

# Member Meetup



BOSTON COLLEGE  
**CENTER FOR CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP**  
CARROLL SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

# RECAP

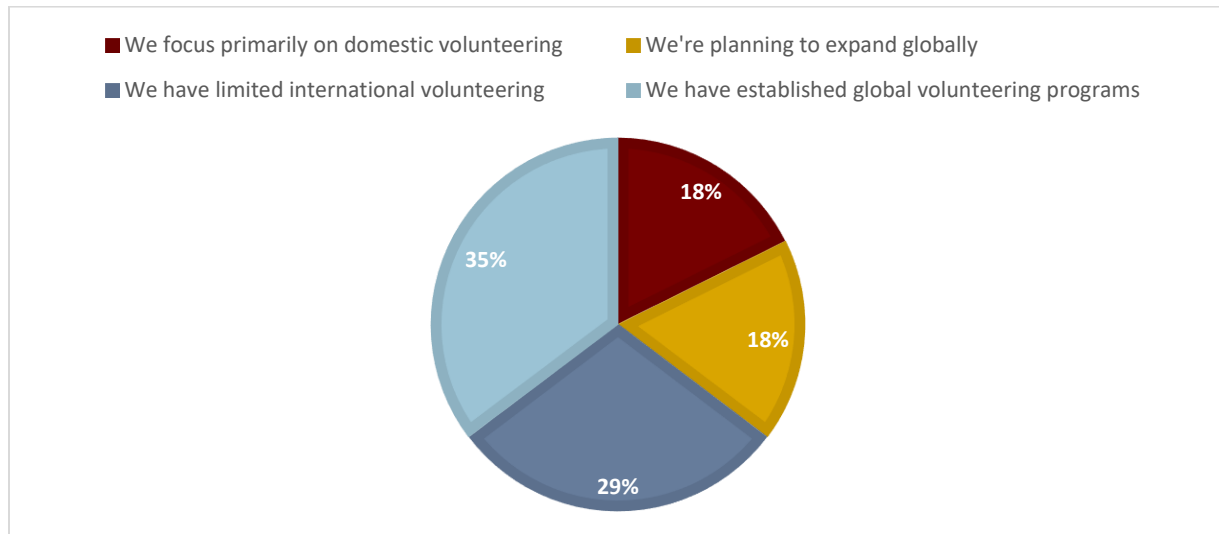
April 30, 2025

## Global Volunteer Programs

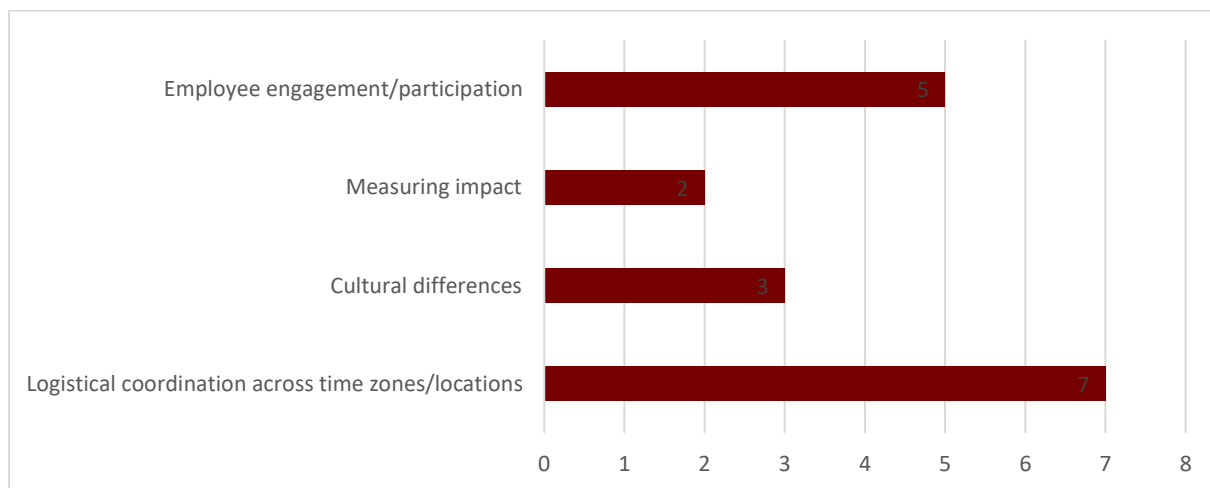


# Polls

## 1. What is your company's current level of global volunteer engagement?



## 2. What do you see as the biggest challenge in implementing global volunteer initiatives?



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# Meeting Notes

## Background Information

The April 2025 Member Meetup explored how companies are engaging employees in volunteering initiatives around the world. Organizations shared their best practices and strategies for building far-reaching volunteer programs, increasing employee engagement, and coordinating efforts across diverse locations.

The first organization shared successful strategies used to increase employee participation across their various volunteering, fundraising, and giving programs. Given their diverse workforce, this organization focused on removing perceived barriers to entry and driving traffic toward their employee CSR portal. Strategies such as issuing quarterly community engagement newsletters, voluntary surveys, and diversifying onsite volunteering offerings have incentivized employees to use the organization's CSR site and seek opportunities that directly impact their local community.

