WIN–WIN–WIN: THE INFLUENCE OF COMPANY-SPONSORED VOLUNTEERISM PROGRAMS ON EMPLOYEES, NGOs, AND BUSINESS UNITS

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Although the number of firms adopting corporate volunteerism programs is rising steadily, very few firms are assessing the benefits of such programs on target groups, such as employees and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and identifying the conditions under which benefits to the various groups are maximized. This study addresses both by examining the conditions of employees' corporate volunteer assignments that lead to increased employee engagement, sustainability of the volunteers' project within the NGO, capability development for the business unit, and employees' continuation of volunteerism. Using a longitudinal and multisource design, responses from 116 corporate volunteers from a global pharmaceutical organization are matched with responses from their NGO managers and their business unit managers at 3 points in time: at the start of the volunteer assignment, at the end of the assignment, and 6 months after the completion of the assignment. Across these outcomes, we found that employees' volunteer assignments are most valuable when they are international, when the volunteers perceive that their projects contribute meaningfully the NGO's functioning, when volunteers have professional skills (and are able to use them), when there are opportunities for skills to be developed that can be applied in the volunteers' regular work role, and when the NGOs have tangible resources to sustain the volunteers' projects.

Activities to increase a company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) are those that take into account the concurrent expectations from a firm's multiple stakeholders' (e.g., customers, community,

shareholders, employees) and attempt to maximize performance in not only in the firm's financial goals but also goals related to improving society and the environment (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Orlitzky, Schmidt, & Rynes, 2003). Thus, when business leaders decide to invest company resources into activities related to their CSR, they often do so hoping to maximize the benefits to multiple stakeholders. This belief that "win–win–win" is possible—that organizations can profit from maximizing the benefits of multiple constituents concurrently—has its roots in stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) and, more recently, theory of shared value (Porter & Kramer, 2011). At their core, these theories suggest that organizations' leaders should make strategic decisions to satisfy numerous constituents, including shareholders, employees, and the community; in doing so, stakeholders' goals are simultaneously reinforced while value is created for the firm. Especially among companies beholden to creating value for shareholders, decisions to invest the firm's resources into CSR initiatives should be made with an eye toward using these initiatives to not only "do good" but also to increase competitiveness, improve reputation, attract and retain better employees, and enhance goodwill to, in turn, increase a firm's financial performance (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Orlitzky, Schmidt, & Rynes, 2003; Orlitzky, Siegel, & Waldman, 2011).

Studies suggest a positive relationship between investments in CSR and a variety of individual and organizational outcomes, including increased innovation (Hull & Rothenberg, 2008), strategic differentiation (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Hull & Rothenberg, 2008), risk management (Godfrey, Merrill, & Hansen, 2009), employer attractiveness (Turban & Greening, 1996), customer preferences (Callado-Munoz & Utrero-Gonzalez, 2011; Lacey & Kennett-Hensel, 2010), shareholder value, and financial performance (e.g., Cochran & Wood, 1984; Godfrey et al., 2009; McGuire, Sundgren, & Schneeweis, 1988; Orlitzky et al., 2003; Waddock & Graves, 1997; for reviews of the empirical and theoretical articles linking CSR and outcomes, see Aguinis and Glavas [2012], McWilliams, Siegel, and Wright [2006], and Orlitzky et al. [2011])

Although studies suggest many positive relationships between investments in CSR initiatives and desired outcomes, meta-analyses have found that the CSR–organizational performance relationship can vary depending on the operationalization of CSR, the stakeholder being considered (Orlitzky et al., 2003; Peloza, 2009), and the methodology employed (Quazi & Richardson, 2012). Studies with greater specificity in the operationalization of CSR and those with a greater focus on specific stakeholders' outcomes suggest that the influence of CSR might not only be positive but also negative, neutral, and curvilinear. For example, McWilliams and Siegel (2000) found a neutral relationship between CSR and firms' profitability when accounting for the other ways in which firms achieve

strategic differentiation (i.e., through advertising and R&D investments). When focusing on corporate charitable giving, studies have found an inverse U-shaped relationship between the amount firms donate and the firms' financial performance (Brammer & Millington, 2008; Wang, Choi, & Li, 2008). To address the need for a more focused operationalization of CSR, this study investigates a single CSR initiative, namely *corporate volunteerism*. As a CSR initiative, corporate volunteerism has the potential to improve the firm's perception within the community, to benefit society at large, to become an attractive employer to those interested in social concerns, to improve corporate culture, and to build a positive reputation for "doing good" (Brown & Ashcraft, 2005).

It is important to consider multiple constituents when investigating the benefit of any given CSR initiative, such as corporate volunteerism. Investing time, money, and human talent into any given CSR initiative might increase value to one group while having a negative or neutral influence on others (Hillman & Keim, 2001). At the organizational level, for example, Hillman and Keim (2001) found that company-level participation in social issues was negatively associated with shareholder value whereas stakeholder management (increased community relations and employee relations) was related to shareholder wealth creation. At the individual level, the same corporate offering designed to benefit employees, such as sabbatical time, vacation leave, or flexible work arrangements, might positively affect the motivation of employees partaking in the benefit and, at the same time, negatively affect coworkers who feel as though they are burdened with additional work (Ryan & Kossek, 2008). To address this concern regarding the extent to which the same CSR practice affects multiple groups, our study examines how corporate volunteer assignments affect three different constituents: employees, NGOs, and business units.

In addition to the need for greater specificity in the relationships investigated and a focus on diverse stakeholders, there is also a need to study CSR on individual-level outcomes. In a meta-analysis, Aguinis and Glavas (2012) noted that only 4% of the CSR-outcome studies were conducted at the individual level of analysis (with an additional 5% examining two or more levels). They found that 90% of all studies examining CSR outcomes were investigated at the organizational or institutional levels and concluded that the "likely reason for the knowledge gap regarding underlying mechanisms is the predominance of organizational- and institutional-level research compared with individual-level research" (p. 955). To address the need for individual level CSR studies, this study examines the individuals' volunteer assignment conditions as they relate to outcomes for employees, NGOs, and business units.

Taken together, our study has two goals: The first is to assess whether corporate volunteerism produces lasting benefits to employees, NGOs, and business units 6 months after employees complete their volunteer assignments. The second goal is to empirically test the conditions of the volunteer assignment under which employee engagement, continued volunteerism, project sustainability, and capability development are maximized.

Corporate Volunteerism Programs

Corporate volunteerism is an example of the way in which employees' are actively engaging in their employers' CSR activities. Mirvis (2012, p. 95) noted that "increasing numbers of firms are using CSR to enable employees to actually do "something more" on their jobs and, in select cases, to produce value for both the business and society." Although cash donations have declined during the recent recessionary years, the number of firms adopting corporate volunteerism programs is rising steadily (Deloitte, 2010). Corporate volunteerism is described as a "big tent" that includes a wide range of corporate sponsored or encouraged activities designed to serve others in need (Allen, Galiano, & Hayes, 2011). Most corporate volunteerism programs are formal programs where companies sponsor release time and regular compensation for their interested employees to volunteer with targeted nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Initiating corporate volunteerism programs is a firm-level investment of time, money, and human talent. Despite this large potential investment, few firms are assessing the longer-term impact of their employee volunteers' services on any stakeholders (Basil, Runte, Easwaramoorthy, & Barr, 2009; Deloitte, 2010; Sherraden, Lough, & McBride, 2008). This oversight on assessment might be because the benefits to employees and NGOs are clearly visible in the midst of the volunteerism "moment": employees feel good when they volunteer (Glomb, Bhave, Miner, & Wall, 2011; Post, 2005), and the NGOs show immediate appreciation to business leaders for the assistance. However, as with any investment, the question should not be whether short-term positive feelings were created; rather, the question should be whether any longer term return or benefit was realized among key constituents. Thus, the first question this study seeks to answer is whether an investment in a corporate volunteerism program produces benefits to employees, NGOs, and business units in the longer term.

