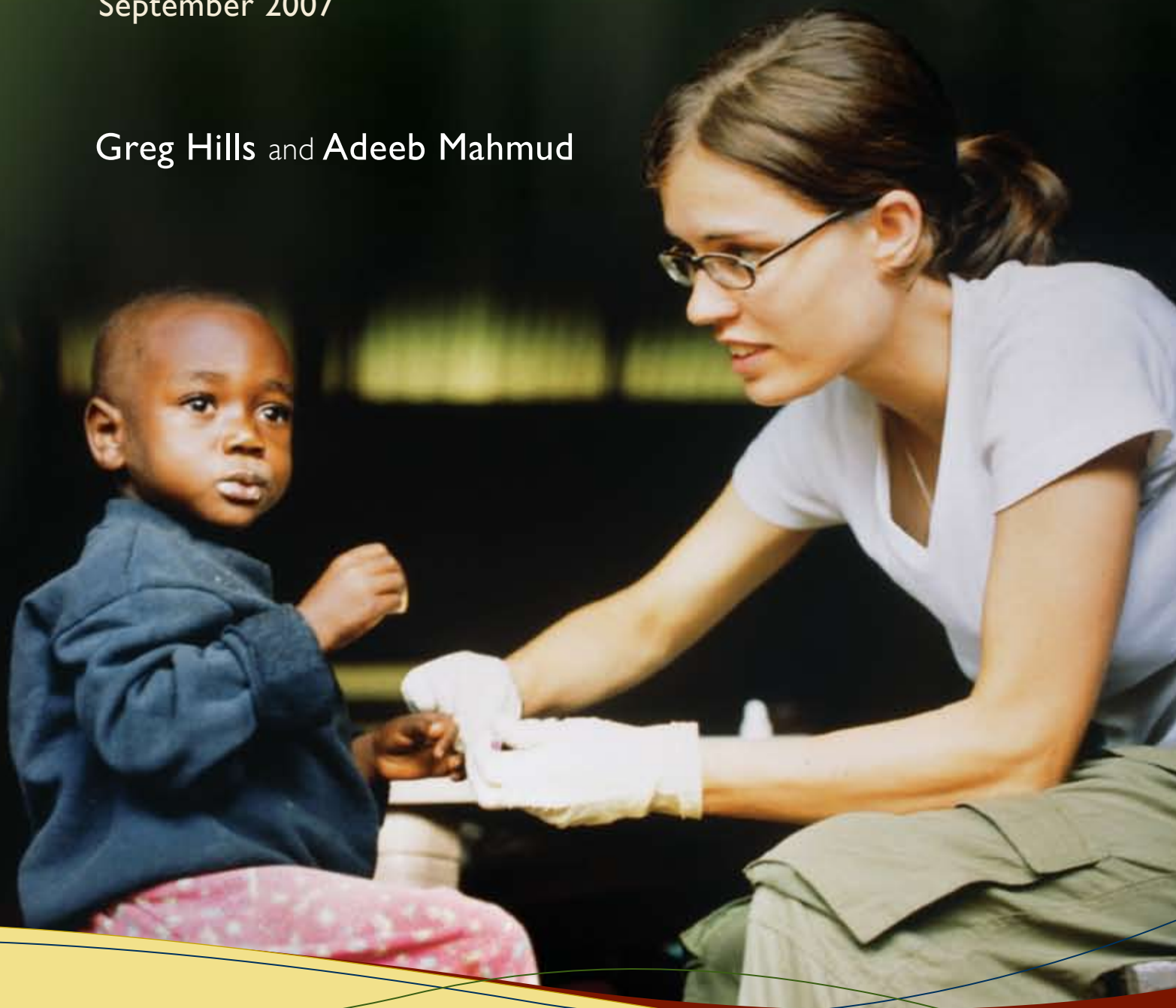


# Volunteering for Impact

Best Practices in International Corporate Volunteering

September 2007

Greg Hills and Adeeb Mahmud



**FSG**  SOCIAL IMPACT ADVISORS

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FSG Social Impact Advisors is a nonprofit organization dedicated to accelerating social progress by advancing the practice of philanthropy and corporate social responsibility. FSG services include:

- **Advice:** Advising leading foundations, corporations, and nonprofits on how to increase their social impact through strategy development and evaluation
- **Ideas:** Publishing original research and innovative ideas
- **Action:** Incubating and launching long-term action initiatives in collaboration with our clients, funders, and partners

With offices in Boston, San Francisco, Seattle, and Geneva, the FSG international team of full-time consultants combines the highest standards of strategy consulting with a deep understanding of philanthropy and the nonprofit sector. The organization invests heavily in research to learn and to develop new ideas, and FSG thinking is regularly featured in such publications as *Harvard Business Review*, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, and *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*.

Guided by the work of Cofounder and Senior Advisor Michael E. Porter of Harvard Business School, FSG Social Impact Advisors has worked with dozens of global corporations — such as GE, Microsoft, Nestle, Pfizer, Shell, and Swiss Re — to build competitive advantage and social value through innovative practices in corporate social responsibility and philanthropy.

For more information, visit [www.fsg-impact.org](http://www.fsg-impact.org).

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## A Message from the Sponsors

As multinational corporations become truly global, they are seeking new, strategic, high-impact opportunities through which they may engage with the communities in which they work. International Corporate Volunteering (ICV) has thus emerged as an important new vehicle for corporate citizenship programming that not only deepens local corporate community involvement, but also leverages the human assets and vast technical skills of a company to effect improvements in areas such as the environment, health care and education. ICV programs provide powerful opportunities for corporations and employees to engage directly in addressing social challenges in the local communities where they operate, worldwide. These programs provide a unique platform for creating both social and business impact.

Despite the growing number of corporate employee volunteering programs, the field of ICV generally suffers from a lack of widespread documentation of existing and effective models. Given the emergence of high-impact models that are sustainable from a business perspective, the growing number of corporations seeking to engage in the arena, and the vast array of global developmental challenges — a critical need existed for further research on this topic.

We believe that *Volunteering for Impact: Best Practices in International Corporate Volunteering* is an important and unique contribution to the field of international service. Researched and written by FSG Social Impact Advisors, this independent white paper provides a useful overview, identifies a variety of models, and describes detailed case studies, all of which we believe will play a key role in enhancing the dialogue around increased effectiveness of ICV.

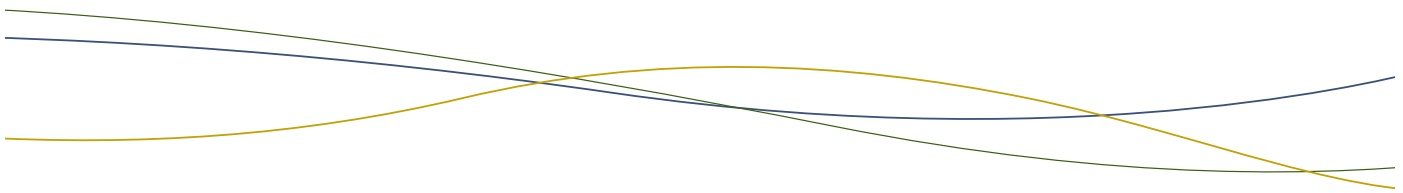
From Brookings' perspective, this paper is an exciting addition to our Initiative on International Volunteering and Service. As part of this initiative, we are exploring ways for the culture of volunteering to enhance global understanding and security. This paper is an important contribution to the Initiative's Corporate Affinity Group and provides a compelling discussion of the unique power that ICV can bring in improving the lives of people across the globe.

At Pfizer, we are particularly excited about the diversity of models that this paper illustrates. Since launching our Global Health Fellows program in 2002, we have gained significant insights from our experience and continue to seek new ways in which to better assist our partners and increase developmental impact on the ground. It is our hope that by documenting the variety of models and effective practices of leading corporations, this paper will provide a useful guide for those seeking to initiate or expand ICV activities.

Pfizer and The Brookings Institution are proud to sponsor and share this research with the field. We encourage corporations across industries to learn from and build upon the experiences of others and to recognize the opportunity that exists to achieve both social and business goals through effective and strategic ICV programs. We submit that it is only by building the capacity of local institutions and individuals through effective knowledge and skills exchange that we will be successful in addressing the challenges our world faces today.

Robert L. Mallett  
Senior Vice President  
Worldwide Public Affairs & Policy  
Pfizer Inc

David Caprara  
Director and Nonresident Fellow  
International Volunteering Project  
The Brookings Institution



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An IBM volunteer shows children in her community how to participate in IBM's KidSmart Early Learning program, which has been used by 2.6 million students and teachers in 7,500 centers in 60 countries.



# Executive Summary

Multinational corporations invest significant time and money to deploy employee volunteers throughout the world. A range of international corporate volunteering (ICV) programs have emerged in recent years with an estimated 40 percent of major corporations supporting employee volunteering efforts around the world.<sup>1</sup> International corporate volunteering, or ICV, refers to the practice of engaging employees in service projects in countries outside of the company's headquarters country. ICV includes two principal models: *local service*, in which employees based in countries outside headquarters volunteer in their local communities; and *cross-border service*, in which employees travel abroad to volunteer.

Similar to corporate grantmaking, corporate volunteering suffers from a disproportionate emphasis on the quantity of activity rather than potential impact. Just as corporate giving focuses on metrics like total grantmaking dollars, the typical corporate volunteering program highlights numbers of volunteers and total hours of service. Corporations neither regularly articulate the strategic purpose nor measure the social impact of volunteering. They justify ICV programs based on improved employee morale and contributions toward corporate citizenship. While these traditional motivations are valuable, they set a low bar of expectations that ignores volunteering's potential for increasing business or social impact.

To increase the overall understanding and effectiveness of these programs, Pfizer and The Brookings Institution engaged FSG Social Impact Advisors to research and analyze best practices in the field. This paper seeks to explore and understand the lessons learned among major corporations, and is intended to be a first step toward creating a more structured and systematic understanding of the landscape of ICV. It provides an analysis of a sample of leading corporate programs, suggests ways in which corporations can more strategically align volunteering programs with their businesses, and provides recommendations for companies to consider for the future.

## Findings

This paper analyzes the two principal ICV operational models: *local service* and *cross-border service*. The ICV projects reviewed ranged from occasional hourly contributions to longer term, full-time volunteering, known as fellowships. The local service model, which is a more established and widespread way in which corporations engage employees in

service, differs widely by country and office location, as it is often dictated by the needs and interests of local employees and community members. The cross-border model of ICV is a relatively new phenomenon in corporate philanthropy and international development — each of the 11 cross-border programs researched in this sample was initiated within the last nine years. Therefore most of the corporations we profiled are still in learning mode as they seek to improve and refine programs.

Among the companies in FSG's research sample, a wide range of focus areas and approaches spanned the two operational models. The amount of corporate investment in ICV programs ranged from lean programs covering only employee salaries to more resource-intensive efforts that included tailored preservice training programs, centralized project management, structured partner relationships, product donations, and grant enhancements. Programs address such issues as economic development, education, the environment, disaster relief, and health care.

The most common beneficiaries of corporate volunteering were nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and only a few programs benefited multilateral organizations, government agencies, private businesses, or individuals. While some corporations work directly with individual organizations to plan volunteer assignments, many corporations partner with a nonprofit intermediary that manages placement logistics. Program measurement remains elusive, as only a few corporations have conducted structured evaluations to understand the impact of ICV program investments.

## Increasing Business and Social Impact

Reviewing the landscape of activity in international corporate volunteering illuminates the wide range of choices that corporations make as they design and implement programs. This paper provides a strategic framework that can guide choices and help tether program design and execution to purposeful objectives. The framework depicts two important dimensions for ICV programs: (1) business motivations; and (2) leverage of corporate assets and expertise. The *business motivations* dimension makes a distinction between general motivations of employee volunteering (such as corporate citizenship, company reputation, and employee morale) and motivations that align with a corporate strategy (such as

<sup>1</sup> *Giving in Numbers: 2006 Edition*, Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy, 2006. Percentage reflects responses from a sample of more than 100 corporations that CECP surveyed.

stakeholder relations, customer focus, competitive context, and leadership development). The *leverage of corporate assets and expertise* dimension reflects the degree to which corporate volunteering programs draw on the workplace skills of employees and the company's distinct corporate and/or philanthropic resources.

An examination of nine companies' stories illustrates how leading corporations have chosen to utilize their employees to provide both business and social impact. The School Feeding Volunteer Program at TNT, the express delivery and logistics provider, is an example of traditional volunteering that addresses a critical social need in the developing world. The cross-border programs of the management consulting firm Accenture, the accounting firm Ernst & Young, and



TNT exhibit a high leverage of employee knowledge and skills. Their employees serve in valuable capacity-building and technical-assistance roles. Starbucks' program sends volunteers to the coffee cooperatives of its suppliers, and the footwear and apparel company Timberland performs reforestation work in Asia. Both examples highlight a strong level of corporate social responsibility to employees and customers.

Among the corporations in this research, a handful exhibit qualities of "high-impact" volunteering: strategic motivations and high leverage of corporate assets and expertise. PricewaterhouseCoopers' Ulysses program deploys high-potential senior employees on skills-based service projects as part of a structured internal leadership-development program. IBM's On Demand Community leverages its employees' skills and the firm's customized portal technology to facilitate widespread volunteering, while at the same time showcases the effectiveness of its technology solutions. Pfizer's Global Health Fellows program sets the bar for cross-border programs by dispatching dozens of highly skilled employees each year to address global health issues with key nonprofit and government stakeholders in the developing world. Similarly, the medical technology company BD recently launched an ICV program combining product donations, enhancement grants, and skilled employees to improve the effectiveness of hospital laboratories in sub-Saharan Africa.

## Recommendations

With the goal of increasing the impact of international corporate volunteering, FSG has compiled several best practices that can be incorporated into the planning and implementation of future programs:

- 1. Set Goals before Roles:** *Identify the business motivations for volunteering and then develop programs to fit those goals.* Whether corporations engage in ICV for general motivations or strategic goals, identifying the appropriate business objectives is critical. While both types of motivations are important, companies need to identify what's driving their work and design programs and outcomes accordingly.
- 2. Walk before You Run:** *Determine which of the two operational models to pursue — cross-border or local service — based on your level of experience with international programs and your desired presence in a target country.* All corporations with international locations should consider the local service model. Companies that have a significant local presence in strategic markets with a strong culture of volunteering could be candidates to implement local fellowships. For firms that may not have significant international experience but would still like their employees to learn from cross-cultural opportunities, a cross-border model with a low commitment of resources is most appropriate. Fully funded fellowships for employees to volunteer abroad are more appropriate for corporations that have developed extensive international program experience and are comfortable managing the complexities of highly engaged programs.



