

Servas International 2010 Development Committee Report

Background: At its 2009 General Assembly meeting in Argentina, the SI federation of National Servas groups made changes in what was formerly known as the Development Fund Committee (DFC).

Purpose of the SI Development Committee: The GA renamed the SI DFC the SI Development Committee (DC) and explicitly charged DC to be proactive in more ways than approving SI Funds. DC is to offer assistance instead of waiting for requests for help and to work with SI Officers and Key Persons to strengthen and expand Servas.

The GA charged the DC, Peace Secretary and Vice President to institute systems and processes to help small national groups to grow and flourish and be actively involved in the Servas Spirit in the next decades.

- use of Buddies, Mentors, and Traveling Ambassadors to further peace and Servas development (\$500 annual budget+ add a few sentences in their Letters of Introduction to promote these new SI key person roles)
- support new National Servas Groups with 5 hosts. New Servas Country applications for up to \$200 are to be directed to DC by a Key Person from another country. Applications must include a brief explanation of how the money is to be used and what is to be accomplished. Reports of accomplishments must be sent to the key person and DC within a year of funding.
- support existing National Servas Groups with few members. The National Secretary/Key Person from that country may apply directly to DC for the \$200 mini-grant. Although plans are not required for first year of funding, plans are required for subsequent requests for funding. Reports of accomplishments must be sent to the DC within a year of funding with Receipts when available.
- support both new National Servas Groups and National Servas Groups with few members, \$3,000 is to be allocated in SI Budget each year
- use ideas and practical suggestions in the Intelligent Roadmap

- revise the Servas Handbook to make it more user friendly for small/new national Servas groups

The GA empowered the DC to provide Grants for meetings with specific purposes in line with Servas ideals and explicitly called for the DC to take the initiative to offer assistance

- enable new and small member Servas groups to thrive
- facilitate cooperation between 2 National Groups working on the similar projects
- magnify DC efforts, welcome/recruit/use volunteers (as Buddies, Mentors, Traveling Ambassadors, Distant Interviewers, telephone callers to validate membership in countries with fewer than 10 members, etc.)
- provide more support for SI development projects by fund raising - seek contributions from National Servas Groups as well as other donations
- support Servas Youth activities
- communicate development efforts with Area Coordinators to be sure ACs are kept in the loop.

- **GA elected Development Committee Members:**

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|----------------------|-------------|--|
| • Mary Jane Mikuriya | (USA) | DC Chair (previous past SI Vice President) |
| • Aneris Cao | (Argentina) | DC Secretary (translator at GA) |
| • Luisa Corbetta | (Italy) | DC Member (current SI Peace Secretary) |
| • Judith Shotten | (Israel) | DC Member (previous past Member of SI DFC) |
| • Sally Lee | (Malaysia) | Resigned DC Member |
- DC Contact information: [**development@servas.org**](mailto:development@servas.org)

GA SI allocation to DC + a separate SI line item for Donations to DC

For 2010 US\$ 9,000
 For 2011 US\$ 9,500
 For 2012 US\$ 10,000

One of the 2009 GA mandates was to seek donations for the DC. Unlike SI annual allocations, donations can be carried over from year to year. The 2009 Audit Report showed CHF 14585 from donations to DC

You will notice that SI finances operate in Swiss Francs yet GA allocations above are given in US\$. When the US\$1 = CHF1, DC fund allocation is not a problem, but mostly the SI Treasurer must recalculate, therefore the DC must be mindful of the currency in the budget request.

It took 4 months, 8 emails and involved several individuals to determine exactly how much money DC had available to offer/allocate to grant requests.

The Annual SI Audit Report is the definitive source for identifying the amount of donations available to DC. No matter what currency the donation was in, it is summarized in CHF - Swiss Francs

The SI Treasurer Mirek Wasilewski informed DC that CHF 9600 were budgeted for 2010 DC operations as follows:

Small grants for beginning Servas groups (up to \$200 each) - CHF 2600
Country office grants up to \$200 each - CHF 2000
Support for Regional and Project Meetings - CHF 5000

Note the above SI Treasurer allocations in both US\$ and CHF

Operationally DC recommends funding and the Treasurer sends the money. DC is never informed how much was actually spent. The only way to find out how much was spent is by review of the annual SI Audit that is not published at the beginning of each fiscal year to know how much DC has.

The 2009 GA “explicitly charged DC to be proactive in more ways than approving SI Funds. DC is to offer assistance instead of waiting for requests for help and to work with SI Officers and Key Persons to strengthen and expand Servas. “ If DC is to be proactive with its funds, it must be informed /know how much it has in each DC budgeted line item at all times.

