

Stone Soup Sustainability:



Workbook





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Corporation for National Service
1201 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20525
(202) 606-5000
<www.nationalservice.org>

Corporation for National Service

Created in 1993, the Corporation for National Service oversees three national service initiatives – AmeriCorps, which includes AmeriCorps*VISTA, AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps, and hundreds of local and national nonprofits; Learn and Serve America, which provides models and assistance to help teachers integrate service and learning from kindergarten through college; and the National Senior Service Corps, which includes the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companion Program, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

National Service Fellowship Program

The National Service Fellowship Program, launched by the Corporation for National Service in September 1997, involves a team of individual researchers who develop and promote models of quality service responsive to the needs of communities. The goal of the program is to strengthen national service through continuous learning, new models, strong networks, and professional growth.



What's in the Cupboard: Table of Contents

I.	The Story of Stone Soup.....	4
II.	Welcome.....	5
III.	Host Organization Information.....	7
IV.	Community Information.....	8
V.	Project Material.....	9
VI.	Community Contacts.....	10
VII.	Volunteer Development.....	12
VIII.	Grants and Funding Opportunities.....	13
IX.	Training Opportunities.....	15
X.	Communication.....	17
XI.	Transition Information.....	18
XII.	Reflections and Suggestions.....	19
XIII.	National Service Resources.....	20
XIV.	On Line Resource Material.....	23



The Story of Stone Soup

A hungry peddler comes upon a town in famine. While looking for a place to have dinner the peddler meets up with the town blacksmith. When the peddler asks where he might partake in a meal, the blacksmith said "You'll find no food here, all the townspeople have hoarded their food and will not share with one another, especially not a stranger." To this the peddler declared that he had all the ingredients for a wonderful meal and that he would cook for the famine-ridden town. The peddler asked if he could borrow a kettle from the blacksmith and began to build a fire. When the blacksmith returned with the kettle they filled it with water and waited for it to boil. When the water began to boil the peddler reached deep into his coat pocket and pulled out a simple stone. He dropped the stone into the kettle of boiling water and leaned over the kettle and sniffed the air, licked his lips and declared that this was to be one of the best batches of stone soup he ever made. The townspeople began to gather around the kettle to see what this peddler was cooking up. Curiosity and hunger broke the silence of one townsman who said, "Stone soup is good, but it's even better with potatoes." Another villager shouted out, "What you really needed are quality carrots." And with that the villagers went to their respective homes, brought out the best food in their cabinets and dropped it in the pot. After all of the villagers had eaten the marvelous stone soup, they offered to purchase the stone. The peddler replied that he couldn't take money for the stone and left it for the townspeople. Years after the famine had passed, villagers could still be heard bragging about how wonderful their community's stone soup was.

~Old Russian Folk Tale



Welcome

The peddler in “Stone Soup” is much like the role a VISTA plays in the community. Using only a stone, the peddler organizes the community and helps them figure out a way to end their hunger. Similar to the peddler, VISTAs have a wonderful ability to inspire their communities to share the best they have to offer. For thirty-five years VISTAs have been mobilizing communities across the United States to make important changes. The goal of a VISTA’s work is to create a project that empowers a community to take action on difficult issues and establish a project that will last long after the last VISTA has left. Sustainability is a challenge that begins the first day of a project and how it can be achieved is a question that should be asked daily. This workbook was developed to help VISTA create sustainable projects.

The workbook was developed to help VISTAs organize project material so that it can be passed on to their successor. The workbook is a series of checklists to help VISTAs collect and organize project material; it was designed for a three-ring binder. The checklists provide general suggestions of helpful information to gather, and VISTAs are encouraged to supplement this with project and community-specific information. By capturing the suggested project material and sharing thoughts on how the project and VISTA experience can be changed, VISTAs can increase the chances for a sustainable project. The workbook also includes some suggestions and reflections from VISTA alumni. These sections are meant to give a sense of the important work VISTAs have accomplished in the past as well as the legacy their service experience has had upon them both personally and professionally.

Throughout the workbook you’ll see “resource material.” All of the publications mentioned in the workbook are available through National Service Resource Center (NSRC) administered by ETR Associates.

ETR Associates
P.O. Box 1830
Santa Cruz, CA 95061-1830
Phone: 800-860-2684
Fax: 831-430-9471
www.etr.org/NSRC

The workbook is part of the *Stone Soup Sustainability Series* developed for the AmeriCorps*VISTA community. There are two other resource pieces in the series: **Stone Soup: How to Sustain the AmeriCorps*VISTA Experience** and **Stone Soup Sustainability: A Supervisor's Guide to Developing AmeriCorps*VISTA Workplans**. The training manual is a compilation of training activities designed to help the AmeriCorps*VISTA community increase their awareness of sustainability. The guidebook was designed to follow an AmeriCorps*VISTA project from its beginning stages through its final grant year, provides supervisors with the checklists, timelines and sample project material to help create, implement and sustain a AmeriCorps*VISTA project.

