



the road ahead >>

TRENDS IN
**CORPORATE
SOCIAL
IMPACT**

GLOBAL PRO BONO
STATE OF THE PRACTICE
REPORT 2021



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THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

THE WORLD IS FACING AN EXISTENTIAL CRISIS. With the vaccine roll-out demonstrating that an end to the pandemic may finally be in sight, the world will be left to address the devastating aftermath, much of which disproportionately impacts the most underserved communities. Simultaneously, we are starting to drastically feel the effects of climate change due to unsustainable ways of living and doing business, including rising sea levels, food shortages, severe weather, forest fires, and the potential for a rise in [new pandemics](#). If anything, COVID-19 has been a cruel demonstration of the intricate linkages between the world's most pressing problems. The issues we face—including racism, climate change, and economic inequality—are systemic in nature and can no longer be ignored nor dismantled as independent issues.

Solving systemic challenges calls for collaboration between people from different countries, races, ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic levels, political parties, and sectors. Collaboration, however, is difficult when there is widespread mistrust of societal institutions and global leaders.

According to the [2021 Edelman Trust Barometer](#), COVID-19 “accelerated the erosion of trust around the world.” Despite this, corporations are now viewed as the most trusted institution and are seen as more ethical and competent compared to NGOs, the government, and the media. Employer CEOs are trusted across both sides of the aisle in the United States, one of the many countries facing a moment of extreme political polarization. Now more than ever before, business leaders carry a responsibility to champion change, build brand trust, and address society’s problems.

In addition, in his [annual Letter to CEOs](#), Larry Fink, CEO of Blackrock, the world's largest asset manager, reiterated the importance of companies articulating their purpose and establishing trust with stakeholders, including employees, customers, communities, and shareholders.

“The more your company can show its purpose in delivering value to its customers, its employees, and its communities, the better able you will be to compete and deliver long-term, durable profits for shareholders.”

PYXERA Global is at the forefront of addressing these systemic challenges by convening leaders and experts across all sectors and is proud to share the 9th Global Pro Bono State of the Practice Report, sponsored by SAP. This report is a tool for corporate changemakers engaged in CSR, Sustainability, DE&I, Talent Development, and Employee Engagement across the world who are seeking out ways to address rising community needs to meet expectations from society and employees.

Global Pro Bono is the most effective tool for companies to alleviate societal problems while engaging their talent—all the while building trust in their brands.

With a majority traditionally conducted in-person, Global Pro Bono programs have faced unparalleled challenges as they have shifted to virtual models in response to COVID-19. Eighty-one percent of corporate respondents surveyed reported that their Global Pro Bono programs have been impacted by COVID-19, with roughly half of companies reporting major setbacks, including canceled programming, postponements, and reductions in funding. Despite these challenges, it has also been a transformative year for the practice. The events of 2020 have brought about new innovations—giving us insight into how Global Pro Bono programs can be more impactful now and in the future.

“People have always turned to our team during times of crisis—not only for crisis response, but also for inspiration, resilience, and reinforcing commitment to our values (and culture).”

—SOCIAL IMPACT MANAGER

Q+A

What is Global Pro Bono?

Global Pro Bono programs are corporate-sponsored initiatives aligned to a company's broader strategy.

Projects are time-bound and deliverable-based.

Participating employees leverage their professional skills to assist social mission-driven host organizations such as nonprofits, social enterprises, or government entities.

What are some other terms for Global Pro Bono?

- skills-based volunteering
- pro bono
- employee and community engagement
- talent development, *and more*

Which departments help organize these programs?

- CSR
- sustainability
- individual business units, *and more*
- human resources
- social impact

Where can programs take place?

Anywhere in the world!

What are the different types of program models?

- virtual
- in-person
- hybrid of virtual and in-person
- challenge models, *and more*

GLOBAL PRO BONO

FIVE TRENDS TO WATCH

1

Corporations are leveraging their employees as an agile resource to take action on urgent social challenges, such as structural racism and COVID-19.

2

Adaptive partnerships enable Global Pro Bono programs to successfully navigate crises, such as the upheaval of the global pandemic.

3

As employees' role in social impact evolves, community impact is increasingly the top reason that corporations are engaging in Global Pro Bono.

4

Sustainability and CSR leaders' responsibility has increased—reflecting society's growing demand for corporations to address environment, social, and governance (ESG) issues.

5

Virtual Global Pro Bono is here to stay—but in-person Global Pro Bono has proven indispensable.

Click on a number to navigate through each corresponding trend!

