



Chapter Leadership Playbook

2026

A guide by students, for students — to help leadership successfully navigate the full Brigade journey.



DEVELOPED BY OUR 2025-26 STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

Dear Student Leaders,

If you are reading this, you are now part of the world's largest student-led movement for global health. Welcome!

For more than twenty years, Global Brigades' progress, growth, and evolution has been driven by student leaders just like you. Every medical clinic, public health project, clean water system, and dental treatment, begins with students who are willing to step forward, bring others with them, and turn our shared vision into meaningful action.

This playbook was created to support you in that leadership. We asked our 2025–2026 Student Advisory Board members to share their best practices, lessons learned, and practical advice for building a strong chapter, preparing volunteers, and leading with purpose. Their insight directly shaped the pages that follow.

So grab a coffee, take a deep breath, and dive in. Inside, you'll find guidance from student leaders who have been in your shoes and are excited to pass along what helped them succeed. Use this as a starting point, a reference, and a reminder that you are not leading alone.

Thank you for embarking on this journey with us, for inspiring your peers, and for carrying forward the legacy of lasting, student-led change.

With gratitude,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christie Catlin".

Christie Catlin
Executive Director

Table of Contents

<u>01 Timeline</u>	5
<u>02 University Guidelines</u>	6
<u>03 Leadership Team</u>	7
<u>04 Marketing</u>	11
<u>05 Social Media</u>	13
<u>06 Recruitment</u>	16
<u>07 Fundraising</u>	18
<u>08 Year Round Involvement</u>	21
<u>09 Brigade Preparation</u>	23
<u>10 On Brigade</u>	25

Introduction

This Peer-to-Peer Playbook has been created to help leadership successfully navigate the full Brigade journey — from interest through return — using real examples, and practical advice.

This is written by students, for students, and designed to reduce confusion, increase confidence, and support long-term Brigade sustainability on campus. It will cover topics like university affiliation, recruitment, fundraising, preparing for a Brigade, and what happens upon your return.

Special thanks to our 2025-26 Student Advisory Board for sharing their experiences and helping shape this playbook for GB Chapter Leaders.

*Ruby Bales
Paige Boyland
Grace Crossley*

*Nayana Esarla
Nishil Gandhi
Suhani Gajera*

*Melinda Jin
Eileen Kabriti
Abby Mack*

*Grace Menzia
Alex Olivero
Neha Srinivasa*



01

Timeline

Below is a visual timeline of the Brigade planning process. Use this as a high-level guide for the major milestones from start to finish.



02

University Guidelines

Why is this important?

Being affiliated with your college or university can ease the Brigade planning process. Working with your university from the start can help guide your Chapter regarding travel restrictions, financial support, academic support, faculty support, and more. Working within your university can present more fundraising and recruitment opportunities, and supports the sustainability of your Chapter for years to come.

How do I become affiliated with my university?

Reach out to the Office of Student Affairs / Office of Dean of Students on campus to learn about the process of becoming a Registered Student Organization (RSO).

Questions to ask:

- What are the requirements to become an RSO?
- Is there an application process? Does an application need to be renewed annually?
- Are there any required officer roles (President, treasurer, etc)?
- Are there any limitations with international travel?
- Are there any funding opportunities available for clubs on campus?
- Is there a Global Risk Office I need to be in communication with for risk management?
- Are there any risk management and travel compliance forms that need to be completed?
- Can I utilize the University's name while recruiting?
- Can individuals who do not attend the university still attend the Brigade with the Chapter?
- Is there a requirement to have a faculty advisor supporting our Chapter?

Is a faculty advisor required to establish a Chapter?

Global Brigades highly encourages finding a faculty advisor to support or join your Brigade. Faculty advisors can assist you and your team by helping to lead, plan, and attend your Brigade.

How do I find a faculty advisor?

