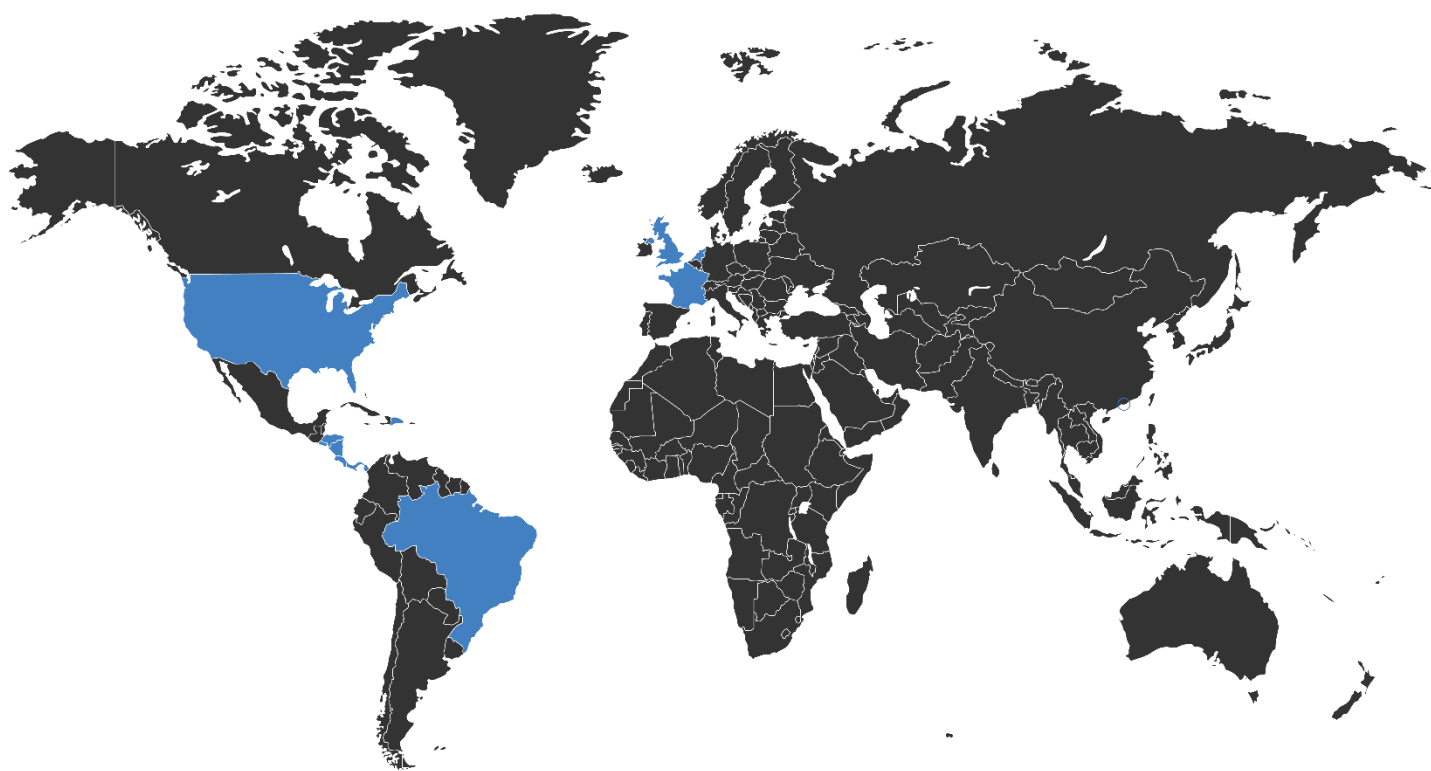




COMMUNITY BUILDING SOLUTIONS AND INNOVATIONS FROM THE POINTS OF LIGHT GLOBAL NETWORK















A Global Community Working to Address Social Challenges

The following 13 innovations highlight a sampling of the community-building strategies being developed across the Points of Light Global Network, a group of more than 200 organizations accelerating people-driven social impact across 37 countries worldwide. Together we are inspiring, equipping and mobilizing more people to use their time, talent, voice and resources to create positive change in their communities.