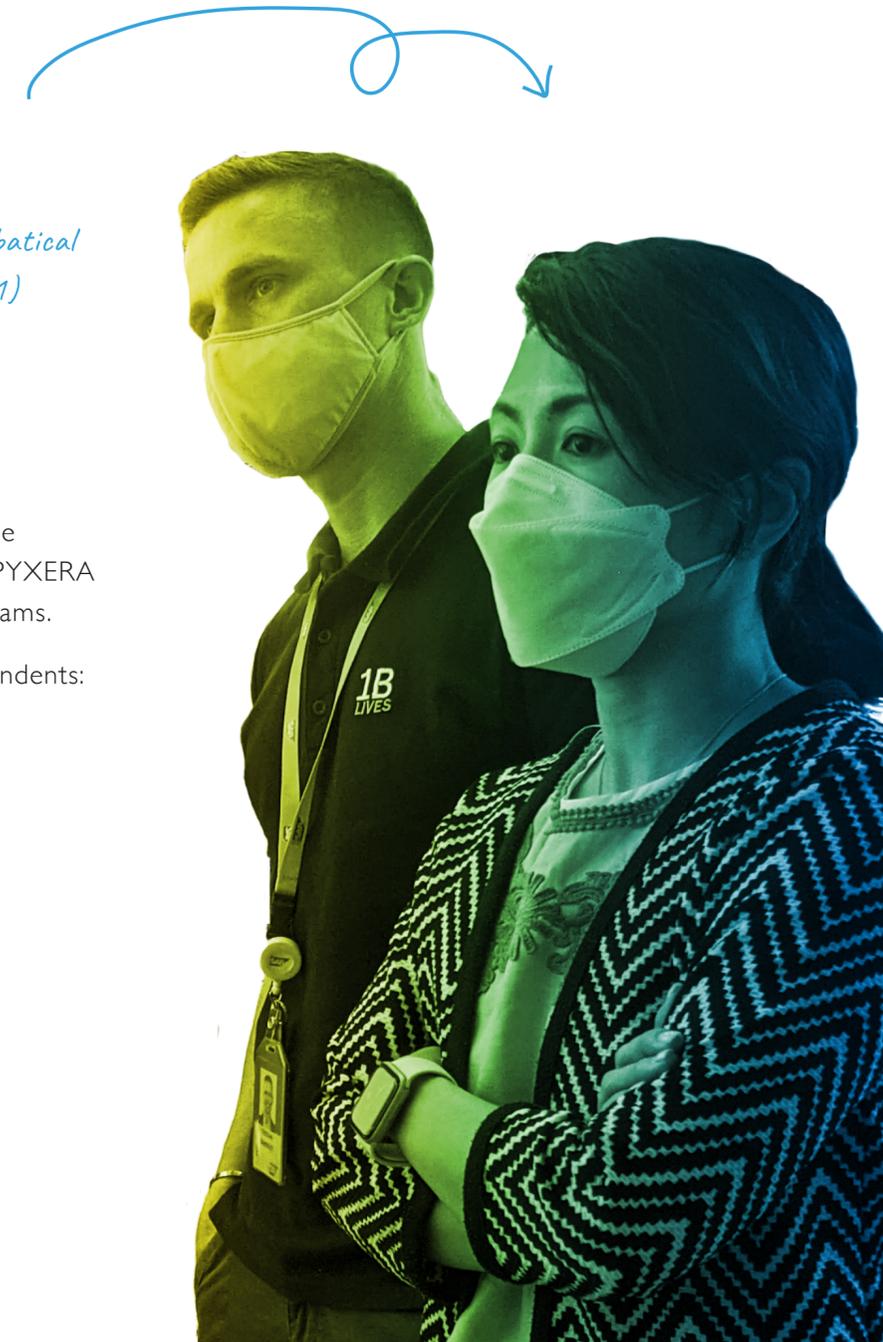
STATE OF THE PRACTICE REPORT

SURVEY OVERVIEW

The 9th Global Pro Bono State of the Practice report highlights trends and approaches based on 29 companies that completed the 9th biennial survey from October to November 2020. Survey responses cover Global Pro Bono programs implemented in 2020.

The production of this report was made possible by SAP, a global leader in business application software. Founded in partnership with PYXERA Global, SAP's flagship pro bono program, the [SAP Social Sabbatical](#) has offered pro bono business consulting services since 2012 to social-mission driven organizations in an effort to live by its purpose of "helping the world run better and improving people's lives." Over that period, SAP has found that the engagement of its top talent in this skills-based service activity has provided creative outlets for employees to explore new ways of ensuring customer success, leading to positive business benefits. SAP is a leader in not only creating a corporate culture that gives back to the communities in which its employees live and work but also growing the field of Global Pro Bono by encouraging other companies to engage their employees in tackling global social issues.

Two SAP employees work with their host organization, Engineering Good, during a scoping workshop for the SAP Social Sabbatical for Local Engagement in Singapore. (2021)



Methodological Note

PYXERA Global launched the Global Pro Bono State of the Practice Survey, formerly called the International Corporate Volunteerism Benchmarking Survey, in 2010. The analysis is based on PYXERA Global's years of experience in designing, implementing, and evaluating Global Pro Bono programs.

Longitudinal comparisons of data presented in this report stem from two separate sets of respondents:

- **Matched Set Data (2013-2020 trends):** Analysis of 2013-2020 trends compares nine companies that have responded to each of the 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020 Global Pro Bono State of the Practice surveys.
- **Pre- and post-COVID Analysis:** In addition, PYXERA Global assessed data across 19 corporate respondents (including all nine companies who responded to all surveys from 2013) who responded to both the 2018 and 2020 Global Pro Bono State of the Practice surveys in order to capture the effects of COVID-19 on Global Pro Bono programming.

To maintain the confidentiality of respondents, all data and analyses have been anonymized.

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Survey Respondent Profile



COMPANIES

29 companies

45% of respondents among the Fortune Global 500



TOP REGIONS OF OPERATION

- North America
- South & Central America
- Asia & Australia
- Europe



STAFF SIZE

450 – 780,000 employees



TOP SECTORS

- Healthcare/Pharmaceuticals
- Services
- IT

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTICIPATING COMPANIES*



*Edelman and MetLife not depicted



Corporations are leveraging their employees as an agile resource to take action on urgent social challenges, such as structural racism and COVID-19.

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In 2020, the world was ravaged by a series of moments of reckoning. Humanity's [destruction of our natural capital](#) has contributed to the spread of new and deadly pathogens, and our historically unjust systems barring Black individuals from the most necessary liberties has led us to where we find ourselves now—a world not necessarily broken, but unfinished. Yet, as we continue to repair our most damaged parts, we are witness to the role of the private sector in responding to the most pressing needs of today. Companies have stepped up to respond to the needs of their stakeholders by leveraging their most valuable asset: their employees.



GLOBAL PRO BONO & RACIAL JUSTICE

As society at large becomes more aware of racism and the systems perpetuating it, companies too must respond to these long-standing issues. Survey results indicate that racial justice will mold the Global Pro Bono practice, changing the field of community and employee engagement for years to come. Data shows that companies are increasingly engaging their employees in their commitments to racial justice, but there are still significant opportunities for corporations to serve as an example for others.



Nearly 1 in 4 companies indicated **anti-racism** and **racial justice** as one of their Global Pro Bono's program's **top social impact priorities** over the next two years.



1 in 6 companies that implemented **new Global Pro Bono programming** in 2020 had a **focus on racial justice**.

“We really increased our focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) efforts due to COVID and the murder of George Floyd. This will mainly show up in the social mission organizations we work with...”

—COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

“In tandem with the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement and protests against police brutality, there is an urgency and obligation for companies to join conversations in their communities, take a public stance, and follow it up with action.”

—CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MANAGER

As companies make commitments to address racial inequity, employee engagement managers, DE&I directors, sustainability officers, and other CSR leaders are being asked to step up. One respondent who manages employee volunteering explained, *“Approximately 80% of my time is now focused on supporting the rollout of a new global Inclusion & Diversity development program.”*



MOVING FROM RHETORIC TO ACTION: TACKLING RACISM THROUGH GLOBAL PRO BONO

SAP Corporate Highlight

The events of 2020, including the racism-driven murders of Black citizens across the United States, prompted SAP to speak up and [commit to concrete steps](#) toward social justice and equality. A key component of the commitment is to leverage SAP's decade of experience implementing pro bono expertise to provide support to Black-owned businesses and social enterprises.