3. **Lead with Leverage:** *Opportunities to create social impact will be greater if companies leverage employees' workplace skills and knowledge.* Not all companies are equally equipped to utilize the skills of their employees with every type of beneficiary. Corporations in any industry should make a systematic decision about which projects may be the best opportunities for employees to use their workplace skills.
4. **Align with Philanthropic and Corporate Social Responsibility Activities:** *Look for opportunities to combine volunteering programs with ongoing philanthropic or CSR work.* Cash and in-kind donations or other services can increase the social impact of international volunteering. Focus and alignment with the rest of the company's philanthropic efforts also make it easier to prioritize, promote, and publicize ICV activities.
5. **Partner Proactively:** *Partnerships can provide access to resources the company may not have.* It is important that companies pick partners that have relationships in the country and are intimately familiar with local cultures and practices. In addition, relationships within the company can be just as important as external alliances.
6. **Invest in Infrastructure:** *Ensure adequate internal resources (staff, funding, systems) to manage volunteering programs.* For cross-border programs, resources are particularly important due to the additional needs of training, logistics, and coordination.
7. **Communicate Clearly:** *Be up-front about the motivations and benefits of your program, and communicate those messages to internal and external stakeholders.* ICV initiatives can have multiple stakeholders (employees, management, beneficiaries, intermediary partners, third-party observers), not all of whom may bring the same objectives or expectations to the table. Both internal and external stakeholders need to be aware of the program's goals.

Looking toward the future of ICV, corporations can think more broadly about their goals. They can go beyond simply running an effective ICV program and toward opportunities to create an exponential increase in the scale of impact. Significant opportunities exist for companies to structure high impact programs through expanded local service programs. Given the cost differentials and limited life disruption for employees, the biggest opportunity for scaling ICV is with these local models.

Another powerful way to scale impact is to collaborate with other corporations. Working together with other companies provides several potential benefits: deeper expertise can be leveraged as companies draw on a broader range of core



competencies, implementation risk can be spread across several organizations, and costs can be saved from pooling administrative resources. Corporations would still benefit from the “ambassadorship” of their own employees who volunteer in the community, but a broader level of social impact could be achieved.

While most examples of corporate collaboration focus on event-based disaster relief, such as the volunteers from IBM and Cisco, the technology supplier, who worked on tsunami relief, such joint efforts could be applied toward more proactive and ongoing efforts to benefit society. Whether it is through individual or collaborative efforts, it is clear that creating high-impact ICV programs requires strong leadership to ensure that investments benefit business goals and also effectively address important global issues.

BD volunteers worked alongside health care workers at Mpanshya Mission Hospital in Zambia to ensure safe testing of blood samples.



# 1. Introduction

## Background

Multinational corporations invest significant time and money to deploy employee volunteers throughout the world. As companies embrace the increasingly interdependent nature of business and society, they often use employee service programs as a vehicle for addressing critical social challenges in international markets. A range of international corporate volunteering (ICV) programs, from occasional hourly contributions to longer term, full-time volunteering known as fellowships, have emerged in recent years. These ICV activities are captured by two operational models: *local service*, in which employees based in countries outside headquarters volunteer in their local communities; and *cross-border service*, in which employees travel abroad to volunteer.

Despite the corporate investment of time and money in these programs, however, a lack of research exists about the level of activity and overall effectiveness of employee service in international markets. The U.S. National Council on Workplace Volunteerism recently announced that its member companies have involved more than 463,000 employee volunteers, who have donated nine million hours to employee volunteer programs in the U.S. and abroad.<sup>2</sup> While this is a large *quantity* of community service, CEOs should interpret this number as a monumental investment of corporate resources and should ask about the impact of that investment: What strategic benefit is the company accruing and how effective have employees been at adding value to society?

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Similar to corporate grantmaking, corporate volunteering suffers from a disproportionate emphasis on the quantity of activity rather than potential impact. Just as corporate giving focuses on metrics like total grantmaking dollars, the typical corporate volunteering program highlights numbers of volunteers and total hours of service. Corporations neither regularly articulate the strategic purpose nor measure the social impact of volunteering. They justify ICV programs based on improved employee morale and contributions toward corporate citizenship. While these traditional motivations are valuable, they set a low bar of expectations that ignores volunteering's potential for increasing business or social impact.

Setting such low expectations for volunteering programs poses real risks to corporations. Employee volunteering draws directly from the active employee base — the lifeblood of any company. Every hour of corporate-sponsored volunteering time represents an hour that an employee is not working toward the bottom line of the business. Such high opportunity costs can dwarf a company's level of cash giving. Additionally, if volunteering programs are not executed effectively, dissatisfied employees will lose interest in continuing to volunteer their time. Programs that struggle to deliver significant business value or social impact will fail to capture the attention of senior executives, as well, ensuring that they will be doomed to a fate similar to that of other nonstrategic philanthropy programs — a slow fading from importance resulting in a reduced commitment of financial and human resources.

In addition to these general risks, international corporate volunteering programs face a unique set of issues. Since ICV initiatives often require multiweek travel to international destinations, they can include significant direct expenses above and beyond the value of an employee's time. In addition, program planning and execution inherently involves additional management and logistical complexities, which have human and financial costs to the company. Successful programs require advance planning with the local beneficiaries, training of volunteers, and coordination of in-country logistics. Further, since volunteers serve as informal “ambassadors” for the company abroad, choosing the wrong volunteer or having an unsuccessful program poses corporate reputation risks.

Understanding the potential risks, as well as the potential business value and social impact of international corporate volunteering, can help corporate executives and philanthropy leaders plan, design, and implement more strategic and effective programs. Despite its increased activity and attention, ICV remains at a nascent stage. Even among corporations that demonstrate best practices in this field, experience is measured in years, not decades. According to Jane Nelson, senior fellow and director of the CSR Initiative at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government:

*We're still at the early stages of making this a thrust for global corporations. There are only a tiny handful of companies that are thinking of volunteering strategically, and an even smaller number internationally.*

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<sup>2</sup> “National Council on Workplace Volunteerism Achieves Important Milestone,” Points of Light Foundation Web site ([www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)), March 29, 2007.

Strategies for ICV are evolving and systems for executing programs are still being created. Likewise, the challenge of accurate measurement of social or business impact is ever present, just as it is with other corporate philanthropy programs.

## Defining International Corporate Volunteering

While corporate employees have been engaging in various degrees of community service internationally for years, a widely used definition for this service does not exist. A variety of terms are used — fellowship, community engagement, volunteering, and service — all of which imply a range of activities. For the purposes of this paper, and with a goal of establishing a more widely accepted nomenclature, we have developed the following definition:

International corporate volunteering (ICV) engages employees in service projects in countries outside a company's headquarters country.

The two principal models of ICV are:

- **Local Service:** Employees based in countries outside headquarters volunteer in their local communities; and
- **Cross-Border Service:** Employees travel abroad to volunteer.

## Research Objectives

To increase understanding of ICV, Pfizer and The Brookings Institution engaged FSG to research and analyze best practices.<sup>3</sup> This research is a key element of the Corporate Working Group of The Brookings Institution's "Building Bridges Coalition," an initiative dedicated to catalyzing increased international volunteering through the participation of corporations, universities, nonprofits, and governments. While additional research and activities are

planned in the coming year, this paper represents the first substantive research of the Corporate Working Group.

"Volunteering for Impact" seeks to explore and understand the lessons learned among major corporations whose employees have engaged in international volunteering. While multiple studies have been published on domestic corporate volunteering activities, only a few studies focus exclusively on international efforts.<sup>4</sup> "The state of ICV is still nascent, and there is far more known about corporate philanthropy than about international corporate volunteering," says David Caprara, director of the Initiative on International Volunteering at Brookings.

This study is a first step toward creating a more structured and systematic understanding of the landscape of ICV. It provides targeted analysis of a sample of leading corporate programs, suggests ways in which corporations can more strategically align volunteering programs with their businesses, and provides recommendations for corporations to consider in the future. While this paper does not seek to provide a comprehensive assessment of the ICV landscape, it is our hope that it advances the discussion, identifies areas for further exploration, and increases the future potential impact of ICV.



<sup>3</sup> "Best practices" in this paper are a set of effective approaches that the authors have identified based on their findings from extensive research, analysis, and interviews with major corporations and subject-matter experts on international corporate volunteering.

<sup>4</sup> See de Gilder, Dick, et al., "Effects of an Employee Volunteering Program on the Work Force: The ABN-AMRO Case," *Journal of Business Ethics*, 2005; BSR Staff, "Volunteerism and Release Time," *Business for Social Responsibility*, undated; Logan, David, ed., "Employees in the Community: A Global Force for Good," *The Corporate Citizenship Company*, 2002.

## Methodology

The study's research methodology applies the results of primary and secondary research to a strategic framework. The primary research draws on phone interviews and targeted surveys with more than 30 experts representing corporate volunteering programs, international volunteering intermediaries, nonprofit advocacy groups, and academia (see Appendix B for List of Organizations Interviewed). The initial list of interviewees consisted of members of the Corporate Working Group of the Brookings Initiative on International Volunteering and Service, and was supplemented with additional relevant corporations suggested by the interviewees and other experts.

The phone interviews focused on developing an in-depth understanding of best practices and lessons learned from a sample of major corporations involved in ICV. Secondary research included a review of relevant reports, studies, and articles from a range of sources on the subject of international volunteering and international corporate philanthropy. In addition, the analysis adapts several strategic frameworks on corporate philanthropy to the specific issue of international corporate volunteering.<sup>5</sup>

The findings of this report are divided into three primary sections. The first section provides an overview of the landscape of international corporate volunteering. It identifies the two primary models of ICV and the key distinctions between those models, as well as provides an understanding of how different companies have chosen to focus their ICV programs. In the second section, the authors argue for an increase in the potential business and social impact of ICV initiatives. The discussion contrasts the more general motivations of corporate volunteering with motivations that are more closely aligned with corporate strategy. In addition, the section highlights the increased value that corporations can achieve if they leverage their corporate assets and expertise, such as workplace knowledge and skills, corporate philanthropy resources, and other relevant functions. The third section offers strategic and operational recommendations and lessons learned for both models.

While this paper offers insights and advice for corporations that are currently engaged in ICV or that are considering a program, we acknowledge that our research may omit some corporations that deserve to be profiled but could not be included due to time, scope, and space limitations. Nonetheless, we hope that the discussion and findings provide ideas that will ultimately lead to a more strategic use of resources to address the world's social problems.

## The Brookings Institution's Initiative on International Volunteering and Service

As the need grows to increase dialogue and cooperation between people of different countries worldwide, the Brookings Initiative on International Volunteering and Service seeks to explore ways in which the culture of volunteering can help enhance global understanding and security. The initiative was launched in June 2006 and comprises a coalition of more than 70 groups, including corporations, nongovernmental organizations, leading universities, and government agencies, who work in partnership to encourage more Americans to volunteer internationally.

The Brookings Initiative is engaged in a three-year project seeking to expand American volunteer service efforts internationally and improve service quality, capacity, and positive impacts in communities throughout the world. The initiative will achieve these goals through four distinct areas of operation and strategy: assessment of international service; Building Bridges Coalition and public engagement; public policy analysis and recommendations; and corporate sector engagement. Further information is available at: [www.brookings.edu/global/volunteer](http://www.brookings.edu/global/volunteer).

<sup>5</sup> See Porter, Michael E., and Mark R. Kramer, "The Competitive Advantage of Corporate Philanthropy," *Harvard Business Review*, December 2002.

On an Earthwatch expedition in Kenya, HSBC volunteers monitor the movements and behavior of elephants in Tsavo National Park.

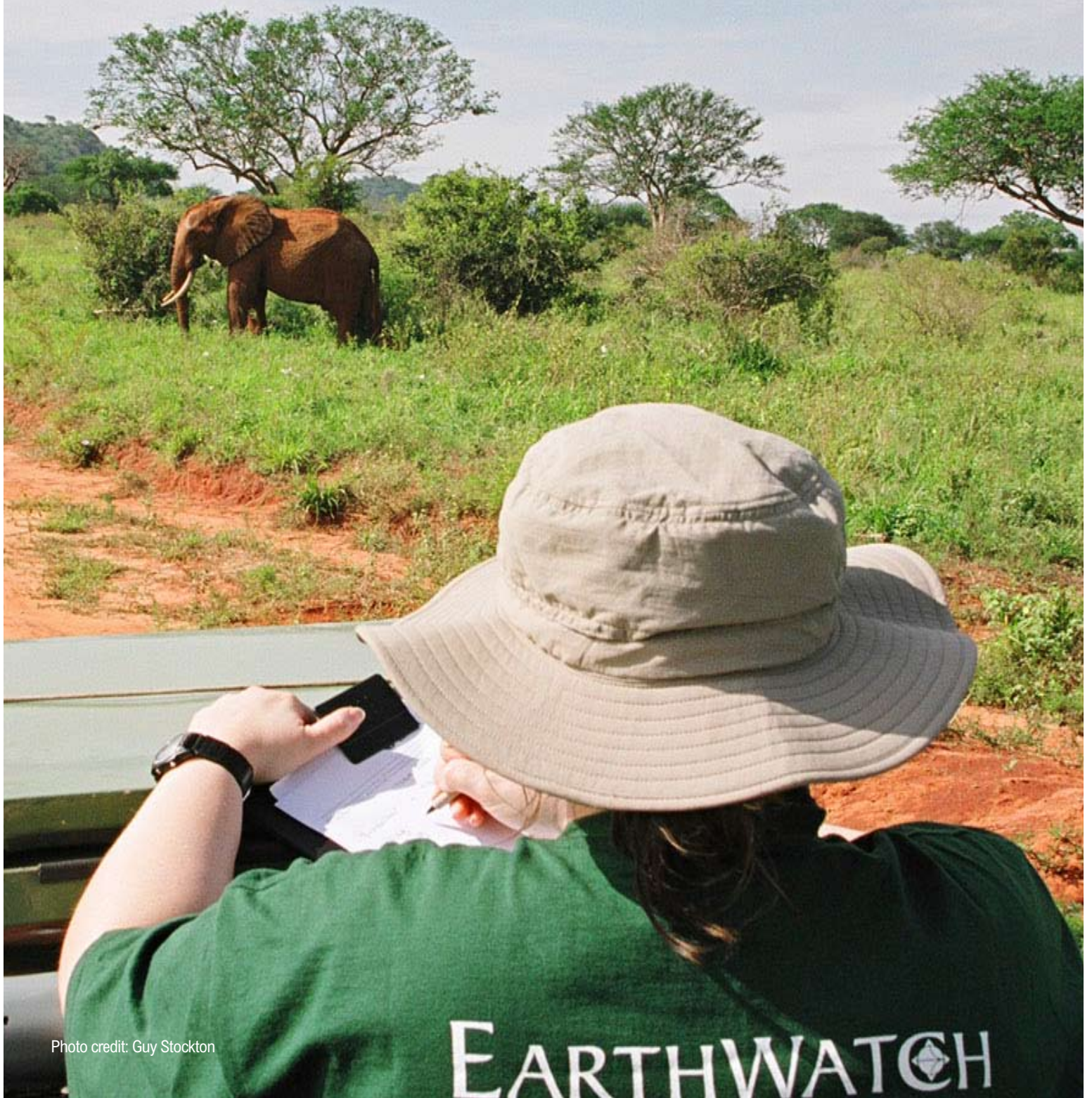


Photo credit: Guy Stockton

## 2. What Corporations Are Doing

This study captures the range of volunteering programs that corporations currently offer to their employees. ICV programs differ in the *geographic base* of employees, which results in two different operational models. In the “local service” model, employees of a multinational company are based in and volunteer in countries that are outside the country in which a company is headquartered. In the “cross-border service” model, employees are typically based in developed countries but travel abroad to volunteer in developing countries for a fixed length of time. The local service model usually allows employees to volunteer in their communities while maintaining the responsibilities of their full-time job during the year (although local full-time fellowships are also possible). The cross-border model, on the other hand, allows employees to take off a specified length of time from their full-time jobs to volunteer.

