

Witness Stones Project

Strategic Plan Executive Summary

2021-2024



Founded in 2017 in Guilford, CT, to tell the truth of Northern slavery and to change the local historical narrative, the Witness Stones Project has since grown to serve twenty-five schools and historical institutions in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Jersey. With an increasing focus on racial reckoning, communities across the Northeast are requesting the Witness Stones Project and its curriculum and the organization is poised for its next phase. In 2020, WSP embarked on a strategic planning process to set forth a roadmap for organizational development over the next three years. Informing the process was a stakeholder analysis of WSP's strengths, challenges, and opportunities gathered through interviews with a dozen educators, research partners, and funders.

In creating the Strategic Plan, the Executive Director, together with the 8-person Board of Directors of the Witness Stones Project: 1) Created Mission and Vision; 2) identified key pillars and goals; and 3) created an action plan specifying the actions needed (including an updated budget and fundraising targets) to address the critical issues.

Vision Statement: The Witness Stones Project envisions communities committed to learning their true history, dismantling current inequities, and building a just future.

Mission Statement: The Witness Stones Project seeks to restore the history and honor the humanity of the enslaved individuals who helped build our communities.

Through this strategic planning process, WSP's work is organized around three key pillars:

- 1) Expand and Diversify Student and School Projects
- 2) Strengthen Communications and Network Engagement
- 3) Build Organizational Capacity



Witness
STONES
Project™

1. **Expand and Diversify Student and School Projects:** *Expand the number of schools and standardize the building blocks of the curriculum to reach a broader group of students by age (elementary through high school), geographic region (throughout the Northeast), and demographics (reaching more students of color).*
 - a. Expansion of curriculum with standardized elements for elementary through high school and throughout all regions of the Northeast
 - b. Teacher training and capacity building on WSP's five themes of slavery to make the curriculum accessible to all students.
 - c. Reach a broader group of students, especially in public and urban schools, and implement multi-school, multi-community projects to foster conversation across communities about the legacy of slavery. Goal of 12 new schools per year, with two being in public/urban majority minority schools to reach more students of color.
 - d. Increase community engagement and education through development and delivery of a Witness Stones Project workshop for adult learners.

2. **Strengthen Communications and Network Engagement:** *Educate the community and supporters through lectures, presentations, workshops, and publishing. Build capacity of WSP schools and research affiliates/partners.*
 - a. Strengthen WSP brand, website, and internal/external communications
 - b. Increase media visibility for projects and installation ceremonies in communities.
 - c. Publish a book to break new ground in the history of New England slavery and gradual emancipation through a micro-edition which follows one enslaved family's heart wrenching journey from slavery to freedom in early New England.
 - d. Share timely resources through a virtual network for capacity building, communication, and best practice sharing for research partners and teachers.

3. **Build organizational capacity:** *Grow WSP into a sustainable organization with research and organizational capacity to meet the demand for its programs.*
 - a. Hire an Executive Director and Research Associate to enable the Founding Executive Director to focus time as Education and Program Director.
 - b. Grow and diversify the board of directors and create an advisory council.
 - c. Build strategic research partnerships for capacity building and enable scaling of school engagement.
 - d. Launch fundraising campaign to engage individuals, foundations, and companies in supporting WSP's growth and organizational sustainability.