



HandsOn
NETWORK

GENERATED BY
POINTS OF LIGHT
INSTITUTE

Skills-Based Volunteerism Nonprofit Case Study



PROJECT DIMENSIONS:

Resources:

Individuals working alone or in teams

Engagement Model:

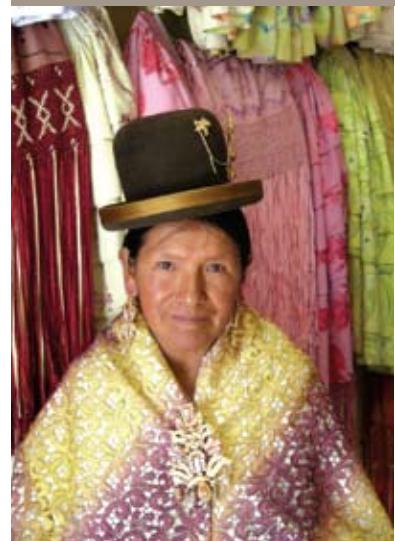
Short and long term

Types of Skills:

Various skills

Geography:

National with international impact



Bankers without Borders®:

Connecting People, Passion, and Skills to Scale Microfinance and Technology-for-Development Solutions

Microfinance institutions globally are working to improve the lives of poor people, mostly women, by offering access to financial services and information. The opportunity to create self-sustaining businesses enables the poor to live with dignity, breaking a generational cycle of poverty. To do this, microfinance institutions provide a high volume of low value loans and other services, expanding outreach to under served and un-served segments of the 3 billion people who continue to live on less than \$2 per day.

Grameen Foundation is a global nonprofit organization with more than 12 years experience providing resources, technical assistance and technology solutions to microfinance institutions. With a mission of enabling the poor – especially the poorest – to create a world without poverty, Grameen Foundation has used microfinance and technology to help more than 45 million poor people in Sub Saharan Africa, Asia, the Arab World, and the Americas improve their lives. Dr. Muhammad Yunus, the founder of Grameen Bank and the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, is a founding member of our board of directors and remains engaged with Grameen Foundation's work.



For more information about skills-based volunteerism, please contact
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The Challenge

Not unlike typical private sector institutions in rapidly developing markets, microfinance institutions face a range of development challenges, including unclear or unsupportive regulatory frameworks, weak infrastructure support, and internal operating processes that grow in complexity. Grameen Foundation itself also has a variety of organizational requirements to support its continued evolution as an innovator in poverty-focused support for the microfinance industry. Therein lay both the challenge and opportunity: the development of a framework that

reduces the cost of consultants and staff to address these needs while leveraging additional technical skills and experience through targeted volunteer interventions and broader corporate support for the microfinance industry.

Throughout its history, at any given time, Grameen Foundation engaged numerous volunteers working in a variety of capacities. From field-level operational work with grassroots partners to pro bono legal counsel or fundraising activities, volunteers participated in key functions that enabled

the host organization to achieve its mission. However, Grameen Foundation lacked a consistent organization-wide framework for volunteer engagement and management, project definition and implementation, and impact analysis and follow-up. This put added pressure on staff and lessened the impact of volunteers' contributions. It also resulted in many missed opportunities where qualified and willing volunteers were not deployed to advance organizational plans and microfinance industry challenges.

Enter Bankers without Borders®

In late 2008, Grameen Foundation launched Bankers without Borders to build the capacity of microfinance institutions to manage and scale their organizations and strengthen access to capital and related services in order to expand their services to the poor; increase volunteerism in the microfinance and technology-for-development industries; and create an efficient operational framework to mobilize, engage, and leverage the resources of private sector organizations and volunteers to support Grameen Foundation in fulfilling its missions.

Bankers without Borders® is a global reserve corps of business professionals and retirees from a variety of industries who are willing

to contribute their time, skills, and experience to support microfinance and technology. The program works with companies, associations, higher education institutions, and individuals to match volunteers' skills with the critical needs of organizations serving poor people around the world.