### Operational Models

**Model 1 — Local Service:** This model allows employees of multinational companies who work outside the business’ headquarters country to volunteer in their local communities. Local service is by far the most common model of ICV. The majority of activity in the local service model consists of hourly volunteering during the work day or after hours, although a few companies offer local full-time fellowships. Nearly all of the companies that participated in this study offered the hourly volunteering option to employees. GE is an example of a global company utilizing this option. For its 300,000 employees and 100,000 retirees worldwide, GE has more than 140 local volunteer councils in offices around the world that allow each office to set its own volunteering agenda. “Our employees work with us to provide volunteering opportunities in their communities,” explains Paul Bueker, GE Volunteers manager. “Some projects enhance corporate philanthropic initiatives with volunteer efforts. Others are based on employee-driven interests and respond to local needs.”

Local service allows companies to tailor volunteer programs to local needs and contexts. It also has a lower cost per employee than the cross-border model, which carries significant expenses in terms of direct costs and staff resources. As Patrick Kirby, service manager of the social enterprise department at the footwear and apparel company Timberland, explains, “Because it is less costly and more sustainable, the local service model is a huge potential opportunity for multinational companies.”

A local service fellowship offers a more resource-intensive version of the model. The local fellowship engages employees in their own countries, but offers a sabbatical-type structure similar to the cross-border approach. It avoids some of the operational risks of cross-border programs, while still allowing employees to engage full-time, for several weeks or months, with a beneficiary. The company needs to deploy more resources per volunteer to cover salaries, expenses, and management of the program, but gains from a significant engagement with the community. For example, IBM employees in Australia can take a leave of several months to live in aboriginal villages and transfer needed skills. While these local fellowships have unique advantages, overall they are still a new concept. Cisco, the technology supplier, is the only other company in this study that has an active local-fellowship model.

**Model 2 — Cross-Border Service:** Although still at a nascent stage, the cross-border model has become popular with several multinational corporations in recent years (see Figure 1 next page). These programs, by their design, offer a fellowship in which employees take a leave from their jobs to travel abroad for volunteer service. Employees typically receive full pay and benefits, and most companies also cover all expenses related to the volunteering project. Beneficiaries are often recipients of other corporate grants, which are commonly referred to as enhancement grants. A system, either internal to the company or administered by an intermediary, is usually in place for the selection, training, ongoing support, and reintegration of the fellows. Accenture, BD, Cisco, Ernst & Young, HSBC, Pfizer, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Starbucks, and the express delivery and logistics provider TNT all employ the cross-border model to various degrees.

The Ulysses program at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), for example, is an eight-week leadership-development project that sends seven to eight teams of employees each year to developing countries to assist in a range of social challenges. Employees use their business skills to work on projects that have ranged from rural electrification in Madagascar to the fight against AIDS in Swaziland. The company pays employees’ salary, benefits, and all expenses, and conducts trainings both before and after the fellowship to assess its impact on participants.

The resources companies dedicate to cross-border ICV programs vary considerably. Our research identified lower-resource versions of the cross-border model that send

employees abroad to volunteer but utilize fewer resources than the full fellowship model. Timberland has sent one to two employees a year for the last few years to volunteer with nonprofits in developing countries. One employee went to Lima, Peru, to volunteer with an orphanage. The company does not provide expenses for these programs, but does offer full pay and benefits during the time the employee is away. Such limited fellowships allow the employees to gain the benefits of a cross-cultural experience, but at a relatively low cost. On the other hand, employees need to be more creative and dedicated, since they must pay their own expenses, and a systematic process does not match them with volunteer opportunities abroad.

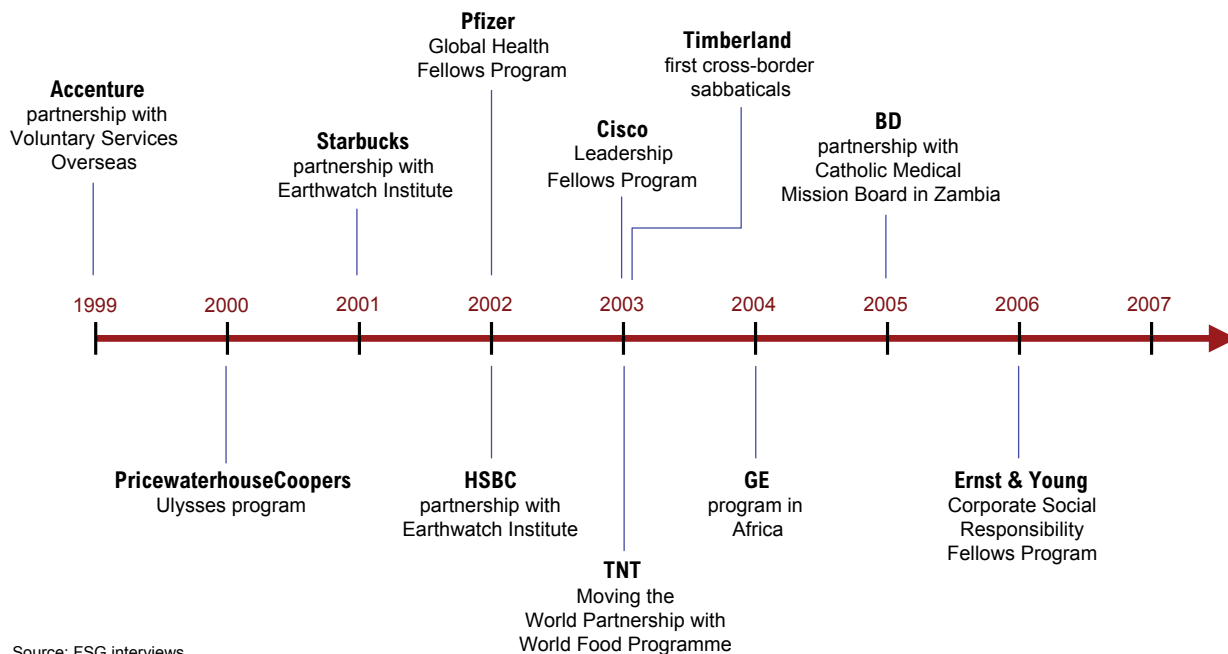
Premium versions of the cross-border model, on the other hand, provide significant resources and tools to actively encourage employees to participate in cross-border service, and have the potential to reap the full benefits of a cross-cultural experience for fellows. But this approach is also more resource-intensive for a company, and can be challenging because of cultural differences and political risks. Nevertheless, by providing a fuller set of resources, the model provides unique cross-cultural and business-learning opportunities.

## Corporate Resources Deployed

The resources companies utilize for ICV programs include employees who manage the programs, compensation for volunteering during work hours, travel and other expense reimbursements, training, volunteers' time, tools to identify and manage volunteering opportunities, and cash or other grants to supplement the volunteering efforts. In general, the cross-border model usually requires a higher resource investment per employee, due to the employee's extended time away and expenses related to international travel. (For an overview of the programmatic elements of a sample of ICV programs, see Appendix A.)

While international volunteering is important to companies as a component of their philanthropic effort, we found that a relatively lean staff typically runs these programs. Often, ICV is one of several responsibilities of those who manage it at the local level, or in the case of cross-border volunteering programs, at the headquarters office. When corporations work with intermediaries, the two partners are often able to share responsibilities for the selection and management of cross-border fellows.

Figure 1: Timeline of Launch Dates for Cross-Border Programs





Sustaining a successful ICV program also requires companies to maintain an appropriate level of engagement and excitement from different levels of the company. While the initial impetus may come from senior executives or employee demand at the grassroots level, to be sustained over time, ICV activities need to be tied to a company's business needs. In general, the



international volunteering programs reviewed in this study were resilient and highly valued throughout the company. The majority of the corporate leaders interviewed were confident that their programs would be sustained through leadership changes or business uncertainties. “Our program has a lot of support from global and Americas’ leadership,” says Maria Pena, senior program manager for CSR Americas at Ernst & Young. “I can’t imagine, even in a down time, the program will be compromised.” While at the beginning of these projects,

the initial excitement and corporate buy-in often comes from a small number of individuals, frequently senior executives, the long-term survival of ICV initiatives depends on demonstrating that these efforts are valuable not only to the beneficiary communities, but also to the business and its employees.

Companies offer a wide range of training for volunteers in terms of scope and length. Some of the leading cross-border models have developed a comprehensive, multiday training session for fellows before they leave on their assignments, while others limit training to a few hours or even deliver it through an online resource. Systematic training programs allow for continuous refinement and improvement of activities. Initiatives like PwC’s Ulysses program also provide post-volunteering sessions to allow employees to synthesize the lessons learned and apply them to their jobs. Pfizer has added a re-entry component to its orientation to help employees adjust back to their jobs and to get employees and managers thinking about how to incorporate newly acquired skills to benefit their work groups.

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**“Our program has a lot of support from global and Americas’ leadership. I can’t imagine, even in a down time, the program will be compromised.”**

– Maria Pena, Senior Program Manager for CSR Americas, Ernst & Young

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Employees are a company’s most precious resource, so their time away from work is a significant cost. Sending employees on cross-border models requires companies to incur either the incremental costs of replacing that employee or the opportunity costs of the lost productivity. In addition, overseas fellowships involve traveling away from home, often for months at a time, so these programs create additional logistical hurdles for volunteers. Employees with family responsibilities (such as a spouse, children, and/or elderly parents) would need to consider either bringing family members with them or being away from them for weeks or months. While this highlights the higher likelihood of potential life disruption, anecdotal evidence from Pfizer indicates that participants in the Global Health Fellows program represent a range of family situations, with approximately 50 percent having a spouse and/or children.

For the local model, employees typically volunteer during nights and weekends, or work with their supervisors to determine a flexible schedule that allows volunteering during normal work hours. IBM, for example, does not give specific time off for volunteering, but managers are strongly encouraged to give employees the flexibility to volunteer and then to allow them to make up the work later. For the cross-border models, the length of time away from work varied from eight days (Starbucks) to 12 months (Accenture, the management consulting firm, and Cisco). The range of the numbers of volunteers per year also varied significantly, from one or two (Timberland) to 500 (HSBC, the banking and financial services company).

Identifying appropriate opportunities that both offer significant social impact and draw the interest of employees can be resource-intensive. Lower-resource cross-border models (such as the Timberland program discussed earlier) may let employees identify opportunities according to the employee's needs. They thereby avoid company costs associated with volunteer-program identification, support, and program management. But with this approach companies also give up their say in the types of projects that employees can choose. Those that want to provide more direction and guidance often have a multistep process for the selection and matching of appropriate employees and beneficiaries. Again, external partners can provide useful support to corporations in the process. For the local model, technology is a useful mechanism for publicizing opportunities, as well.

Companies like BD, GE, HSBC, and Pfizer combine cash or in-kind donations to complement the service of their employees. The medical technology company BD has provided product donations to the beneficiaries of its cross-border program in Africa, while Pfizer has deployed its Global Health Fellows to nongovernmental organizations that have also been recipients of significant product and cash grant support. HSBC entered into a five-year partnership with an intermediary, Earthwatch Institute, for its cross-border program, and also provides grant support for the organization.

## Social Sector Focus Areas

Companies interviewed for this study are involved in a variety of social sectors, with health, education, economic development, and the environment being the major focus areas. In the wake of recent natural disasters, many companies, like IBM, have engaged their employee volunteers to provide disaster relief assistance (see sidebar below).

**Global health**, a major recipient of philanthropic dollars in recent years, is also an ICV focus area for multiple companies in the study. BD has initiated an employee volunteer program that partners with nongovernmental organizations to improve health care in medically underserved regions of the world. In 2005 and 2006, BD

### IBM Combining Technology Donations and Volunteering for Disaster Relief

Disaster relief has been an emerging area of activity for multinational corporations in recent years. IBM has been particularly active in this arena. Over the last 10 years, IBM has responded to more than 70 natural disasters and provided millions of dollars for its disaster-relief experts to participate in cross-border volunteer opportunities. The company deploys employees in different "layers." IBM staff often volunteer virtually by leveraging free and open source software to provide remote support for disaster relief efforts. One such program, Sahana, was developed in Sri Lanka and will be used to identify missing persons and manage volunteers, refugee camps, and donations. IBM also has a group of people with specific technical expertise in relief efforts who are deployed across borders to disaster areas. Further, local IBM employees lend themselves to relief efforts in their own communities.

Says Rebecca Curzon, project manager at IBM, "Our local volunteers can work in a sustainable way on the cleanup that continues long after the disasters. We can leverage the expertise from our business to disaster relief due to our presence all over the globe." IBM also works with other corporate partners (such as Cisco, with whom IBM is extending its business relationship to the disaster relief area) to leverage its resources and to create a larger social impact. In addition, realizing the complex and often political nature of these large relief efforts, IBM also works closely with national governments to ensure that its efforts are fully integrated with public-sector programs. While disaster-relief ICV programs are unique, in that they are not scheduled activities, they nevertheless represent an important and growing part of the field.

partnered with the Catholic Medical Mission Board to send volunteers to Zambia to address the acute AIDS crisis through improvements to laboratory facilities in rural health clinics. In 2007, 12 volunteers completed a trip with Direct Relief International to Ghana to build maternal and infant health care capacity. The program takes advantage of the unique skills, resources, and partnerships that the company can leverage to address severe health care challenges in developing countries.