In this study, we assess the conditions under which each of three diverse groups—the employees, the NGOs, and the employees' business units—derive value from the corporate volunteerism program. First, for

the employee volunteers, we assess the factors of the volunteer assignment that affect *employee engagement after they have returned to their business units*. Second, for the NGOs, we assess the factors of the volunteer assignment that affect the *sustainable impact of the volunteers' work on the NGO's performance after completion of the volunteer assignments*. Third, for the employees' business units, we examine the factors of the assignment that affect *the extent to which the volunteers' have developed capabilities that can be applied to the business units upon completion of the assignment, when back in their regular jobs*. Last, we assess the conditions of the volunteer assignment, which increase the *employees' likelihood of continuing their volunteerism on their own time*, after the completion of the corporate-sponsored volunteer assignment. Each of these, with their associated unique theoretical bases, is described in the following sections of this paper.

We note at the onset that this study was conducted within a single global pharmaceutical firm with a corporate volunteerism program championed by the firm's CEO. The participating firm deploys high-skilled employee volunteers to both domestic and international locations for volunteer assignments ranging between 3 and 6 months. Since the inception of the program in 2009, the participating organization has collected longitudinal stakeholder data at the onset, end, and 6 months after completion of the volunteer assignment, enabling us to assess the value of a company's corporate volunteerism program on three different groups using a longitudinal and multisource design.

Corporate Volunteerism Programs and Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is defined as the "positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 295). This desirable state of engagement is higher among employees who perceive that they are working for organizations that are good corporate citizens (Glavas & Piderit, 2009). Corporate volunteerism, as a CSR practice that employees can be involved in directly (Mirvis, 2012), might also help create engagement among the employees who volunteer. Preliminary evidence from Dutch-owned financial services firm ABN-AMRO suggests that employees who participate in corporate volunteering have higher engagement in their work when compared to those who do not participate (de Gilder, Schuyt, & Breedijk, 2005). This corporate volunteerism–engagement relationship might be caused by volunteer opportunities enhancing volunteers' positive identification with their employers (Finkelstein, Penner, & Brannick, 2005; Pajo & Lee, 2011) and connecting them with their employers in a more positive way (Bhattacharya, Sen, & Korschum, 2008).

It is also possible corporate volunteerism programs are increasing positive affect among employees by offering a "feel good" experience. Many people experience an energy producing "helper's high" during volunteerism activities as endorphins are released, resulting in positive physical and emotional feelings (Post, 2005). Research in social psychology has found that volunteers experience an increase in positive affect and attitudes as a function of engaging in volunteerism (see Snyder & Omoto, 2008 for a review). Although increasing employee affect is an important goal on its own, the broader question is whether the positive affect created during the volunteer role is *directed toward the organization* when employees return to their work role and *sustained,* such that the positive feelings last beyond the volunteer experience. The boost in employee energy or engagement should not be a temporary state isolated to a single event (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). If volunteers feel energized by the work they do in their NGO while volunteering but not with their organization upon return, the benefit of the volunteerism experience would not help build employee engagement. For the employee and company to experience the benefit of increased employee engagement from corporate volunteerism programs, the employees' would need to report that they feel engaged in their work after the conclusion of their volunteer experience.

If employee engagement is created, companies potentially benefit because employee engagement has been shown to be positively related to employee retention and productivity (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002), task and contextual performance (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010), and negatively related to burnout (Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Thus, an increased employee engagement for regular (nonvolunteer) work after volunteering is a potential "win–win" for both the employees who participate in and the organization investing in corporate volunteerism. From this study, the following written quote from one volunteer 6 months after completing the volunteer assignment illustrates how positive affect can be created and sustained:

> I feel that I have a stronger commitment to [COMPANY NAME] after completing my Assignment and I am filled with pride to be working for a company that supports an innovative volunteer program like [NAME OF COMPANY'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAM].

Although the experience illustrated in this quote and the preliminary evidence from the ABN-AMRO case (de Gilder et al., 2005) are positive for the volunteerism–engagement link, they do not tell us the conditions under which volunteerism experiences will influence employee engagement. To identify these, we examine the three psychological conditions

necessary for increasing engagement: (a) meaningfulness, (b) psychological safety and support, and (c) availability of resources (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004; Rich et al., 2010). In the following section, we will consider each in greater detail to explain the mechanism by which a volunteer experience can produce greater employee engagement.

The first psychological condition noted by Kahn (1990) is perceived *project meaningfulness*. In the employment context, the psychological state of meaningfulness has a significant positive relationship with individuals' engagement at work (May et al., 2004). In the volunteer context, for the work to be perceived as meaningful, the volunteer experience must provide employees with a sense that their volunteerism efforts are making long-term sustainable contribution to the overall performance and mission of the NGO (Hall & Chandler, 2005). Taking inventory of supplies or making photocopies might be necessary tasks for the NGO's administration, but routine office work is not likely to be perceived as meaningfully affecting the performance of the NGO, at least not in the eyes of high-skilled corporate professionals.

The second psychological condition according to Kahn (1990) should also be satisfied: the perceptions of psychological safety or *social support*. Applied to the corporate volunteerism context, psychological safety is the comfort volunteers feel to "be oneself" and to be fully present while working in their respective NGOs. Psychological safety is derived from supportive coworker and supervisor relations (Edmonson, 1999; May et al., 2004) whereby supervisors, in particular, play a vital role in creating psychological safety (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Extending the levers of psychological safety to corporate volunteerism, psychological safety would be derived through the perceptions of support from NGO coworkers and supervisors. Thus, this social support should be important for creating employee engagement.

According to Kahn (1990), the third condition for creating employee engagement is psychological availability, meaning the presence of the physical, emotional, and cognitive resources to succeed. In the case of volunteerism opportunities, employees self-nominate for these experiences, are screened by their organization, and then matched so their technical skills match the needs of the NGO (especially in the case of the longer term programs, such as the one in this study). Given this level of rigor (and especially because there is a self-nomination process), we believe the variance of physical, cognitive, and emotional resources would be low in that all volunteers would have a sufficient level of each. The volunteers would not, presumably, self-nominate if they did not feel as though they were physically able to do the volunteer work and emotionally or cognitively able to meet the demands of the volunteer assignment. In addition, they would not be selected for the program if these were not present. Although

the dimensions of availability of resources should be relatively constant for the individuals, the NGOs in which volunteers are placed might have limited resources, which could affect their engagement. Thus, the *availability of NGO resources* for the volunteerism project will vary across NGOs. The availability of NGO resources could directly influence psychological engagement; if the volunteers perceive that the NGO does not have the resources to sustain the project after they leave, their engagement could be negatively affected. Perceiving that one's volunteer work has the potential to have a positive, lasting impact on the NGO should positively affect their engagement. We believe that these three conditions in volunteers' experiences are critical for creating employee engagement that lasts when the volunteers have completed their volunteer work and have returned to their regular jobs. Thus, to predict to employee engagement, we hypothesize:

> *Hypothesis 1*: The volunteers' perceptions of project meaningfulness, social support, and availability of resources to sustain the project are positively related to their employee engagement with the company 6 months after the completion of the volunteer assignment.

Corporate Volunteerism Programs and Sustainable Impact on NGOs

The top two priorities for organizations when determining which corporate volunteer activities to support are (a) the potential to help alleviate a given problem and (b) to help the nonprofit function more effectively (Deloitte, 2010). From a stakeholder perspective, the nonprofit organizations and the communities they serve are intertwined; effective nonprofit organizations and NGOs should be able to better serve their target communities. The goal for corporate volunteerism is that the employee volunteers' projects have an influence on the NGOs' that, in turn, positively affect the communities they serve. Although some corporate volunteerism assignments can fill short-term human talent needs lasting only the length of the assignments, other assignments can have a positive influence on the mission and functioning of the NGO long after the volunteers' departure from the volunteer assignment (Allen et al., 2011). From a stakeholder perspective, the latter—sustainable impact on the NGOs' performance— is the more desirable goal. Typical assignments that have sustainability in mind tend to include knowledge transfer from high-skilled corporate volunteers to the NGO staff members or the community members directly or "start-to-finish" projects, where the output of the completed project can be utilized effectively by the NGO to further its mission to serve the community directly.

