



HandsOn
NETWORK

GENERATED BY
POINTS OF LIGHT
INSTITUTE

Skills-Based Volunteerism Case Study

PROJECT DIMENSIONS:

Resources:

International team

Engagement Model:

Unplanned short term

Types of Skills:

Technology with
implementation and training

Geography:

China



IBM On Demand Community: Sahana to the Rescue

IBM On Demand Community Facts

With the launch of On Demand Community in November 2003, IBM reinvented its support of employees and retirees whose volunteer work enriches the communities where we live and work. This innovative global program reflects IBM's business strategy, making a wide range of knowledge and expertise available to volunteers online. It extends a long tradition of community engagement by IBMers worldwide, drawing on IBM's strengths in innovation, expertise, reliability, and trust. On Demand Community offers dozens of volunteer solutions designed around specific opportunities such as student mentoring, helping not-for-profit organizations understand their technology needs, sharing the fun of math and science with schoolchildren, and more.

Each solution provides supporting materials such as presentations or educational modules, to prepare and equip volunteers for their valuable work with schools or community agencies - more than 200 resources, with hundreds of translations into 15 languages to support what is truly a worldwide program.

As of December 2008, more than 114,000 employees and 12,000 retirees from 74 countries were registered with On Demand Community, and had reported over 8 million hours of volunteer work since the program's inception.



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

As demonstrated on numerous occasions, ranging from September 11 to the Asian tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, IBM volunteers bring extraordinary expertise, leadership and compassion to bear in the wake of catastrophe. On May 12, 2008 a 7.9 magnitude earthquake in central China killed more than 70,000, left five million homeless and 18,000 missing. The epicenter of what has been called the most damaging natural event in that country's history was Sichuan Province. It happened when kids were at school. More than 5000 died or were missing. Over 15 million people lived in the affected area, including almost 4 millions in the city of Chengdu. Villages were toppled or buried and landslides raked mountains

as large portions of Sichuan — where the quake was centered — and two neighboring provinces were wrecked. The destruction united the country in a massive rescue effort boosted by volunteers, private donations and international aid.

The chaos and confusion that accompany war and natural disasters can separate families during times when they need each other most. And of course the urgency for the families who have missing relatives is to find out as quickly as possible if they have been found, if they are alive and if evacuated, where. China did not have any system in place to help this effort.

Before the aftershocks of the disaster were even finished, more 100 employees from IBM China volunteered (while continuing to work on their day jobs) to mobilize recovery efforts for the region. These volunteers typically worked 16 or 17 hours a day, between their IBM responsibilities and interfacing with local governmental officials or assessing and working on what needed to be done.



on demand  community™

Client & Community Impact

The implementation of the system helped alleviate human suffering and helped save lives. It allowed bringing together the diverse set of actions for government, emergency management, NGOs, INGOs, spontaneous volunteers and victims themselves. It empowered them to help themselves and others. The missing persons registry helped reduce trauma by effectively finding missing persons. Coordinating the distribution of relief organizations in the affected areas and connecting relief groups allowed them to operate more efficiently. Tracking the location and numbers of victims in the various camps helped the set up of temporary shelters all around the affected area.

As the only official Internet portal to help identify missing people, the resource was visited nearly 52,000 times during the recovery period. As of July 2008, there were more than 198,000 pieces of population data being consolidated by the Sahana system. The system not only served to identify the missing, but also assisted the Chinese government in managing the needs of all who were affected. Nearly 500,000 disaster victims in Chengdu city and 20 surrounding cities and counties benefited from the volunteer effort.

The Model

On Demand Community represents collaboration amongst IBM Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs, IBM business units whose expertise in areas such as technology planning and open source software is integral to many volunteer solutions, as well as external partners from the fields of education and not-for-profit administration.

At the heart of the IBM volunteer team's response was the "5.12 Missing Persons Portal" powered by Sahana, as well as the application of several On Demand Community tools to facilitate teaming and process improvements. The Lanka Software Foundation and Sahana, their free and open source disaster response application, created in the weeks following the Asian tsunami and supported by a growing community of

contributors, were among the external partners. The IBMers' quick response included rapid server installation and associated software, a network deployment environment, the production of training manuals, and localizing Sahana to assist with identifying victims as well as the locations and status of survivors. Participants in this effort included dozens of volunteers from the China Development Lab, Global Services and Technical Support Departments and Systems Center, as well as IBM engineers from the U.S. and other regions.

This team of developers was able to customize, localize and launch the Sahana application within two weeks of mission start. Aside from Sahana, the team also employed some of the On Demand Community tools for the implementation and training phases. The effort

required strong collaboration among IBM, Chengdu Public Security Bureau, Civil Administration Bureau and the Information Industry Bureau. The portal was officially transferred to the Chengdu Public Security Bureau on July 11, 2008.



Participant Stories

For their dedicated response and tireless efforts, the volunteer teams of developers, Mao Xin Sheng, Jane Li, Li Bin, Li Peng, Zhang Wenju, Zhong Haijun, Hu Jian, Shi Tiange, Bi Yongjun and Xiao Huabiao have been recognized with the 2008 On Demand Community Excellence Award “Outstanding Award of Merit.”

James Yeh
Chief Technology Office,
IBM Greater China Group

“It has been more than 40 days since the Wenchuan Earthquake happened. None of us will forget what has happened in that time. I was assigned to supervise the project considering its complexity. In the past 40-odd days, as every other team member, I devoted all my passion and energy to every piece of work that could help the people in tragedy. We’ve tried our best to get the Population Registry Module into production within the shortest time.”

Overcoming the difficult and dangerous situation imposed by the series of aftershocks, team members in Chengdu worked with our partners from the Chengdu municipal government to clarify the demands, participate in on-site data collection, and train our partners. Back in Beijing and the US, our development team worked around the clock to realize the demands by re-developing and optimizing the software. The Corporate Citizenship & Corporate Affairs (CCCA) team has been communicating 24x7 with the headquarters to obtain the quickest support from the company. Team members from the Public Sector worked hard to understand the urgent requests from various rescue units and build a partnership with them. Product delivery and service team quickly got all equipment in place. IBM Volunteer Association helped recruit Sahana volunteers across the company; Communications team timely reported the project rationale and progress to internal and external audiences. Human Resources also provided support to ensure the success of the project.

It’s our joint efforts and collaborative values of the whole company that enabled the system to go live in just three weeks! All our hard work and sweat paid off when families reunited with their missing members! It was really an emotional moment of truth when we saw the happy tears when people reunited with their families. It was an equally emotional moment for our Sahana team to tell that what we did and held on to is worthwhile!

Eventually, we can say with pride that what we have done is worth remembering for our whole life. We helped people in the disaster area with our technology. We rallied the best talents in IBM and contributed to the open source community. The optimized Sahana software can help more disaster-stricken people in the world. When friends outside of IBM heard of our efforts, they said, ‘What you’ve contributed on such timely basis can never be purchased or measured by money.’”

Shen Jian
Advisory IT Specialist,
IBM Solutions and Services Company

“To help our partners from the Public Security Bureau of Chengdu City to input the population data on site, we’ve been to the temporary camps in Pengzhou, Longquan, Gaoxinxiu. We felt the anxiety of the people who lost contact with their family members in the disaster. What impressed us most was not the happiness when they found their family members, but the loss and sadness when they got no clue of whereabouts of their beloved ones. For them, ‘no clue’ might mean the beloved-one have gone. Such anxiety propels us to work harder to help more people reunite with their families.”

**For more information about IBM On Demand Community, contact
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