In GE's case, donations of equipment, such as diagnostic machines, water purification technology, and solar panels, and cash are complemented by a limited number of GE Volunteers whose technical expertise helped to build up much needed hospital infrastructure in Ghana. As a global pharmaceutical company, Pfizer has been active in global health through a variety of activities, including its Global Health Fellows program. Pfizer fellows from North



America, Europe, Australia, and other regions travel to developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to provide technical assistance to health-services organizations, particularly those fighting infectious diseases like AIDS and malaria. In their volunteering efforts, all three companies leverage their business presence in health care, whether through drugs, equipment, or expertise.

IBM and Microsoft, both of which employ the local service model, are integrating **education** activities with their ICV

programs. With its On Demand Community program, IBM provides technology solutions to employees around the world to aid in their volunteering efforts. IBM employees can use the platform's IT tools and resources as they work in schools. Other tools allow IBM professionals to mentor students via the Web. Microsoft has made a significant commitment to skills training as part of its Unlimited Potential initiative. The program supports IT training at community technology centers around the world to broaden the reach of technology and to create economic opportunities. Several Microsoft offices, including those in Australia, Singapore, and Spain, have used funds from the program to complement their local volunteering efforts with youth-service organizations.

**Economic development** is another focus that several interviewees, such as Ernst & Young, Levi Strauss & Co., Timberland, and TNT, identified. Ernst & Young's Corporate Social Responsibility Fellows are deployed to provide skills-based technical service to entrepreneurs at small- to medium-size firms in underserved communities in the Americas. Based on the belief that entrepreneurship has historically created economic opportunities and increased standards of living, the company makes available its most valuable assets to help promising entrepreneurs create sustainable economic value. TNT's partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), the world's largest aid agency, assists the agency in its mission of providing food to 90 million people in more than 80 countries each year. In addition to providing general and specialized hands-on support in the form of employee volunteers, the company also transfers knowledge from its specialized business operations, makes cash grants, and provides awareness-building support to WFP.

International **environmental issues** are a common focus area for ICV programs, particularly in developing countries. Starbucks and HSBC, both working in partnership with the nonprofit Earthwatch Institute, are helping to improve the environment through their ICV efforts. As part of HSBC's Investing in Nature initiative, the company sends volunteers on Earthwatch expeditions around the world. The goals of the initiative for 2007 are to resuscitate three of the world's major rivers, help halt global plant extinction, and deliver a "century of environmental research."<sup>6</sup> For Starbucks, the environment is also a key focus area, given its sourcing of coffee from developing countries. Through Earthwatch, the company sends volunteers — both employees and customers — to a coffee cooperative in Costa Rica from which Starbucks sources its coffee. Volunteers work with local farmers and scientists to understand and contribute to sustainable coffee farming.

<sup>6</sup> HSBC Web site ([www.hsbc.com](http://www.hsbc.com)).

## Implementation Partners

There are two types of implementation partners for ICV programs: (1) beneficiaries, the organizations that receive the volunteer’s services; and (2) intermediary organizations, the entities that provide support to corporations in knowledge, logistics, and management.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are the most common beneficiaries, since their missions typically align with social objectives and they are natural recipients of grant and volunteer support from corporations (see Figure 2 below). Of the 14 companies in our study, 12 mentioned working with nonprofit beneficiaries. Alternatively, other ICV programs, such as Ernst & Young’s Corporate Social Responsibility Fellows, provide technical assistance exclusively to for-profit entrepreneurs in developing countries. TNT’s cross-border program works with a single large multilateral organization, the World Food Programme.

At other corporations, such as Accenture, Cisco, IBM, Pfizer, and Timberland, employee volunteers provide services to governments, in addition to working with nonprofits. Government agencies require special considerations, as they often carry political and implementation risks, particularly in developing countries. “There are challenges of trust and transparency — barriers to entry — of beginning to work with government agencies, but governments also provide the opportunity to effect large-scale social change,” says Jennifer Anastasoff, CEO of BuildingBlocks International, a nonprofit that brings management expertise to community-based organizations in developing countries. According to Cisco’s Barbara Jones, program manager of its Leadership Fellows Program:

*While we still work almost entirely with nonprofits, our fellows are starting to work with local governments. In Africa, a group of companies are working with local governments on education to improve educational systems. We are going to engage in more activities of that kind going forward.*

Figure 2: Types of ICV Beneficiary by Company

Beneficiary Company	NGOs	MLOs	Government (National, Regional, and Local)	Private Businesses	Individuals
Accenture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BD	✓				
Cisco	✓		✓		
Ernst & Young				✓	
GE	✓				
HSBC	✓				
IBM	✓		✓		
Levi Strauss & Co.	✓				
Microsoft	✓				
Pfizer	✓	✓	✓		
PricewaterhouseCoopers	✓	✓			
Starbucks	✓				
Timberland	✓		✓		✓
TNT		✓			

Note: NGOs refers to nongovernmental organizations; MLOs refers to multilateral organizations.  
Source: FSG interviews

The second type of implementation partner, the volunteering intermediary, provides unique knowledge of social sectors, local context, and operations. Several of the companies featured in this study partner with such intermediaries, particularly for a cross-border model in which a company's local knowledge and contacts are often limited. Current ICV partnerships include: Accenture with Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO); BD with Catholic Medical Mission Board and with Direct Relief International; Ernst & Young with Ashoka, Technoserve, and Endeavor Global; and HSBC and Starbucks, both with Earthwatch.

Intermediaries provide several important benefits to corporations. Through extensive knowledge of local cultures, customs, and processes, as well as deep sector expertise, they offer unique insights that may otherwise be unavailable to companies. Since these intermediaries specialize in volunteering and identifying beneficiaries, they are often much better equipped at matching volunteers with appropriate opportunities than corporations. Maria Pena of Ernst & Young describes their partnership with Endeavor Global to operate the Corporate Social Responsibility Fellows, who assist entrepreneurs in the developing world:

*The partnership has been critical for the success of our program. In addition to the support, we would not be able to find the entrepreneurs without their help. Our staff is working on tax and audit. Our expertise is not in identifying small- and medium-size enterprises in developing countries. We rely on our partners' work and expertise to make sure we're helping the right people.*

Intermediaries also provide much-needed operational assistance in volunteer and partner selection, training, and on-the-ground support. The volunteering opportunities that intermediaries can provide open doors to a much larger set of options than if corporations had been working alone. HSBC, for example, sends employees to 50 to 60 Earthwatch programs around the world each year. Once the opportunities are posted internally, applications are sent directly to Earthwatch staff, who make the selection and identify the appropriate match. These partnerships also enhance the reputation, credibility, and publicity of the programs, to the benefit of all parties involved. "Working with established and known partners also provides an opportunity to share the risks," indicates Dianna Smith, director of VolunteerMatch, a nonprofit that links volunteers to service opportunities.

The benefits to the intermediary organization are obvious. Often, intermediaries are recipients of corporate grants. For example, Accenture provides grants to its partner, VSO, and financial assistance for each Accenture employee who goes on sabbatical through the program. In addition, corporations can provide publicity and indirect marketing support for intermediaries through their extensive networks. "We regularly support VSO's efforts to broaden its network of corporate partners by sharing the benefits of our work with other companies that may be considering similar programs," says Cecile Walton, Accenture's global VSO coordinator.



## Measuring Impact

The majority of companies involved with ICV have not engaged in significant measurement of their programs. However, most of the companies identified impact measurement as a key area to focus on in the coming years. Some of the major challenges identified with measuring impact include: (1) the costs and complexities associated with robust, long-term evaluation; (2) the newness of many ICV programs; and (3) the difficulty of attributing specific impacts, such as employee retention or improved health outcomes in developing countries, to the volunteering program. “Measuring social impact is a challenge, since there is no standard approach to measure the outcome at a global level for the social impact that volunteers create,” says Kirby of Timberland.

Even if specific metrics can be identified and measured, it is often difficult to assess exactly which changes are due to the volunteers’ work versus other changes in the beneficiary’s internal or external environment. Pena of Ernst & Young explains:

*It’s difficult to attribute impact on the entrepreneur to just Ernst & Young’s fellows. There may be many other factors at play. How do you measure the ROI of a balanced-scorecard development? It’s hard because so much of the work of our fellows is strategic.*

In spite of the challenges of quantifying impact, several companies interviewed have already taken steps to tackle the issue. In many of these cases, companies are working on evaluation studies either with their nonprofit volunteering partners or external evaluators. IBM, for instance, engaged the Points of Light Foundation, a nonprofit working to engage more people and resources in volunteer service, to evaluate its local ICV program, On Demand Community. Pfizer has been a leading player in the measurement of its Global Health Fellows program, and is now conducting the second phase of the program’s evaluation with Boston University (see sidebar).<sup>7</sup>

In addition, BD has evaluated both the social and business impact of its program in Zambia in collaboration with the Catholic Medical Mission Board. In a case study about the initiative, BD mentions both business and community “outputs,” as well as longer-term “impacts.” Among the community-level outputs are the leveraging of other resources, the enhanced laboratory skills of the beneficiaries, and the increased knowledge that local beneficiaries bring. Benefits to BD include anecdotal evidence of increased employee morale and pride, and the development of leadership and teamwork skills of BD employees. In terms of long-term impact, the study lists a set of potential indicators (fewer laboratory accidents, better patient services, improved reputation, employee skill development), but acknowledges that it would be necessary to do more extensive assessments to measure these factors over a long period of time.

To identify a program’s impact on employees, many companies use internal surveys and anecdotal evidence to gauge employees’ interest and preferences, as well as the impact of their ICV programs. Surveys include questions about employee perceptions of the program and whether employees are likely to recommend the program to others. Nigel Pate, senior manager of corporate responsibility at HSBC, describes his company’s experience with evaluation:

*We commissioned a research company in the U.K. to do a study among our Earthwatch fellows to find out what employees thought, and what they applied to their work when they came back. We asked if employees would recommend HSBC as a place to work, and received very positive answers. We are now planning to improve the employee survey.*

Similar to the attribution problem in measuring social impact, however, internal surveys often ask about a company’s overall corporate citizenship activities rather than ICV components specifically. That makes it challenging to discern whether higher employee morale or retention comes from ICV efforts or other citizenship activities.

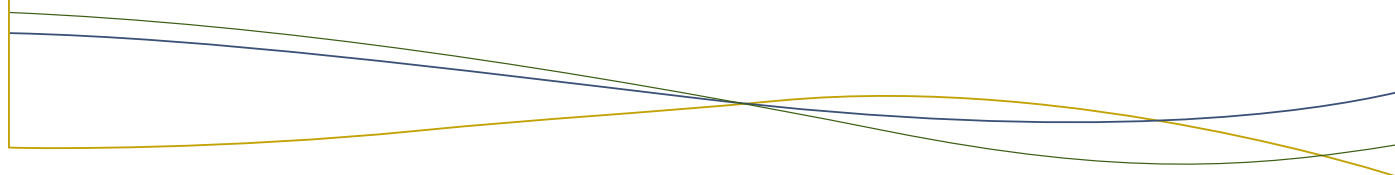
<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the evaluation, see Vian, Taryn, et al., “Public-Private Partnerships to Build Human Capacity in Low Income Countries: Findings From the Pfizer Program,” *Human Resources for Health* (an open-access, peer-reviewed journal at [www.human-resources-health.com](http://www.human-resources-health.com)) 5:8, 2007; and Vian, Taryn, et al., “Corporate Social Responsibility in Global Health: The Pfizer Global Health Fellows International Volunteering Program,” *Human Resources Planning* 30 (1): 30-35, 2007.

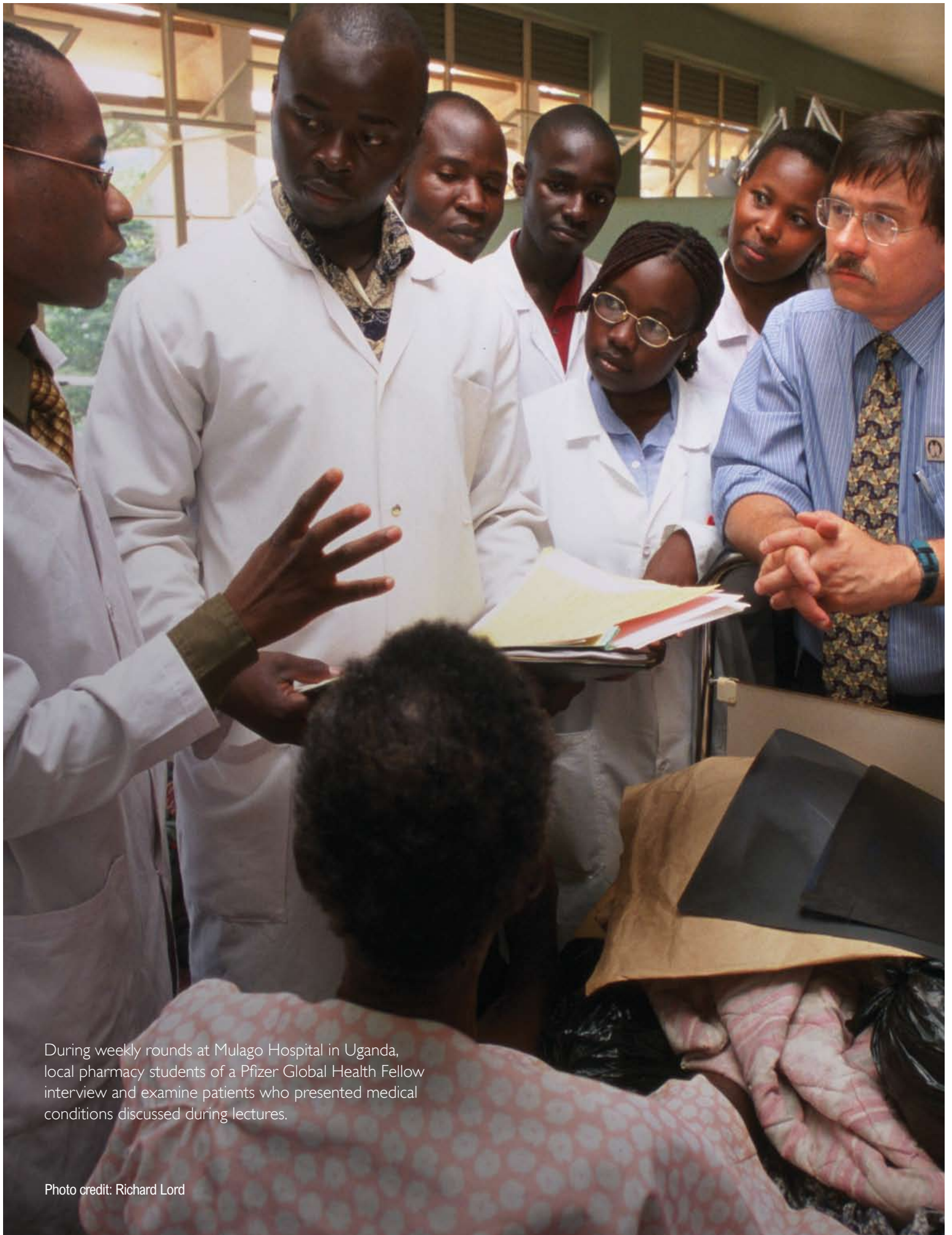
## How Pfizer Evaluates Its Global Health Fellows Program

Pfizer's Global Health Fellows program loans employees to health care-related NGOs and multilateral and governmental organizations for a period of three to six months. Fellows transfer technical skills and help build local capacity in developing countries. Colleagues from Pfizer's U.S. and international locations apply to specific "positions" that the host organization creates, and are "hired" by that organization. The fellows' performance is then measured against specific development and capacity-building objectives. Between 2003 and 2006, Pfizer deployed 128 cross-border fellows to 30 partner organizations in 31 countries.