Illustrating the sustainable impact corporate volunteers can have on the communities they serve, NGO leaders who have worked with the participating company's corporate volunteers note:

> Having [COMPANY NAME] Volunteers has been an inspiring infusion of talent, strategy, and energy for [NGO] this year. The [NAME OF COMPANY AND ITS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM] Volunteers have truly added much value to our life-saving work and can know in leaving their posts that their work has assisted governments in developing countries with their health systems in ways that will have lasting impact.

> The [NAME OF COMPANY'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAM] is a fantastic opportunity for NGOs working in the health sector to obtain the technical support of highly qualified professionals who have relevant experience in their fields. The support of our [NAME OF COMPANY'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAM] Volunteer made a significant impact on improving the antiretroviral (ARV) supply chain in Cameroon, consequently contributing to preserving the lives of over 100,000 Cameroonians living on ARV therapy.

As these quotes illustrate, when considering the NGOs as a key stakeholder, projects resulting in long-term sustainable benefits after the departure of the volunteers are viewed as highly valuable for the NGO. To promote sustainability, the capacity of the volunteer and the capacity of the NGO should both be high (Sherraden et al., 2008). It is important for (1) the volunteers to be able to *utilize their professional skills* to create value for the NGO and (2) the NGO to have *available resources* to sustain the project (Sherraden et al., 2008). With an available resource or capacity approach to creating sustainable impact for the NGO, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2: The volunteers' ability to utilize their professional skills and the availability of NGO resources are positively related to the projects' sustainable impact on the performance of the NGO 6 months after the completion of the employees' volunteer assignment.

Corporate Volunteerism Programs and Capability Development

As numerous organizational learning scholars have argued, the ability to create new knowledge and capabilities is critical for a firm's competitive success. In the organizational context, employees are often the creators and transmitters of knowledge in the work group, team, business unit, and organization (see, for example, Cross & Sproull, 2004; Nonaka, 1994; Nonaka & Konno, 1998; Smith, Collins, & Clark, 2005). With a strategic goal of capability creation, corporate volunteerism programs can be valuable to sending organizations if employees' gain valuable and usable

knowledge, skills, or abilities (collectively referred to as "capability development") that can be leveraged by the business units upon completion of the volunteer assignment.

Research has found that service-learning projects are developmental for participants by increasing "community learning (knowledge of social, cultural, or economic issues) and personal learning (self-awareness of managerial attitude and abilities)" (Bartel, Saavedra, & Van Dyne, 2001, p. 367). The employee volunteers participating in IBM's Corporate Service Corps reported that they had an increased appreciation for the effects of global differences (community learning) and had learned new skills (personal learning) as a result of the volunteerism experience (Marquis & Kanter, 2010). In this study, both types of learning—community and personal—are illustrated by the following quotes from line managers whose direct reports had completed volunteerism assignments:

> An example of community learning: [NAME OF VOLUNTEER] is already enthusiastically applying the new skills he has learnt during his [NAME OF COMPANY'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAM] placement to his projects at [COMPANY NAME]. His new perspective on ways to bring benefit to patients and increase the effectiveness of teams will help bring a new dimension to the way we advance programmes.

> An example of personal learning: I am delighted to have an engaged manager [NAME OF VOLUNTEER] who has transformed into an effective leader—a transformation so rapid and wide-ranging that even the best of training interventions may not be able to match!

These two quotes and the IBM case illustrate that learning *can be* transferred from the volunteer experience to the business unit. However, it is important to understand *how* volunteers' capabilities are created during the assignments (Bartel et al., 2001; Giles & Eyler, 1994). Giles and Eyler (1994), based on Dewey's (1933) theory of learning, suggest that for new capabilities to be created, the volunteer experiences should generate interest, be intrinsically beneficial, be novel in the sense that they "present problems that awaken new curiosity and create a demand for information," and must "...be capable of fostering development over time" (Giles & Eyler, 1994, p. 80). Bartel and colleagues (2001) found that service-learning assignments that were meaningful and provided opportunities for social interaction increased learning. Taken together, volunteerism assignments should satisfy three broad conditions for volunteers' capability development; they should (a) be meaningful, (b) offer developmental stretch challenges, and (c) be socially interactive. In the following section we consider these three conditions more deeply and how they can foster volunteers' capability development.

First, *project meaningfulness* during the volunteer assignments will increase learning such that volunteers who can connect their work with the goals of the NGO will "attend to, absorb and interpret information about the task and the broader social context" for learning to occur (Bartel et al., 2001, p. 269). Volunteers working on projects they believe are making a difference in the long-term functioning of the NGO should be more motivated to learn because they would be inclined to believe that their increased ability to contribute would enhance the NGO's functioning and mission.

Second, opportunities for volunteers to *utilize their professional skills* in the novel context of the NGO should increase capability development. Each corporate volunteer has a functional area of expertise or primary specialist professional skills (e.g., strategy, marketing, finance, human resources). In the context of the volunteer assignment, they might be called upon to employ other professional business skills beyond their area of specialty or expertise. In these circumstances where they are calling upon a greater range of skills, the corporate volunteers are being asked to be more of a generalist and less of a specialist. Using more professional business skills in the NGO context should be developmental because of the experiential novelty of exercising a wider range of skills compared to those used in one's regular job. In addition, the NGO environment itself can be a novelty, one that has the potential to stretch volunteers' ability to perform in a unique context, thus fostering the development of new capabilities (Pless, Maak, & Stahl, 2011). For example, an evaluation of PriceWaterhouseCoopers "Project Ulysses" service-learning program found that volunteer assignments gave employees "exposure to adverse situations, forcing participants out of their comfort zones, confronting them with cultural and ethical paradoxes, and motivating them to change their perspectives on life and business" (Pless et al., 2011, p. 252). Volunteer environments involving repetitive or dull tasks (such as stuffing envelopes or taking inventory) are less likely to foster the development of new capabilities because volunteers would not have the opportunity to stretch their range of professional skills in the novel NGO context (Bartel et al., 2001; Pless et al., 2011).

Third, the volunteer experience can potentially be a rich opportunity for learning when the environment provides *social support* for the volunteer. Volunteer work that occurs in isolation with little support is less likely to provide the necessary elements for development (Pless et al., 2011). The importance of social support for learning is best highlighted through social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) whereby individuals learn and develop by engaging with their surroundings and can practice newly learned behaviors, when they can receive feedback (e.g., from co-workers or supervisors), and when the environment is professionally or

emotionally safe to take risks and possibly make a mistake. For example, applied to quality teams, Choo, Linderman, and Schroeder (2007) found that when teams fostered openness, acceptance, and respect, they were better able to create knowledge. Thus, fundamental for capability development from a volunteerism experience is that the volunteers perceive to have social support from the NGO leaders and peers such that the NGO work environment would have the potential to allow relationships to form and learning to occur in a supportive environment.

Taken together, these three conditions lead to our third hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 3*: Project meaningfulness, the utilization of professional skills, and social support in the volunteer assignment are positively related to whether any capabilities developed during the volunteerism assignment can be applied to regular work within 6 months after the completion of the volunteer experience (as judged by the business unit leaders).

Corporate Volunteerism Programs and the Continued Volunteerism

Value is created for multiple stakeholders when employee volunteers to continue volunteering *after* the conclusion of the volunteer assignment without the formal support of the company in terms of paid leave, time off, and the like. The NGOs benefit from employees' independent continuation of volunteerism because they have the engaged contribution of skilled talent for a longer period of time. Employees benefit from volunteering their time by experiencing affect-enhancing feelings (Glomb et al., 2011). Companies also benefit when their employees volunteer independently on their own time because the firm can be credited with creating socially responsible citizens, effectively increasing CSR without using additional firm resources to do so (de Gilder et al., 2005). Thus, the question is not whether continued volunteerism is beneficial for stakeholders; it is, provided continued volunteerism does not distract from employees' regular work. The more relevant question is *how* the initial corporate volunteerism assignments can increase the likelihood of continued employee volunteerism.