These strategies illustrate creative approaches to developing representative and diverse leadership for social change, catalyzing new kinds of relationships that are rooted in equity and inclusion, building mutually-beneficial connections across different members of communities, and establishing operating models that are scalable, sustainable, and multifaceted in their resourcing. Each is fundamentally powered by the good in people in what we like to think of as, “engines of human compassion.”

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CREATING MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFUGEES

Abraço Cultural (São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro)

CHALLENGE

The number of refugees entering Brazil has sharply increased with the number of asylum seekers growing from about 10,000 in 2016 to more than 30,000 in 2017. While refugees in Brazil have many employable skills and talents, they often find barriers to employment that have a tremendous impact on their ability to provide for themselves and their families.

STRATEGY

Atados leverages volunteers to train refugees in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro to teach language and cultural classes in Arabic, Spanish, French and English. With classes twice a week, program participants learn new language skills over the course of one to four months, depending on the type of course they select.

Periodically, cultural experiences are offered so students may experience the food, dance and music of their teacher's home country.

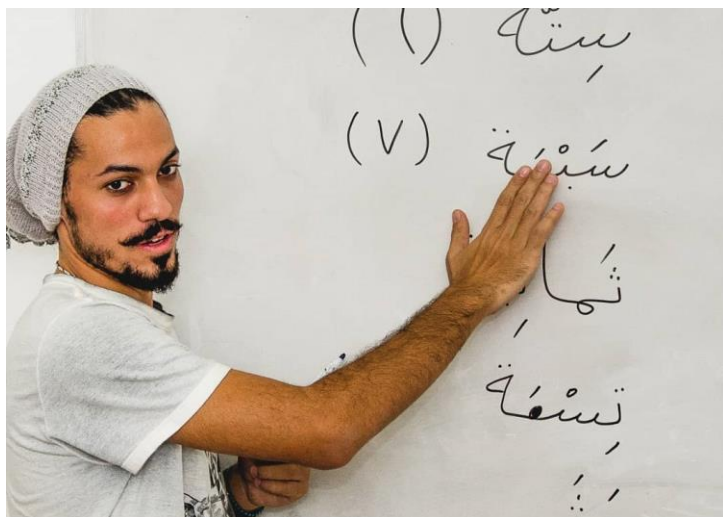
These teaching opportunities provide paid employment to refugees as they focus on settling into their new country with the long-term goal of securing other sources of employment.

To date, more than 50 refugees have been employed as part of this program, earning more than \$500,000 USD in income. Currently, there are more than 30 active teachers offering language courses in Brazil.



SOLUTION

Abraço Cultural, which translates to Cultural Embrace, was launched in July 2015 to give refugees the opportunity to teach language classes and share their culture with others.



Atados connects volunteers to opportunities in communities across Brazil including São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Brasília and Florianópolis.

Learn more about [Abraço Cultural](#).

ELIMINATING SOCIAL BARRIERS THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM

Taking Action All Together (Paris)

CHALLENGE

In France, there's a direct correlation between socioeconomic status and volunteering – the greater one's income and education, the more likely they are to volunteer. As a result, homeless and low-income individuals with a desire to give back were not equipped with opportunities to volunteer.

STRATEGY

Taking Action All Together connects homeless shelter residents to volunteer opportunities where they work alongside other community volunteers. Having begun at one homeless shelter, the program has expanded to partnering with four homeless shelters around Paris.

Program participants receive customized support:

- Attend informational meetings to have questions answered and share concerns;
- Training to use the volunteer portal to sign up for projects and other resources that simplify the search for projects;
- A cohort of volunteers work together to develop a charter and discuss what it means to be a volunteer.

To date, about 100 people have participated in the program with the majority being asylum seekers from other countries. Several have become regular volunteer leaders with Benenova.



SOLUTION

With social diversity being an important value for Benenova, the Taking Action All Together program was launched in December 2016 to connect homeless shelter residents with meaningful volunteer opportunities.



benenova

Benenova launched in Paris in 2013 with the aspiration to create a society where everyone feels empowered to tap into their own potential to change the world. Since then, Benenova has expanded into Nantes and Lille.

Learn more about [Benenova](#).