To measure the impact of the program, Pfizer and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) engaged Boston University's Center for International Health and Development. USAID was interested in Pfizer's ICV program as a model for public-private partnerships that respond to global public health issues. Between October 2005 and January 2006, the center evaluated the first two years of program operation, covering 72 fellowships. The researchers conducted interviews with more than 200 individuals whose work had been touched by the program.

They found significant positive impact on both the beneficiaries and Pfizer employees. About a third of the fellowships produced operational improvements that expanded service delivery at the beneficiary organizations. About 88 percent of the fellows reported that the experience had met "most" or "all" of their goals. In a second phase study of the Pfizer program completed in August 2007, the Boston University team created an ICV Evaluation Toolkit that uses nine individual impact measures, as well as a composite impact index to allow monitoring of programs over time and across countries. Using the index with a subset of recent Pfizer fellowships, the team found that 60 – 75 percent of fellowships could be considered "high impact" or "very high impact" in terms of strengthening the capacity of recipient organizations to deliver efficient, high quality services. The ICV Evaluation Toolkit can also be adapted by other companies wishing to evaluate the impact of their volunteering programs.





During weekly rounds at Mulago Hospital in Uganda, local pharmacy students of a Pfizer Global Health Fellow interview and examine patients who presented medical conditions discussed during lectures.

Photo credit: Richard Lord



# 3. Increasing Business and Social Impact

## A Strategic Framework for ICV

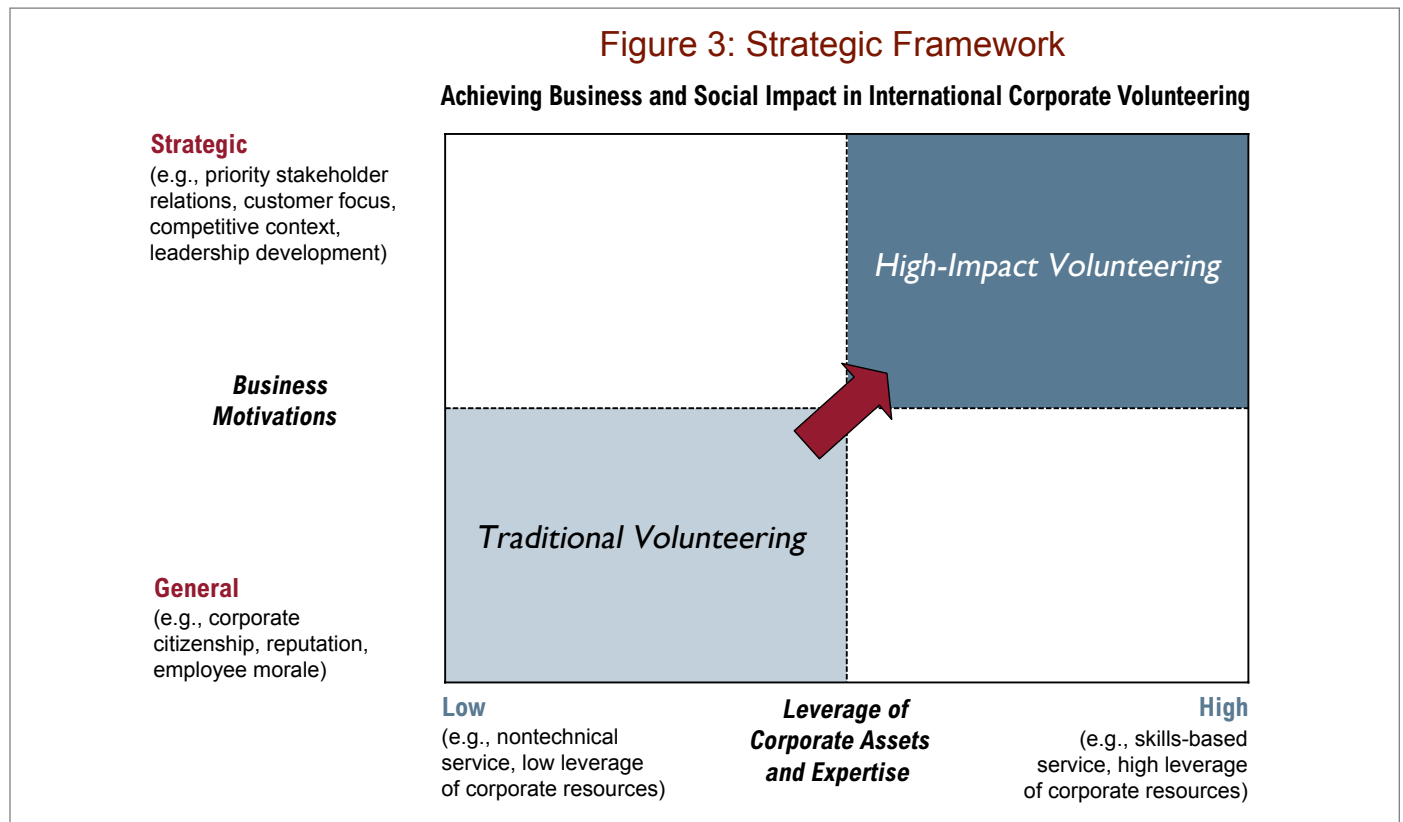
“There are opportunities to make volunteering more strategic and truly international and global. It’s not just about cross-border programs, but also about local volunteering of multinational companies. Volunteering should be globally strategic and locally relevant.”

– Jane Nelson, CSR Initiative, Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government

Corporations face a wide range of choices as they design and implement ICV initiatives. The types of volunteers, geography, beneficiary, social sector, and level of corporate support all represent strategic choices that executives must make. Given the significance of this investment of time and money, how should decision-makers think about these choices? What are the key factors that should drive a corporation’s ICV strategy?

To aid in understanding these questions, we developed a strategic framework that depicts two important dimensions for ICV programs: business motivations and leverage of corporate assets and expertise (see Figure 3 below). Considered together, both of these dimensions can guide strategic choices and help design and execute purposeful programs.

Before describing the two dimensions of the strategic framework, it is important to note that an overarching assumption of this paper is that all ICV programs have an inherent objective of achieving social impact. Corporate volunteering efforts in local or foreign communities are not profit-driven activities — they deploy people in the community as a way to improve elements of society. However, since corporations are organizing and supporting such efforts of their employees, and often allow employees to volunteer while “on the clock,” corporate volunteering must be viewed through a different lens than “pure” community service. The following discussion of the strategic framework provides this customized lens.



The “Business Motivations” dimension depicts a spectrum based on how a corporation articulates the primary purpose of its ICV activity in the context of its business strategy. Shown on the vertical axis of the framework, this dimension ranges from “general” at the bottom to “strategic” at the top. It draws on the corporate-philanthropy-motivations framework created by Michael Porter and Mark Kramer and tailors it to the ICV environment.<sup>8</sup> Specifically, it makes a distinction between typical motivations of employee volunteering and motivations that align with a differentiated corporate strategy. For example, nearly all corporations identify the goals of “good corporate citizenship” or “doing the right thing” as elements of corporate volunteering. Similarly, positive public relations and visibility in the local community are integral to a corporation’s local reputation. Employee dimensions such as team building, morale building, recruitment, and retention — all important to companies, but not core to business strategy — are also often articulated as common motivations for volunteering.

The strategic end of the spectrum demands that corporate volunteering programs address social issues *and* be aligned with a differentiated business strategy. These programs, by definition, look different from company to company, and are based on the corporation’s distinct strategic needs and competitive environment. Strategic motivations can include enhancing relationships with priority stakeholders, improving customer interest/loyalty, addressing elements of the competitive context, and fostering strategic leadership development.<sup>9</sup> While a number of these motivations could apply to domestic corporate volunteering, ICV offers distinct opportunities for corporations to address strategic considerations unique to a global marketplace. For example, ICV can expose employees to strategic elements of the company’s global supply chain, develop an international mindset among its future leaders, or directly address the social issues of importance to key international NGOs or government stakeholders.

The “Leverage of Corporate Assets and Expertise” dimension of the framework reflects the degree to which corporate volunteering programs draw on the workplace skills of the employees and the company’s distinct corporate and/or philanthropic resources. Depicted on the horizontal axis, this dimension distinguishes between skills-based volunteering — service that directly applies an employee’s technical workplace knowledge and skills — and nontechnical service that could be done by almost anyone. Skills-based volunteering has the potential to yield much higher social impact, because the nonprofit beneficiary theoretically is getting much higher “value per hour” than is possible with nontechnical service.

Another way to draw on corporate assets and expertise is to integrate ICV programs with corporate and/or philanthropic efforts. An employee volunteer working in the community without the support of corporate or philanthropic resources is similar to a salesperson working without marketing materials or an expense budget. While it is possible to deliver results, the addition of financial and nonfinancial resources would dramatically increase the likelihood of success. Likewise, the benefits and potential social impact of ICV activities can be significantly improved by providing grant enhancements, product donations, and other corporate resources, such as public relations, legal, or financial services. Grants to cover a nonprofit’s overhead expenses, donations of technology and equipment, and linkages with corporate communications infrastructure can all add value to the time that individual volunteers donate. To the extent that corporate or philanthropic resources are more integrated with ICV activities, they will have a higher potential for delivering social impact.



<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Porter and Kramer.

<sup>9</sup> For a further discussion about how corporate philanthropy can address elements of competitive context, see *ibid.*, Porter and Kramer. For a more detailed discussion of competitive context in general, see Porter, Michael, *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* (New York: Free Press, 1990).

## Case Studies

While the strategic framework offers broad guidelines for ICV program design and implementation, often the most useful way to understand these concepts is to apply them to existing programs. This section provides “deeper dive” profiles of specific companies whose ICV programs demonstrate one or several characteristics of each of the four quadrants of the framework. These nine case studies illuminate the ways in which major corporations have chosen to deploy their employees to provide both business impact and social impact (see Figure 4 below).<sup>10</sup>

Historically, corporations have organized traditional volunteering programs that engage employees in a range of service activities, often with little consideration for the linkage to corporate strategy or the unique skills and assets of employees. Depicted in the lower left quadrant of the framework, these programs can deploy employees to an array of sectors, activities, and partners. The programs, if well executed, can provide significant value to a corporation in terms of employee morale and a corporation’s reputation as a good citizen. However, the opportunity to make more strategic choices about how employees spend their service time — both in terms of what issues they tackle and how they address them — presents a compelling case for transitioning from traditional volunteering to high-impact volunteering.

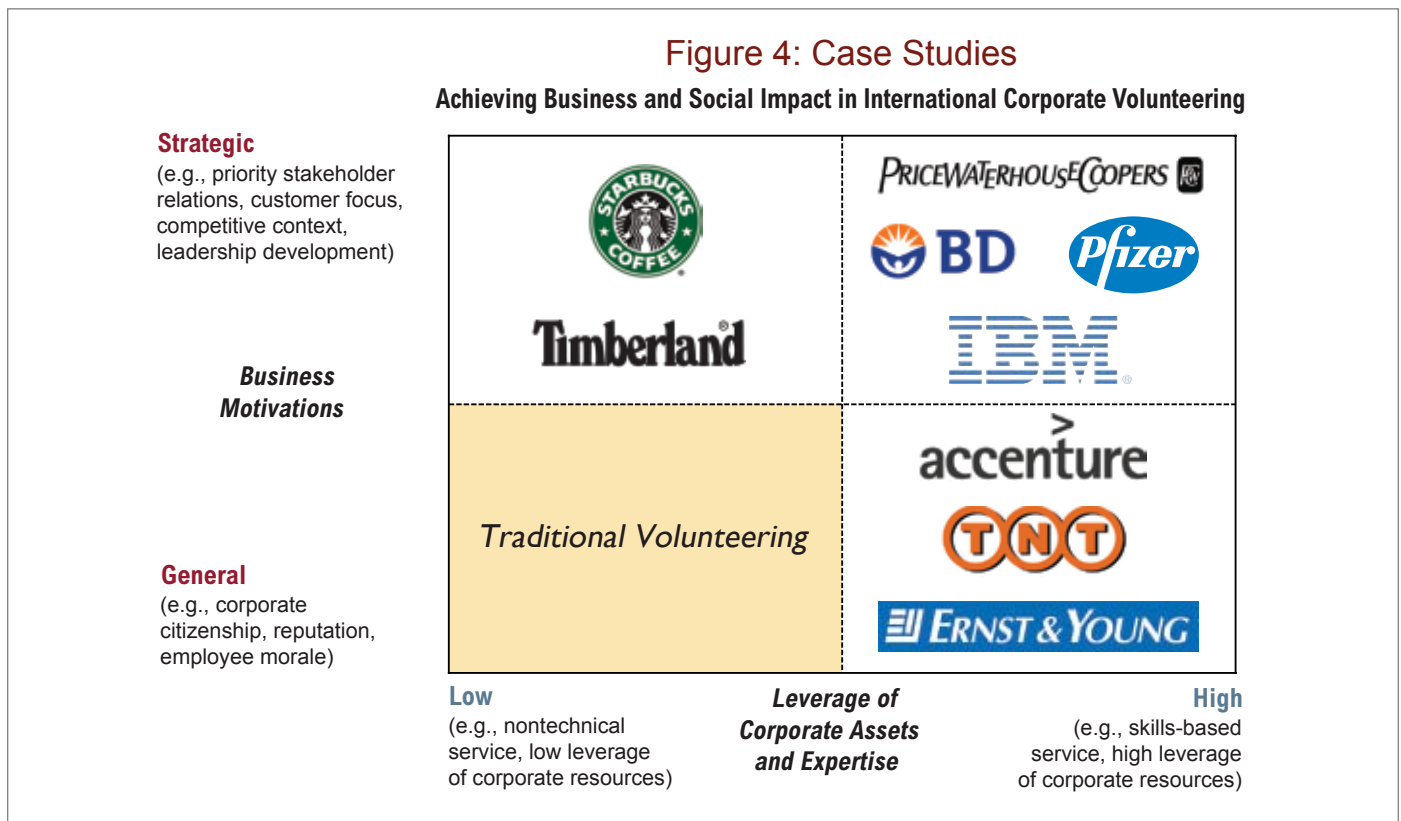
## General Motivations, High Leverage

Three ICV programs we studied are positioned in the bottom-right quadrant of the framework, employing general motivations and high leverage of corporate assets and expertise. The ICV program at **Accenture**, the management consulting firm, provides a powerful example of leveraging corporate assets and expertise, both through skills-based volunteering and grant enhancements. The firm’s Voluntary Services Overseas/Business Partnership Scheme (VBP) sends its consultants to work with nonprofits and governments on business, management, and technology issues. Accenture employees with more than two years of experience take an unpaid leave of absence for between 1 and 12 months and

“All of the volunteers are utilizing their skills from their work at Accenture.”