On the basis of the theories of work design and motivation, Grant (2012) highlights three high-level job characteristics and associated motives that an initial volunteer project might fill (see Grant, 2012 for a comprehensive review). These job design characteristics include knowledge characteristics (fulfilling developmental and career motives), task characteristics (fulfilling prosocial and self-enhancement motives), and social characteristics (fulfilling belonging and self-protective motives).

Pajo and Lee (2011) found similar conditions of corporate volunteerism assignments affecting employees' ongoing motivation to volunteer; they found that the employees' perception of the volunteer assignment's meaningfulness, the positive social interactions, and the ability to work in a novel environment motivated employees to volunteer. Taken together, to encourage future volunteerism, the volunteer assignments should, at minimum, offer an opportunity for individual development, a chance to be a part of something meaningful and positive social interactions. We now consider these three conditions more deeply.

The first factor affecting continued volunteerism is the perceived *skill development* that employee volunteers believe they have gained as a function of the volunteer assignment (Booth, Park, & Glomb, 2009; Govekar & Govekar, 2002; Tomkovick, Lester, Flunker, & Wells, 2008). Tomkovick et al. (2008) found that, when service-learning projects were perceived to develop valuable skills, volunteers were more likely to engage in future volunteerism activities. This positive relationship is likely be even more pronounced among employee volunteers who have unmet development or career motives in their regular jobs that are being (or were) met during their initial corporate volunteer experience (Grant, 2012) and among employees who are able to use the skills gained on the volunteer assignment back in their regular jobs upon completion of the volunteer experience. Employees might continue volunteerism as a way to continue their professional development.

The second feature of volunteer assignments that would affect the continuation of volunteerism is the perception of the *project's meaningfulness* (Pajo & Lee, 2011). The more valuable and meaningful volunteers believe their work has been to the NGOs they served, the more likely they are to engage in future volunteerism activities (Pajo & Lee, 2011; Tomkovick et al., 2008). In the student service-learning context, the value of service-learning projects is related to student participants' continued volunteerism after the formal completion of the project (Lester, Tomkovick, Wells, Flunker, & Kickul, 2005). Continuation of volunteering will likely be high among employee volunteers who perceive their initial volunteerism tasks to be more meaningful when compared to their regular jobs (Grant, 2012). Employees would seek continued volunteerism opportunities as a way to continue to have a positive and lasting influence on NGOs.

The third feature of the volunteer assignment that would affect employees' continuation of volunteerism is the *social support* they received from the NGO supervisor and staff during the volunteer assignment. Employee volunteers who perceive support from their NGO colleagues and supervisors would have more positive feelings about the volunteerism experience (Geroy, Wright, & Jacoby, 2000) and, in turn, have higher intentions to continue their volunteerism (Farmer & Fedor, 1999). If employees' initial

corporate-sponsored volunteerism experience lacks desirable social characteristics, future volunteerism behaviors might cease especially when the employees' affiliation needs are being met in their regular jobs (Grant, 2012).

Taken together to predict the continuation of employee volunteerism with the NGO after the completion of the formal volunteer assignment, we hypothesize:

> *Hypothesis 4*: Employee volunteers' perceived skill development, project meaningfulness, and social support are positively related to their continued volunteerism with the NGO 6 months after completion of their formal volunteer assignment.

Method

Participants

To test our hypotheses, we analyzed data collected from a large European-based *Fortune* 500 pharmaceutical company as a part of the company's program evaluation for its corporate volunteerism initiative. This corporate volunteerism program is open to all interested employees who have been with the company for at least 3 years, have sponsorship from their line managers, and have made it through the selection process. The selection process includes written essays, psychological assessments, and an interview. Successful candidates are moved to the final matching stage. In this final stage, successful applicants' skills and experiences are matched with the projects that the NGOs have requested. Over half of the successful candidates are matched with a project.

Since the company's corporate volunteerism program began in April 2009, the company has placed 196 employees in 39 countries working with 58 nonprofit organizations or NGOs. The employees participating in the program are nationals from 26 countries: 42% of the volunteers are from the United States or Canada, 28% from the United Kingdom, 16% from other European countries not including the United Kingdom, 5% from Asia, 4% from Africa, and 3% from Central and South America. Employees used their professional skills to work on NGO projects: 21% worked in communications and marketing (media, messaging, publicity, branding), 17% worked in business development and change management (operational evaluation and improvement), 17% worked in research and development and clinical health (discovering and implementing knowledge, medical or pharmaceutical expertise), 16% in project management (planning, organizing resources for completion of specific

goals/objectives), 11% in supply chain management (movement and storage of materials), 8% in information technology (networking and infrastructure), 4% in data management and knowledge transfer (enhance data value and distribution), 3% in financial management (planning and organizing monetary resources), and 3% in human resources (organization and people development, policy and procedures). Seventy percent of the participants were female.

The volunteer assignments require the employees to leave their current organizational role for either a 3-month or a 6-month period, with the average assignment lasting 5.4 months. Sixty percent of the volunteers were assigned internationally. Among these volunteers, 33% were assigned to work in the United States or Canada, 28% to work in Africa, 16% in the United Kingdom, 10% in Asia, 6% in European countries not including the United Kingdom, and 5% in Central and South America.

Procedures

Data collection involved questionnaire responses from three sources: volunteers (employees), NGO managers, and line managers. Data collection occurred at three points in time: Time 1 was at the start of the volunteer assignment (after the employee had been in role for 30 days). Time 2 was at the end of the volunteer assignment. Time 3 was 6 months after the completion of the assignment.[1] At the time of data analysis, 116 employees had completed their assignments and returned to their business units for at least 6 months. This gave us a maximum possible sample size of 116 matched responses across employee (Times 1, 2, and 3), NGO manager (Time 3), and line manager (Time 3).

Time 1 survey of employees. At Time 1, volunteers were invited to complete an online survey as a part of the company's program evaluation after they had been on their volunteer assignments for 30 days. This survey asked the questions regarding the NGO support they were receiving. A total of 53 volunteers completed the Time 1 survey for a response rate of 46%.

Time 2 survey of employees. At Time 2, volunteers were invited to complete a second online survey as a part of the company's program evaluation at the end of the volunteer assignment. This survey asked the questions regarding their perceptions of their projects' meaningfulness, the NGO support they received, the available NGO resources to

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[1]The decision to collect data 6 months after the completion of the assignment was a practical one. The participating company selected 6 months as the appropriate time to follow up after consulting with their internal corporate stakeholders on the most realistic, powerful, and pragmatic time frame for the follow-up.

continue the project, their engagement, and the extent to which they utilized professional skills in the NGO while on the volunteer experience (i.e., utilization of professional skills). A total of 80 volunteers completed the Time 2 survey for a response rate of 69%.

Time 3 survey of employees. Six months after the completion of the volunteer assignment, the Time 3 data were collected. Employees received a third online survey to assess their employee engagement after the volunteer experience and their skills developed from the volunteer experience as well as whether they continued volunteerism. A total of 65 of the volunteers completed the Time 3 survey for a response rate of 56%.

Time 3 survey of NGO managers. Six months after the volunteers formally departed from the NGO, the NGO managers were asked to rate the long-term sustainability of the volunteers' project. A total of 64 of the 116 possible NGO managers completed the survey for a response rate of 55%.

Time 3 survey of line managers. Six months after the volunteers returned to their business units, online surveys were sent directly to the employees' line managers. In those surveys, managers were asked to assess whether these employees had developed any capabilities that had been applied to this work unit. A total of 19 of the 116 line managers completed the survey for a response rate of 16%.

Measures

The measures were part of a program evaluation for the organization, developed for this purpose. Unless otherwise indicated, all items used a five-point Likert-type scale with anchors of 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. High scores represent greater standing on the variable of interest.