Recognizing the [disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black businesses](#) and the historical inequalities facing Black business owners, SAP created the [Pro Bono for Economic Equity program](#) in partnership with PYXERA Global. The program was designed in collaboration with leaders across SAP's CSR department, Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) team, and Black employee network. In the first half of 2021, Pro Bono for Economic Equity will work with 16 influential Black-owned businesses across Chicago, New York City, Atlanta, and Philadelphia. SAP employees will leverage their professional skills in support of these businesses and social enterprises. SAP employees will prepare for their assignment by attending a series of virtual workshops that will enable them to better understand systemic racism, challenges Black-owned businesses face, and how to be an ally.

Upon their completion of the program, participants will have the opportunity to serve as D&I Ambassadors within the company, working to consistently advance the cause of social justice in SAP operations, as well as commit to a concrete action that focuses on either fostering an inclusive workplace or making an impact in their local communities. The program is set to be further expanded later this year, both within the United States but also internationally.

Companies' increasing focus of Global Pro Bono programming on dismantling racist systems will ensure their employees' leadership skills remain relevant in the changing times.

While the topic of racial justice has only begun to rise to the surface in the sphere of Global Pro Bono, PYXERA Global anticipates and encourages continued and fast-paced growth in the coming years for many reasons. Global Pro Bono—when harnessed in new and innovative ways—has the power to be a transformational tool that can change the way a company conducts business and leads in the space of social impact programming.

Global Pro Bono programs targeting racial justice foster nuanced and inclusive leadership skills within employees, including empathy, the ability to seek out diverse or overlooked perspectives, cognizance of bias, intercultural competence, and more. Employees that harness these skills will be those most successful, innovative, and competent in our changing world. Moreover, employees that engage in racial justice-focused Global Pro Bono programming can bring back key insights to the company on how it can deepen its role in dismantling structural racism.

For more information on how other companies have moved from commitment to action with regards to racial justice, please refer to PYXERA Global's webinar series, [Rhetoric to Action](#).

Three Ways to Engage Employees in Anti-Racist Programming

Proactively engage employee resource groups (ERGs)

in creating programs that are intended to partner with communities of color. ERGs may have existing relationships with and valuable insight into communities and the challenges they face. This insight can be highly illuminating to construct meaningful Global Pro Bono programming.

Invest in Black-owned businesses

by providing access to human capital. Employees can serve as pro bono consultants while also gathering insights from the community and strengthening their leadership skills. Corporations must be diligent in understanding the broken system that causes many Black-owned businesses to fail and then doing their part to address it.

Invest in historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs)

by partnering with faculty to understand how your company's expertise and skills can complement the curriculum and classroom learning, in addition to providing philanthropic support. Not only will college students be empowered to apply theory to practice, but your company will gain insight into how to help bridge the skills gap and begin to understand the realities and impact of unjust systems on education while enhancing the diverse talent pipeline.

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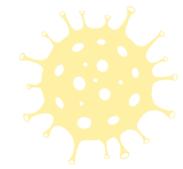
GLOBAL PRO BONO & THE REPERCUSSIONS OF COVID-19

Corporate volunteering programs have served as a powerful mechanism in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions. Despite starting 2020 with significant disruptions to employee engagement programs, companies have leveraged Global Pro Bono as an adaptable tool for resilience and crisis response. According to survey data, 23 percent of corporate respondents reported canceled programming, 35 percent reported postponements, and 13 percent reported a reduction in funding. **However, despite the obstacles the pandemic posed, a majority of corporations took action against the COVID-19 crisis and its effects on the economy.**

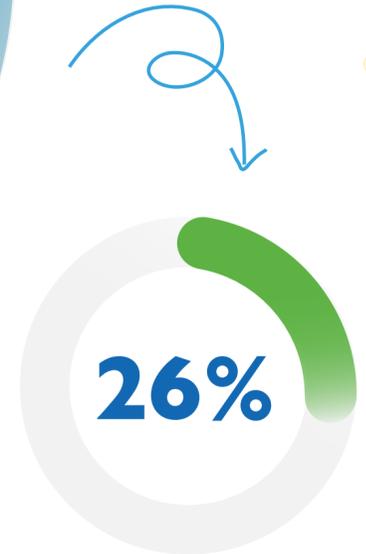
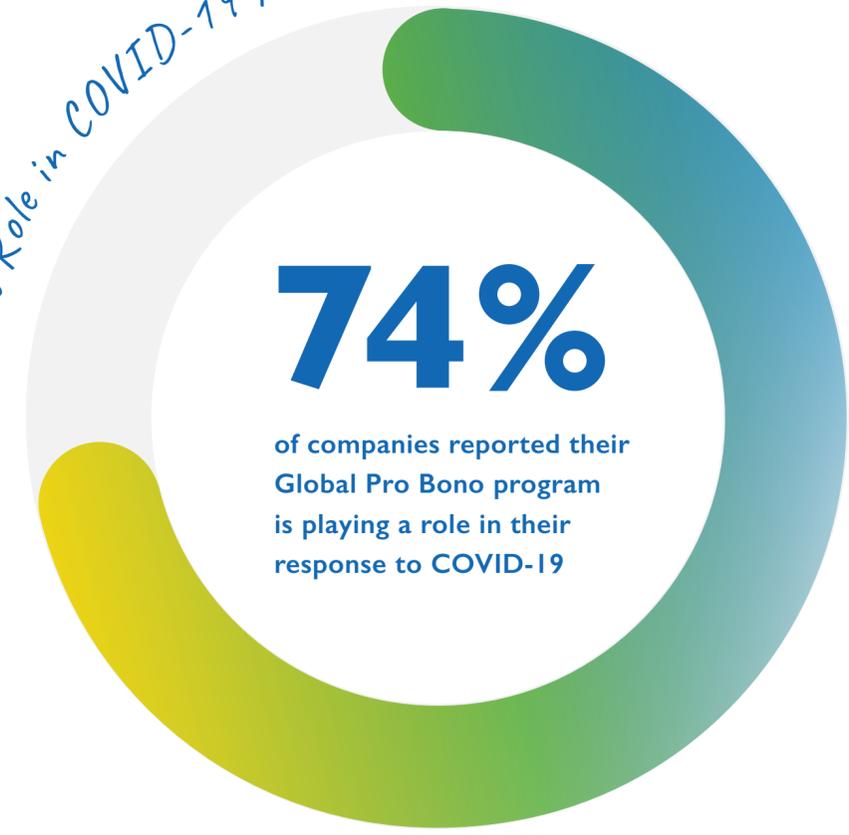
Corporate Role in Global Economic Recovery



NOTE: Companies could select multiple response options; not all options are displayed



Corporate Role in COVID-19 Response



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GLOBAL PRO BONO & THE REPERCUSSIONS OF COVID-19

PYXERA Global believes in the triple impact of Global Pro Bono, as it works to benefit the company, its employees, and the communities in which host organizations are located. This year, however, has been a glaring manifestation of the power of Global Pro Bono in transcending the traditional mantra of triple impact. Global Pro Bono served as the rapid response mechanism of companies to address the world's most pressing and immediate problems. **In fact, according to one respondent, the biggest goal of their Global Pro Bono program is not to support the recovery of the economy, “but to change how the economy recovers and how systems are put in place.”**



“We did not want to pause programming and neither did Medtronic employees. They were requesting opportunities to help with the COVID-19 pandemic, and we were thrilled to provide high-impact projects in response... We ramped up operations and worked with PYXERA Global to create a rapid COVID-19 Response.”