– Cecile Walton, Accenture Global VSO Coordinator

receive a financial subsidy from Accenture and a local salary from Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), the nonprofit volunteering intermediary that processes placements and manages travel and logistics. Drawing employees from 16 Accenture offices around the world, the program can deploy



<sup>10</sup> Note that the programs profiled in each case study do not necessarily reflect the full extent of a company’s ICV programs. Other programs are likely to exist that were not mentioned in this research. The relative positioning on the strategic framework reflects the authors’ interpretation of the highlighted programs.

volunteers in up to 34 countries, based on VSO's countries of operation. In early 2007, Accenture had more than 20 individuals in VSO programs.

Accenture's program embodies skills-based volunteering. As Cecile Walton says, "All of the volunteers are utilizing their skills from their work at Accenture." Accenture volunteers provide high-value services that have the potential for significant social impact, including change management, financial management, market analysis, or other business services.

A London-based Accenture manager, for example, volunteered in Africa as part of the VBP program. Working for the Vocational Education Authority in Tanzania, she used her



consulting skills to research and analyze the formal and informal labor market to ensure that both college students and the wider community could receive the relevant training required to get jobs or improve their livelihoods.<sup>11</sup> Adjusting her salary to consulting rates in Tanzania, and assuming she would bill at \$10 per hour to the clients, the value of her eight months of work locally would be over \$14,000.

Contrast this scenario to one in which the same volunteer painted schools in Tanzania for eight months. Assuming a painter in Tanzania earns \$1 per hour, the eight months of work would represent just over \$1,400 for the same amount of time volunteered. In this example, skills-based volunteering delivered 10 times the economic value of nontechnical volunteering. It's a compelling argument for corporations to deploy valuable employees in a way that increases their potential for social impact.

In addition to the skills-based component of its VSO partnership, Accenture provides additional resources to improve the potential success of volunteering efforts. The firm makes enhancement grants to VSO for each volunteer to offset the costs of managing each deployment's planning and logistics. In addition, it provides a "livelihood" grant to support in-country organizations associated with volunteering projects, such as a recent grant to assist a dairy supply-chain improvement project in Malawi.

The express delivery and logistics provider **TNT's** partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) offers another case of a high-leverage, cross-border ICV program. The Netherlands-based company deploys its volunteers in a number of projects, with a common aim of fighting world hunger. Since the TNT and WFP partnership began in 2002, TNT employees have volunteered to provide supply-chain and logistics expertise, engage in disaster-relief food distribution, and improve feeding infrastructure and health and nutrition in schools.

TNT's "specialist" program provides a structured opportunity to leverage the skills, knowledge, and expertise of the company's professionals. The program deploys people who have particular areas of expertise with WFP development projects that need their assistance. Volunteers go abroad for three to six months, working on projects that match WFP's needs with TNT's skills in logistics and operations. For example, one French employee who is a specialist in fleet-management software has volunteered in Angola, Ivory Coast, and Sudan on a fleet-management rollout. In the aftermath of the Asian tsunami, TNT employees provided advice about airplane-ramp-unloading processes to ensure efficient and effective distribution of supplies in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. The typical emergency-response deployment lasts three to six weeks. TNT has also provided emergency-response assistance in Sri Lanka, Sudan, Djibouti, Niger, and Pakistan, among others.

<sup>11</sup> "Tanzania Provides Challenges to Charity Work," Accenture Web site ([www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com)).

Alongside the skills-based specialist program, TNT also operates a generalist School Feeding Volunteering Program. It sends 36 volunteers annually from TNT's global offices to the developing world for three-month deployments that seek to increase educational outcomes by improving the nutrition and health of preschool and primary-school children. Visiting Cambodia, Nicaragua, Tanzania, The Gambia, and Malawi, volunteers have worked on such microprojects as the construction of kitchens, storerooms, fuel-efficient stoves, latrines, and water tanks. This "generalist" program is open to a range of employees and does not offer skills-based volunteering. The objective is to give employees a first-hand experience which will make them effective advocates for the activities of the WFP back home. As TNT evolves this program, it is considering opportunities to more specifically utilize the unique skills of its employees in support of the WFP's school-feeding activities.

**Ernst & Young's** (E&Y) Corporate Social Responsibility Fellows program is another high-leverage initiative that deploys skilled employees to improve social conditions in the developing world. Started in 2005 and partially modeled after the Pfizer Global Health Fellows program, E&Y's effort is unusual in that, unlike most volunteering initiatives that work with NGOs or governments, its fellows work directly with private-sector businesses. The firm sends five employees per year on three-month assignments to provide skills-based technical service to entrepreneurs at small- to medium-size companies in underserved communities in the Americas. Based on the belief that entrepreneurship has historically created economic opportunities and increased living standards, the program assists promising entrepreneurs in their efforts to create sustainable economic value. It utilizes fellows' workplace skills — in accounting, tax, audit, IT, and project management — for volunteer "advisory" projects that offer technical assistance to entrepreneurial companies. The fellows are chosen from an applicant pool of high-performing employees who are at the manager level and above and have been with the company usually for five to seven years.

While E&Y's fellows program leverages the skills of its professionals, the company's business motivations follow the more general goals of corporate citizenship, employee morale, and local community relations. "Our volunteering abroad allows us to add a human face to our work," explains Maria Pena of E&Y, citing the program's expanded "license to operate." Within the broad umbrella of economic development, the company does not strategically define specific industries of focus. "We don't prioritize any sector," says Pena. "We really look at the needs of the entrepreneurs. We try to identify where we can add value, where the need is greatest, as opposed to the specific industry." For example, 2005 and 2006 fellows worked on such projects as a dairy cooperative in Nicaragua, a vegetable-seed company in Chile,

and a software-development company in Argentina. Only in its second year, the program has already gathered significant excitement within the company and will be expanded in future years. "Scale-up is planned in Latin America, and other geographies are also interested in introducing it," adds Pena.

### Strategic Motivations, Low Leverage

Two ICV programs we studied are positioned in the top-left quadrant of the framework, employing strategic motivations and low leverage of corporate assets and expertise. For corporations seeking to migrate their ICV effort from general business impact to a more strategic approach, the evolution of **Starbucks'** program is an instructive case study. While Starbucks' overall ICV strategy is still being developed, in a short time the firm has identified ways to align its volunteering with elements of its corporate strategy (see sidebar next page).

While Starbucks' program does address strategic motivations, it currently has limited leverage of corporate assets and expertise. As Starbucks' Web site says, "No special training is needed, just a desire to learn, engage with others, and make an enduring contribution to the environment." Likewise, as Kristin Anderson, Starbucks senior specialist in stakeholder engagement says, "At this point, no skills are leveraged. In our revamping of the projects, that is something we may consider."

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**"We were spending all this money, but it was unclear what lions in Africa had to do with coffee."**

— Kristin Anderson, Senior Specialist, Stakeholder Engagement, Starbucks

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## The Evolution of Starbucks' Strategic ICV Program

Starbucks partners with the nonprofit intermediary Earthwatch Institute to place employee volunteers in environmental projects. However, the company did not see the business value in the initial volunteer expeditions: "We were spending all this money, but it was unclear what lions in Africa had to do with coffee," recounts Kristin Anderson, senior specialist in stakeholder engagement at Starbucks. In 2004, Starbucks instituted some focus by limiting the program to only coffee-origin countries. But that alone did not provide strategic alignment: "We were never making a connection with the environment, corporate social responsibility, or Starbucks," says Anderson. "Partners [Starbucks employees] and customers were saying, 'This is cool,' but we weren't sure how it was relevant."

In 2007, Starbucks and Earthwatch created a program that brings each of these elements together. The program works with scientists and farmers at the CoopeTarrazu cooperative in Costa Rica, a coffee farm that Starbucks buys from. In addition to being open to 10 Starbucks employees, the program is also being offered to 20 Starbucks consumers on a lottery basis. Given the importance of corporate social responsibility to the Starbucks customer, the program provides a strategic linkage between the company's CSR efforts and its customer base through a highly visible and tangible opportunity. In addition, it connects farmers, baristas, and customers, allowing employees and consumers to witness the impact of the company at different levels of its supply chain.

Similar to the Starbucks example, the ICV program at **Timberland**, the footwear and apparel company, shows how employee volunteering can be focused on issues aligned with a firm's corporate strategy. While volunteering is a natural extension of Timberland's deep-rooted culture of giving back to communities in which employees live and work, the company has also targeted its events strategically to deepen relationships with key business partners and customer segments.

In Asia, Timberland partners with a local NGO, Green Network, to mobilize employees, customers, and business partners as volunteers to plant trees in northern China and Mongolia. Known as the Horqin Desert Reforestation Program, the effort seeks to plant one million trees in this region prior to the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. As Timberland eyes large potential growth opportunities in the China region, it is targeting the "increasingly aware outdoor enthusiast" customer segment with programs that resonate with consumers' desire for environmental improvement. An estimated 50 percent of program volunteers are in Timberland's target customer base, providing strong visibility and connection to the company. "We asked ourselves the question, 'How can we address an environmental need that is absolutely a compelling concern for our consumers?'" says Patrick Kirby at Timberland. A clear indication that this ICV

program is strategic to Timberland's future business is the fact that it is managed by the company's marketing and brand team, rather than the corporate social responsibility team.

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**"We asked ourselves the question, 'How can we address an environmental need that is absolutely a compelling concern for our consumers?'"**

– Patrick Kirby, Service Manager, Social Enterprise Department, Timberland

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Timberland sponsors the Path of Service program at its 24 employee locations worldwide, providing all full-time employees with 40 hours of paid time to volunteer in a range of social sectors. A majority of volunteering is in three broad areas: youth engagement, community revitalization, and environmental sustainability. Program participation is widespread throughout the company, with more than 70 percent of Timberland's global employees in 2006 using some of their allotted hours, with an average of nearly 14 hours per employee who volunteered. These ICV efforts are direct-service programs that do not explicitly leverage employees' workplace knowledge and skills. For example, Timberland sponsors two flagship local service

events — Earth Day in April and Serv-a-palooza in September. Other recent projects include nontechnical volunteer work, such as improving an elementary school in Santiago, Dominican Republic, where 195 volunteers landscaped, renovated a playground, and installed lighting and fans; and improving an elementary school in Zhuhai, China, where more than 200 employees and guests provided landscaping and painting services.

Timberland's cross-border initiative, which is a relatively new and fairly small sabbatical program, sends one or two employees annually from the U.S. abroad for up to six months. It offers employees wide flexibility in choosing projects. Employees retain full pay and benefits during their stay, but incur their own costs for travel and other logistics and do not receive structured training or support from Timberland on project implementation.

### Strategic Motivations, High Leverage

In the last category of case studies, the top-right quadrant of the strategic framework, five ICV programs are both strategic in their differing motivations *and* achieve high leverage of their assets and expertise. We believe these companies have the highest likelihood of delivering both business and social impact from their ICV activities.

At **PricewaterhouseCoopers**, the Ulysses program provides a unique example of a strategic ICV program that also leverages direct business expertise. Ulysses is a highly structured leadership-development program that targets high-potential, senior-level professionals. It includes traditional training and an eight-week field assignment in which multicultural, three- or four-person teams work with an NGO, U.N. agency, or other social sector organization. The effort has been growing since its start in 2000, and now deploys about 25 people annually. "Ulysses is an internal leadership-development program, rather than a volunteering or CSR program," explains program manager Kellie Roberts. She emphasizes the strategic nature of the program, as opposed to the corporate-citizenship or morale-based motivations seen in other models:

*It's integral to the development of our business. The main reason for us to create the Ulysses program was to build a pipeline of leaders who understand how to work in diverse situations with a wide range of stakeholders.*

Another leading example of high-impact ICV activities is **IBM's** On Demand Community (ODC) program. ODC is a sophisticated, multicountry, local service model that leverages significant IBM assets and skills, while at the same time showcases IBM's technology solutions in an easily accessible environment. A global program with local management,

ODC features a Web-based portal that helps IBM manage its global volunteering efforts. It provides a portfolio of technology solutions that can assist employees in their local volunteering efforts.

In 2006, IBM tracked the volunteering of more than 80,000 employees (out of 320,000), whose work represented over 4.4 million hours. While the numbers are impressive, the value that each of these volunteers provided to nonprofits and schools is what makes IBM an interesting example to study. IBM professionals can employ the ODC platform's unique IT tools and resources to facilitate an effective volunteering experience. MentorPlace is a tool that allows IBM staff to mentor students via the Web using classroom-based curricula. ODC includes an online forum to post and exchange ideas and to share skills and resources, and has a half-dozen online Web courses for training people who are volunteering on their own. Further, IBM provides enhancement grants to nonprofits — \$1,000 in cash or \$3,500 in technology — when employees volunteer for 40 hours a year. As a testament to the value of IBM's volunteering, evaluations indicate that the beneficiaries value the IBM skill set even more than the financial or product grants.

IBM's On Demand Community program aligns with its business motivations, because it utilizes a technology solution that is core to the firm's commercial business. The ODC technology platform helps a range of potential customers understand the power of IBM's solutions. Diane Melley, director of On Demand Community at IBM, describes the program's linkage with potential commercial opportunities:

*[The program uses] the On Demand portal technology that we sell to our customers around the world. By viewing the On Demand Community, it becomes readily apparent to the viewer that IBM has committed significant resources and time to volunteerism. The IBM technology enabled us to implement our program in 68 countries around the world in only seven months. We're getting valuable visibility from ODC that we can reference with our clients. It demonstrates our company's values, the skills of our people, and the power of our technology, all in a way that is easy for our clients to relate to their own businesses.*

In addition to this local service model, IBM has also decided to utilize the cross-border model. In 2007, IBM's Chairman and CEO Samuel J. Palmisano announced a new set of leadership tools and resources that will be implemented in 2008 for IBMers to enhance their careers and expertise. Among these is The Corporate Service Corps that will bring about 600 IBMers from around the world over the first three years to participate in projects with NGOs in developing and emerging markets.