Project meaningfulness. Three items measure the volunteers' perceived project meaningfulness assessed at the end of the assignment (Time 2). The items are: "The scope of my assignment has delivered or will deliver a sustainable difference to my NGO," "I have had a positive impact on the skills of those I have worked with," and "I have had a positive impact on the behaviors of those I have worked with." The internal consistency reliability of this scale was acceptable, $\alpha = .85$.

Social support. The two items to measure volunteers' perceived NGO social support throughout the assignment measured during (Time 1) and at the end of the assignment (Time 2) for a total of four items. The items include "My assignment has/had the full support and buy-in from key staff members in my NGO" and "I feel/felt supported by my NGO line manager." The internal consistency reliability of this four-item scale was acceptable, $\alpha = .80$.

Availability of resources. To measure the availability of NGO resources, three resources were listed that, when in short supply, could prevent the volunteers' project in the NGO from being sustained after the completion of the assignment (Time 2). These three items are lack of funding, lack of relevant skills, and lack of staff members' time. Employees were asked to select all of the reasons they believed would affect the sustainability of their project. The score for this variable was a numeric count from 0 through 3, with high score indicating a lack of available resources. For ease of presentation, we reversed this score in the subsequent analyses (i.e., a high score equals more resources).

Utilization of professional skills. At the end of the assignment (Time 2), volunteers were asked to evaluate the extent to which they used each of eight professional business skills during their volunteer assignment on a scale of $1 = never$ to $5 = often$. The eight skills are comprehensive for these participants, representing the full content domain of their primary and secondary skills that they might possibly have and employ in their corporate roles. They are business development or strategy, marketing or communications, data management or knowledge transfer, financial management, human resources or change management, IT networking or infrastructure, logistics or supply chain management, and project management. During the volunteerism assignment, volunteers could have been called upon to use other professional business skills beyond their primary skills, their area of specialty, or expertise. In assignments when additional skills were needed, the volunteerism assignment was requiring them to be more of a generalist. A high score would indicate that they were acting in a generalist capacity, whereas a low score would suggest they were operating as a specialist. The average utilization of the eight professional business skills had a minimally acceptable internal consistency, $\alpha = .67$.

Skill development. Six months after returning to their business unit (Time 3), volunteers were asked to assess whether they have been able to apply any of the skills developed during the volunteer assignments to their regular job. This construct was assessed using a five-item measure. Sample items include the extent to which the participant agrees that "the volunteer assignment has enabled you to bring new ideas and fresh ways of thinking or working to COMPANY NAME," and "the volunteer assignment has enabled you to share a different external perspective that has helped inform or shape COMPANY NAME'S work, thinking, or policy." The scale had a minimally acceptable internal consistency, $\alpha = .69$.

Employee engagement (self-rated). Employee engagement was measured by a single item "I feel energized by my work at COMPANY NAME" asked two times, once at Time 2 (when the assignment was completed) and again at Time 3 (6 months after the assignment completion). The average represents this variable.

Project sustainability (rated by NGO managers). To measure project sustainability 6 months after the volunteer completed the project (Time 3), NGO managers were asked to evaluate the extent to which they believed that the volunteer's project had contributed to 11 aspects of their NGO's performance. The participating company selected the 11 dimensions from generally accepted NGO rating guides (e.g., Nelson, 2007; SustainAbility, 2003) because they believed that these were the dimensions on which their volunteers' projects would have the potentially greatest influence (e.g., branding, funding, mission success). These 11 dimensions are increasing funding/income, increasing the number of people the organization helps, increasing the number of donors, increasing the geographic scope of impact of the organization, increasing the awareness of the organization among the target audiences, raising the priority of the issues the organization works on among the target audiences, improving the reputation of the organization among the target audiences, improving the organization's relationships with governments, improving the organization's relationships with corporations/foundations, improving the organization's relationships with other NGOs, and improving the organization's relationship with the general public or certain communities. The scale had an acceptable internal consistency, $\alpha = .94$.

Capability development (rated by business unit leaders). Six months after returning to their business unit (Time 3), business leaders were asked to assess whether the employees who had been volunteers have been able to apply any of the capabilities developed during the volunteer assignments to their regular job. The two items ask managers to assess the extent to which they agree that the volunteer has "brought new ideas and fresh ways of thinking or working to COMPANY NAME" and "shared a different external perspective that has helped inform or shape COMPANY NAME'S work, thinking, or policy." The scale had an acceptable internal consistency, $\alpha = .73$.

Continuation of volunteer work (self-reported). Six months after returning to their business unit (Time 3), a single-item indicator assessed continuation of volunteer work. Volunteers were asked whether they had some continued involvement with their assignment organizations since their return to the company, coded 1 = *yes* and 0 = *no*.

Control variables. Some control variables were included in the analyses due to their potential influence on both independent and dependent variables. Research suggests that employee attitudes may be influenced by cultural contexts (Ryan, Chan, Ployhart, & Slade, 1999). Thus, the first control variable was whether the employee volunteered in an NGO located in a different region of the world from which his or her home country was located. This variable is called "interregional experience" (0 = *from the same continent*, 1 = *from a different continent*). In addition, volunteers'

experience with the logistics and administrative management of the volunteerism program might influence their reactions. Thus, we controlled for volunteers' "satisfaction with the program's administration" (e.g., reimbursements, communications from the program office). This control variable was assessed on a five-point Likert-type scale with an anchor of $1 = strongly\ dissatisfied$ to $5 = strongly\ satisfied$. A higher score represents greater satisfaction with the way the program was administered.

Results

We used hierarchical linear regression analyses to test Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 and logistic regression to test Hypothesis 4 due to the dichotomous dependent variable. We controlled for interregional experience and volunteers' satisfaction with the program administration when testing all hypotheses.

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, sample sizes, and bivariate correlations of all control, independent, and dependent variables included in these analyses. To test Hypothesis 1, employee engagement 6 months after the completion of the volunteer assignment was regressed on project meaningfulness, social support, and availability of resources. As shown in Table 2, both project meaningfulness ($\beta = .26, p < .05$) and availability of resources ($\beta = .25, p < .05$) were significantly related to employee engagement as we predicted. However, the influence of the social support on employee engagement was not significant ($\beta = .06, ns$). The variables explained 18% of the total variance of employee engagement ($p < .05$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was partially supported.

As suggested by our anonymous reviewers, we further considered the interactions among the three antecedents on employee engagement in a post hoc manner. We first included three two-way interaction terms in the regression equation and then added the three-way interaction among project meaningfulness, social support, and availability of resources in the analysis. As shown in Table 3, the three-way interaction significantly predicted employee engagement ($b = .47, p < .01$). And the inclusion of the three-way interaction also significantly improved the model fit ($\Delta R^2 = .12, F (1, 68) = 10.99, p < .01$). To further clarify the pattern of the three-way interaction, we followed the approach of Aiken and West (1991) to plot the relationship between project meaningfulness and employee engagement at the high (one standard deviation above the mean) and low values (one standard deviation below the mean) of social support and availability of resources. As presented in Figure 1, when both social support and availability of resources were high, the unstandardized relationship between project meaningfulness and employee engagement was 1.23 ($t = 3.52, p < .01$). When social support was high and availability of

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Sample Sizes, and Correlation Coefficients

	Mean	SD	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Interregional experience	.45	.50	116										
2. Satisfaction with program administration	4.69	.65	78	.07									
3. Project meaningfulness	4.40	.71	80	.01	.23*								
4. Social support	4.30	.92	80	−.19*	.31**	.46**							
5. Availability of resources	2.37	.85	79	.03	−.16	.04	.15						
6. Utilization of professional skills	2.17	.38	78	.12	.16†	.37**	−.04	−.01					
7. Skill development	3.86	.77	64	−.02	.01	.04	.21†	.05	−.17				
8. Employee engagement	4.04	.87	100	.00	.16†	.32**	.25*	.25*	−.06	.55**			
9. Long-term project sustainability	4.02	.67	61	.25*	−.03	.14	.05	.08	.34*	.13	.04		
10. Capability development	4.32	.47	19	.18	.07	.51*	.54*	−.31	−.27	.35†	.31	.11	
11. Continued volunteerism	.88	.33	65	−.04	−.04	.11	.16	−.29†	.01	.33*	.05	−.06	−.22

Note. Correlation coefficients were calculated by using cases pairwise.
†$p < .10$, 1-tailed. $*p < .05$, 1-tailed. $**p < .01$, 1-tailed.

