. Located on Fort Sam Houston, BAMC, an Academic Medical Center, is the Department of Defense's largest facility and only Level 1 Trauma Center. Our guests learned about the Center for the Intrepid, the nation's top rehabilitation center for OIF/OEF casualties who have sustained amputation, burns, or functional limb loss. They also had an informative tour of the facilities and discussed cutting edge rehabilitation techniques for veterans, particularly those needing prosthetic or orthopedic assistance. After the tour, the delegation met with the representative of the Warrior & Family Support Center and they learned about how the center provides coordinated services to patients, next-of-kin, and extended family members with a primary focus on wounded Operation Iraqi Free-

dom and Operation Enduring Freedom warriors. The conversation highlighted services that provide spiritual support, as well as ways that active duty military are helped to prepare for transition into civilian life after they leave the service.



Next, our guests met with representatives of the Bexar County Veterans Service Office (VSO), an advocacy agency that assists veterans and their dependents to understand and receive benefits available to them through the US Department of Veterans Affairs. They also learned about the ongoing collaboration with local, state, and federal government agencies, nationally chartered Veterans service organizations, and non-profit agencies to assist clients in obtaining needed specialized services. Through this meeting, participants of this program asked questions about the ways the VSO helps veterans navigate an often complex system and to explored the range of services offered.

Overall, the group found the visit to San Antonio very supportive of their project objectives and appreciated the opportunity to meet with partners, to see the centers in action, and to ask questions of the professionals who are dedicated to this important work. The visitors were particularly amazed with the work of several non-government organizations, as most of their work is done by volunteers and through donations from the community, concepts not common (yet) in Ukraine. The visit made a significant impact on the visitors and their exchange experience. We greatly appreciate each partner, organization, and representative of San Antonio's community for collaboration and partnership in our mission.

Reflections on the “Diplomacy Begins Here” Regional Summit

The Diplomacy Begins Here Regional Summits bring together leaders in business, government, and non-profit organizations to forge new connections with local communities around exchange programming and issues. They also serve as an opportunity for local communities to deepen their understanding of US foreign policy, public diplomacy, and how exchange programs such as the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) play a role in each.

The World Affairs Council of Kentucky & Southern Indiana, a Community-Based Member (CBM) of Global Ties US, hosted a Diplomacy Begins Regional Summit in Louisville, KY around the theme of Global Education. SACIV’s Program Coordinator, Tania Kayumova, visited this summit. The two-day program hosted speakers from a variety of different businesses and governmental organizations.

The first day was primarily focused on the opportunities in which Community-Based Members (CBMs), such as SACIV, could improve. The Learning Lab sparked much

discussion on how each CBM can learn from each other, specifically on topics such as storytelling, media partnerships, and brand management, as well as working with in-

ternational liaisons & interpreters. The day ended with a wonderful reception at Kentucky Derby Museum, located on the grounds of the iconic Churchill Downs, where Board Members and staff welcomed summit participants from the Global Ties US network and the region. It provided an opportunity for Community-Based Members, National Program Agencies, Department of State representatives, and prominent individuals to mingle and make new connections.

The second day of the summit was held in the Muhammed Ali Center and was focused on global education and the 21st century workforce in preparing young people for a global future. Speakers agreed that diversity and inclusion is at the forefront of that future. “The most important thing when it comes to global competency is you have to embrace diversity,” one of the participants said. “It’s a word that’s thrown around all over the place, but you really have to live it.”

The evening ended at the dinner table with a local member of World Affairs Council of Kentucky & Southern Indiana and other representatives of the Global Ties US network. Participants shared their personal experiences and life stories of working with international visitors and ensuring that Citizen Diplomacy matters.

SACIV “Holiday Party” Celebrates the Season

On December 8th, SACIV members gathered to celebrate the season at our annual “Holiday Party”. We took the occasion to recognize the many members who graciously volunteered to host our international visitors for dinner hospitality throughout the year, thanking them for their generosity and hospitality in welcoming these guests to our city. Longtime members and new members alike shared in the joyful festivities, mingling which enjoying seasonal snacks and a hot chocolate bar.

Board Chair, Jo Ann Andera, highlighted the success of the past year. In 2018, SACIV hosted 40 programs and in 2019 that number went up to 49. In 2018, we welcomed 319 international visitors and in 2019, it was increased to 338. Visitors in 2018 represented 91 different countries, while in 2019, we saw representation of visitors from 102 countries around the world. The scope and reach of the organization has expanded significantly in the past year and the opportunity for members to become more involved has also expanded.

As everyone was gathered in friendly discussion, Executive Director Cecilia Cross took a moment to thank the Board Members for their continued work on behalf of SACIV. She also thanked every member for being a part of SACIV community, particularly those who opened their homes to our visitors for dinner hospitality and shared with them what Texan hospitality looks like. She emphasized that the dinner hospitality experience is such a critical part of the international exchanges SACIV facilitates, as it allows casual, natural conversation between people from all over the world and our internationally engaged membership. It is always a highlight of the visitors’ experience in San Antonio and we are grateful to all those who helped make it possible.



“WORLD VIEW”

Editor

Cecilia Cross

Contributor

Tania Kayumova



San Antonio Council
FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

P.O. Box 6088 San Antonio, TX 78209

Board of Directors & Staff

JoAnn Andera
Chair

joann.andera@utsa.edu
210.865.9984

Justin Rice
Secretary

justrice@yahoo.com
210.269.5033

Dr. Angelika Jansen-Brown

angelikajansen@yahoo.com
210.224.6011

Sarwat Husain

shusain@cair.com
210.378.9528

Sandra Torres Richardson

w2wempowerment1@outlook.com
678.315.8210

Ann Nguyen

nguyenthuyan05@gmail.com
210.929.3095

Marcos Fragoso
Vice Chair

fragoso@uiwtx.edu
210.805.3014

Betsy Cameron
Immediate Past Chair

bcameron.saciv@gmail.com
210.663.8055

Patricia O'Connell

ploconnell@aol.com
210.854.9646

Christopher Herring

christopher@globalchamber.org
210.459.5321

Louise Mandel

louise.mandel@gmail.com
210-408-1190

Sherry Dowlatshahi

sdowlatshahi@sanantonio.gov
210.207.8100

Chuck Rose
Treasurer

chuckrose@gvvc.com
210.854.4131

Irma Reyes
Founder & Chair Emeritus

sacivtx@sbcglobal.net
210.380.0377

Patricia Stout

pstout@alamotravel.com
210.593.0084

Cecilia Cross
Executive Director

ccross@sacivtx.org
210.287.6328

Tania Kayumova

Program Coordinator

tkayumova@sacivtx.org
918.869.5123

San Antonio Council for International Visitors (SACIV) was founded in 1989 as a non-profit, volunteer-based organization aimed at encouraging understanding and friendship between the community and visitors from abroad. SACIV provides information, hospitality, and assistance in making business and professional contacts for these visitors. SACIV is a member of Global Ties US in Washington, DC. This publication is funded by the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State under the authority of the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961.

San Antonio Council for International Visitors

P.O. Box 6088 | San Antonio, TX 78209 | 210.580.1548 | www.sacivtx.org

Facebook.com/SACIVTX | Twitter.com/SACIVTX