I hope you find this workbook useful and that it helps you create sustainable community development projects. Good Luck!

~Amy Bonn, National Service Fellow. VISTA Alum





Host Organization Information

The following is a list of material that will help you get to know your host organization. As you develop project material during your service year, think about what information might be useful to future VISTAs.

- Organizational chart
- Annual report
- Mission statement
- Brochures/pamphlets on specific projects

One thing you need to do early on is make contact, establish a relationship with what we now call community gatekeepers; these are the important people in the community. There are the county agency people who at least had the potential to make my job easier and there were community leaders ranging from some black farmers who had some influence to the county funeral director. It's important to get in touch with them and sit down with all of them and get their views and make it clear that you're there to learn from them and not to tell them what to do. This is learning the community's ecology; it's knowing where people go to meet, where they hang out, where they go to school, where they go to church, how they interact with each other, that sort of thing.
~Dr. Daniel Blumenthal. Director of Community Medicine. Moorehouse School of Medicine, VISTA Alum

Resource Material

QuickSilver: Adventure Games, Initiative Problems, Trust Activities and a Guide to Effective Leadership by Karl Rohnke and Steve Butler

Curing Terminal Niceness: Building Healthy Volunteer/Staff Relationships by Marilyn MacKenzie

Available through the National Service Resource Library:

ETR Associates

Phone: 800-860-2684

<www.etr.org/NSRC>



Community Information

Here's a good spot to put information about your host community. Collect information that will give others a sense of the area's history and why the VISTA project is needed.

- Chamber of Commerce publications
- United Way resource book
- Material from host community's historical society
- Census data <www.census.gov> Enter the zip code(s) of your service area you can download helpful demographic data
- A map of the community including an outline of the host site's service area
- List of where to post flyers
- List of community gathering places (post office, diner, school sporting events etc.)

Resource Material

Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey by Michael Winer and Karen Ray

Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets by John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight

Available through the National Service Resource Library:

ETR Associates

Phone: 800-860-2684

<www.etr.org/NSRC>

On serving in a community very different from the one he grew up in:

First of all, we were kids and we didn't know their culture. We didn't know anything about them. Who are we to go and help these people? What were we doing there? I'm not sure that the community knew but they treated us with incredible respect and with love.

~ Ray Magliozzi, Co-host of the radio show "Car Talk", VISTA Alum.



Project Material

As the project progresses be sure to include a copy of all major documents in this section.

- Project application
- Workplan
- Job description
- Quarterly reports
- Recruitment flyers
- Newsletters
- Contact information about state and national recruitment assistance
- Project numbers (number of people served, number of volunteer hours, etc.)

For me, and probably for the other VISTAs too, VISTA is more than just a thing that you did, it was an experience. It was philosophical. It was spiritual. It was a whole bunch of those other things that made it so important to folks and that's what made it fun as well as rewarding; I think that that's an important element. Another important element is that you really have to work to make it fun. I saw a number of VISTAs who didn't have enough of a sense of humor about life in general I guess. Because you're working, in very difficult and challenging environments you're seeing and being exposed to things that aren't the way it's supposed to but if you can't get some sense of humor about it will just suck you dry.

~ Peter Waite, President of Laubach Literacy International, VISTA Alum

It's a VISTA's chore not to come there and be employees but to carve a way for people who are gonna be left there. Carve a path for them. Help them do that, help enable them. And in the process you're going to get so much more out of it than you ever gave.

~ Wisconsin State Senator Gwendolyn Moore from Milwaukee. VISTA Alum.

Resource Material

The National Service Resource Library has a series of on line documents including job descriptions, mission statements, policies and press releases. This material can be accessed through their website at <www.etr.org/nsrc/forms/index.html>

Getting Started - A Guide for AmeriCorps Members

Principles to High Quality National Service Programs by the Corporation for National Service

Available through the National Service Resource Library:

ETR Associates

Phone: 800-860-2684

<www.etr.org/NSRC>



Community Contacts

Here's the place to list all the helpful project people you've been working with. On the attached sheet please list the people who have been most helpful to you in your project.

- Advisory board/mentors for the project
- Government contacts
- Helpful nonprofit staff members
- Trainers
- Heads of local civic organizations
- School contacts

Sustainability is what you build in the community. I mean that's where your work may live on if it's valuable. If it's valid people buy into to your work and they help get the project started. The important thing is to engage with the community not to be separate from it.

~Tom Flemming, Corporation for National Service.
VISTA Alum.

Resource Material

New Community Collaboration Manual published by the National Assembly of National Voluntary Health & Social Welfare Organizations

Quickening of America by Lappe, Frances Moore and Paul Martin Du Bois

Available through the National Service Resource Library:

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Phone: 800-860-2684

<www.etr.org/NSRC>

Contact List

Name	Phone Number	Email	Address	Helped with what Project(s)	Notes





Volunteer Development

What are some effective strategies you have used to recruit volunteers? Where have you gone to recruit? How have you trained? This is the section where you should record your ideas for volunteer development.