ELIMINATING LANGUAGE BARRIERS FOR IMMIGRANT WORKERS

Allies for Immigrants (Boston)

CHALLENGE

Proficiency in English impacts the earning potential of people seeking employment in the United States. On average, immigrants who are proficient in English earn 2.5 times more in wages than those who are not. However, the waitlist for ESOL (English as a Second Language) classes in Boston is long, with more than 3,500 individuals waiting to be accepted.



SOLUTION

Boston Cares launched Allies for Immigrants in 2015 to leverage volunteers to meet the critical classroom support needs in ESOL classes around Boston.

STRATEGY

Allies for Immigrants volunteers play a pivotal role in reducing the ESOL class waitlist by providing supplemental tutoring and support that equips students to complete their classes with greater efficiency. Volunteers support learning in several ways:

- Classroom volunteers are utilized as tutors to aide students who need extra assistance.
- Conversation group volunteers work to support students who are still learning basic English words or who need extra practice.
- Volunteers also support citizenship classes by helping students practice for their interview and civics exam.

Volunteers receive training from Boston Cares and commit to volunteering at least twice a month across nine sites throughout Boston.

By the end of 2018, more than 2,000 volunteer slots have been filled and more than 5,000 hours of tutoring, classroom assistance and conversation groups have been provided. This past year, 23 Allies for Immigrants volunteers earned a Gold President's Volunteer Service Award for their collective 1,000+ hours of service.



Boston Cares was founded in 1991 by a group of young adults who aspired to make service a part of their lives. Today, Boston Cares is the largest volunteer center in New England.

Learn more about [Allies for Immigrants](#) and other Boston Cares programs.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO MAKE MEANINGFUL SOCIAL CHANGE

Community Investment Strategy (Chicago)

CHALLENGE

Chicago's history of racial, economic and social segregation has led to a city divided. This isolation discourages investments in certain communities, and allows negative narratives to persist about these neighborhoods.

STRATEGY

The Community Investment Strategy focuses on neighborhoods where volunteerism can be catalytic and directs resources where the infusion of volunteers and capacity can be transformational. Beginning in four communities, Chicago Cares is:

- Working with community leaders, anchor organizations, and corporate and general volunteers to identify and collaboratively build volunteer projects that accelerate the implementation of the community's Quality of Life Plan;
- Hiring local residents and investing resources in local business, purchasing meals and project supplies locally, to strengthen the economic impact projects make in core neighborhoods;
- Bringing local community volunteers and volunteers from across Chicago together to educate one another about the assets, challenges and opportunities in each neighborhood, encouraging volunteers to stay involved to truly build a stronger, more unified Chicago

In the first 18 months of implementing the strategy, Chicago Cares has completed 94 projects, engaged 3,308 volunteers and added \$771,713 in value to the four communities.



SOLUTION

Chicago Cares launched the Community Investment Strategy in 2017 to employ impact volunteerism as a catalyst for civic engagement and community change on Chicago's south and west sides.



CHICAGO CARES

Founded in 1991, Chicago Cares mobilizes volunteers to build a stronger, more unified Chicago.

Learn more about the [Community Investment Strategy](#).

CLOSING THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY GAP IN LATIN AMERICA

Community Schools Program (Central America)

CHALLENGE

Widespread poverty and extreme violence in Central America and the Caribbean hinder access to quality education, as well as other basic services and opportunities. These challenges are compounded by under-resourced public schools with inadequate infrastructure, overcrowding, overworked and unmotivated faculty, and many safety concerns.

STRATEGY

The Community Schools program is an evidence-based, holistic program that integrates a variety of volunteer-led initiatives including school makeovers, after-school programs, community cafes with parents and families, and school-based mental health programs.

The Community Schools model impacts hundreds of communities across Central America by rehabilitating school infrastructure, providing equipment and supplies, as well as expanding the four-hour school day with positive youth development and life-skills programming. At the core of this innovative model is the engagement and commitment of the community – volunteers, companies, teachers, students, school administrators, family members and other local leaders – who serve as positive role models for the students.

A 2016 evaluation of the program showed student improvement in math and science compared to those not in the program, as well as reduced absenteeism. Students also showed better behavior and identified their school as a safe and positive space.