— LARA FEDOROV, PORTFOLIO MANAGER, MEDTRONIC FOUNDATION

How to Quickly Pivot Your Program to Address Urgent Challenges

1

Gain buy-in from leadership

on why it is strategic to respond to the changing needs of today. Consider speaking to the fact that pivoting Global Pro Bono programming to address pressing and immediate global challenges can:

- Demonstrate commitment to communities and build brand trust
- Enable employees to learn new, relevant skills and lead in a fast-changing society
- Gain real-time insights into communities and issue areas important to your business
- Maintain brand relevance and competitive advantage

2

Stay open and flexible to new partnerships

(e.g., multi-company Global Pro Bono programs like PYXERA Global's [Reimagine Series](#)), while also taking advantage of the strengths of existing partnerships (e.g., long-term relationships with existing grantees or implementing partners)

2

3

Harness your employees' interests

Employees' interest and engagement are a main driver for successful Global Pro Bono programming.

3

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One of Global Pro Bono's primary strengths lies within its ability to adapt to the evolving needs of the time—whether that is a pandemic, an economic slump, or a racial justice movement.

Medtronic Foundation Corporate Highlight

Recognizing the urgent needs in the healthcare space, the Medtronic Foundation, which partners to improve lives of underserved populations, ramped up operations and developed a new virtual Global Pro Bono (GPB) program to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The Medtronic Foundation created a Train the Trainers model that the American Heart Association and Project HOPE piloted. Using this model, Medtronic employees trained on a set of modules that raised awareness about COVID-19 and signs of stroke and heart attack. Then, the employees directly trained healthcare professionals and community members served by the nonprofits. This virtual model takes a learn, practice, and apply approach. Employees participate in a formal training at the onset and immediately apply the learnings in a real-world setting—accelerating learning and community impact. The Medtronic Foundation recognized and harnessed employee interest and desire to engage, as well as leveraged strategic partnerships to deliver relevant programming to the pandemic.

ENABLING GLOBAL PRO BONO THROUGH ADAPTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Employees are Now Influential Partners in Global Pro Bono Programming

In the face of program cancellations and pauses in 2020, data reveals that employees have become an important partner in ensuring the continuation and growth of Global Pro Bono. Employee interest and adaptability is a leading reason for companies' success in the transition to virtual Global Pro Bono. According to one employee volunteering manager, "From what we've seen, there's increasing appetite for people/employees to get involved and give back given the events of 2020." While the number of companies investing in Global Pro Bono to provide their employees with opportunities to harness their skills for social impact has decreased, employees are now viewed more as partners. In other words, employees have an influential stake in program success and momentum and are not considered "customers" of the program as they were previously.



"We've seen a 108% increase in volunteer engagement despite COVID-19."

—CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY MANAGER

50%

Fifty percent of respondents cited **employee interest** as one of the most significant factors that has helped or is helping to return their Global Pro Bono programs to pre-COVID volume*

*(pre-COVID volume refers to the number of Global Pro Bono projects, participants, or host organizations supported prior to COVID-19).

Implementing Partners Have Been Key in Pivoting Global Pro Bono Programming

Additionally, a strong relationship with an implementing partner has been a key factor in maintaining and growing Global Pro Bono operations during the pandemic. Approximately one in three respondents cited that their strong relationship with their implementing partner has been a significant factor in their ability to move fast and identify vetted social organizations, which has helped or is helping to return their Global Pro Bono programming to pre-COVID volume.

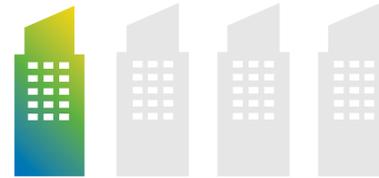
"Our partnership with PYXERA Global has been a key element in transitioning our in-person program to a virtual model. They were ready to implement a rapid response to COVID-19 and remained agile and innovative throughout the process."

—SKILLS-BASED VOLUNTEERING MANAGER

ENABLING GLOBAL PRO BONO THROUGH ADAPTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Relationships with Host Organizations are Being Tested

Companies rely on strong relationships with host organization partners (e.g., nonprofits, social enterprises, etc.) for successful Global Pro Bono programming, and virtual programming is putting these relationships to the test. Companies foresee challenges in continuing to engage with host organizations in a virtual setting and are specifically concerned about the virtual process of identifying and building relationships with viable host organizations. As an increasing number of companies move from hands-on to virtual pro bono consulting, companies are also concerned about the potential saturation of the Global Pro Bono “market.”



Nearly 1 in 4 companies believe their top challenge with their Global Pro Bono practice in the future is nonprofit partnerships.

While previously the JPMorgan Chase Service Corps was predominantly conducted in-person, this year the team quickly pivoted to 100 percent virtual engagements. In 2020, 88 employees supported 17 mission-based organizations working to advance local economic recovery.



How to Address Virtual Challenges with Host Organizations

1 How do you scope potential nonprofit organizations without face-to-face interactions?

Consider refining scoping criteria to include pertinent indicators important for your company’s Global Pro Bono program. For example, if an organization’s technical capacity to virtually host a team of pro bono consultants is a priority selection criterion, consider conducting scoping meetings using video calls to check bandwidth capabilities.

2 How do you address the concern of nonprofit technical ability to host a virtual project?

To ensure organizations can work virtually, consider working only with those that have a strong network connection and level of tech-savviness, including familiarity with collaboration platforms and other indicators. Additionally, consider hosting an orientation session for selected organizations to discuss best practices for hosting a virtual Global Pro Bono team.

