

Benefits of the Leave for Change Program

Leave for Change[®] is a program that offers tangible benefits to employers, wonderful professional and personal development to staff and also strong support to organizations in developing countries.

The Program enables employees from participating organizations and companies to transform part of their annual leave into a three to four week volunteer assignment in one of 11 developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Volunteers contribute skills and advice to local project partners with the support of professionals in the host country.

Employers invest in the development of their human resources, thereby strengthening their competitiveness in Canada's evolving workforce. Participation in Leave for Change creates a human resources recruitment and retention advantage by offering a meaningful tool to personal and career development. And, employers demonstrate leadership in corporate social responsibility at the international and local level. In return, public recognition and employees' pride in their employer is increased. A Harvard Business School study of IBM's international corporate volunteering program found measurable improvement in employees' skills, including their global leadership, resilience and cultural intelligence.

Leave for Change assignments are identified by our overseas partners who require support in a variety of professional and technical areas such as management, accounting, strategic planning, business and cooperative development, communications, training of trainers, curriculum development, marketing, IT, community development, and others. Our partner organizations work in specific sectors: basic education and vocational training, improving food security and agricultural products, local economic development, equality between women and men, health and combating HIV and AIDS.

More than twenty Canadian organizations are current Leave for Change partners and collectively sponsor over 80 volunteers a year.

Leave for Change is implemented jointly by World University Service Canada (WUSC) and the Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI) and is undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through the Canadian International Development Agency.

Program costs to the employer and services covered by Leave for Change

The sponsoring employer covers part of the direct costs of the volunteer assignment; all costs associated with program management, staffing, and project support are covered by our Canadian Government grant and other funding.

The fee covers our “turn key service” which accompanies the participating organization and volunteers throughout the program in Canada and overseas:

Assignment of a Leave for Change Resource Person

A Leave for Change Senior Program Officers is assigned to an organization as program liaison and supports its promotional and recruitment efforts through suggestions and electronic materials for a campaign, setting up a calendar of activities, presentations to employees (in certain geographic areas only), working to tailor the application form, assessment of the pre-selected candidates, final interviews, and follow up with selected volunteers.

Sharing the experience at home

After their return, volunteers are encouraged to share their experience with their colleagues and personal networks. Volunteers also have access to information about global issues that helps them put their own contribution into context. They can also get involved in awareness raising campaigns and fundraising activities organized by WUSC and CECI.

Example of a Leave for Change volunteer and public engagement activities.

“Short assignments long on impact overseas and in Canada”

Larry Bergeron, Nova Scotia Community College – NSCC

4-week assignment: Cooking and Baking Advisor, Hoa Sua Vocational School for Disadvantaged Youth, Vietnam

Larry is a Cooking and Baking Instructor at the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) located in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. Larry has over 30 years of professional experience in a variety of aspects of multi-faceted food services delivery. Chef Bergeron is a Canadian and international gold medal culinary competition winner and is committed to excellence and his students' entrepreneurial success. Larry's mandate in Vietnam was closely aligned with his experience and benefited Hoa Sua's staff and teachers through improvements to the cooking and baking curriculum, customer services, and in training in developing marketing strategies to promote Hoa Sua's products and services. Larry was an assiduous blogger during his assignment in Vietnam, posting frequent updates and amply illustrated by photos. The blog garnered an enthusiastic following among his colleagues, students and personal networks:



After Larry's return to work in Canada, he continued to engage with the project through numerous media and presentations. As he says *“ I miss Vietnam. One way to bring it back to life is to go public. Sharing my incredible experiences is the way.”* Larry directly reached over 500 people through presentations at the Festival of Learning at the NSCC, at the Dartmouth East Rotary Club and through two CTV television appearances.