- Search for a faculty member who aligns with the GB mission — find someone familiar and with the capacity to support the organization.
- For Medical and Dental Brigades, consider looking into humanities or public health for additional perspectives.
- Determine faculty involvement — would they like to attend? What would their responsibilities be? How much communication is expected?

Advice

- Ask your professors! A public health, ethics, international relations, or Spanish professor can provide valuable insight.
- Your school might require approval from your faculty advisor for events, travel, and constitution changes — stay in communication.
- Recognize that asking professors to be an advisor is a commitment for them. Be organized and clear about their role.
- A Global Brigades Chapter provides incredible value for the University. Set up meetings with administrators and deans to promote your Chapter.



03

Leadership Team

Why is this important?

Your leadership team is there to ensure that all goals are met in order to coordinate a successful Brigade. From logistics on campus, university affiliation, fundraising, and recruitment — all key goals go back to your leadership team. It is super important to have a team that you can trust and rely on, not only when building your Chapter but year after year.

How many people do I need?

At least three! Global Brigades requires a minimum of three individuals in a leadership capacity. Generally a Chapter has at least a Chapter Leader/President, Recruitment Chair, and Fundraising Chair, but you are not limited in team size or positions.

Common Leadership Positions

- **Chapter Leader / Co President:** Overall leader and primary point of contact. Oversees all Chapter activities and serves as liaison between the Chapter, University, and Global Brigades team.
- **Vice President:** Directly assists the Chapter Leader. Works with team members for fundraising and recruitment support. Establishes relationships with other RSOs, faculty, and community partners.
- **Secretary:** Tracks member attendance, deadlines, meeting notes, and scheduling. Reserves rooms for sessions and applies for tabling events on campus.
- **Treasurer / Fundraising Chair:** Manages funding requests and Chapter budget, applies for grants, plans fundraising events. Communicates regularly with GB Success Advisor.
- **Recruitment Chair:** Manages recruitment and volunteers. Aims to expand efforts and find volunteers for Brigade and local events.
- **Social Media / Marketing Chair:** Manages social media and outreach. Creates posts and ideas to attract volunteers and promote the Brigade.



Where/How do I find leadership team members?

- Ask friends and peers, promote to like-minded clubs such as AMSA, ASDA, PHSA and similar organizations on campus, through social media, classes, greek life, etc. Look for individuals with prior leadership experience to streamline the process.
- Search across all studies/majors — education, business, nursing, marketing, international relations, healthcare, public health, etc.
- Promote leadership opportunities in info sessions. You don't have to wait for all Brigade details to be determined!

Communication & Accountability

- Communication is key! Determine how you want to communicate from the start. Common platforms: text, GroupMe, Slack, and Flare.
- Set up recurring meetings — weekly or biweekly. Require 75% attendance with 48-hour notice for absences.
- Set deadlines and expectations right away. Implement attendance tracking, point systems, recurring calendar invites, and response-time expectations.

Leadership Transitions

Leadership transitions often occur upon return from a Brigade in preparation for the next year. Before transitioning, ensure all exec board members create transition documents including: overall duties, in-depth instructions, review of previous year, important contacts, expected pitfalls, and organized files.

Advice

- Communication is of the utmost importance. Share expectations of roles from the beginning. Your entire leadership team should be in touch with their GB Success Advisor.
- Set up a year-round calendar at the start of planning with deadlines, team meetings, fundraising/recruitment events.
- Leadership team members are required to join your Brigade — make sure they have all questions answered before committing.
- Consider having the VP or another E-board member designated to become Chapter Leader after the current leader leaves.
- As chapters grow, expand beyond a traditional 3–5 person board with structured committees (Travel, Education, Fundraising, Recruitment/Mentorship).
- Consider your leadership team's years in University. Recruiting first and second year students significantly helps with sustainability.

Additional Resources

- [Starting a Chapter](#)
- [E-Board Role Descriptions](#)

Potential Challenges

Struggling to find passionate and committed people

Have in-depth discussions about expectations. As a leader, people reflect your enthusiasm — keep a positive attitude and lots of communication!