3 How might we avoid saturation of the social sector as more companies move towards virtual skills-based volunteering?

Expand to other types of organizations. Many companies currently target nonprofits, but there is also a need for pro bono support among social enterprises, entrepreneurs, small to medium-sized enterprises, government agencies, universities, community health centers, and more.

JPMorgan Chase Corporate Highlight

JPMorgan Chase cultivates deep partnerships to support the work of mission-based organizations across the globe, including through the Service Corps, their flagship Pro Bono program that began in 2013. The Service Corps projects bolster the firm’s commitment to advance an inclusive economy through supporting Jobs and Skills, Small Business Expansion, Neighborhood Revitalization, and Financial Health development with the full force of the firm. The organizations invited to participate in Service Corps are existing grantees, and regional program managers, who work hand-in-hand with the local partners, spot potential projects where a Service Corps team might be able to add value, remove barriers, and accelerate the organization’s mission. These trusted, multi-faceted relationships allowed JPMorgan Chase to work quickly and closely with its partners to transition to full virtual engagements this year, as colleagues and partners across the globe worked under new and evolving conditions under COVID.

3

As employees' role in social impact evolves, community impact is increasingly the top reason that corporations are engaging in Global Pro Bono.

1

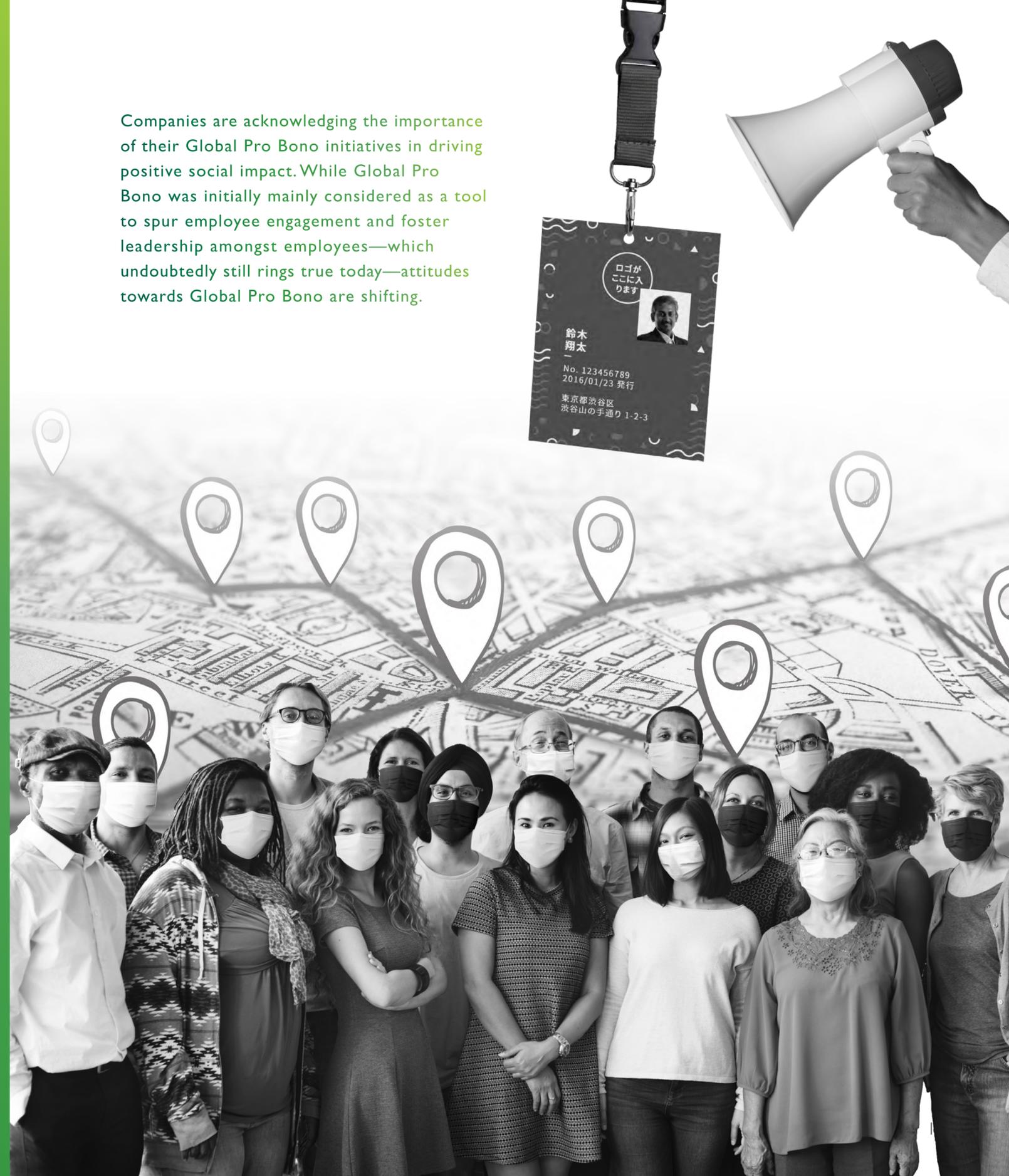
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Companies are acknowledging the importance of their Global Pro Bono initiatives in driving positive social impact. While Global Pro Bono was initially mainly considered as a tool to spur employee engagement and foster leadership amongst employees—which undoubtedly still rings true today—attitudes towards Global Pro Bono are shifting.