TABLE 2
Hierarchical Linear Regression Results for Hypotheses 1, 2, and 4

	Employee engagement	Project sustainability	Capability development[a]
Interregional experience	.03	.20	.63**
Satisfaction with program administration	.12	−.17	.02
Project meaningfulness	.26*		.69*
Social support	.06		.10
Availability of resources	.25*	.08	
Utilization of professional skills		.36*	−.72*
R^2	.18*	.16†	.77*
Adjusted R^2	.12	.06	.62
N	77	38	13

Note. Standardized regression coefficients were reported in this table.
[a]This result should be considered exploratory given the low sample size.
†$p < .10$ (1-tailed). *$p < .05$ (1-tailed). **$p < .01$ (1-tailed).

TABLE 3
Post Hoc Analysis of the Three-Way Interaction of Project Meaningfulness, Social Support, and Availability of Resources on Employee Engagement

	Employee engagement	
Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	3.43	3.70
Interregional experience	.02	.18
Satisfaction with program administration	.14	.10
Project meaningfulness	.26	.16
Social support	.12	.06
Availability of resources	.21	.06
Project meaningfulness × social support	−.14	.27
Project meaningfulness × availability of resources	.24	.54*
Social support × availability of resources	.08	.02
Project meaningfulness × social support × availability of resources		.47**
R^2	.21*	.33**
Adjust R^2	.11	.24**
N	77	77

Note. Unstandardized regression coefficients were reported in this table.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

resources was low, the relationship between project meaningfulness and employee engagement was −.44 ($t = −1.22, p = .23$); when social support was low and availability of resources was high, the relationship was −.004 ($t = −.01, p = .99$); when both social support and availability of resources were low, the relationship was −.19 ($t = −.84 \ p = .40$). Combined, the
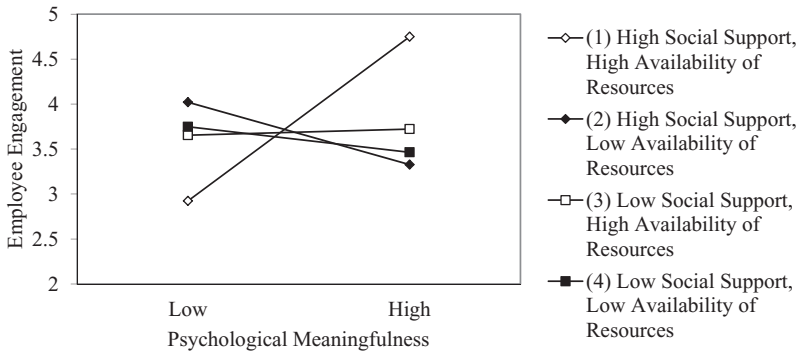
Figure 1: **Three-Way Interaction of Project Meaningfulness, Social Support, and Availability of Resources on Employee Engagement.**

three-way interaction results indicated that project meaningfulness, social support, and availability of resources complemented each other to improve employee engagement. When any of the three antecedents was low, employee engagement would be compromised.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that availability of resources to sustain volunteer project and volunteers' utilization of their professional skills during the volunteer assignment would be positively related to project sustainability as judged by the NGO managers 6 months after the volunteers completed their assignments. As presented in Table 2, the influence of utilization of professional skills was significant ($\beta = .36$, $p < .05$), but the impact of availability of resources was nonsignificant ($\beta = .08$, ns), accounting for 16% of the variance in project sustainability ($p < .10$). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that project meaningfulness, the utilization of professional skills, and social support during the volunteer assignment would be positively related to capability development from the volunteer experience as judged by the business unit supervisors 6 months after the completion of the assignment. As indicated in Table 2, we found significant effect of project meaningfulness ($\beta = .69$, $p < .05$) on capability development, along with significant effect of utilization of professional skills that was, however, opposite from the predicted direction ($\beta = -.72$, $p < .05$). The impact of social support was nonsignificant ($\beta = .10$, ns). As a control variable, the volunteerism assignment being an interregional experience was also significant ($\beta = .63$, $p < .01$). In total, the control and independent variables explained 77% of the total variance of capability development ($p < .05$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

In Hypothesis 4 we proposed that the skill development, project meaningfulness, and social support would be positively related to employees'

TABLE 4
Logistic Regression Results for Hypothesis 3

	Continuation of volunteer work
Interregional experience	−.68
Satisfaction with program administration	−.13
Project meaningfulness	.42
Social support	.04
Skill development	1.20*
–2 Log likelihood	25.84
N	43

Note. Unstandardized regression coefficients were reported in this table.
*$p < .05$ (1-tailed).

independent continued volunteerism with the NGO 6 months after completion of their formal volunteer assignment. Logistic regression, shown in Table 4, confirmed the positive effect of skill development ($\beta = 1.20$, $p < .05$) but not for project meaningfulness ($\beta = .42$, *ns*) or social support ($\beta = .04$, *ns*). The nonsignificant –2 Log likelihood chi-square ($\chi^2 = 25.84$, $df = 38$, *ns*) indicates that our model fit the data reasonably well. Hypothesis 4 was partially supported.

Discussion

This study begins to address the call for greater theoretical and empirical evidence examining the benefits of CSR (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; McWilliams & Siegel, 2011) by hypothesizing and testing the linkages between corporate volunteerism programs and benefits for some stakeholder groups 6 months after the completion of volunteer assignments: employee engagement, sustainable impact on the NGO, capability development for the business units, and employees' continuation of volunteerism. This study also begins to address the need for more individual-level studies (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012) that investigate the conditions necessary to create "high quality" volunteer experiences (Bartel et al., 2001) that will, in turn, maximize the benefits for stakeholders (Hillman & Keim, 2001; Pajo & Lee, 2011). In the context of the broader research literature, the results for each stakeholder are discussed in the following sections.

Employee Engagement

Our study found that under certain conditions of the volunteer assignments (i.e., when projects were meaningfulness, when the volunteer felt social support, and when the NGO had the resources necessary to

sustain the project), employee engagement is sustained when employees' return to their regular work. This is an important finding because it suggests a carryover of positive affect from the nonwork to the work context, extending the recent research that found that engaging in organizational citizenship behaviors promotes positive employee affect (Glomb et al., 2011). In other words, the corporate volunteerism experiences can create a positive energy from the act of volunteerism that has the effect of strengthening employees' affect toward their employers and producing higher employee engagement overall.

Past study suggests that employee engagement is higher for those who perceive their organizations to be good corporate citizens (Glavas & Piderit, 2009). Our study extends this by suggesting that, under certain conditions, employees' *active involvement* in CSR is related to higher employee engagement (Mirvis, 2012). Corporate volunteerism is a way for employees to actively become part of the CSR activity in the organization. Past research has demonstrated a positive relationship between corporate volunteerism programs and employees' organizational commitment (Bartel, 2001) and morale (Basil et al., 2009). This study adds employee engagement to this list of individual-level benefits of corporate volunteerism.