Leadership team members missing deadlines or meetings

Have a casual reminder first. If the issue persists, be more firm and ask if they are able to take on the role.

Maintaining a leadership team over time

Motivate members to take over positions and have people in mind. Transition documents are hugely helpful for smooth succession.

04

Marketing

Why is this important?

Marketing sets the tone of your Chapter and expectations. It promotes Brigade specifics and is the backbone of recruitment, which is one of your main goals. It is also important that marketing aligns with the core mission and values of Global Brigades.

How should I communicate Brigade expectations?

- Transparency builds trust, particularly when students are asking families for permission or making financial commitments. Be honest and realistic about daily schedules, living conditions, and physical or emotional demands.
- Share practical advice: packing suggestions, travel essentials, and lessons learned from first-time brigaders.
- Communicate Brigade dates, location, and ways to get involved outside of the Brigade itself.
- Maintain continued communication with volunteers through a group chat and social media with regular events and updates.

How do I promote my Brigade?

- Leaders should lead with professionalism and kindness. Your Chapter reflects your university, Global Brigades, and the communities you partner with.
- Social media should be intentional. Follow Global Brigades branding guidelines — approved color schemes, fonts, and warm, people-centered visuals.
- Focus content on the organization's mission and values, chapter culture, and Brigade education rather than travel alone.

How do I present my Brigade on campus?

- "Humanize" the Chapter. Highlight the people behind the organization with day-in-the-life features, member spotlights, reflections on why students joined, and stories from past Brigades.
- Feature members who have not yet traveled to reinforce that Global Brigades is a year-round community, not just a trip.
- Send forms to your volunteers to pull valuable stories and background to share.

Communication with stakeholders

Be confident with the information you share. Your GB support team (Program Advisor or Success Advisor) are always there to join calls and help answer questions. Be transparent and aware of the process and policies.

- Host pre-departure meetings or calls to review code of conduct, ethics, professionalism, and cultural respect.
- Many chapters require brigaders to sign or acknowledge a code of conduct agreement.
- Reference the parent/school packet for Q&As and details families may be curious about.

ADVICE & TOOLS

- Utilize the resources GB already has in place — marketing toolkits, info session slide decks, social templates.
 - [Medical](#)
 - [Dental](#)
 - [Public Health](#)
 - [Water](#)
- Maintain consistent communication channels. Use one primary platform so volunteers always know where to find updates.
- Communicate early and often. Share timelines, expectations, and milestones well in advance.
- Create space for questions and feedback through Q&A sessions, office hours, or anonymous forms.

05

Social Media

This guide helps local chapters create, manage, and grow their own social media accounts while staying aligned with Global Medical Brigades' brand, values, and safeguarding standards.

Purpose of Chapter-Level Social Media

- Build local awareness and engagement on campus or in the community
- Recruit and retain members, volunteers, and donors
- Share chapter-specific activities while amplifying GMB impact
- Drive traffic to official GMB campaigns, events, and resources

Chapter accounts should complement — not replace — official Global Medical Brigades channels.

Approved Platforms

- **Instagram** : Use to connect, promote, & engage with your volunteers and potential volunteers.
- **Facebook**: Use as a private group to message your team and keep them up to date on timelines.
- **TikTok**: Use for recruitment and fundraising.
- **LinkedIn**: Use for telling your personal story and your Chapter's.

Naming Conventions

- Instagram / TikTok: @GMB_[UniversityName] or @GlobalMedicalBrigades_[UniversityName]
- Facebook / LinkedIn: Global Medical Brigades – [University Name]

Do not: Abbreviate "Medical" or "Brigades," use unofficial acronyms, or create parody, meme-only, or anonymous accounts.