Since the program's launch, more than 700 professionals from around the world have registered in the program database, and many already have been assigned to U.S.-based, field-based, or virtual projects in areas such as finance, marketing, graphic design, translation, human capital, and business process management. Grameen Foundation has more

than 60 active skills-based volunteer projects for which it is recruiting or to which volunteers are currently assigned.



How It Works

At its core, Bankers without Borders® is a volunteer management framework designed to:

- Identify resource needs of microfinance institutions, relevant industry stakeholders, and Grameen Foundation itself, specifically those needs that can be fulfilled through unpaid volunteer contributions;
- Recruit, screen, orient, and train volunteers;
- Provide a standardized methodology to develop and implement project activities that will have demonstrable results;

- Evaluate the impact of these project activities;
- Quantify volunteer time and financial value of donated services; and
- Provide feedback and ongoing communications to volunteers before, during and after project completion.

Like most volunteer initiatives, Bankers without Borders® has multiple stakeholders with different needs. Volunteers require well-managed, structured projects while also placing great value on training, development,

and networking opportunities. Companies and associations are looking for turnkey volunteer engagements that are well aligned with their strategic objectives, geographical interests, and core competencies. Grameen Foundation staff and microfinance partners are looking for the equivalent of free skilled consultants who are knowledgeable of the industry and accountable for clear deliverables. And, all three stakeholder groups want to ensure that volunteer engagements result in measurable results and social impact.

The Process

To meet these expectations, Bankers without Borders® has adopted a strategic approach and process that places a strong emphasis on project development, volunteer training, and project evaluation.

Project Development

The Bankers without Borders® team provides training and support to Grameen Foundation staff and microfinance partners who develop detailed project descriptions and scopes of work akin to those used for consultancies. This investment in planning improves recruitment; screens out volunteers who may not have the skills or commitment required for the project; and lays solid groundwork for project training and management.

Orientation & Training

In order to ensure that skilled volunteers gain industry knowledge and understand the big picture, Grameen Foundation requires all volunteers to participate in an introductory session on microfinance and an orientation to Grameen Foundation's mission, structure, and strategic priorities. Volunteers also receive project-specific training from their project managers. In the coming year, Bankers without Borders® plans to launch an online

webinar series for all volunteers that will feature guest lecturers and more in-depth presentations on discrete topics of interest in the microfinance and technology-for-development sectors. Not only will this keep the reserve corps engaged when not volunteering, it also ensures that corps members are exposed to the latest research, trends, and hot topics, which for many individuals is the reason they want to volunteer – they want to learn more about social innovations such as micro-savings, micro-franchises, and mobile phone banking.

Project Evaluation

Quantifying the value of volunteers is a key component of project evaluation. Bankers without Borders® measures volunteer impact using a series of indicators including the value of in-kind services donated, the completion of all volunteer deliverables, volunteer and project manager satisfaction, and longer-term tracking of the cost-savings and economic value of volunteer projects. Bankers without Borders® tracks the hours and value of labor donated on a per project basis. As part of the application process, volunteers provide proof of their hourly rate or salary equivalent.

Once assigned to a project, volunteers are responsible for documenting their volunteer hours through an online volunteer management system. At the conclusion of each project, all stakeholders are advised of the value of the in-kind services donated. This helps to change mindsets regarding the value of volunteers. At the completion of the project, volunteers typically present their findings to staff and other stakeholders through written reports and oral presentations – this provides recognition to the volunteer while also increasing accountability for each agreed-upon deliverable. Through exit evaluations with both the volunteer and project manager, Bankers without Borders® is able to gain insights on how to improve the process and stakeholder support for the future. Lastly, Grameen Foundation is committed to measuring the social and financial impact of its work, but this often occurs over time horizons much longer than the volunteer's engagement. However, by using a logic model approach – such as the sample below – volunteers and other stakeholders can see upfront the intended outcomes of the project.

Highlighted Projects

A Corporate Alliance with JPMorgan

JPMorgan is the inaugural sponsor of Bankers without Borders®. In addition to sponsoring the program, JPMorgan actively promotes Bankers without Borders® volunteer opportunities to its employees and provides up to two weeks of paid leave and covers travel expenses for those employees selected for a specific project. In January 2009, JPMorgan launched the initiative with employees by hosting workshops with Bankers without Borders staff and featuring Grameen Bank's Dr. Yunus and Grameen Foundation CEO Alex Counts as part of its microfinance lecture series. To date, there has been a significant response from employees, who

have contributed their expertise on volunteer projects focused on foreign currency risk analysis, point-of-sales technology devices, and graphic design.