SOLUTION



Glasswing's Community Schools program – which converts traditional public schools into “centers of community” – provides students from marginalized communities around Central America and the Caribbean with opportunities that enable them to stay in school and away from violence.



Glasswing International is an innovative nonprofit organization that addresses the root causes of poverty and violence through education, health, and community empowerment.

Learn more about [Glasswing International](https://www.glasswinginternational.org).

LEVERAGING LOCAL LEADERSHIP TO DRIVE SOCIAL CHANGE

Neighborhood Ambassadors (Columbus)

CHALLENGE

Columbus, Ohio is a growing city that has seen steady economic development in recent years. However, despite this growth, the poverty rate remains high and the rise in social issues coupled with large resource gaps in many neighborhoods has created significant inequality.

STRATEGY

Recognizing that solutions to community problems exist within the community itself, Neighborhood Ambassadors was created to harness the entrepreneurial spirit of volunteers to solve pressing issues.

Neighborhood Ambassadors are contributing grassroots community leadership to ensure services are designed, delivered and sustained from the perspective of residents living in the communities that have the largest opportunities to be transformed through direct engagement.

They then link people to critical resources and volunteer opportunities every day using HandsOn Central Ohio's mobile application, volunteer website and an active social media community.

As part of their service commitment, Neighborhood Ambassadors attend quarterly meetings that give them opportunities to engage directly with other leaders from community organizations and government agencies. They also get regular data updates on issues and trends in the neighborhoods they serve.

Today, a network of more than 150 Neighborhood Ambassadors are actively supported by HandsOn Central Ohio as they work to improve communities across the city of Columbus and its surrounding suburbs.

SOLUTION



HandsOn Central Ohio began Neighborhood Ambassadors in 2016 with the goal of recruiting and training grassroots leaders to develop and implement place-based solutions to the social issues they see in the neighborhoods they call home.



HandsOn Central Ohio connects people, local resources, volunteers, and service organizations to opportunity.

Learn more about [Neighborhood Ambassadors](#).

MAKING VOLUNTEERISM ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Serve-A-Thon (Hong Kong)

CHALLENGE

A Hong Kong study on volunteerism noted that while three quarters of people say they would like to volunteer and believe it's important, less than 25 percent actually do. Key barriers to volunteering include lack of time, not seeing the direct impact and not knowing where and how to get started.

STRATEGY

Across nine days each May, Serve-A-Thon engages individuals, families, companies and schools in volunteer projects across Hong Kong. The wide variety of opportunities and participating organizations makes volunteerism in Hong Kong accessible to more diverse members of the community.

HandsOn Hong Kong promotes and organizes the initiative with support from strategic partners that include the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and the Volunteer Movement of the Social Welfare Department.

In addition to being a large-scale volunteer initiative, Serve-A-Thon is also a fundraising mechanism that generates funding to support programs year-round. As a result, HandsOn Hong Kong is able to support its mission by living its mission.

In 2018, Serve-A-Thon engaged 1,889 volunteers in 6,227 hours of service across 152 projects in partnership with 54 local NGOs.



SOLUTION

HandsOn Hong Kong launched Serve-A-Thon in 2017 to bring people from all walks of life together to raise public awareness around the importance of collective community engagement in helping to address important social issues.



HandsOn
HONG KONG

HandsOn Hong Kong was founded in 2007 to meet the community's most pressing social needs through volunteer service.

Learn more about [Serve-A-Thon](#).

KEEPING LONDONERS WARM DURING THE WINTER

WrapUp London (London)

CHALLENGE

Poverty rates in London have remained steady, with more than 25 percent of Londoners falling below the poverty level. As a result, basic necessities like coats during the cold winter months can prove challenging to come by. Adding to the crisis, coat drives were an unknown concept in the United Kingdom just a decade ago, leaving organizations to buy coats in order to make them available to homeless and low-income clients.



SOLUTION

Recognizing a significant gap in the availability of coats to people in need, WrapUp London was launched in 2011 in order to provide free coats to the community while also creating a large-scale opportunity for individuals, families and companies to unite around a shared cause.

