The PC Recipe Box – Concept Paper

**Background**

Regardless of the sector to which they belong, Peace Corps Volunteers are frequently involved in activities centered on cooking demonstration and education to improve nutrition outcomes in their communities. However, assurance of quality and a ‘Do No Harm’ approach is left to the individual with inadequate guidance to inform choices of food types, ingredients, etc.

A resource that could meet multiple needs through a single interface is expected to enhance the Volunteer experience and raise the quality of activities around meal planning, cooking demonstrations and other activities that seek to improve nutritional outcomes through food and diet.

This resource would benefit a number of constituents and would ***align with the food security strategy*** goal that actively ***promotes improved nutrition outcomes***. Improving the quality of programming related to food and diet is seen as an essential component related to this goal.

**Building Momentum**

To facilitate the launch of the Recipe Box, designers can capitalize on a long history of PC country-specific cookbooks. Often passed down in simple written formats, PC Volunteers have, over the years, created and archived both traditional recipes as well as innovative adaptations that incorporate local inputs.

Though these have been used primarily for Volunteers to prepare food for themselves, this initial database of recipes will provide the initial ‘feedstock’ to build the database of recipes and is evidence that there is a demand for the platform.

**Stakeholders (Potential and Confirmed)**

* Nutrition-focused Volunteers
* Non-nutrition Volunteers
* Training Staff at Post
* RPCVs
* OPATS/OGHH
* 3rd Goal
* Office of Innovations

**Phased Development**

* **Phase 1: XX day consultancy**

**(Gabe, can you fill this section? – what do we need here, how many days?)**

1. **Collection and consolidation of 100 recipes**. There are roughly 83 cookbooks in various file formats (PDF, Word, Text, and HTML). A single recipe platform would require consistent data, categorized data. An effort needs to be made in order to transfer at a minimum 100 recipe items (including all relevant metadata) in order to move to the next phase of design and development.
2. **Design and scope of recipe app platform**. This phase is an initial iteration to connect recipe data and user interface the design of the

* *Consolidation of existing recipe database into a single format (excel?)*
* *Develop a mock of user experience map/front page*
* *Develop plan to generate nutrient output (via USDA nutrient database or other?)*
* *Presentation at conclusion to inform “go/no-go” decision*

**The User Experience**

By accessing the PCRB, the user should be able to accomplish the following:

* Find a recipe to create a meal for themselves
* Find a recipe to use for a food-oriented programming activity
* Easily assess the relative quality of a recipe based on a nutrient output
* View and submit comments about the recipe and any activities related to the using the recipe

**Information Page Essential Components**

* Searchable fields
  + Type of Cuisine
  + Meal (Breakfast, lunch, etc.)
  + Season (if applicable)
* Ingredient List
* Comment Area
  + Ratings
  + Modifications
  + Endorsements (technical specialists, collaborating Registered Dieticians etc.)
* Video upload capability to assist with execution of the meal
* Nutrient Database Output
  + Overnutrition
    - Calories
    - Sodium
    - Fiber
    - Saturated Fat
    - Micronutrient Information
  + Undernutrition
    - Micronutrients Information (Vitamin A, Zinc, Iron and Iodine)
* Measurement Dropdowns
* Recipe Upload Function

Multiple meetings have been held with USDA to ascertain the level of interest and capacity to support the effort. The robust [National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference](http://ndb.nal.usda.gov/ndb/search/list) can serve as the backbone of the project. However, use of the database is insufficient for the project and a number of additional components are required. These additions are listed below:

**The Recipe Database**

There already exists a wealth of recipes at various Peace Corps posts that have been recorded and passed down for decades. Collection of these resources and upload of the data into a digital format could be done to initiate the database. Allowing users to upload new recipes will be critical to this being a “living” database and to ensure that it achieves a critical mass.

**Measurement Converter**

There will be a need to convert measurements into various units to account for local preferences for Volunteers and their communities all around the world. Allowing users to ‘create’ measurement equivalents will be necessary to account for obscure localized measurement units.

**Project Tasks**

* assess content/quality of PCV cookbooks
* assess challenges with measurements
* evaluate requirements
  + what are the use cases for this type of platform (listed in concept paper to an extent…)
  + what type of user interface - mobile/offline/webapp, etc...

Resources

<http://foodhack.wikispaces.com/Datasets+and+APIs>

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/Services/docs.htm?docid=8964>

<http://ndb.nal.usda.gov/>

[www.food.com](http://www.food.com)