Recommendation: The SI Treasurer provide financial updates, as information becomes available, summarizing the amount of money available for DC.

For larger amounts, EXCO authorizes payments. Since SI Area Coordinator funding is managed by the Vice President and approved by EXCO, Area Coordinators can request SI funds for a Regional Conference from EXCO and from DC for the same event as happened in 2010. The coordination of funding from these two pots of SI money for the same event are not clear. Therefore, in 2010, EXCO and DC had a joint teleconference to be assured that EXCO and DC funds were focused and complementary.

DC approved 2 large Grants in 2010 for \$9000 = the total \$9000 2010 allocation and turned down 2 grant requests

South American Area Servas Conference October 20- 24, 2010 in Santiago, Brazil was submitted by the Area Coordinator Jamie Ramirez in August 2010 and after many discussions **approved for \$3000 from DC funds + \$6000 from SI's Regional Coordinator Allocation**

Servas Youth Conference held at the same time and place, October 20-24, 2010, in Santiago, Brazil was submitted by SI Youth Coordinator, Pablo Chufeni, and approved by the DC September 28, 2010 for \$6000

Observations: During the grant approval process it became clear that the level of specificity required for funding was missing. Applicants were asked to briefly explain how what was proposed would strengthen or expand Servas, what specific outcomes could be expected, and how all budget requests were clearly related to the purposes/outcomes of the proposal. The committee through emails, conference calls and individual Committee Member consultations with applicants resulted in Grant revisions for fundability.

The 2 requests for funding in 2010 that were turned down

Grant Request #1 Georgia: Based on contact with someone in Servas, 2 new Servas members were added to Dolphin without a designated Mentor who vouched for and guided them, but informed them of the availability of SI grants. The new Georgian Servas members immediately requested \$1,307.50 for Servas Development. One of the 2 Georgian members signed the request as Georgian National Secretary and President and the other signed as Servas Organization Development Manager. When informed that a maximum of \$200 was available for start-up Servas groups, the Georgians asked the \$200 for internet connection and pay for a Servas website domain to search for "good and really interesting people who will be future Servas members".

Correspondence with Georgia revealed that a "Servas Meeting" was held on December 27, 2009 in the Marioti Hotel, Tbilisi were 150 participants paid 10 lari each to become Servas members. The next meeting was to be scheduled for Jan 5, 2010 for interviewing. There is no information whether the January meeting took place? Many Key Persons (Servas Belgium, Germany, Russia and USA) were involved in trying to obtain from the "NS of Georgia" the flyer of what was promised new Servas members, the list of the 150 new members, and the return of SI stamps. An SI Ambassador was sent to Tbilisi to talk to the "NS". Her correspondence and phone calls were ignored. How can there be a "NS" who does not communicate by email, phone or in person? Result the two Georgians names were deleted from Dolphin. It is not clear if the return of the SI Stamps ever happened.

Request #2 Armenia: The Armenian Establisher submitted a grant application for mLatin America in Spanish for distribution to Servas National groups with less than 10 members. Armenia has about 5 members. The Establisher was told that the maximum allowed for development of Servas was \$200. She was also told the grant application was not funded because it was not clear as to how the proposed TV Project in Spanish would benefit Servas Armenia.

DC oversight of SI Mentors, SI Ambassadors and SI Buddies

2009 GA mandate: “Use of Buddies, Mentors, and Traveling Ambassadors to further peace and Servas development (\$500 annual budget+ add a few sentences in their Letters of Introduction to promote these new SI key person roles)”

Mentors

The SI Mentor is a relatively new category of leadership. It was recommended at the 2006 EGA that individual Servas members help develop and strengthen Servas.

The experience and skills required to be a Mentor are working familiarity with SI statutes and practices, Servas web and the information to be found there, the Servas Handbook which sets forth what is expected from National Secretaries, stamp accounting, host list updating, annual SI reports, the Financial Operating Procedures, and interviewing requirements for hosts and travelers. Mentors provide timely, kind and informative responses. Although Mentors may not have all the answers, they can direct the person to a committee or person who can. Mentors take initiative for working with Servas membership locally or internationally and helping new/isolated Servas leaders. A Mentor is a problem-solver assigned to help a National Servas group or a Servas committee. The Mentor can advocate for the National Group to receive up to \$200 DC funding for a proposed realist plan to expand Servas.

