Executive Summary

– CHF’s VIP program is a powerful tool for both participant companies and individuals that provides a positive return on the investment of time and resources.
– Volunteer programs increase intercultural competence, boost employee morale and renew commitment to the company upon return.
– VIP volunteers contribute to CHF programs but also enhance their own lives and careers. Experiences gained through the challenges of the program provide volunteers and companies with fresh perspectives and highly developed problem-solving skills.
– VIPs work closely with local staff, gaining a deeper understanding of global communities, people management and meeting business challenges in unfamiliar environments.
– Each volunteer creates a lasting impact on the program in which they work, bringing fresh ideas and enthusiasm in addition to their experience.
– VIPs come from a variety of backgrounds and have at least five years experience in their fields.
– VIP volunteers have contributed more than 3,000 days to CHF projects in 28 countries around the world.

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The vice president of a U.S. cooperative bank uses his skills in housing finance to advise city and banking officials in Poland on new public-private lending models for a condominium project. In Mongolia, a senior consultant for a global consulting firm helps local business advisors devise strategies to grow their clients’ businesses. An epidemiologist with internet skills helps build a database to better manage project information and trains local partners in a program to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS in Kenya.

These are actual projects undertaken by volunteers from CHF International’s Visiting International Professionals (VIP™) program. Since the program started in 1998, VIP volunteers have contributed more than 3,000 days to CHF projects in 28 countries around the world, trading high-level skills for a deeper understanding of global communities and hands-on experience solving problems in some of the world’s most challenging environments. This is the kind of exchange that creates lasting impact and helps to ensure the sustainability of investment by aligning social and private-sector interests.

Why Volunteer?

Since 1952, CHF has worked in over 100 countries around the world, bringing together individuals, organizations and the resources necessary to ensure steady, sustainable change. CHF’s projects include local communities and the local private sector in every step of development, resulting in improved quality of life, greater stability, and increased prosperity.

VIP volunteers are an increasingly important component of CHF projects. Past and current VIPs number over 100, and include a former congresswoman, commercial bank officers, private-sector corporate executives, academic researchers, and graduate students. They have worked abroad and in the United States on a wide range of assignments which usually last from two to 12 weeks. Each VIP volunteer, a technically skilled professional with at least five years experience, is a highly valued contributor to CHF projects worldwide, bringing fresh ideas and enthusiasm in addition to their knowledge and skills.

With skills ranging from information technology to construction, public health to microfinance, VIP volunteers offer their time and expertise to benefit CHF programs and to enhance their own lives and careers. This is serious, challenging work that provides a positive return on the investment of time and resources, both to individuals and to their employers.

Why Send Volunteers?

An estimated 40 percent of major corporations have active programs or support volunteer efforts around the world. Recent research has shown that supporting volunteer programs can increase a company’s intercultural competence and improve their understanding of emerging markets as well as boost its reputation at home and abroad. These programs improve employee morale and commitment to the company and give corporate volunteers hands-on experience solving problems in challenging contexts that teach lessons applicable to more familiar business environments upon return to the workplace.

As a platform for lasting social and business impact worldwide, CHF’s VIP program serves as a powerful resource for companies investing in volunteering. The VIP program can be leveraged into existing volunteer programs through sponsorship of an employee, covering the costs of participation or through the use of matching funds. Other ways of partnering with CHF’s VIP program might include donations to specific programs or areas of interest.
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Enhances lives, careers. VIP program can work hands-on, problem solving skills. It teaches valuable, emerging markets and businesses, existing volunteer contributor to CHF projects worldwide, bringing fresh ideas and enthusiasm in addition to their knowledge and skills.

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Support volunteer commitments improve employee morale and commitment as well as boost its reputation at home and abroad. These partnerships improve their understanding of emerging markets as well as boost its reputation at home and abroad. These partnerships improve their understanding of emerging markets.

In the Republic of Georgia, where the unemployment rate is extremely high, creating sellable handicrafts from regional materials such as wool and clay can offer valuable economic opportunities. In partnership with local NGOs, CHF International is providing business training to handicraft producers so they can generate real income.

With 20 years experience running her own design and manufacturing company, Cindy Owings knows the difficulties faced by artisans trying to develop their products and market. As a VIP volunteer in Georgia, in 2006 Owings led workshops and trained local artisans in techniques for dyeing raw wool, felting and yarn spinning, followed by business and market development.

In 2005, CHF International began forming a development finance institution (DFI) in Romania, to help bolster the country’s economy in preparation for entry into the European Union. A major objective was to review the outlook for micro, small and medium enterprises in Romania and lenders to these enterprises.

With 15 years in the production and economic divisions of Mobil Corporation, VIP volunteer Walter R. Arnheim offered his business acumen and corporate governance expertise to participating enterprises in Romania. During his time there, Arnheim helped create a Corporate Risk Management Policy intended to later guide the new DFI, and advised CHF in-country staff on the completion of the DFI business plan.

In Mongolia she trained entrepreneurs and filed teeth to give them business training, you know you are going to have to stretch yourself to come up with creative, cross-cultural solutions."

"I was impressed with the quality and dedication of the CHF staff in Romania ... we all worked together in a roll-up-the-sleves environment to get the job done. I returned home with a sense of satisfaction of having contributed to a project that will benefit thousands of Romanians."

"The VIP program taught me how to approach challenges from different angles than ever before and to be able to communicate with anyone. My confidence and people management skills increased dramatically."

"Sharing my professional textile experience was valuable to me as well as for those who participated... I had to think on my feet, meaning I had to be inventive specific to the needs of each group I worked with."

"I loved my VIP work with CHF — it was a great hands-on experience for learning about development and I feel like I helped them to do important work... they worked hard to make sure I got a lot out of it and that they were putting my skills to good use."

WALTER R. ARNHEIM : Development Finance Institution, Romania

ALEXANDRIA WISE : Entrepreneur & Business Training , Sudan and Mongolia

CINDY OWINGS : Product & Market Development, Georgia

TOBY WHITNEY: Software Development Unit, Serbia
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Founded in 1952, CHF International serves more than 20 million people each year, empowering them to improve their lives and livelihoods for a better future.

CHF currently has programs in more than 25 countries and territories around the world, across Asia, Africa, Latin America & the Caribbean, Europe & the Caucasus, and the Middle East.

Our mission is to be a catalyst for long-lasting positive change in low- and moderate-income communities around the world, helping them improve their social, economic and environmental conditions. Our reputation is built on the strong relationships we have with the communities we serve – engaging and involving them throughout the development process through a unique methodology that keeps control and ownership in their hands.