- List of volunteers and their contact information
- How you contact volunteers (by phone, email, mail)
- List of activities volunteers helped with
- Recruitment material (newspaper announcements, posters)
- Training schedules and agendas you've used for volunteer training
- How you think volunteers could help in the future
- Types of volunteers you are looking for (accountant, someone with computer skills, someone who has a background in education, etc.)

VISTA emboldened us to go out and do things that you would never do. I'm normally very quiet and very shy but in order to get things that you had to go and speak in front of large numbers of people and present your case. I would be shaking in my boots but I knew I had to stay on top of it to get my point across in order to get the help that I needed for the community.

~Monique Magliozzi, VISTA Alum.

Resource Material

Volunteer Management Handbook for Effective Development of Volunteer Programs by Ann Jacobson.

Volunteer Development Toolbox by Marilyn MacKenzie and Gail Moore.

The Resource Connection: The Newsletter of the National Service Resource Center <www.etr.org/nsrc/newsletter.html>

Available through the National Service Resource Library:

ETR Associates

Phone: 800-860-2684

<www.etr.org/NSRC>



Grants and Funding Opportunities

It's helpful to put all of the funding material in one spot. Take some time to write down on the attached sheet helpful resources, contact people and events and grants that you would recommend pursuing in the coming year.

- Contact information of donors
- Names and application copies of grants you applied for. If you received the grant what type of reporting expectations does the funder have? If you didn't get the grant did you receive any feedback about why not and how might this affect future applications for this grant?
- Names and contact information for foundations you've approached
- Description and event material for fundraising events held and suggestions for future events
- Letters of support for grants
- Membership material (solicitation letter, thank you letter)
- People who helped develop the grant, reviewers, experts in a particular fields, etc.

Resource Material

101 Ways to Raise Resources
by Steve McCurley and Sue Vineyard

Fundraising Ideas: Over 225 Money Making Events for Community Groups, with a Resource Directory by Janell Shride Amos

Winning Grants Step By Step by Mim Carlson

Grassroots Grants: An Activist's Guide to Proposal Writing by Andy Robinson

Available through the National Service Resource Library:

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The skills I use now to pull together multimillion dollar projects, when we have opportunities to do that, are the same ones that I was using back in 1972 to pull together money for my VISTA project. As a VISTA I was asking for a hundred dollars here and a hundred dollars there and a school bus and a dump truck and paint; it's still the same skill set I use today.

~Peter Waite, President of Laubach Literacy International. VISTA Alum

Grant and Funding Opportunities

Name of

Grant/Funding
Opportunity

Contact
Person

Phone
Number

Address

Due
Date

Notes

Name of Grant/Funding Opportunity	Contact Person	Phone Number	Address	Due Date	Notes





Training Opportunities

What local and regional resources are there to help build the skills of VISTAs? In this section of the workbook write down classes, workshops and trainings that would be helpful to future VISTAs.

- National Service training opportunities
- Names and contact information of people in the community who have expertise in helpful areas
- Online opportunities
- Scholarship opportunities for training
- Local training suggestions (college, training sponsored by another organization)

Resource Material

The National Service Resource Center keeps a list of conferences and training opportunities of interest to Americorps*VISTAs. You can access this list on their website at: <www.etr.org/nsrc/calendar.html>

The things on my VISTA project that I thought were a pain in the butt would always turn out the other way. It's changed my whole perspective on life because I'm always saying there's a light in this somewhere I just don't know where it is right now. It always happens. Always.

~Barbara Niess, Corporation for National Service Staff. VISTA Alum.

Training Opportunities

Name of Training	Topics Covered in Training	Training Date	Contact Person	Phone Number	Notes
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Communication

This is the who, what, when and where section of the workbook. Who did you talk with during your service year? What material did you develop for them? When is a good time to contact them? How would you suggest other VISTAs work with them?

- Contact names and numbers of local radio, television stations and newspapers.
- Press releases
- Newspaper articles
- Letters (to funders, to volunteers, thank you notes, etc.)

What I remember from VISTA was the courage, accomplishments and heroic efforts made by so many people who did not have the advantage of education, money or influence. My experience defied all of the stereotypes my generation was brought up with around welfare, welfare recipients, race, and poverty. I was a twenty-year-old, red headed, freckle faced, southern white boy from southeast Virginia when I entered VISTA in 1966. I trained in the southeast Bronx (NYC) and was then assigned to United South End Settlements in Boston.
~Norman Olshansky, VISTA Alum.

Advice to Fellow VISTAs

Listen

Visit

Commit one random act of beauty or kindness a day

Write down one word that encapsulates the day in a journal

Fast once a week (put savings in a jar)

Take photographs.

Write one note of appreciation a week.

~Shayne DelCohen,. Writer.
VISTA Alum.

Resource Material

Accessing the Media produced by ACTA Publications (video)

A Guide to Working with the Media by the Corporation for National Service

Available through the National Service Resource Library:

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Phone: 800-860-2684

<www.etr.org/NSRC>

