

# Globetrotting Grants

A unique collaboration between **Silicon Valley Community Foundation** and **YourCause** is opening new doors for international philanthropy.

Jonathan Nicholas serves as CEO of ReachOut.com, a nonprofit in Sydney, Australia, that links young people to the mental health care they need. Given his location, he was surprised to open his email one day and find a message from someone on the other side of the international date line.

The email from Silicon Valley Community Foundation posed a simple question: Would ReachOut.com like to be included on a list of nonprofits that employees at multinational corporations can give to with a click of a button?

Nicholas jumped at the offer.

As the vetting process unfolded, what SVCF was doing appeared to be more than just a good opportunity for his organization. It seemed revolutionary.

“Great ideas can happen anywhere,” he says. “If we’re going to solve global issues, we need to scale up great ideas, no matter where they come from.”

Right now, that’s difficult. Because of tax laws, a good idea in Australia is likely to stay there, regardless of whom else it could help. But SVCF’s collaboration with Texas-based tech company YourCause is breaking down those borders.

The plan is straightforward: Identify nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to which companies may wish to target their giving, and do all the upfront work of vetting those NGOs as equivalents to nonprofits in the United States. Compile a list. Make that list available to any of the companies that work with Silicon Valley Community Foundation or use YourCause’s corporate social responsibility (CSR) platform, CSRconnect. Allow companies to make grants to hundreds of vetted organizations as a result.

CSRconnect lets philanthropists and organizations find each other much in the way the successful taxi-alternative company Uber allows riders and drivers to find one another, Nicholas says. It’s a disruptive idea that serves a clear need through smart strategy and technology.

In other words, it helps philanthropy truly move into the 21st century.



COURTESY OF DELL

Dell employees in China organized sports and games for local children.

50%  
More than half of YourCause clients request international giving services

## 5 Features of CSRconnect

CSRconnect offers companies access to a suite of tools designed to create a one-stop shop for corporate philanthropy and employee engagement. Among other things, CSRconnect offers the ability to:

1. Manage corporate volunteerism
2. Manage employee donations
3. Manage emergency relief donations
4. Manage matching gifts of volunteer time or money
5. Create an employee community focused on philanthropic opportunities

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— JONATHAN NICHOLAS, REACHOUT.COM

### NEED, NOT WANT

When Ann Magee, director of sales at YourCause, talks to companies looking to refresh or expand their CSR programs, the first thing she does is assess their needs. And more and more often, these new clients tell her one thing.

“There’s a push to give internationally,” Magee says. “Three years ago there was limited demand for an international component to our clients’ corporate social responsibility programs. Today, more than 50 percent of YourCause clients use international giving capabilities, and many of those need that ability at launch.”

Dell is one such company. When the computing company contracted with YourCause in 2009, it had a mandate: Bring its disparate CSR programs together in one place, and make sure all employees could participate, whether they were located at corporate headquarters in Round Rock, Texas, or at Dell’s campuses in China, Malaysia, India, Brazil or Poland. Using YourCause and SVCF’s international giving capabilities allowed that to happen.

“This was a requirement for us to launch with them,” says Jenn Friday Jones, Dell’s global employee engagement strategy and strategic giving manager. “When we launched, we launched in three or four languages. We were looking for a one-stop shop.”

CSRconnect certainly is that. The platform, configured for each company, enables employees to donate, volunteer, participate in emergency disaster relief efforts, and get matching grants for time or money from their company. In addition, the platform offers a private community at each company, in which employees can support one another and generate goodwill through their actions. Because not every company needs every component of the CSRconnect platform, YourCause customizes and brands each client community.

### INTERNATIONAL KNOW-HOW

What the platform couldn’t do — at least at first — was allow employees located outside of the U.S. to give to



Alcoa employee Lillian Guzzardi and her daughter volunteered together during a book drive at Escola Municipal José Avelino de Melo in Poços de Caldas, Brazil.

40  
The number of countries where SVCF made grants in 2013

scenes for YourCause, sometimes companies ask to work directly with SVCF for a higher level of vetting or for additional counsel on their philanthropic programs.