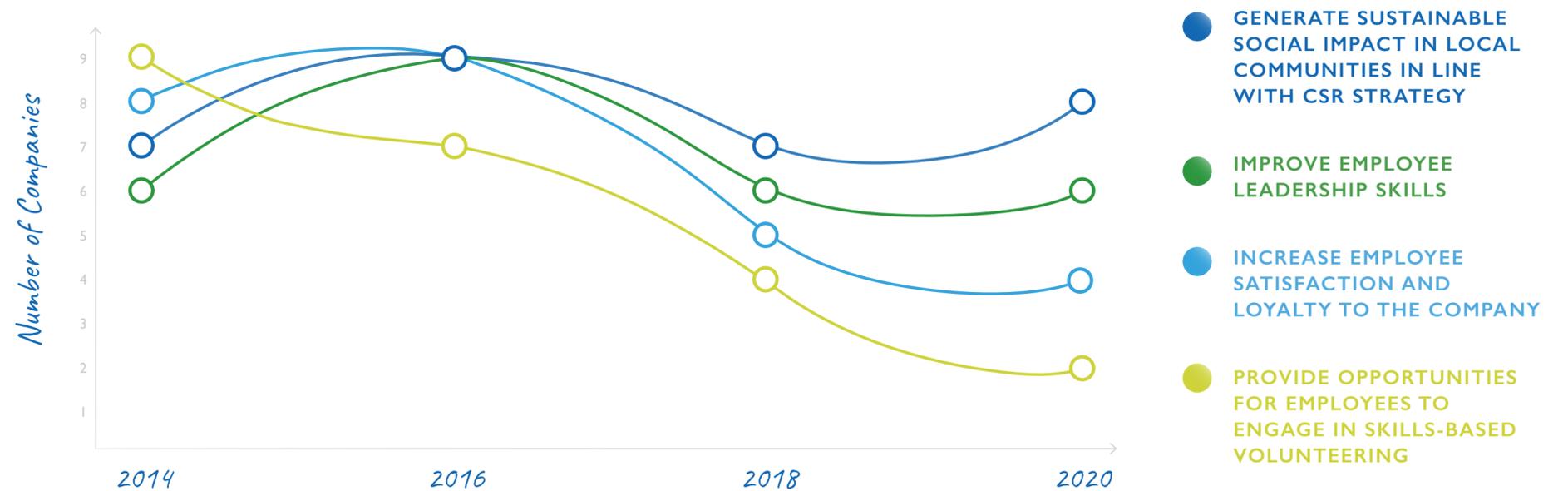
GLOBAL PRO BONO'S SHIFT TOWARDS COMMUNITY-FOCUSED SOCIAL IMPACT

Companies are becoming more connected to and invested in their communities. As displayed in the figure on the right, generating sustainable social impact in local communities has consistently been a top reason companies invest in Global Pro Bono for the past several years. Survey data indicates that now more than ever, community development is a key component of Global Pro Bono programming.

“Our pro bono teams provide crucial opportunities for us as a company to engage in strategic and meaningful ways with the community. The COVID-19 crisis has elevated much of that work.”

— SOCIAL IMPACT MANAGER

Why Companies Are Investing in Global Pro Bono Programs**



The greater focus on community development might be explained by the events of 2020, which have conveyed the interconnected relationship between social and environmental issues. In particular, companies are focusing on the local communities in which their employees live and work. Of the companies that prioritize general community development, 77 percent implement Global Pro Bono programming in their local communities.

Conversely, as demonstrated in the figure above, the number of companies that invest in their Global Pro Bono programming for the lead purpose of enhancing employee engagement and increasing satisfaction and loyalty has declined over time. This relative decline, however, does not indicate that companies are deprioritizing their employees. Rather, stakeholder relationships within Global Pro Bono programs are shifting, and employees are now more often viewed as partners in community impact rather than just program participants. Employee passion to give back has never been as high as it is today, and thus, Global Pro Bono is now considered more as a tool for positive impact and less to increase employee engagement.

*Matched Set Data: Analysis of 2013-2020 trends which compares nine companies that have responded to each of the 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020 Global Pro Bono State of the Practice Surveys.

**Graph only includes relevant response options

GLOBAL PRO BONO'S SHIFT TOWARDS **COMMUNITY-FOCUSED SOCIAL IMPACT**

The shift towards community-focused social impact demonstrates companies' growing inclination to make a tangible impact in the communities in which they operate.

Employing a local community focus for employee engagement poses strategic business opportunities because it:

Meets employee demands to give back to the community in which they live.

Strengthens social license to operate and brand recognition for companies within the communities in which they operate.

Meets ESG criteria by engaging employees in supporting communities while also attracting young talent who expect employers to mirror their values.

3M Corporate Highlight

As COVID-19 exacerbates healthcare disparities, 3M Impact Health Care, a new Global Pro Bono initiative of 3M, aims to reduce health inequities through community-focused engagement. 3M Impact Health Care was established to address the needs of community health care organizations at the height of the pandemic. It also created an opportunity for 3M's Health Care Business Group to explore a strategy that differs from 3M's other Global Pro Bono programs in that it: 1) utilizes business group employees only, 2) targets grassroots community health care organizations 3) focuses on addressing health disparities, inequity and social determinants of health, and 4) establishes longer term relationships with selected host organizations.

Furthermore, while supporting these organizations, 3M participants undertake trainings focused on equity and social justice. Participants develop and apply an intersectional and intercultural lens to social justice issues and are encouraged to use their Global Pro Bono experience to gain deeper insights into producing or innovating around community needs—seamlessly intertwining business and community benefits. The 3M Impact Health Care program addresses the complexity of health care, including social determinants of health, through innovative internal practices, inclusive leadership development among participating employees, and community partnerships.



4

Sustainability and CSR leaders' responsibility has increased—reflecting society's growing demand for corporations to address environment, social, and governance (ESG) issues.

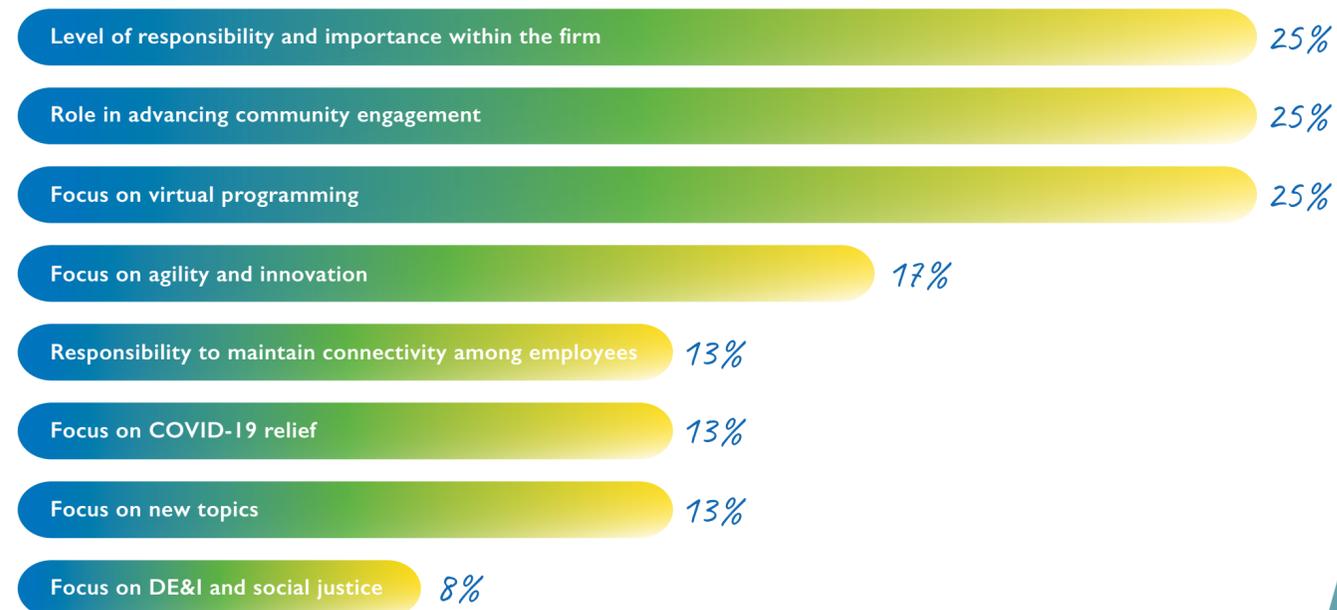
Nearly 80 percent of Sustainability and CSR professionals believe their role has changed within their company because of the COVID-19 crisis. These leaders are becoming increasingly integrated into the business as they are called on to understand and work with various business units to deliver value, whether that is in the form of brand recognition, DE&I advancement, positive community relations, or insights into new markets. As a result, the role and responsibilities of the CSR professional have expanded to include critical topics such as COVID-19 relief, racial justice, employee connectivity, innovation, company morale, and ESG reporting.