The question regarding "how" employee engagement is created in the volunteer assignment context was also investigated. Our findings underscore the importance of meaningful work to increase employee engagement, which is consistent with research in the nonvolunteerism work context (Christian et al., 2011; Kahn, 1990; May et al., 2004). Potentially unique to the volunteerism experience, our study also found that corporate volunteers who work in NGOs with the resources to sustain their volunteer projects after they leave had higher employee engagement in their regular work roles. Together, these results suggest that corporate volunteer programs create employee engagement when volunteers perceive that they have made a meaningful and sustainable contribution to the functioning of the NGO. Most important, our post hoc analysis found a significant three-way interaction in predicting engagement. This result suggests that all three variables—project meaningfulness, social support, and availability of resources—are interrelated as they affect employee engagement. For corporate volunteerism programs to improve employee engagement, all of these conditions should be present in the volunteers' assignments. The following written quotes illustrate these relationships:

> [NAME OF COMPANY'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAM] gave me the opportunity to make a difference, to be empowered, and to be gratified and humbled through helping others and making a serious impact on improving communities and society. It gave me an extended sense of pride not only

to exhibit my [NAME OF COMPANY'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAM] involvement, but also to say that I am a [COMPANY NAME] employee.

I was so proud to be an ambassador for [COMPANY NAME] in its new and very important role as a community partner and steward of engagement. I have been given the priceless opportunity to both "Be the Change" and be changed. I am energized and passionate beyond belief in continuing in my role as a change agent and creative problem solver, and am committed to using my multitude of learning from this assignment to partner in the transformation of [COMPANY NAME].

Sustainable Impact on NGOs

We investigated the conditions under which volunteers' work was able to make a lasting contribution to the NGO 6 months after the completion of the volunteer assignment. Sherraden et al. (2008) have suggested that, to make a long-term sustainable impact, both the capacity of the volunteers and the capacity of the NGOs should be high. Between the two capacities, however, our results suggest that the volunteers' capacity, in terms of the scope of their professional skills, were more critical. We found that NGO managers gave higher ratings to the sustainability of the volunteers' projects when volunteers used a wide range of their professional skills as generalists during the volunteer assignment. The capacity of the NGO in terms of their resources to sustain the project was not significant. It is worth noting that the null result might be directly related to the significant one: if the volunteers had skills that they were able to transfer to NGO staff, then their skills might have increased the NGOs' human talent capabilities and, in turn, ensured that the project could be sustained without them. This would effectively raise NGOs' capacity *through* the volunteers' capacity. The following quote from one of the NGO leaders in this study illustrates this possible explanation:

we could not have developed a sustainable programme without our Volunteer's contribution. It has been business critical to its expansion and my staff members are more motivated and knowledgeable as a result of working alongside a professional with expertise that we simply do not have in our team.

Capability Development

This study begins to address the concern that "few companies have figured out how to reap the returns of such CSR engagement" (Bhattacharya et al., 2008, p. 37) and suggests that firms are, in fact, able to directly benefit from the capabilities developed during employees' corporate volunteer assignments. We found that there were certain conditions of the

volunteer assignments under which supervisors rated employees as having developed capabilities. First, our study finds supports for the importance of meaningful projects relating to greater capability development. This extends results from the service-learning context (Bartel et al., 2001) to corporate volunteerism. Extending this literature, volunteers working on projects they believe are making a difference in the functioning of the NGO are possibly more motivated to build their own capabilities because having greater skills would enable them to contribute more to the NGOs' functioning and mission.

The international environment is also important for capability development in the corporate volunteerism context. Past research has found that using professional skills in the novel NGO environment is important for learning and development (Bartel et al., 2001; Pless et al., 2011). Although the importance of novelty in capability development was not hypothesized directly in this study (because all participants were working in NGOs), the control variable of whether the volunteers were on inter-regional assignments was significant. This finding suggests international experience is instrumental in capability development, extending the findings from the expatriation literature (e.g., Oddou, Osland, & Blakeney, 2009) to international volunteer assignments.

Surprisingly, there was a significant *negative* relationship between using professional skills and capability development. This suggests that it was the specialists—and not the generalists—who had the greatest increase in development. It is possible that, for the purposes of capability development, perhaps the specialists were able to practice the adaptation of their skills and really benefit from the novelty of the environment. This is an interesting finding that should be explored further because it has important implications for how volunteerism assignments should be developed if the goal is, in fact, capability development. We also found a nonsignificant relationship between social support in the NGO and capability development. It might be the case that social interactions with members from the communities served (again, not assessed in this study) would have been the more relevant social learning dimension with respect to predicting capability development.

Continued Volunteerism

Examining the predictors of whether corporate volunteers would continue volunteering on their own time, our findings were consistent with the literature on service-learning projects; the amount of personal development experienced during the volunteer assignment is related to continued volunteerism on one's own time (Govekar & Govekar, 2002; Tomkovick et al., 2008). When the volunteer assignments were perceived to be

professionally valuable in terms of skill development, volunteers were more likely to engage in future volunteerism activities. The other two predicted variables, project meaningfulness and social support, were not significant. It might be the case, as suggested by Grant (2012), that the volunteer assignments fulfilled unmet needs for career development, thus producing subsequent motivation to continue volunteering. Following Grant's (2012) logic, it might be the case that our participants' career enhancement needs were stronger (and fulfilled) than were their prosocial or social needs. This matching (and fulfillment) of motivational needs was not tested directly but is a plausible explanation for our finding given that the volunteers were skilled professionals.

Stakeholder Perspective

Examining the results together as a part of a multiple stakeholder analysis, some results of this study are particularly salient. The results suggest that volunteerism assignments that include meaningful projects, social support within NGO, and opportunities for skill development are positively related to the benefits to multiple stakeholders—specifically, employee engagement, sustainable impact on the NGO, capability development, and/or continued volunteerism. Extending Bartel et al.'s (2001) work from the service-learning context, this study suggests that project meaningfulness, social support, and skill development are features of "high quality" volunteer experiences because these conditions influence volunteers' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, which, in turn, positively affect outcomes for multiple stakeholders.

One goal of the study was to understand the conditions that maximized outcomes across multiple groups, producing a "win–win–win." Across most conditions (e.g., meaningfulness, social support, resources) our study suggests that volunteer assignments can be crafted in a way to increase the value to diverse groups simultaneously. We found one to be the exception. Volunteer assignments, which required a greater utilization of a wide range of the volunteers' professional skills, were *both* positively related to sustainable impact for the NGO *and* negatively related to capability development for the business unit. Volunteers who were acting as generalists using a wider range of their skills (as opposed to specialists) had a more positive impact on the NGO sustainability and performance. At the same time, volunteers who were acting as specialists in the NGO were able to eventually apply more acquired capabilities in the business unit. It is possible that using a broad range of skills, although good for the NGO, did not give volunteers a chance to "go deep" and develop any one skill in this novel context. This finding is worthy of future research exploration because it demonstrates, at the individual level, what Hillman

and Keim (2001) found at the organizational level, that increasing value to one organizational stakeholder could have a negative or neutral effect on the others. This preliminary result suggests is that one of these volunteer assignment conditions, there might be a trade off with some of the conditions.

Limitations and Future Research

There are many positive aspects to this study, such as the longitudinal design and multisource data collection. However, as with all studies, this study is not without its limitations. To begin, our study focused on only those individuals who participated in a corporate volunteerism program. This was the appropriate design to test, as we did, the microlevel conditions of corporate volunteerism assignments that maximized the benefits to stakeholders. However, focusing only on those who participated, we were not able to compare corporate volunteer programs with other corporate interventions (CSR and otherwise) on the relevant outcomes. Comparing multiple initiatives is an important direction for future research to better understand the relative influence of corporate volunteerism (see McWilliams & Siegel, 2000, for an example of this type of macrolevel study) and to test Porter and Kramer's (2011) shared value approach by assessing which corporate initiatives generate greater innovation and growth while simultaneously increasing benefits to society.

In terms of design, the longitudinal nature of this study enabled us to test the cause–effect relationships hypothesized. This study is not, however, a controlled experiment. Comparing a control group of nonvolunteers with volunteers would have strengthened the conclusions around stakeholder benefits by isolating the effect of volunteerism at the individual level. For example, studies have found positive relationships between employee engagement and task performance, contextual performance, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Christian et al., 2011; Rich et al., 2010). These links should be tested further in future research to see whether they are stronger for those who have had corporate volunteerism experiences, perhaps by assessing a matched sample of nonvolunteers with former volunteers. Taken together, a multilevel study in which the outcome from those participating in corporate volunteerism can be directly compared with those participating in other corporate initiatives and those who are part of a control group would be the ideal design.