“Companies ask, ‘Can you take this a step further and check that this organization or this grant is aligned with our program guidelines?’” says Miccio. “The goal is to make it as easy as possible for their employees to give and to engage their local communities.”

### HARNESSING CSR FOR GLOBAL GOOD

For the NGOs that make the cut, the process removes some of the red tape that currently hinders worthy nonprofits.

Take, for example, ReachOut’s experience. To receive contributions from foreign companies, ReachOut had to create stand-alone entities in the U.S. and Europe that could function as completely autonomous organizations. That involved duplication of leadership, as well as tremendous overhead that otherwise could go toward helping the people the NGO was created to serve.

“The barrier to entry for an NGO to American corporate foundations can be insanelly high,” Nicholas says. “That means the only real area of international cooperation and expertise is in the emergency aid field.”

That is partly why Nicholas sees SVCF’s vetted list of nonprofits as an Uber-level disruption to the traditional philanthropy model, again referring to the transportation service.

“We’re very impressed that the SVCF has taken this on,” he says. “They have the opportunity to be a thought leader on this topic. It has the potential to be a game changer.”

### GLOBAL CORPORATE CITIZENS

Jones says that at Dell, employees record more volunteer hours outside the U.S. than inside, even though there are far more nonprofits in the U.S. than elsewhere.

Aluminum company Alcoa is finding the same thing. Alcoa has offices in 20 countries, and at each site, the company strives to be part of the local community. In many locations, it even has advisory boards that include local residents, and the boards help shape corporate giving there. But because the headquarters are in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, all corporate giving from the Alcoa Foundation must meet U.S. giving standards. That means each nonprofit has to be vetted to American standards.

“As a global company, YourCause’s international giving functionality was key in our decision to partner together,” says Malika Harrison, Alcoa Foundation’s Community Engagement Manager. “Our corporate giving mission and priorities are multitiered and far-reaching, so we appreciate that YourCause and SVCF can complement these efforts.”

And although most of SVCF’s work is behind the

NGOs in their area. That’s where SVCF came in.

“[Our work with SVCF] is a first-of-its-kind collaboration in the industry, allowing clients to come together and fully vet international organizations and provide a gateway method to donate to international organizations,” says YourCause CEO and founder Matt Combs. “It allows employees to donate seamlessly to international charities the way they might donate to domestic charities.”

But getting to that seamless donation takes a lot of work behind the scenes. Fortunately, SVCF was already a leader in international philanthropy before joining with YourCause. SVCF made grants to 40 countries in 2013, says Maeve Miccio, SVCF’s vice president of corporate responsibility.

“We’ve built our internal capacity to do this at scale,” Miccio says. “And we’ve worked with nonprofits to streamline the process and make it simple for them to access donations and increase their impact.”

SVCF, essentially, is the bridge between corporations’ giving priorities and the NGOs that serve global communities. Using a process called “equivalency determination,” SVCF screens NGOs for transparency, governance and other qualifications that, if they were based in the U.S., would qualify them as public charities.

Once they are qualified, they go onto a list that any YourCause client corporation can offer to their employees for potential donations, matching gifts or volunteer time, depending on the program.

So far, more than 700 nongovernmental organizations in 80 countries have been vetted and qualified by SVCF. They’re available to all SVCF individual and corporate donors and YourCause corporate clients.

COURTESY OF ALCOA

## Free-Range Philanthropy

Silicon Valley Community Foundation has already vetted 780 nongovernmental organizations around the world, enabling American corporations and philanthropists to give with confidence — and within the confines of U.S. tax law.

Want to see how far and wide philanthropy can spread? Search by country or category at [siliconvalleycf.org/ngo](http://siliconvalleycf.org/ngo).



Share your insight on **global giving** on SVCF’s Facebook page and on Twitter, using the hashtag **#SVCFglobal**. Learn more about YourCause at [siliconvalleycf.org/fall-2014/yourcause](http://siliconvalleycf.org/fall-2014/yourcause).