A Mentor facilitates becoming a GA approved voting National Servas group. Those countries that have ten or more hosts and 3 National contacts published in the key list are on the road to being a recognized voting member of SI. These 3 local leaders must familiarize themselves with the Servas Handbook and agree to follow the expectations of Servas. The Servas Handbook discusses the receiving and accounting for Servas Stamps. The National Secretary is hopefully elected/confirmed by members. SI wants to get away from individual or family run national Servas groups. When countries have 10 confirmed different, current, host households on their host lists, provide annual reports, have provided the necessary records/reports for any SI funding received as well as 3 contact-able National Leaders listed in the SI key list, the country can then request SI voting status at the next GA or by Distant Vote.

The Mentor consults with the SI Membership Committee to support the Country having SI voting status based on his or her personal knowledge that requirements for SI voting membership are in place.

Since 2006 there are 5 mentors:

1. Omer Ozkan of Turkey, former NS of Turkey and former SI Treasurer was the mentor for Kosovo, Greece, Syria, Jordan and Saudia Arabia.
2. Harald Steiffer Treasurer@servas.de of Germany who is the fluent-in-Russian was the mentor for Kazakhstan.
3. Rita Dessuvage is the NS of Belgium and is the French Speaking mentor for French Speaking countries in Africa such as Cameroon and Congo-Brazzaville.
4. Mary Jane Mikuriya, former NS of USA and former SI VP is the mentor for Sierra Leone and Liberia
5. Nancy Mitchell, former NS of USA and current SI and USA Distant Interviewer is the mentor for Palestine and Bangladesh

Recommendations:

To assist the Host List Coordinator keep valid Servas Lists, new National Servas Group's name or members should be added to Dolphin only by Servas Members willing vouch for them. In the past names have been added to Dolphin by individuals who were given who were given access to Dolphin without someone willing to vouch for them. Later on 2 individuals had to be removed. Mentors or Sponsors need to approve new members before they are the first to be added to Dolphin as a new Servas group.

All new national Servas groups need an identified Servas Mentor to provide clear communication with Establishers about Servas until the country is approved as a Voting Member Country

All mention of SI grants must say a **maximum amount of \$200** is available to beginning National Servas groups or for Servas groups with few hosts.

First time requestors of large SI Funds need to discuss their request for funds with DC and VP before making promises, setting dates and proposing budgets. Luisa Corbetta, Mary Jane Mikuriya, Nancy Mitchell, and Pramod Kumar have experience as grant writers/project managers and are willing to help first time Requestors of large grants with their grant writing requests

Servas Ambassadors.

SI Ambassadors are individuals Hosts and Traveler who are willing to help Servas members or Servas groups. Beginning or isolated Servas members groups that welcome help to develop Servas in their country are delighted to communicate and/or

host Servas Ambassadors. Any Servas member can be a Servas Ambassador if they are willing to offer a listening ear, an observing eye and a helping hand and are knowledgeable about Servas and can find the help that is needed.

Traveling Servas Ambassadors are the face of Servas. They can provide training, obtain SI documents or help identify a Mentor.

By working with a country's Mentor, Ambassadors can recommend up to \$200 of start-up funding for developing Servas in a country. The traveler/Ambassador can hand deliver start up funds to the country and work with the country to understand that with the gift of SI money requires a report of "accomplishments" or simply put, a report of the results of the funding that can be published in the SI Newsletter.

Too often, up to 50% of the \$200 start up Servas funds are eaten up by bank transfer and bank fees when sent internationally. Thus after the traveler assesses the situation, works with the mentor, receives authorization to give the \$200 of his or her personal money directly to the National Servas organizer, gets a receipt for the funds, the Mentor arranges for the reimbursement when the traveler returns home.

The following are the know SI Ambassadors and there are surely more.

1. Charlotte Melville of USA Ambassador to Georgia and Armenia
2. Judith Shotten of Israel Ambassador to Palestine
3. Geoffrey Sheldon of Australia Ambassador for Papua New Guinea
4. Amir Levi of Israel Ambassador to Latvia.

Servas National Groups as Buddies to countries with few hosts and few resources.

Buddies are well functioning National Servas groups willing to partner with a struggling Servas group.

EGA encouraged more Servas buddy relationships. If you look at the Key List you will notice that some countries include other countries in their Host Lists. For example France is the host list buddy to the 24 hosts in Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guyana, New Caledonia and Tahiti. Turkey was the host list buddy for the 19 Greek hosts until Greece was able to produce its own host list. Under the *host list buddy system*, the host lists of buddy countries with few hosts are up-to-date. Those countries with few hosts and have old lists tend to be without Buddies.

It is time to find a buddy!

Area Coordinator

Several National Servas groups can become a region. Those National groups that constitute a region need to agree to work together. They must be verified by EXCO. When their AC is elected, the area can be recognized on the Key List. The AC will arrange for Regional Meetings. The AC knows what is going on in each country and shares the country reports with other national groups in a newsletter or at a regional

meeting. The AC is the acknowledged respected leader for the Area and is an advocate for the area to EXCO and DFC. There is SI money available for ACs in order to strengthen and expand Servas in the Area.