A great illustration of the compatibility of JPMorgan's expertise and Grameen Foundation's needs can be found in a Hedging Project recently completed by a team of London-based Investment Bank employees. Grameen Foundation has about \$7 million in direct loans outstanding to its microfinance partners. Because Grameen Foundation takes on all the currency risk related to these loans, as the dollar appreciated in early 2009, Grameen Foundation

experienced larger than anticipated currency losses and needed to explore how to better protect itself against future losses. This was especially pertinent in Indonesia where Grameen Foundation anticipated disbursing millions of dollars in loans over the next two years.

Enter JPMorgan employees Neil Clift, Stefano Diamantini, and Patrice Wan Hok Chee (based in London), and Debarghya Mukhopadhyay (based in Mumbai) who collectively brought experience in hedging, currencies, foreign exchange, swaps, and futures. Together, working with staff from Grameen's Capital Markets Advisory Center, the team

Highlighted Projects, con't

analyzed the current situation and developed recommendations for the most cost effective way to remove currency risk from the loan portfolio. Once implemented, these recommendations will help Grameen Foundation ensure it is maximizing the loan funds available to its microfinance partners around the world.

Shanghai Volunteers from Banking Sector Train and Mentor Chinese MFIs

In late 2008, Grameen Foundation, in conjunction with PlaNet Finance, invited China's top microfinance institutions (MFIs) to participate in the country's first Investment Readiness training geared specifically to MFIs. More than 18 of the country's best MFIs convened in Shanghai and Beijing to participate in training sessions that specifically focused on how to better engage with international investors and financiers.

A group of Shanghai-based volunteers were instrumental in not only planning the logistics for the training, but also acting as trainers, facilitators, and mentors to the MFI participants, who have traditionally been underexposed to the international investment standards and requirements that commercial and social investors outside of China are seeking. The Investment Readiness workshop sought to close this gap by bringing in national and international finance, microfinance, and legal experts to lead hands-on sessions and discussions.

The training was built around a comprehensive hands-on process

that gave the MFIs a real-world perspective of the investment and funding processes outside of China.

A unique piece of the training was the integration of professional finance experts from the Shanghai community who volunteered their weekend time to act as business mentors to each MFI. These volunteers worked with an assigned MFI to help fine tune its new business plan and create an investment pitch that would appeal to international investors. Taking their new investment pitches, each MFI presented to a volunteer judging panel of senior finance executives to simulate a real-life investment pitch environment, with tough questions and constructive feedback on how the MFIs could best attract more funding for its organizations.

Having finance professionals mentor the MFIs was an enriching and new experience for many of the MFIs who participated. The sentiments expressed from the Association for Rural Development of Tong Wei was representative

of other MFI participants: "This was our group's first exposure to finance professionals who are not from microfinance. The input we received helps us think differently about how others may look at our organization. What has been especially helpful is the specific guidance we have received today about the real-world demands and expectations for finance."

Likewise, many of the mentors and judges found their volunteer hours productive and the experience helped expose them further to how microfinance is reaching the poor in China. Steve Wang, a Change Management executive from Bank of America, who mentored ARDPAS, GF's partner in Sichuan province, shared the following reflection: "Volunteering with Grameen Foundation was definitely time well spent. Not only did we get to help the local MFI improve their business plan and presentation, we also had the opportunity to learn more about the China market and some of the business opportunities that exist."



For more information:

- For additional information on becoming a Bankers without Borders® volunteer, please visit our website at www.grameenfoundation.org/get_involved/volunteer_initiatives.
- For more information about how your company or organization can partner with Bankers without Borders®, please contact: BwB@grameenFoundation.org or call (202) 628-3560 ext.139.
- To explore other ways to support Grameen Foundation's fight to alleviate poverty, please visit www.grameenfoundation.org/get_involved and or make a financial donation at www.StopPovertyNow.org.