The second organization offered insights from their efforts to expand their global volunteerism programming into new markets and regions. They discussed their volunteering programs' evolution over the past two decades, growing from one city office to over thirty countries around the world. Much of their success stemmed from their top-down approach: building strong relationships with local executives and transforming them into program "champions" who drive regional volunteering initiatives going forward. After planting the seeds in new markets, this organization encourages local employees to take ownership, build out the program, and create volunteering events that matter most to them.

## Analysis:

Whether looking to scale an existing program or starting from scratch, it is important that global volunteering efforts are grounded in local needs, leadership, and support. Some factors to consider when expanding internationally include:

- **Program Accessibility:** Removing any perceived barriers to employee engagement, especially those related to physical location, digital systems, or complex organizational processes.

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- **Employee Incentives:** Encouraging employees to not only volunteer, but also recommend programs to fellow team members, create and lead initiatives, and share successes within and outside the organization.
- **Stakeholder Alignment:** Determining optimal program timelines and digital offerings using employee feedback to avoid extended rollouts or delays.
- **Leadership Support:** Securing regional executive sponsorship, ideally from leaders who are enthusiastic about the volunteer programs and highly attuned to local needs.
- **Internal Communication:** Leveraging existing resources and communication channels to continuously engage employees about volunteering opportunities.

## Challenges, Solutions, and Strategies:

- **Engaging a Diverse Workforce**
  - **Challenge:** Cultural, linguistic, and lifestyle differences among employees can make it difficult to identify which volunteer opportunities garner the most engagement.
  - **Solutions:**
    - Establishing committees led by employees themselves to guide programming.
    - Partnering with local service organizations or nonprofits for opportunities, insights, and resources.
- **Increasing New Employee Participation**
  - **Challenge:** New hires and employees not currently engaged in volunteering programs may not be aware of existing opportunities or perceive barriers to getting involved.
  - **Solutions:**
    - Providing introductory materials that explain current program offerings, answer most frequently asked questions, and emphasize the benefits of volunteerism.

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- Offering a diverse array of opportunities to volunteer onsite (e.g. hygiene kit builds) that are easily accessible and incorporated into employees' workday.
  - Organizing worldwide events like Global Volunteering Month that encourage regional or local teams to host events that are the most meaningful to them.
  - Broadening eligibility criteria for volunteering activities (e.g. allowing employees to log volunteer hours related to personal volunteer engagements for their church or their children's school).
  - Creating pride opportunities (special recognition, award or grant ceremonies, branded items) that encourage employees to volunteer or nominate peers.
- **Measuring and Communicating Program Impact**
    - **Challenge:** Determining the effectiveness of volunteer programs across sites and highlighting positive outcomes or successes.
    - **Solutions:**
      - Tracking both qualitative and quantitative outcomes (retention rates, promotion rates, engagement).
      - Gathering employee feedback, success stories, and volunteering anecdotes through voluntary surveys.
      - Seeking external validation through recognition programs and benchmarking.
      - Promoting photos, videos, individual stories, or causes through companywide newsletters or other communication channels.
  - **Scaling Programs Across Multiple Locations**
    - **Challenge:** Maintaining consistent programming across various company sites.
    - **Solutions:**
      - Keeping the initial program launch in a new market as simple as possible, scaling effective strategies from established sites once the new site stabilizes.

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- Leveraging the company's communication team to create simple, yet compelling promotional materials to share with potential sites.
- Establishing local teams or committees of employees to manage initiatives at each location.
- Using both informal and formal opportunities to praise program champions for their efforts in the new market.

## Actionable Steps:

- **Start with Assessment**

- Determine which markets are most suitable for expansion/new programs.
  - What are the geographical areas we want to focus business growth on?
  - Where do we have the most population density of our team members so we can serve the most people during the initial launch?
- Identify existing volunteering initiatives, partnerships, or causes.

- **Establish Strong Foundations**

- Establish local committees of employees to manage initiatives at each location.
- Partner with local service organizations or nonprofits for volunteering opportunities, insights, and resources.
- Curate a diverse array of opportunities to volunteer onsite (e.g. hygiene kit builds) that are easily accessible and incorporated into employees' workday.
- Gather employee feedback about the program to measure its alignment with employee expectations.

- **Build Program Champions**

- Secure sponsorship from regional executives who are enthusiastic about scaling the program at their sites.
  - Leverage your communications team to create simple, yet compelling promotional materials for the new program.

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- Create a “road show” slides deck to share with potential sites.
- Build advocates within the communications team and bring them along the entire launch.
- Encourage team members to share their volunteering stories and successes.
- Establish global networks where new program leaders can consult and collaborate with more experienced leaders.
- **Measure Your Impact**
  - Track both qualitative and quantitative outcomes (retention rates, promotion rates, engagement).
  - Gather employee feedback, success stories, and volunteering anecdotes through voluntary surveys.
- **Share Your Successes**
  - Explore recognition programs that can provide benchmarking and best practices.
  - Promote photos, videos, individual stories, or causes through companywide newsletters or other communication channels.
  - Connect with peer companies to share lessons learned.

## Additional Resources:

- **Webinar:** [Volunteering in a Hybrid World](#)
- **Article:** [Skills-Based Volunteering & Pro Bono Services in 2024: Company Insights & Examples](#)
- **Executive Course:** [Fundamentals of Employee Volunteer Programs](#)
- **Advisory Board:** [Advisory Board for Leadership in Community Involvement](#)
- **Board Report:** [Leadership in Community Involvement Advisory Board Report](#)
- **Center Report:** [2023 Community Involvement Study](#)

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