In support of generalizability of our study, the participants in this study, as a group, reflect a wide range of nationalities and corporate functional areas; they were assigned to domestic and international locations; they volunteered in many different countries. Although participants were representative and diverse on these individual-level dimensions, we had

no variance at the organizational level. The participating company is in the pharmaceutical industry, one that is likely to have a greater connection to underserved communities in need of medications. Other firm-level characteristics that could not be tested in this study, such as industry, visibility, financial resources, and degree of public contact, might affect the CSR–outcome relationship (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). For example, Wang and Qian (2011) found in a sample of Chinese firms that the relationship between philanthropy and corporate financial performance depended on the type of organization, whether the company was visible, government-owned, and well-connected politically. (See Aguinis and Glavas [2012] for a comprehensive model of the institution, firm, and individual-level characteristics affecting the CSR–outcome relationship.)

Within this single participating organization, the average assignment duration was a sabbatical-type program lasting over 5 months. It might be the case that long duration of this program has given volunteers higher quality experiences, which, in turn, affected capability development, engagement, and the like. For these reasons, future studies should be conducted across a variety of firms representing diverse industries and with different types of corporate volunteerism programs (e.g., short-term; local, community-based service; service-learning teams).

We believe our measures met the basic psychometric properties, in some cases even assessing the full content domains for given constructs (such as, our measures of availability of resources, utilization of professional skills, and continuation of volunteerism). However, some measures were not necessarily as comprehensive as would have been if they were generated from the research literature. Our engagement measure, for example, was a single item measured twice assessing the vigor dimension of employee engagement. In addition to the construct of vigor, future studies should examine the effect of corporate volunteerism experiences on other facets of employee engagement, such as dedication and absorption (e.g., Rich et al., 2010; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The psychological conditions of meaningfulness, psychological safety, and availability of resources could, likewise, be measured with existing and validated scales.

Compared to many microlevel studies, this study is less susceptible to precept bias because most of the independent and dependent variables are assessed by different sources and at different points in time. Although the independent variables were assessed by the volunteers, two (of the four) dependent variables, project sustainability and capability development, were assessed by other raters (NGO leaders and business unit supervisors, respectively) 6 months after the completion of the volunteer assignment. Continued volunteerism was self-reported; however, it was a behavioral indicator (the volunteer either was or was not still volunteering with the NGO). For the hypothesis related to employee engagement, we attempted

to minimize the concern of precept bias by assessing variables at different points in time.

Although we had sufficient statistical power to test our hypothesized relationships, the relatively small sample size did not give us sufficient statistical power to test a more comprehensive model, such as the one suggested by Aguinis and Glavas (2012). Future studies should look at the relationships among these outcome variables (employee engagement, long-term sustainability, capability development, and continued volunteerism) and also include additional independent variables. For example, in the case of employee engagement, value congruence, perceived organizational support, core self-evaluation (Rich et al., 2010), conscientiousness, and positive affect (Christian et al., 2011) should be assessed as antecedents of engagement in future studies. In the case of project sustainability, studies should examine the nature and type of assignments, the extent to which projects require additional resources, and a determination of which resources are most critical for sustainability.

Lending support for the importance of the novel environment in capability development, the volunteer assignments occurring outside of one's home continent were related to greater capability development. This is particularly interesting given that there has been an almost fourfold increase from 2006 to 2011 in the number of U.S.-based companies sending employee volunteers internationally (Gold, 2011). As such, we believe future research should include the predictors, which could affect volunteers' success in this unique type of international assignment. A meta-analysis examining personality as predictors of international assignee performance found that Extraversion, Emotional Stability, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness were predictive of expatriate performance (Mol, Born, Willemsen, & Molen, 2005), a finding that should apply to international volunteers. This same meta-analysis also found cultural sensitivity and local language ability to be predictive of expatriate performance. These variables should be included in future research studies on this topic. In a related area, future studies should examine the extent to which cross-cultural competencies are gained while on international volunteer assignments. Oddou et al. (2009) identify factors that would encourage a transfer of knowledge from the international assignment back to the sending unit. A test of their model in the international volunteerism context would be valuable, especially if the gain in cross-cultural competencies of those who have been on expatriate assignments could be compared with those on volunteer assignments.

Our study examined the continuation of work with the NGO after completing the assignment, but the extant community or society at large is a broader stakeholder that might also benefit from these international volunteerism assignments. Specifically, the extent to which corporate

volunteerism programs have created more engaged community members (that is, those who volunteer more time, engage in helping behaviors, become involved in solving community problems, and the like) is an important area of future research. Grant (2012) proposes a comprehensive theoretical model to explain sustained volunteerism behaviors, and it should be tested in this context. Individual differences, such as empathy, helpfulness (Penner, 2002), and positive mood (Bartel et al., 2001) are related to volunteering but also potentially related to the outcome measures. These were not included in this study but would be interesting in future research.

In addition to assessing whether citizenry behaviors change after the volunteer assignment, future research should assess the change in employees' identity, attitudes, and values toward volunteering (Clary et al., 1998; Finkelstein et al., 2005; Grant, 2012; Penner, 2002) as a function of volunteer assignments' characteristics, volunteers' experiences (Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Pajo & Lee, 2011), and organizational support (Grant, 2012). For example, future studies could investigate whether employees who initially accept volunteer assignments because of the career-enhancing benefits become more empathetic to those less fortunate during the assignment—and ultimately seek out subsequent volunteer opportunities for more humanitarian or altruistic reasons.

Practical Implications

With respect to corporate volunteerism programs, there are many potential "wins" for employees, NGOs, and business units. At the individual level, we have seen increased employee engagement, which has been found to be related to greater performance, higher productivity, and better recruitment. At the firm level, companies benefit from the potential for capability development, which can be, in turn, transferred back to the workplace upon completion of the volunteer assignment. Many organizations view their corporate volunteerism programs as a significant method for leadership development alongside CSR (Marquis & Kanter, 2010). Our results support this view.

It is recognized that few firms are assessing the longer term impact of their employee volunteers' services on any stakeholders (Basil et al., 2009; Deloitte, 2010; Sherraden et al., 2008). This study highlights an approach and encourages companies to engage in a stakeholder analysis for their corporate volunteerism programs and any other key CSR practice. We encourage companies to collect objective data from multiple stakeholder groups and to examine the benefits in the short and longer term.

As this study suggests, the qualities of the volunteer assignment can have a direct influence on the outcome to the stakeholders involved—and

all corporate volunteerism experiences are not created equal. Companies cannot merely assign motivated high-skilled volunteers into any volunteer situation and hope that they will succeed and, in turn, derive benefits for their stakeholders. To capture value across multiple stakeholders, we encourage companies to craft international volunteer assignments that are meaningful, to select volunteers for their technical skills (and put them in assignments where they are able to use them), to provide them with an opportunity to further develop their skills, and to assign them to NGOs that have the tangible resources to sustain the volunteers' projects after the volunteers leave so the "sense of purpose" among the volunteers is high.

Conclusion

As organizations globally are expected to do more with less, we believe corporate volunteerism programs have the ability to provide benefits for firms and other stakeholder groups. Porter and Kramer (2011) advocate a corporate social value approach that encourages firms to "look at decisions and opportunities through the lens of shared value" (Porter & Kramer, 2011, p. 65) to maximize corporate growth and innovation while concurrently providing greater benefits to society. We believe corporate volunteerism programs, when designed to align with the strategic goals of the organization, have the ability to do exactly this—providing benefits to organizations, employees, and society at large. As this study suggests, organizations that offer their high-skilled employees meaningful volunteer experiences will not only help NGOs (and the communities they serve) but also develop employees' skills, increase their employee engagement, and build their knowledge in areas which are important for organizational success—a win–win–win.

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