



IBM interview with Citizen's Development Corps

THOMPSON: Welcome to this IBM podcast series on corporate responsibility and global leadership in the 21st century. I'm Kevin Thompson. I'm the program manager in charge of the Corporate Service Corps, and I'm a member of IBM's Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs team.

IBM has just launched the Service Corps which is a program to develop global leadership skills while addressing socio economic challenges in emerging markets. It's part of the Global Citizen's Portfolio initiative announced by CEO Sam Palmisano last July.

Today's conversation is part of a series where we talk with the non-governmental organizations we've teamed up with to identify the projects and the areas of the world where IBM skills can best be applied to benefit local communities.

Today I'm joined by Dierdre White, President and Chief Operating Officer of Citizens Development Corps. Welcome, Dierdre.

WHITE: Thank you, Kevin.

THOMPSON: Dierdre, can you start us off by telling us a little bit about Citizen's Development Corps and your role there, and then how we started working together?

WHITE: Sure. Citizen's Development Corps has been around for almost 20 years. We are a non-profit organization and we were originally launched in response to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the great demand from US citizens to



find some way to go and help in Eastern Europe and then later on in the former Soviet Union.

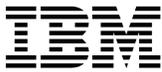
And so on a White House initiative, Citizen's Development Corps was created. And a few years down the line, we realized that in operating in those very challenging environments we had actually developed some real methodologies and real know-how on how to conduct quality economic development programming.

And so we started to move from being a volunteer clearinghouse to an organization that designed and implemented economic development programming utilizing the skills and enthusiasm of volunteers wherever possible.

THOMPSON: And you know you talked about developing core competency in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. And you're our partner for Tanzania, Ghana and Romania. So can you talk a little bit about how you got into Africa? And then specifically, the programs that we're doing with you in Africa?

WHITE: Sure. Well, we started to move into Africa because first of all there was this opportunity and funding there, to be frank, a lot more of the funding that was going into our former stomping grounds started to move to Africa. And we did follow the funding initially.

But the reality is that many countries in Africa are facing the same issues with moving from a command economy or just lack of market economy and they are trying to make this jump to working in the global economy, understanding how



markets work and everything else.

So there isn't a whole lot of difference. But particular circumstances on the ground, the particular challenges on the ground are different but many of the big picture issues are the same.

THOMPSON: You had experience working with other corporations and their placement of volunteers into developing and emerging markets. Could you talk a little bit about the difference between IBM's programs and what you've seen in the past?

WHITE: I think the biggest difference is first of all the volume of volunteers that you've committed to sending. I don't believe that that's equaled anywhere else or certainly I haven't seen it anywhere else in any other corporation.

It is one thing to commit to sending a small handful of volunteers every year; it's another thing to say we're going to send 100, 200 more.

If you talk about sending 100 and more volunteers out to do work and that you commit to doing that for multiple years and you commit to sending multiple groups to one country, then you know that you have an ability to really impact much more than what the one month in country can possibly be. And that's one piece of it that I think is so impressive.

The second piece is just that the variety of skills that are being made available to send out to the field -- because IBM is such an enormous company because the



skill sets that we can tap into there to match with assignments are endless.

And because the partner organizations in the host countries have such a variety of needs, we are just able to find a skill to solve almost any problem that someone can come up with. And I think that that's pretty astounding and unusual in the corporate volunteer world.

THOMPSON: And well, we certainly hope that we can meet those challenges. We do have a very, very wide range of skills that we're bringing in, people from all over the world and certainly I think we're also greatly benefiting from the experience you've had in these markets and also finding the right types of experiences that match the skill sets of the participating IBMers with the local needs.

As we all know, there's a gazillion different things you can do in some of these countries. And you're helping us focus on very targeted activity with accomplished competent local partners in order to have the highest impact.

WHITE: Absolutely.

THOMPSON: And in closing, what does success look like to you?

WHITE: Well, I think we have to start with, because of who CDC is and our philosophy, we have to start with the fact that the host organizations get everything that they can out of this.

Whereas we're looking at doing work that's part of longer strategic planning and has both short-term important results but has long-term results. The companies



that we work with, the clients of these BDS providers in various countries, these companies are going to grow and they're going to create more jobs and they're going to create high-quality jobs.

They are going to help people to be able to afford to send their kids to school. I mean, we see that in a lot of places we work. Mothers that now can have their kids not at home just because they can afford to do it because they now have a decent job. And families that can afford healthcare for their children. I mean, the affect of a program that's focused in jobs creation long term in a region, in a country is enormous.

It's also a very hard impact to quantify over time what was our role in this. But I think that what where we are able to define success is when we look at the local partners, organizations like an industry group in Ghana for instance...

They are able to track their clients over the long term, they know that IBM Corporate Service Corps volunteers participated multiple times in the last few years in working with their companies. They know those companies have grown, they know that the [Komasi] region has this amount of jobs growth and IBM has contributed to that for this program.

So I think we look to our partners first of all to help us before we even send the volunteers out to define what success is going to look like short term and long term. But what we want to assure is that none of this is just about a one off, one month interaction.

And I think that there's always the, for the IBM volunteers the simple process of



taking yourself out of your comfort zone, of moving to an environment be it even only for a month, where you have a whole different set of challenges and priorities to work with every day is really one step for most people will be life changing.

And I think that the IBM volunteers are going to learn an enormous amount, not only about how business is done in these countries and about the cultural aspects of the countries they're working in, but they learn a lot about themselves, too, and learn how to challenge themselves in a different way or learn how much challenge they're up to because it's probably a lot more than they might think.

So I think there are sort of soft success as far as successes, dollar successes for the companies that we'll work with out there.

But then there's things that are very hard to quantify which is just sort of the way that people's lives are changed, both the volunteers and the people in the host organization, the people that interact with the IBMers are going to be changed by this as well.

The IBMers will bring their experiences back home and the folks that are touched by the IBMers in the host countries will share those experiences both wide and far. And with the 30 different, I think, 30 different countries are represented in this.

THOMPSON: Yes we're actually up to, we have 33 represented in the first 100.



WHITE: Thirty-three countries, so just think about the cultural exchange that is going to happen organically as a result of that many countries, that many people interacting in very different environments. I just think it's an amazing, it has potential to have amazing results.

THOMPSON: Yes, and well that's certainly what we're planning for. And you very clearly laid out a lot of the community impacts which we absolutely hope to achieve and that is really the centerpiece of this program.

And also you spoke about the impact on the IBM employee as an individual. And certainly one of the big values we see in this initiative is leadership development that comes from stepping out of your comfort zone and experiencing something that's very challenging and very different from the reality you face in your day-to-day job.

Well, Dierdre, I want to thank you for taking the time today to talk to us. We look forward to continuing our relationship with Citizen's Development Corps. And as will 60 of the first 100 people participating in this program will be working with you and your organization.

So we hope that you feel as positively about IBM in this program a year from now as we do. And thank you again for taking the time this afternoon.

WHITE: Absolutely, my pleasure. And I look forward to the next steps of the program and to meeting your people personally.

THOMPSON: Great, great. Okay, thank you, Dierdre.



WHITE: Take care, bye, bye.

THOMPSON: Bye, bye.

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