Bio & Profile Standards

Profile Photo: Official GMB logo or Chapter-approved logo lockup (if provided)

Bio must include: Full chapter name, affiliation with GMB, link to official GMB page or chapter donation page

SAMPLE BIO

- Official Global Medical Brigades chapter at [University].
- Empowering communities through sustainable health & development. Learn more & get involved [link]

Content Guidelines

Encouraged content:

- Chapter meetings & events
- Fundraisers and campaigns
- Member spotlights
- Educational posts aligned with GMB mission
- Reposts from official GMB accounts

Prohibited Content:

- Graphic medical imagery
- Photos of patients without documented consent
- Political endorsements or advocacy not approved by GMB
- Misinformation or unverified medical claims

Voice & Tone

- Mission-driven, respectful, and inclusive
- Educational, not sensational
- Optimistic and community-focused

Avoid: Savior language, deficit-based storytelling, jokes or memes that could undermine dignity or trust.



Safeguarding & Consent

- Confirm written consent for any identifiable individual
- Never share personal health information
- Avoid naming patients or locations that could compromise safety
- If unsure, do not post and escalate to Global Medical Brigades staff

Account Setup Checklist

- ☐ Receive chapter leadership approval
- ☐ Review this playbook in full
- ☐ Create account using approved naming
- ☐ Upload approved logo and bio
- ☐ Assign at least 2 account admins
- ☐ Follow the IG handle @MedicalBrigades

Escalation & Support

Contact Global Medical Brigades if:

- Media inquiries are received
- A post generates controversy or negative attention
- The account is compromised
- You are unsure whether content is appropriate

Acknowledgement

By creating and managing a chapter social media account, you agree to uphold Global Medical Brigades' mission and values, follow brand, safeguarding, and content standards, and respond promptly to requests from GMB staff.



06

Recruitment

Why is this important?

Chapters have minimum requirements of volunteers to host a Brigade due to required in-country costs and logistics (14 volunteer minimum for Honduras, Panama, Belize, Guatemala, and Ghana; 8 volunteer minimum for Greece). Strong recruitment ensures not only hitting your minimum goals but establishing the building blocks of long-term impact and Chapter sustainability.

How should I prepare to recruit?

- Determine opportunities to promote your Brigade on campus — org fairs, tabling events, hanging fliers. Table at first-look fairs, involvement fairs, or club expos whenever available.
- Wear chapter or Global Brigades merchandise to increase visibility and legitimacy.
- Distribute flyers, share QR codes linking to interest forms, and promote the chapter's Instagram.
- Recruit broadly — you do not need to be a healthcare professional to join a Brigade.
- Have a good understanding of the organization and your specific Brigade details before recruiting.

Questions volunteers will ask

- What is Global Brigades? What is the Holistic Model?
- What type of Brigade are you planning? Where and when?
- What is the expected time/financial commitment?
- What can I expect to do/see on a Brigade?
- Do I need any licenses/certifications to join?
- How can I stay involved/hear about future events?
- What value does a Brigade provide to a student's educational, personal, and professional development?

Where should I promote?

- Table outside high-traffic academic buildings (chemistry, biology, public health, language buildings). Even simple outreach like holding flyers and wearing apparel can be effective.
- Email professors in relevant departments to request 2-5 minutes for a brief class announcement.
- Post announcements on Canvas/Blackboard discussion boards. Work with pre-health or career advising offices for newsletters.
- Host multiple information sessions throughout the year — both in-person and virtual. Your GB Success Advisor is there to support.
- Utilize GB's pre-created info session slide decks edited with your Chapter's specific information.
- Collaborate with other GMB Chapter types on campus (e.g., if you're Dental, connect with a Medical Chapter or connect with similar clubs like AMSA).
- Tabling events at back-to-school fairs and start of spring semester are always highly recommended.

Info Session Tips

- Use personal stories and testimonials to connect emotionally with prospective volunteers.
- Present clear facts: location, dates, financial breakdown, what to expect.
- For newer chapters, use Global Brigades' official [photos and videos](#).
- Your GB Success Advisor can join virtually to help lead and answer questions.