STRATEGY

Each November, WrapUp London blankets the city for three days to collect new and used winter coats. Volunteers make the initiative possible by setting up collection sites at tube stations across the city during peak commuting hours, providing donors an easy way to contribute while on their way to work.

As coats are collected, volunteers sort and distribute them to organizations across the city, providing coats to the people that need them most.

More than 150 businesses, NGOs, schools and churches join the initiative each year by organizing their own coat drives.

WrapUp London has collected 102,000 coats since 2011, with 24,000 in 2017 alone. In addition, other cities in the United Kingdom have joined the campaign, including Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Newport and the County of Lancashire.



HandsOn London was established in 2010 with the goal of being the first place Londoners go to when they want to volunteer.

Learn more about [WrapUp London](#).

CLOSING THE GENDER GAP FOR WOMEN IN NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP

Women's Emerging Leaders Program (Winston-Salem)

CHALLENGE

While about 73 percent of all nonprofit employees in the United States are women, only 45 percent of nonprofit CEO positions are held by women. For larger nonprofit organizations, with assets of more than \$50 million, the disparity is even greater with women holding only 18 percent of CEO roles.

STRATEGY

The Women's Emerging Leaders program leverages strategic partnerships with the Center for Creative Leadership and Wake Forest University to deliver high-impact training to female nonprofit professionals.

Leadership Essentials for Women, a two-and-a-half day workshop, helps participants develop their personal leadership skills while addressing issues and perceptions traditionally unique to women, including the choices and trade-offs that many women face as they juggle professional and personal issues.

Following this workshop, program participants spend 10 months taking skill-building classes that include governance, budgeting and finance, human resources, strategic planning, working with grassroots leaders, fund development, and many more topics.

In fall 2018, the program launched its ninth cohort of emerging female leaders, and to date, more than 60 women have graduated from the program.



SOLUTION

As part of its work around equity and inclusion in the nonprofit sector, HandsOn Northwest North Carolina developed the Women's Emerging Leader Program to equip mid-level female staff to grow into higher-level leadership positions at nonprofit organizations.



HandsOn
NORTHWEST NORTH CAROLINA

Founded in 2007, HandsOn Northwest North Carolina envisions a community where citizens and nonprofits are equipped and engaged in creating thriving, healthy communities.

Learn more about the [Women's Emerging Leader Program](#).

LEVERAGING THE DINNER TABLE TO BRIDGE THE DIVIDE

Cooking Connections (Eindhoven)

CHALLENGE

Like many European countries, the Netherlands saw an influx of refugees from war-torn regions such as the Middle East and North Africa. At the peak of the crisis in 2015, about 60,000 refugees came to the Netherlands. With a new language and new culture, these refugees have at times struggled to assimilate and find self-sufficiency in their new home.



SOLUTION

Inspired by a program from Points of Light Network affiliate RomaAltruista, Samen Voor Eindhoven launched the Cooking Connections program in 2017 as a way to bring migrants and locals together to learn about each other and help the refugees better assimilate.

STRATEGY

With the belief that sharing a meal can bring people together to find common ground, the Cooking Connections program leverages small groups of corporate volunteers to join refugees at local shelters for an evening of community and sharing. As part of the program:

- Refugees and volunteers work together to prepare dinner before enjoying the meal they have prepared.
- Participants receive program-branded aprons and placemats. The placemats have sample talking points printed on them to encourage conversation.
- The event gives refugees the opportunity to interact with locals and practice their English.

In the first year of the program, 250 volunteers participated in a Cooking Connections event. The program has widened to include dinners with the elderly, developmentally disabled and the homeless.



Samen Voor Eindhoven connects companies to meaningful volunteer opportunities in Eindhoven, Netherlands.

Learn more about [Cooking Connections](#).

DEVELOPING MORE DIVERSIFIED NONPROFIT BOARDS

The Bridge: Board Training (Seattle)

CHALLENGE

There is a significant racial leadership gap on nonprofit boards in the United States. The most recent BoardSource study found that only 16 percent of U.S. board members are people of color and 27 percent of boards are 100 percent white.

STRATEGY

Over the course of a full day of training, the program dives into the nonprofit sector and board governance, introduces participants to the fundraising component of a board, discusses both financial and legal responsibilities of boards, and even provides an interactive simulation that allows participants to test their new skills.