Among the ICV programs reviewed for this research, **Pfizer's** Global Health Fellows (GHF) program is one of the most established and comprehensive cross-border service initiatives. The fellowship provides a powerful example of strategic ICV that leverages significant corporate and philanthropic assets. In addition, the GHF program has served as an exemplar with other corporations that have recently designed cross-border models, such as BD and Ernst & Young, which have looked to Pfizer's program as a best practice cross-border model.

Pfizer's former CEO Henry (Hank) McKinnell initiated the GHF program in 2002. It was designed to send skilled employees to developing countries to help NGOs and government agencies build health and social infrastructure in communities ravaged by HIV/AIDS. Originally, the GHF program was intended to augment Pfizer's engagement in the HIV/AIDS arena, an issue of great importance to the company and the HIV/AIDS community. Global Health Fellows are assigned to partners for three to six months to provide technical assistance in Africa, Latin America, or Asia. The GHF program to date has deployed 128 fellows in 31 countries. In addition to overall health and development goals, general corporate citizenship, and employee development objectives, Pfizer had strategic motivations for implementing the program. Given the global health challenges facing the developing world, and in particular the HIV/AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa, key stakeholders urged Pfizer to improve health care for the world's most disadvantaged citizens. Sending Pfizer's highly-skilled professionals to work with key global health partners on the ground allowed employees to be a visible part of the solution and help Pfizer subsequently develop positive relationships with strategic global health stakeholders. Comments Lisa Foster, director of global philanthropy at Pfizer:

*As fellow after fellow meaningfully contributed their skills and partner organizations began to see their capabilities grow due to the contribution of the Pfizer Global Health Fellow, many of our critics began to look at us with less cynicism and became direct beneficiaries of the program. We could never have predicted the value of this program at the outset or the degree to which it would put a human face on our company. We responded to a critical need in a meaningful way and it resonated with our employees and those who influence our operating environment.*

A 2006 third party evaluation of GHF looked at the potential benefits for stakeholder relations and concluded, "NGOs that benefit from the work of the Global Health Fellows are appreciative, and give Pfizer credit for this important contribution. ... There is a 'public relations' benefit to Pfizer even if the positive opinion within NGOs is not communicated to the broader public."<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the strategic motivations of the GHF program, Pfizer designed the program to leverage significant corporate and philanthropic resources. From its inception, the GHF program leveraged Pfizer employees' professional and technical skills, deploying people for a range of activities: administration system development, nonclinical training and clinical training, program evaluation, sales and marketing, and research design. Pfizer also offered a \$1000 enhancement grant for fellows to help implement their projects. In addition, several fellows were deployed to work with global health NGOs cofounded by Pfizer and already receiving significant levels of philanthropic support from the company, such as the Infectious Diseases Institute in Kampala, Uganda, and the International Trachoma Initiative, which has field offices throughout sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.



<sup>12</sup> Feeley, Frank (Rich), J.D., et al., "Evaluation of the Pfizer Global Health Fellows Program," February 10, 2006.



**BD**, the global medical technology company, launched a cross-border volunteer program in 2005 to improve the quality of health care services in medically underserved regions around the world. Partially modeled after the Pfizer GHF program, BD's initiative has partnered to date with the Catholic Medical Mission Board (CMMB) and Direct Relief International to send skilled employee volunteers to Ghana and Zambia for two- or three-week service trips. Each year, the program sends 10 to 12 BD employees from all over the world to volunteer at hospitals and clinics. While the overarching motivation is to impact the community through improved health care — about 16 percent of Zambia's population is HIV-positive and Ghana's infant mortality rate is about 54 out of 1,000 — BD also designed the program for strategic business reasons. "Our number-two motivation was building relationships with nonprofit partners," says Jennifer Farrington, director of social investing at BD. Farrington describes the choices BD made, illuminating the strategic thinking associated with the program's design:

*We've linked the program's service focus to areas of health care that BD has a presence in. We're involved in everything from maternal and neonatal health to HIV/AIDS, and our associates include highly experienced clinicians, nurses, and laboratory technicians who have a strong desire to help people live healthy lives. When we're selecting partners for each of the volunteer service trips, it's a strategic decision to work with organizations that focus on the same areas as BD so that we can leverage the expertise of our associates and truly make an impact. Diabetes, immunization, and health care-associated infections are other potential strategic focus areas.*

The BD program has powerful potential for impact because of its high leverage of corporate and philanthropic resources. Volunteers were selected for specific positions, such as nurses, laboratory trainers, general assistants, and light construction workers, based on the needs identified in the beneficiary location. The program was designed to use specific skills to improve facilities at hospitals and clinics and to develop local health care workers' ability to improve laboratory capacity, in particular with HIV testing in Zambia. In addition to

sending volunteers to the sites, BD donates products both during the visit and as needed for an additional two years. The company also leveraged business relationships on behalf of the organizations to secure donated equipment, including computers and microscopes. And BD employees were able to raise funds that the company's matching-gifts program matched. To capture the lessons learned, BD published a case study of its work with CMMB, including evidence of impact.<sup>13</sup> "We linked the program to sectors where BD has a presence and were pleasantly surprised to see how much impact our work had in terms of leveraging other funding, such as PEPFAR<sup>14</sup> grants," says Ellen Rafferty, project coordinator for social investing at BD.



<sup>13</sup> For more information on the impact of the BD program, see Dow, Michelle, "Walking the Talk: A Case Study of the BD Employee Volunteer Partnership Program in Zambia," The Corporate Citizenship Company, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> PEPFAR is the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, aka the U.S. Global AIDS Initiative. For more information, see [www.pepfar.gov](http://www.pepfar.gov).

The United Nations World Food Programme dispatches trucks carrying food through Sudan after TNT employees set up logistics and software to manage the fleet of light vehicles and trucks in the region.



Photo credit: WFP/Debbi Morello

# 4. Recommendations

## Implementing Best Practices

With the goal of increasing the impact of international corporate volunteering, FSG has compiled several best practices that can be incorporated into the planning and implementation of future programs. We hope that the following recommendations will guide and instruct corporate philanthropy executives and ICV program managers as they seek to build or improve upon their programs.

**1. Set Goals before Roles:** *Identify the business motivations of volunteering and then develop programs to fit those goals.*

Whether corporations engage in ICV for general motivations or strategic goals, identifying the appropriate business objectives is critical. General motivations of improved employee morale, public relations, and corporate citizenship are important for all companies, and can certainly be valid goals of ICV programs. If these reasons drive a company's ICV work, however, a firm should be purposeful in designing programs that achieve those goals and should not try to reap other benefits that may be unrealistic. For example, large-scale volunteer events that provide nontechnical but much-needed service in communities, such as Timberland's Serv-a-palooza program, can be effective in meeting community obligations and boosting employee morale and pride in the company. However, neither measuring specific social impact nor addressing competitive business constraints should be a realistic expectation for these types of programs.

On the other hand, a much smaller but targeted fellowship program that provides services to key stakeholders, such as Pfizer's Global Health Fellows, or programs that utilize the products a company produces, such as IBM's On Demand Community, can achieve strategic business goals for a company as well as create social impact. Indeed, a firm may choose to address both of these motivations by creating multiple ICV programs, each aligned with different goals. Ultimately, while both motivations are important, companies need to identify what's driving their work and design programs and outcomes accordingly.

**2. Walk before You Run:** *Determine which of the two operational models to pursue — cross-border or local service — based on your level of experience with international programs and your desired presence in a target country.*

All corporations with international locations should consider the local service model. Supporting local volunteering efforts in the

community where employees live and work is a low-cost effort that can yield a range of benefits to companies, employees, and beneficiaries. Such programs can be implemented with minimal business disruption and with a modest level of coordination. Local fellowships constitute a niche ICV program that would only be appropriate in certain circumstances. Specifically, companies that have a significant local presence in strategic markets with a strong culture of volunteering could be candidates to implement local fellowships. These programs have higher costs in terms of business disruption, since an employee is absent from the company, but could result in significant impact with the beneficiary and key local stakeholders.

For companies that may not have significant international experience but would still like their employees to learn from cross-cultural opportunities, a cross-border model with a low commitment of resources is most appropriate. An “entry-level” cross-border approach provides a testing ground for companies to learn the ropes of ICV, and avoids excessive resources devoted to program design and implementation. Fully funded fellowships for employees to volunteer abroad are more appropriate for corporations that have developed extensive international program experience and are comfortable managing the complexities of highly engaged efforts. These programs fit well at corporations with international operations that are or will become a significant part of their business, and that therefore need to groom global leaders. In addition, having in-country offices in the same locations as cross-border volunteering helps facilitate successful program implementation and reduce risk.

**3. Lead with Leverage:** *Opportunities to create social impact will be greater if companies leverage employees' workplace skills and knowledge.*

There will always be a value proposition and appropriate context for nontechnical volunteering that builds teamwork skills and morale for employees. While this traditional variety of ICV is certainly important, the potential for social impact is higher when employees utilize their skills and expertise. However, not all companies are equally equipped to utilize employee skills with every type of beneficiary. Professional-services firms, because of the nature of their business, are naturally drawn toward engagements in which the workplace skills of their volunteers are put to use. Nevertheless, corporations in any industry should make a systematic decision about which projects may be the best opportunities for employees to apply their workplace skills and expertise.

Several companies that participated in this study indicated that even if their current ICV efforts did not fully tap into employee skills, they would like to explore this dimension as they continued to bolster their programs. For example, Kevin Carroll, senior manager of worldwide community affairs at Levi Strauss & Co., says:

*Of the Community Day programs that we do now, approximately 20 percent are skills-based. But we are looking for more projects where our employees can deploy their skills to achieve an even greater impact. I think we will see more of those projects in the future.*

While skills-based programs require research and identification of targeted volunteering opportunities, they also offer the chance to deploy the unique resources of the company's most valuable assets. As a result, volunteers feel more connected, the beneficiary receives significant social value otherwise unavailable, and the company can measure and publicize the social impact. Creating programs that leverage skills requires careful planning, the choice of appropriate beneficiaries, and adequate follow-up to ensure that expectations of both the volunteers and beneficiaries are met.

#### **4. Align with Philanthropic and Corporate Social**

**Responsibility Activities:** *Look for opportunities to combine volunteering programs with ongoing philanthropic or CSR work.*

Some companies have designed their ICV programs as stand-alone efforts distinct from their mainstream philanthropic activities. For example, PwC views their program not as philanthropy, but rather as an internal leadership-development tool. Most companies, however, view ICV as an integrated component of a larger corporate-philanthropy strategy. As companies like BD move beyond simply writing checks to beneficiaries, they are looking to bring a full range of corporate resources to bear on the social issues they are addressing. Similar to leveraging employees' skills, cash and in-kind donations or other services can increase the social impact of international volunteering. Focus and alignment with the rest of a company's philanthropy efforts also make it easier to prioritize, promote, and publicize ICV activities.

**5. Partner Proactively:** *Partnerships can provide access to resources the company may not have.*

When companies send their volunteers abroad, competent partners with local expertise and knowledge are critical. "For us, it's not volunteering for the sake of volunteering," says Cecile Walton of Accenture. "It's really a useful partnership and a win-win scenario for both us and VSO." It is important that companies pick partners that have relationships in the country and are intimately familiar with local cultures and practices. In addition, relationships within the company can be just as

important as external alliances. "Building relationships, not just with the NGO partners but with local offices and communities, is the key to success," says Ernst & Young's Maria Pena.

While companies often partner with each other when it comes to domestic volunteering, international programs pose a different set of challenges for cross-company collaboration. However, several companies are partnering in ICV efforts, particularly around disaster relief. For example, IBM and Cisco are working together to deploy technology solutions along with volunteers in the aftermath of natural disasters. Many companies in our study expressed a strong desire to work with others who are tackling the same issues. As Paul Bueker at GE suggests:

*Where a number of multinational companies like GE, IBM, Microsoft or others are working on projects in the same geography, there is no reason why we should not all collaborate to address similar challenges.*

**6. Invest in Infrastructure:** *Ensure adequate internal resources (staff, funding, systems) to manage volunteering programs.*

For cross-border programs, resources are particularly important due to the additional needs of training, logistics, and coordination. "If we were going to do this seriously and comprehensively and add value to the WFP team, then we had to have a dedicated team working on this from the beginning," says Jane Richards of TNT.

In addition to staff time, other resources important to the success of ICV programs include information about target beneficiaries, a system to share lessons and exchange ideas with other volunteers in the company (many of whom may be based or working in other countries), and volunteer training. For the local model, employees are usually already familiar with the country's context and may have knowledge about appropriate beneficiaries as well. But being able to learn from other offices and adapt the lessons to a local environment allows for a richer set of experiences. For the cross-border model, training for cultural context and social norms is particularly important for fellows who may be traveling to countries where they have not worked before.

**7. Communicate Clearly:** *Be up-front about the motivations and benefits of your program, and communicate those messages to internal and external stakeholders.*

Interviewees stressed the importance of having clear and consistent messages about a company's ICV efforts. Initiatives can have multiple stakeholders (employees, management, beneficiaries, intermediary partners, third-party observers), not all of whom may bring the same objectives or expectations to the table. Both internal and external stakeholders need to be aware of the program's goals.

Setting clear goals and processes is critical for managing the expectations of all the parties involved. “The clearer we can be about our guidelines, the more successful our employees can be in helping our nonprofit partners,” says Akhtar Badshah, senior director of community affairs at Microsoft. Communication is also important to spread the word about a new program and to generate attention from employees around the world. “Communication and word of mouth have been crucial to gaining momentum for our Earthwatch Fellows program,” says Nigel Pate of HSBC. “By years three and four, the program was very well known within the company.”

## Future Opportunities

As the field of international corporate volunteering continues to grow, corporate executives and philanthropy leaders will seek opportunities to invest greater resources in international service. Along with this increased investment will come increased expectations of impact, both to the business and society.

Executives have an opportunity to take a leadership role in moving from traditional volunteering to high-impact volunteering within their companies. To be successful in a global marketplace, corporations need employees who have a global mindset and who understand the dynamics of different markets, operating environments, and cultures in a highly interdependent society. Corporations offer distinct skills, knowledge, and assets that can be deployed to address some of the world’s most intractable problems. The opportunity to serve a firm’s strategic needs — leadership development, priority stakeholder engagement, customer value — while simultaneously addressing important societal issues presents a compelling business case for launching high-impact ICV programs.