Advice

- Engagement is key! Follow up with interested students within 48 hours. Use personalized outreach.
- Members who speak authentically about their Brigade experience are the most effective recruiters.
- Think beyond healthcare — students in education, business, engineering, and more can contribute enormously.
- Do not limit recruitment to just your campus. Check if your chapter allows non-affiliated students.

Why is this important?

Brigade costs can be a barrier for volunteers. Fundraising not only reduces the financial burden on individuals but also builds community and strengthens your Chapter's presence on campus. It is important that your Chapter supports its members in creative, transparent, and organized fundraising practices. To get ideas visit the [GMB Fundraising page](#) to learn more and get inspired.

Fundraising strategies

Personal fundraising pages: Each volunteer should have an individual donation URL from the Global Brigades website. Encourage personal outreach to family, friends, and networks.

Group fundraisers: Restaurant partnerships, merchandise sales, local sponsorships, campus events, like a gala. Coordinate these as far in advance as possible.

Online crowdfunding: Share fundraising pages on social media. Tell your story with impact — explain what the Brigade is, how it impacts you, and why it matters.

University support: Universities can either donate directly to your Brigade/Chapter or help set up fundraising events. University funding can often be utilized for scholarships, activities, travel, and general support.

How should my Chapter promote fundraising?

- Provide structure: ready-to-use templates (emails, texts, flyers, budgets), short workshops, and examples from successful chapters.
- Promote opportunities outside of the student body — involve the community, local businesses, faculty members.
- Students typically have less access to excess funding compared to working adults. Get creative to make high- impact fundraisers happen!



How should I market a fundraiser?

Even the best fundraiser can fail without strong marketing. Every fundraiser should have a clear promotion plan:

- Printed supplies (flyers, posters, table signs)
- Social media posts (stories, countdowns, reminders)
- Word of mouth (meetings and conversations)
- Announcements (through classes, professors, or group chats)
- Tabling in high traffic campus areas

Don't be afraid to think outside the usual promotions. Try temporary art installations, gamified giving, and use human billboards to name just a few.

Make instructions extremely clear and repeat them often. For example: "Go to Chipotle on Tuesday between 4–8 PM and say this phrase at checkout."

Collecting and allocating funds

- The easiest practice is to have funds automatically added to your MyBrigades page.
- For on-campus events, consider cash or fund transfer services (PayPal, Venmo, CashApp).
- Before any money is raised, agree on how group fundraising funds will be accepted and allocated. Transparency is essential.
- Common approaches: splitting funds among attendees of each event, or evenly reducing each member's individual balance.

Best Practices

- Coordinate fundraisers as far in advance as possible
- Revisit plans if circumstances change and update members immediately
- Always explore all possibilities and see what works best for your chapter
- Put all fundraising policies in writing
- Decide the allocation method before a fundraiser happens

ADVICE

- Fundraising is trial and error. Not every event will be successful, and that's fine. Put energy elsewhere to still reach Donation Goals.
- Set realistic, achievable goals for each fundraiser.
- Your Success Advisor is there to support with fundraising brainstorming sessions and calendars.
- **Make sure to thank your donors!** Share impact, send handwritten thank-you.
- Some universities require approval before fundraising on campus, check your policies.



08

Year-Round Involvement

Why is this important?

Keep the momentum going and continue to support GB's mission of providing sustainable care. A Brigade is one week long — making sure members are interested and gaining additional experience and opportunities from the Chapter outside of the Brigade is very important for long-term sustainability.

How can I keep engagement year round?

- Host monthly general body meetings, share Brigade impact upon return (stats and testimonials).
- Host casual member outings, fundraising events, and recruitment events.
- Partake in local volunteer opportunities and collaborate with other clubs on campus.
- Think about succession planning before your Brigade even goes.
- Provide structured pre-professional programming: clinical skills workshops, alumni panels, ethics discussions, cultural humility training, resume workshops.
- Send weekly or biweekly emails or messages in a group chat for constant communication.