Help is available from ACs, SI Mentors, SI Ambassadors and SI Buddies

Highlights of the 15 DC meetings in 2010

DC developed criteria for approving requests for SI funding. In the past the DC, received requests for funding without explaining what the funds would be used for. Therefore the DC developed criteria which required a detailed explanation how the requested money would be used to expand/ strengthen Servas.

DC approved funding for the October 24, 2010 joint Youth and Regional South American Conference.

DC Members + SI Vice President contacted a sampling of the 83 countries with less than 10 hosts and out of date lists as old as 2003 to complement the GA validity study of Servas Host lists with 10 or more hosts Each DC member and the VP were assigned to contact at least 5 countries.

Findings: All countries that were able to be contacted were pleased to know that Servas cared enough to contact them to see how Servas was doing and if there were ways that the DC could help. Some contacts felt that due to circumstances, they had gone as far as they could and appreciated being consulted/in touch. Others wanted the caller to visit and be the reason/presenter for having a Servas meeting in order to activate Servas.

Unanswered Questions: There were several countries that where there was no response - no working phone, no email and no Skype.

1. Should countries continue to be listed as having Servas hosts when there are no working phones or emails? Is there a policy/process for removing non-functional national groups from the SI Host List? If not, should there be one?
2. What to do with counties where the NS does not respond, has not updated the host list and yet travelers report staying with hosts? Can NS who do not respond be removed as a NS and replaced with a host who is willing to respond for the country?

Use of the SI web site to welcome members to Servas, needs to be analyzed to make sure that there are responses to all inquires or else potential Servas travelers will be lost.

The Host List Coordinator Pablo Coangelo, sent a 43 page list of about 1000 people who had gone to the SI web site seeking information about Servas. He sent the list to

Mary Jane Mikuriya since she, as the mentor for Sierra Leone, would be interested that there were 4 inquiries from Sierra Leone to talk to the NS of Sierra Leone.

People that contact the Servas web site are ready to travel and join Servas.

There were 15 Albanians interested in Servas and yet there is no Servas group in Albania. Servas loses potential Servas travelers that are leaving in less than a month if no or delayed Servas responses are sent. With such interest from Albania, a Servas Mentor should have been assigned to communicate with the 15 Albanians whose contact information is on the web and determine if one or more would be interested in establishing Servas in Albania.

Analysis:

With the opening the Servas International web site, SI needs a dependable **system** to respond to inquirers to the Servas contacts in a timely manner. Responses may or may not come depending on the country.

To show Servas is a welcoming organization, there needs to be acknowledgement of web applications by introducing them to the local Servas hosts. Imagine the surprise to realize that Servas members may be your neighbors.

There was a suggestion by Judy Shotten, the DC agreed with: anyone person seeking information about Servas from the SI web site receive an automatic friendly welcoming letter with the name of the contact person in their home country and saying if you don't get a response in XX days that you contact YYYYY.

In this way each inquiring person will be acknowledged by Servas. Those that write to YYYYY will inform SI which country contacts are available and functioning and which are not.

Judy Shotten will write the friendly welcoming letter, but EXCO will have to determine who the YYYYY person/team will be able to respond for the country.

Recommendation for expanding Servas membership:

DC encourages EXCO to institute an automatic response system to website inquires and to identify one or more volunteers to analyze and facilitate inquiries for connecting, developing, or strengthening Servas in counties where Servas is nonexistent or frail.

Recommendations for providing individualized help to the 83 national groups that have less than 10 members

- use of Buddies, Mentors, and Traveling Ambassadors to further peace and Servas development. (2009 GA)

- add a few sentences in the Letters of Introduction of Mentors and Traveling Ambassadors to promote these new SI key person roles. (2009 GA)
- revise the Servas Handbook to make it more user friendly for small/new national Servas groups. (2009 GA)
- have annual SI Leadership Training Meetings to identify those Servas members that want to become more active and have the ability to become Mentors and Ambassadors. Include as workshop topics: characteristics of a Servas Helper, how to identify potential new Servas members, interviewing , organizing Servas meetings, what do goals and accomplishments look like, grant writing, how to make a 3 year Servas plan (a GA requirement), overview of SI Financial Operating Procedures to name a few.

Report prepared by Mary Jane Mikuiya , with approval from all SI Development Committee Members - Aneris Cao, Luisa Corbetta, Judy Shotten along with SI Vice President – Pramod Kumar

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