SUSTAINABILITY & CSR LEADERS RESPONSIBILITIES AND ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE

At PYXERA Global, we believe that the role of sustainability and CSR leaders will continue to evolve along this trajectory. As corporations step up to address global challenges, we expect the burden of this responsibility to fall largely on the shoulders of CSR and Global Pro Bono company leads. They will take on a more central role within the company, managing a variety of stakeholders including business units, HR, investor relationship departments, and DE&I.

Of those respondents who said their role has changed, they reported an increased:



Over the past three years and especially during COVID-19, the CSR space has undergone immense change as companies become more purpose-driven. Many companies have moved towards viewing CSR and sustainability as a business opportunity to drive innovation, mitigate risk, and reach ESG targets. As businesses take on a larger role in addressing societal problems, companies will place greater importance on robust sustainability metrics and reporting criteria, one of which is ESG criteria. According to survey data, the most important channels in which CSR professionals showcase their impact data from their Global Pro Bono programming are their annual CSR report (61 percent), followed by their sustainability report (35 percent) and ESG criteria reporting (26 percent).

ESGs are the future as we move forward in a post-pandemic society. As Larry Fink outlined in his [letter to CEOs](#), throughout 2020, companies with better ESG profiles outperformed their peers—and will continue to do so in the future.

“Questions of racial justice, economic inequality, or community engagement are often classed as an 'S' [social] issue in ESG conversations. But it is misguided to draw such stark lines between these categories... What matters is less the category we place these questions in, but the information we have to understand them and how they interact with each other. Improved data and disclosures will help us better understand the deep interdependence between environmental and social issues.”

— LARRY FINK, BLACKROCK CEO

A strategic method for delivering value to stakeholders is engaging employees in meeting ESG targets.

How to Fit Your Global Pro Bono Program into Your Company's Overall ESG Strategy

1 Break down silos in your company

and communicate your work with those managing ESG reporting internally.

2 Become familiar with ESG criteria reporting in your company.

3 Identify how internal CSR or HR activities

—like Global Pro Bono—can be integrated into your company's ESG framework. Consider working with an implementing partner that might help you achieve this.

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Virtual Global Pro Bono is here to stay—but in-person Global Pro Bono has proven indispensable.

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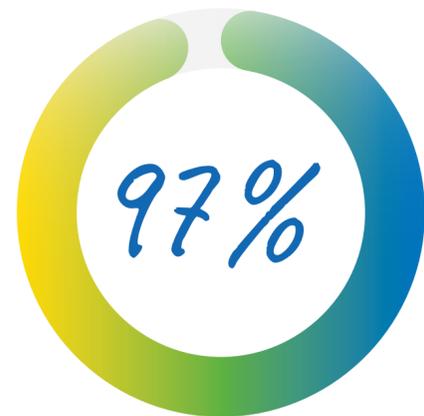
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While at first viewed as a temporary fix, the virtual employee engagement model has shown it offers unique value and is here to stay, however it is clear that in-person Global Pro Bono programs will resume once it is safe to do so.



THE FUTURE OF PROGRAM MODELS: VIRTUAL PRO BONO IS HERE TO STAY

In 2020, the Global Pro Bono practice area underwent a series of innovations and pivots that will continue to shape the space in the future. Although developed out of necessity, 68 percent of respondents indicated they transitioned some or all of their Global Pro Bono programs to virtual in 2020. While at first viewed as a temporary fix, the virtual employee engagement model has shown it offers unique value and is here to stay. Virtual models allow companies to quickly pivot as dynamic players in addressing the most pressing needs of today, and these models are becoming an integral component to Global Pro Bono program portfolios.



97 percent of respondents believe the events of the past year will fundamentally change how Global Pro Bono is conducted.

The top change reported was increased opportunity for virtual Global Pro Bono programming.

“The virtual-first mindset of the past 9 months is a glimpse into the more connected world that we are heading towards. These models allow us to engage any employee and any organization regardless of location, time, or someone’s ability to travel. It opens so many more doors than it closes.”

— SOCIAL IMPACT MANAGER

“I believe we will never go back to total in-person volunteering. We have been able to increase our skills-based volunteer numbers by 500% and decreased the cost to support these programs.”

— GLOBAL PRO BONO MANAGER

Benefits of Virtual Pro Bono Models

- ✓ **Easily scaled**
to include more employees
- ✓ **Less expensive**
than in-person programs
- ✓ **More flexible**
encouraging more employees to participate
- ✓ **Easier to manage**
for both nonprofit organizations and firms



Under Armour Corporate Highlight

Through Virtual Global Pro Bono, Companies are Maintaining Commitments to the Community

“Showing up in our community wherever we have teammates located is an expectation, and we provide the resources that allow our teammates to do so,” said Stacey Ullrich, Sr. Director, Global Community Impact.

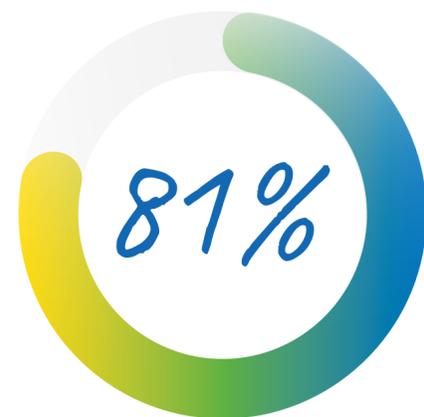
For Under Armour, showing up in the local community is not optional—it’s an expectation. During COVID-19, the sports apparel company recognized that serving its communities was more critical than ever before to ensure it continued to be an active steward of the community in challenging times. At the onset of the pandemic, Under Armour provided PPE production support to local health care systems. In addition, it engaged its talent to support Stanley Black & Decker’s PPE innovation, scale Maryland Food Bank’s warehouse operations, and support a new communications platform rollout to virtual students and families with the Baltimore City public school system.

