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IBM's best and brightest aiding developing countries

IBM's Corporate Service Corps (CSC), a two-year-old initiative, sends its high-performing employees to developing countries to lend their skills and expertise to help charities and non-governmental organizations solve operational problems.

The **CSC program** is available to IBM's top performing executives. Participants are teamed with other staffers and sent to countries such as Brazil, Vietnam, China, Malaysia, Turkey, South Africa, Romania, The Philippines and Ghana among others.

Expertise in Action

Since the program's launch in July 2008, the CSC has deployed 300 IBM employees from 44 countries on 29 teams to 9 countries. Projects vary from assisting networks of entrepreneurs and small businesses trying to grow to the utilization of information technology by communities left behind the "digital divide."

The IBM staff use their expertise in IT, finance, marketing, management, communications and consulting to deliver about US \$250,000 of pro-bono consulting services to non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

They spend two months researching and training before they go, then spend a month at the NGO consulting in teams. When they return, they mentor the next group of recruits. About 500 take part each year.

IBM employs about 400,000 people worldwide. IBM is the largest and most profitable information technology employer in the world. Employees involved in volunteer-type CSC program, still collect their salaries since IBM believes that this initiative gives them unique skills and is instrumental in their development as future leaders.

Stanley Litow, IBM's vice-president of corporate citizenship and corporate affairs, says the CSC program has a "triple benefit."

"The employee gets an experience of a lifetime, the charity gains the expertise and IBM develops leaders", Litow says. "We're preparing leaders for the company who have a broad range of experiences and skills which we think are absolutely vital in terms of leading a global company."

Serving Communities

Orest Pizyo, senior finance expert at IBM's Toronto office and a participant of the CSC, is developing a strategic plan for a charity in Brazil that aids children with autism.

"For me, getting involved in the community is the best part," Pizyo relates. "What's even better is that I don't have to sacrifice my career for it. That's the best of both worlds."

CSC activity in Brazil, for example, started in 2009. The first two teams operate in Sao Paulo.

In this emerging market, IBMers work with six different NGOs, address needs ranging from: community involved education in under served areas, diversity in entrepreneurship, violence prevention, promoting scientific education, digital inclusion, and digital entrepreneurship.

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