While there is a fee for the training, a variety of scholarship opportunities are made available with an emphasis on recruiting persons of color. In 2018, approximately 25 percent of program participants received scholarships.

Following the training, program participants become part of an alumni network where they get connected to opportunities to meet organizations looking for new board members and are invited to other networking opportunities.

Nearly 200 people are trained annually in the program.

SOLUTION



The Bridge: Board Training was established by Seattle Works in 2004 to demystify board service and equip program participants, including opportunity youth, with the skills they need to effectively serve on boards.



Seattle Works was founded in 1989 by a group of twenty-somethings who were dedicated to getting others engaged in the Seattle community.

Learn more about [The Bridge: Board Training](#).

MAKING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACCESSIBLE TO THOSE WHO NEED IT

Pro Bono Mental Health Program (Denver)

CHALLENGE

Access to mental health care in the United States for underserved, low-income populations – especially in rural areas – is limited. Long wait lists for services, financial challenges and the stigma associated with mental illness further create barriers to treatment. In Colorado, 381,689 people needed mental health services in 2017 but did not receive care.

SOLUTION



Spark the Change Colorado's Pro Bono Mental Health Program connects individuals and families to free mental health services from skills-based volunteers across Colorado.

STRATEGY

While not a mental health organization, Spark the Change Colorado adopted the Pro Bono Mental Health Program in 2017 due to its volunteer-focused engagement strategy. In this short time, the program has expanded beyond Denver to other communities in Colorado. Volunteer services include:

- Individual and group counseling in a private practice setting: Referrals come from partner agencies, a support line and community members. Support groups are available for families of addicts, girls and boys who have experienced sexual abuse and trauma, seniors in low-income housing facilities and more.
- Host site partnerships: Volunteers provide mental health services in conjunction with partner organizations such as schools, mental health centers and other nonprofit organizations to enhance their capacity to serve clients with mental health needs.
- Supervision: Volunteers offer supervision for post-graduate license seekers as they attain supervised clinical hours required for licensure. License seekers receive supervision hours in exchange for providing volunteer services.

Approximately 50 mental health professional volunteers are providing free services to 1,000 people annually.



Spark the Change Colorado launched in 1994 as Metro Volunteers – the premier volunteer center in Denver. Programs have since expanded to cover the state of Colorado.

Learn more about the [Pro Bono Mental Health Program](#).

IMPROVING THE MATERNAL HEALTH OF INDIGENOUS MOTHERS

Safe Mothers, Happy Babies (Panama City)

CHALLENGE

In the indigenous region comarca of Ngäbe-Buglé in Panama, the maternal mortality ratio is significantly higher than the rest of the country, with 274 deaths per 100,000 live births compared to the country's average of 94 deaths per 100,000 births.

STRATEGY

In its fourth year, the initiative is in partnership with the Ministry of Health, which runs the maternal homes. Many women who come to the homes typically walk long distances of up to three to five hours, seeking health assistance while bringing few personal belongings with them.

To address the needs of these women, Voluntarios de Panamá has partnered with Procter and Gamble to source supplies to create maternal care kits. Through volunteer support, the kits are created with necessities such as soap, shampoo and conditioner, a toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, sanitary pads, diapers, wipes, toilet paper, underwear and clothes for the newborn. The women are given enough items to support them while they are in the maternal homes, as well as when they return to their community. The initiative has grown from providing 300 kits in the first year to 1,000 kits in 2018.

Procter and Gamble also provides funding for Voluntarios de Panamá to organize an annual three-day training program for the health providers that work in the maternal homes. The training encompasses a wide variety of topics such as maternal home management, postpartum and newborn care, vaccinations, breastfeeding and nutrition.

SOLUTION



Voluntarios de Panamá have responded to this issue by incentivizing the use of residential maternal homes by pregnant women who live in remote rural areas, enabling them to remain near a health center and have a professionally assisted birth.



Voluntarios de Panamá is Panama's national volunteer center that motivates and mobilizes citizens, companies, universities and institutions to actively engage in their communities through volunteering.

Learn more about [Voluntarios de Panamá](#).



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