A significant way in which Under Armour has achieved its commitment to the community is through virtual Global Pro Bono programming. The company transitioned two of its programs—Civic Innovators and Junior Achievement—to a virtual format. This has helped Under Armour maintain a corporate culture that encourages its employees to use their time and talent to partner with the community to foster community growth. Minda Heyman, Director of Strategic Partnerships at Baltimore Corps, a nonprofit that aims to advance equity, racial justice, and social innovation, said, “Beyond bringing critical technical expertise and knowledge to the Civic Innovator Program, Under Armour pro bono volunteers come ready to learn and contribute with our City staff.”

Under Armour’s flexibility allowed it to continue the momentum as a purpose-driven organization while opening the opportunity for more employees to consider using their time to support pro bono opportunities.

THE FUTURE OF PROGRAM MODELS: IN-PERSON PROGRAMMING WILL NOT DISAPPEAR

While COVID-19 could have brought about the end of in-person employee engagement programs, it is clear from survey responses that this is not the case, given 81 percent of respondents intend to resume their in-person programming.



81 percent of respondents intend to resume their in-person programming.

“I do not believe that in-person pro bono programs will go away due to the past few months. While virtual pro bono can be effective, it does not replace the deep, transformational impact that in-person pro bono programs...have had in the past.”

—GLOBAL PRO BONO MANAGER

Benefits of In-person Pro Bono Models

- ✓ **Strengthens co-created solutions through extended, face-to-face interaction**
- ✓ **Enables cultural agility and awareness**
- ✓ **Allows understanding of complex local context**

Other Considerations Before Returning to In-person Programming

Consider Implementing Partner Bandwidth

Implementing partners have been negatively impacted by the pandemic and may need to regenerate and rebuild before they are able to facilitate in-person teams at the same capacity as before COVID-19.

Redefine Host Organization Selection Criteria

Consider revisiting host organization selection criteria, touching on points like their capability to host a team and adhere to safety precautions. It is also critical to consult host organizations regarding their comfort levels in hosting an in-person team of pro bono consultants. Additionally, with an increased number of organizations working virtually, it will be important to consider host organization work-from-home policies.

Develop a plan outlining a protocol to return to in-person programming

This includes considering the vaccination rate in the project location, vaccination status of participants, social distancing measures, health systems capacity in the project location, and more.

Along with considering local government health guidelines and corporate policy, corporate respondents also reported considering the following:

Things to Consider While Deciding How & When to Resume In-person Pro Bono Programming



Participant health

Some companies will only be accepting participants in a low-risk health category.



Project location

Safety and health assessments in line with company policy will be conducted to determine locations that meet those requirements.



Hybrid models

Companies will experiment with hybrid models, a combination of in-person and virtual engagement, to ease into in-person programming before resuming 100 percent in-person engagements.



Cost

For some, the higher cost of in-person programming will be a primary driving factor in determining the ability to resume in-person programming.

HOW TO BUILD A RESILIENT PROGRAM

Of the 29 companies that responded to the survey, four indicated they managed to maintain—and even exceed, in some cases—their pre-COVID Global Pro Bono program volume during the pandemic.

PYXERA Global set forth to understand the key components of these Global Pro Bono programs, looking at what factors made them resilient enough to thrive even amid a pandemic.

Dismantling Assumptions

Although one might assume the companies that performed particularly well during the pandemic with regard to their Global Pro Bono programs were in the healthcare industry, they hail from a mix of industries, including health, IT, and legal services. Furthermore, it would be logical to assume that this set of resilient companies had existing virtual or hybrid models already in place, leaving their portfolios relatively undamaged. This, however, was not the case, as two of the four companies' flagship Global Pro Bono programs are in-person models.

Thanks to the following PYXERA Global staff:

**Amirah Ahmad (Lead Researcher & Writer),
Katharine Fraser (Lead Designer), Diane Bolme,
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Three Critical Success Factors that Enable Program Resiliency

Encourage Employees to Take Ownership

Employee interest to support communities through pro bono volunteering has been a common theme among survey data. Many Global Pro Bono programs have been able to survive due to employee passion, so how might companies leverage employee interest to thrive during crises? The answer is to design Global Pro Bono programs that empower employees to take ownership in program operations. One company that has seen continued growth and momentum in their Global Pro Bono program since February 2020 employs this very approach. Their Global Pro Bono model empowers employees to drive their relationship with their nonprofit partner of choice. A team of employees not only chooses the nonprofit they would like to work with, but also independently scopes out host organization needs and constructs a work plan for their project. Ultimately, employees are encouraged to engage with the communities and issues they care most about, making them more motivated to participate in Global Pro Bono and, in turn, enabling the program to be resilient in the face of COVID-19.

Surround Your Program with Agile and Committed Stakeholders

A common theme among this set of four companies was that they found strength from their relationship with agile and committed stakeholders. In addition to passionate employees, an agile implementing partner and strong relationships with host organizations allowed these companies to succeed during the pandemic. One company cited its relationship with PYXERA Global as a key element in transitioning its in-person program to a virtual model and implementing an innovative employee engagement program to respond to COVID-19. PYXERA Global was agile and innovative, receptive to the company's needs, and in turn a critical part of co-creating the rapid response Global Pro Bono program. Furthermore, having formidable partnerships with host organizations already in place allows for companies to quickly pivot to virtual programming.

Feel Empowered to Innovate

Three of the four companies affirm innovation and adaptability were key to their success. Corporate managers at these companies were afforded the opportunity to innovate and flex their creativity with regard to their Global Pro Bono program and thrived as a result. The following ways are methods in which companies can also be innovative and adaptable:

- Encourage leadership to invest in the initial discovery and design aspects of building out Global Pro Bono programs. This allows creativity to take a more formal role in the process of program design and creation.
- Solicit and consider feedback from stakeholders, including communities, employees, and implementing partners who might be able to provide a unique perspective.
- Join PYXERA Global's **Global Pro Bono LEAD**, an exclusive network of corporate members that was launched to create a space to share best practices, distribute lessons learned, and encourage innovation amongst companies with Global Pro Bono programs.

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