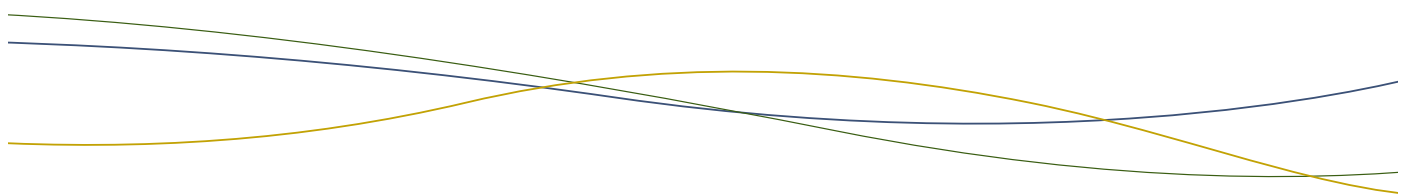
Looking toward the future of ICV, corporations can think more broadly about their goals. They can go beyond simply running an effective ICV program and toward opportunities for exponential increases in the scale of impact. While most of the companies studied have cross-border programs, significant opportunities exist for corporations to generate impact through expanded local service. Today, most of these local efforts consist primarily of traditional volunteering — low-leverage programs with general business motivations. But given the relatively high cost and potential life disruptions of cross-border models, local service can offer a great way to scale and enhance ICV. The local

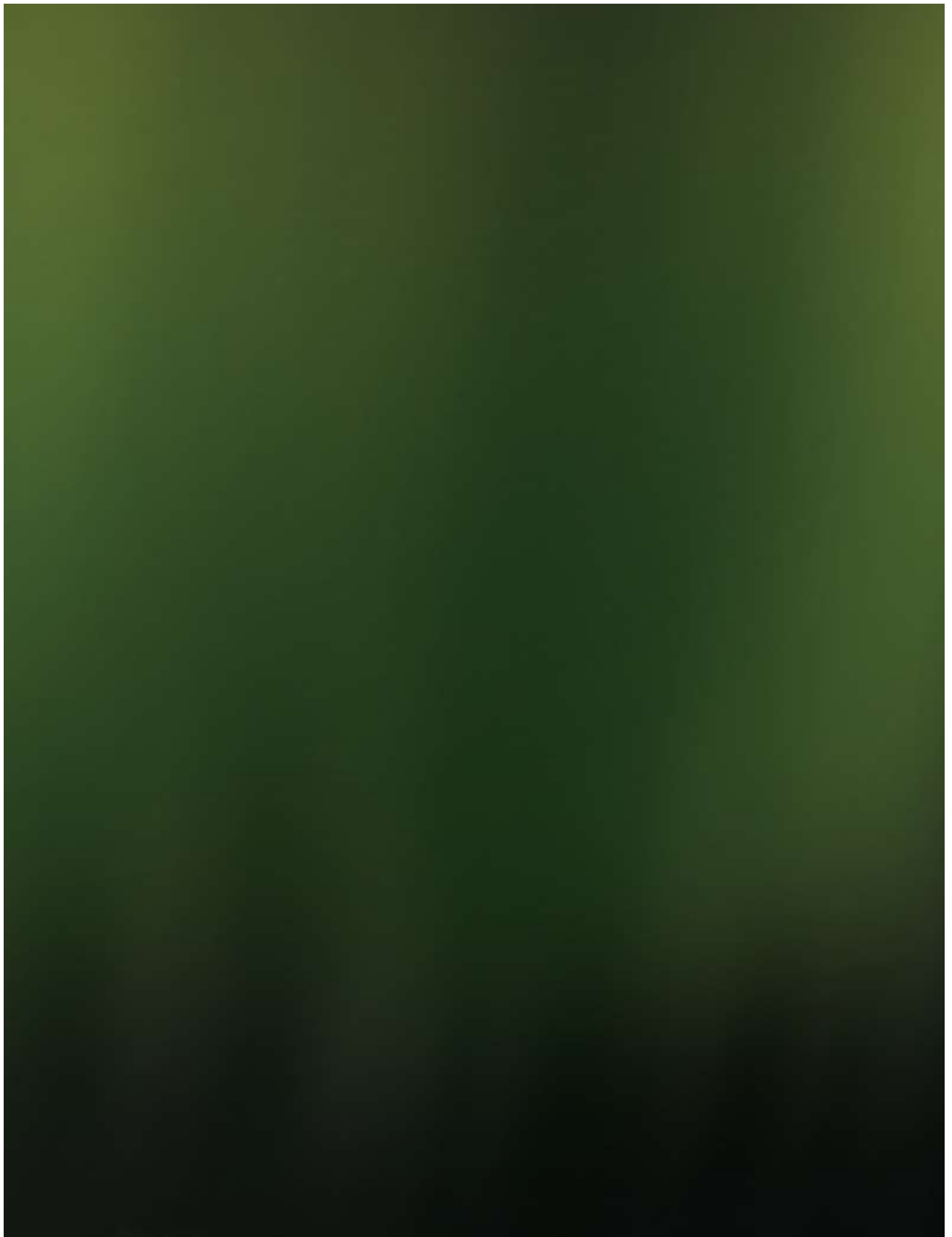
service nature of IBM’s On Demand Community facilitated an increase in the number of volunteers from 25,000 in the first year to 80,000 by the third year — growth and scale dramatically different from what is possible with the typical cross-border program.

A local service program can and should be expanded to include more high-impact volunteering. Cisco’s Leadership Fellows Program, a high-impact ICV program, provides a glimpse into what’s possible. While consisting of only a few international examples today, this leadership-development program offers 6- to 12-month skills-based fellowship opportunities for senior management and directors to provide service in communities where they live and work. The executives are familiar with their communities and do not need to leave their homes and families. While the efforts do not provide cross-cultural exposure, they still offer an important chance for corporations to scale the impact of ICV programs.

Another way to dramatically increase impact is to collaborate with other corporations. Unlike commercial activities, for which a sustainable competitive advantage is the overarching goal, corporate philanthropy and volunteering need not be competitive activities. Working together with other companies provides several potential benefits: deeper expertise can be leveraged as companies draw on a broader range of core competencies; implementation risk can be spread across several organizations; and costs can be saved from pooling administrative resources. Corporations would still benefit from the “ambassadorship” of their own employees who volunteer in the community, but a broader level of social impact could be achieved. While most examples of corporate collaboration focus on event-based disaster relief, such teamwork could be applied toward more proactive and ongoing efforts to benefit society.

Assuming company goals, both business and social, are well defined at the outset, a multicorporation, multidisciplinary program would be a powerful source of high-impact international volunteering. An ICV program team might consist of a GE engineer, an IBM technology expert, a Pfizer research scientist, and an Accenture consultant. If managed well, they could bring a range of expertise and talent to bear on targeted problems. Whether they are created through individual corporate programs or broader collaboration, high-impact ICV programs will require strong leadership and careful strategic choices to ensure investments advance business goals and also effectively address critical global issues.





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# Appendix A: Overview of a Sample of ICV Programs

Company	Total Number of Employees (% Outside HQ Country)	Cross-Border Model					Local Service Model
		Description	Key Focus Area	Year Started	Number of Volunteers	Length	
Accenture	152,100 (70%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership with Voluntary Service Overseas to send employees to developing countries</li> <li>Provide skills-based service (e.g., finance, management) across a range of social issues</li> <li>VSO responsibilities included in the roles of 16 coordinators and one global coordinator</li> </ul>	Various	1999	About 12/year on average since inception	Up to 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal pro-bono programs in multiple countries allow employees to provide services to local nonprofits</li> </ul>
BD	27,000 (56%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership with Catholic Medical Mission Board providing skills-based service at rural clinics in Zambia</li> <li>Partnership with Direct Relief International for similar program in Ghana for 2007</li> <li>2 – 3 FTEs for part of the year to manage the program</li> </ul>	Health	2005	10 in 2005, 4 in 2006, 12 in 2007	2 – 3 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BD encourages employees across the world to volunteer in their communities</li> <li>Volunteer service is complemented by cash and in-kind donations</li> </ul>
Cisco	57,000 (50%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership Fellows Program places senior managers in NGOs around the world; providing skills-based service</li> <li>Relatively small cross-border activity</li> <li>1 FTE to manage the program</li> </ul>	Various	2003	About 1/year on average (4 in the last 4 years, 19 others deployed locally)	6 – 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civic Councils around the world; 20 outside the U.S.</li> <li>Beneficiaries determined by local need and employee interests</li> </ul>
Ernst & Young	114,000 (77%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Social Responsibility Fellows provide skills-based business services to small for-profit entrepreneurs in developing countries</li> <li>Partnerships with Technoserve and Endeavor</li> </ul>	Economic Development	2006	5/year	3 months	
GE	319,000 (52%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Product donations in Africa complemented with volunteer support</li> </ul>	Health	2004	12 in 2006	2 – 4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long history with Elfun program started in 1920s</li> <li>140+ volunteer councils in locations around the world (40 outside U.S. and Canada)</li> </ul>
HSBC	312,000 (83%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5-year partnership with Earthwatch</li> <li>Service provided to 50 – 60 environmental projects per year around the world</li> <li>Less than 1 FTE to manage the program</li> </ul>	Environment	2002	500/year for last 4 years	2 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The majority of local efforts in education and environment</li> </ul>
IBM	355,000 (64%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently no regular cross-border model, but disaster-relief efforts are often cross-border</li> <li>Announced in 2007, The Corporate Service Corps will link IBMers with NGOs in developing and emerging markets</li> </ul>	Disaster Relief	1997	On average, 5 per disaster	Typically at least 1 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched in 2004, the On Demand Community program matches employee and retiree volunteers around the world with technology tools</li> <li>Participation in 68 countries</li> </ul>



Company	Total Number of Employees (% Outside HQ Country)	Cross-Border Model					Local Service Model
		Description	Key Focus Area	Year Started	Number of Volunteers	Length	
Levi Strauss & Co.	10,680 (66%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently no cross-border model</li> </ul>	–	–	–	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Started in the 1960s; currently 66 teams around the world</li> <li>Two local programs: community-involvement teams and community day programs</li> </ul>
Microsoft	76,539 (39%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently no cross-border model</li> </ul>	–	–	–	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local programs in multiple countries; some are skills-based, such as in China</li> <li>Employees outside the U.S. are offered time off for volunteer opportunities</li> </ul>
Pfizer	98,000 (60%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Global Health Fellows provide skills-based service to beneficiaries in developing countries to address health concerns</li> <li>Service can be complemented by cash grants</li> </ul>	Health	2002	25 – 45/year	Up to 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considering local fellowship model in Pakistan and other locations</li> </ul>
Pricewaterhouse-Coopers	142,000 (74%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ulysses program provides general skills-based service to NGOs for leadership development of employees</li> <li>7 – 8 teams with 3 – 4 members per team each travel to different countries</li> <li>2 FTEs managing the program</li> </ul>	Various	2000	25/year	8 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local service in multiple countries where the company has a presence</li> </ul>
Starbucks	~139,000 (0%*)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership with Earthwatch to send employees (partners) and customers to coffee farms from which the company sources</li> <li>2 FTEs managing the program</li> </ul>	Environment	2001	10 employees, 20 customers in 2006	8 – 14 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community-involvement programs around the world; service complemented by grants</li> </ul>
Timberland	5,500 (64%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-border model on a case-by-case opportunistic basis, primarily driven by employees</li> </ul>	Various	~ 2003	1 – 2/year	Up to 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Path of Service (Earth Day and Serv-a-palooza) global volunteering events</li> <li>Local service led by Global Stewards and committees in all countries of operation</li> </ul>
TNT	159,000 (63%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moving the World partnership with World Food Programme to provide both skills-based and general service in multiple countries</li> <li>Service complemented by cash grants</li> <li>9 FTEs managing the program</li> </ul>	Humanitarian Relief, Education	2003	36 for generalist program/year	3 – 6 months	

\* Starbucks locations outside the U.S. are franchises. Franchise employees are not considered Starbucks employees.

# Appendix B: List of Organizations Interviewed

## Corporations

- Accenture Cecile Walton, Accenture UK Corporate Citizenship Lead and Accenture Global VSO Coordinator
- BD Jennifer Farrington, Director of Social Investing; Ellen Rafferty, Project Coordinator; Social Investing
- Cisco Barbara Jones, Program Manager; Leadership Fellows Program; Maggie Larson, Manager; Global Civic Councils
- Ernst & Young Maria Pena, Senior Program Manager; CSR Americas
- GE Paul Bueker, Manager; GEVolunteers
- HSBC Nigel Pate, Senior Manager; Corporate Responsibility
- IBM Diane Melley, Director; On Demand Community; Rebecca Curzon, Project Manager
- Levi Strauss & Co. Kevin Carroll, Senior Manager; Worldwide Community Affairs
- Microsoft Akhtar Badshah, Senior Director; Community Affairs; Yvonne Thomas, Program Manager; Community Affairs
- Pfizer Lisa Foster, Director; Global Philanthropy; Rekha Chalasani, Manager; Global Philanthropy
- PricewaterhouseCoopers Kellie Roberts, Ulysses Program Manager
- Starbucks Kristin Anderson, Senior Specialist, Stakeholder Engagement
- Timberland Patrick Kirby, Service Manager; Social Enterprise Department
- TNT Jane Richards, Moving the World Assignments Manager

## Experts / Key Stakeholders

- AngelPoints Andrew Mercy, CEO
- Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship Chris Pinney, Director Executive Education
- Brookings Institution David Caprara, Director; Initiative on International Volunteering
- BuildingBlocks International Jennifer Anastasoff, CEO
- Boston University School of Public Health Taryn Vian, Assistant Professor
- Earthwatch Institute Barbara Erickson, Chief Development Officer; Ed Barker, Director of Corporate Partnerships
- Hands On Network Madden DeGarmo Manion, Director; Corporate Partnerships; Megan Latimer; Director of Network Expansion
- Harvard University/Brookings Jane Nelson, Senior Fellow and Director; CSR Initiative, Kennedy School
- LBG Associates Linda B. Gornitsky, President
- University of Missouri Margaret Sherraden, Research Professor
- VolunteerMatch Jennifer Kim Field, Director; VolunteerMatch Solutions; Dianna Smith, Director; VolunteerMatch Solutions

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## Disclaimer

All statements and conclusions, unless specifically attributed to another source, are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the interviewees, Pfizer, or The Brookings Institution.

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