What should I do when my Brigade returns?

- Host an event where members share impact, pictures, and videos from the Brigade.
- Receive feedback so your chapter can identify areas of growth. GB sends a post-Brigade form, and your Chapter can send additional surveys.
- Think about strengths and weaknesses from both leadership and volunteer perspectives.
- Consider hosting a post-brigade panel to show excitement and motivation!
- Start considering where and when your Chapter wants to go next — utilize the post-Brigade excitement to mobilize for the future.

ADVICE

- Momentum can fade quickly — have at least one post-brigade reflection meeting or social scheduled before departure!
- Share impact immediately. Post photos, testimonials, and stats within the first 1–2 weeks to keep excitement high.
- Pre-professional programming significantly increases retention. Host skill-based workshops, alumni panels, or speakers.



09

Brigade Preparation

Why is this important?

Brigade preparation is essential for the Brigade running smoothly while in country! It's also helpful for first-time Brigaders to know what to expect. You may be traveling with people who have never traveled without their families, or it is their first time out of the country, or even first time on a plane! You should not assume anything is common sense.

How do I make sure volunteers are prepared?

- Send information to volunteers and parents in advance about travel plans, lodging arrangements, packing lists, and important travel details.

Host Pre-Brigade meetings on:

Language workshops: Get Brigaders familiar with basic phrases and Brigade-specific terms for community interactions.

Ethical volunteering: Make sure volunteers understand the mission and holistic model. Implement ethical scenario practice and discussion exercises.

Country culture/history: Research the country's customs, culture, food, history, economy, and language.

Clinical Skills Workshop (Medical Chapters): Go over clinic day structure and teach manual blood pressure, height/weight, pulse, and intake forms or sign up for our GB Institute's **Vitals Course** as a team or individually. Have volunteers use their personal email to sign-up. Complete the course to get your certificate.

Travel Logistics Workshop: Touch base on travel plans — packing, airport timing, luggage restrictions.

Social Meetings: Host movie nights, bowling, or other activities so Brigaders know each other before departure!



Preparing your leadership team

- Hold leadership-only meetings prior to the Brigade to discuss structure and logistics.
- Assign who will lead reflections and daily check-ins.
- Be sure your leadership is aware of rules and regulations so they can set expectations. Delegate responsibilities clearly.

On-Brigade responsibilities to assign

- Travel logistics (airport coordination, headcounts, rooming lists)
- Clinical station rotations and flow
- Reflection facilitation and daily huddles
- Volunteer morale and team bonding
- Documentation and photography
- Communication with in-country staff

ADVICE

- Delegate responsibilities and establish a culture where people can ask each other for help.
- Clearly set expectations with volunteers but let them know that Brigades come with variability — flexibility is truly important.
- Familiarize volunteers with GB's code of conduct as soon as they commit. Issues are less likely when expectations are set early.

10

On Brigade

Why is this important?

This is THE moment! This is what everyone has been preparing for. It is important to be organized, calm, and productive. Create an inclusive and empathetic group so that community members and health workers are getting the best, most productive help they can.

How can I be a strong leader on Brigade?

- Lead by example with professionalism, punctuality, and cultural respect.
- Stay calm, organized, and adaptable in fast-changing situations.
- Consistently check in on volunteer and support team morale.
- Ask volunteers what they want/need from you at the start of the Brigade.
- Plan fun activities to help volunteers feel comfortable with leaders.
- Create expectations as a team before departure — volunteers set expectations for leadership, and leadership sets expectations for volunteers.

Communication is of the UPMOST importance: Clearly outline when, where, and to whom a volunteer should bring their concerns. Communicate clearly with both volunteers and Brigade staff. If something is not going as planned, find a staff member immediately.

Assigning volunteers to stations

- Assign stations based on professional interest while allowing everyone a chance at each station.
- Rotate volunteers when possible — switch before and after lunch, ensure no back-to-back same stations. Clearly explain roles at each station before arrival to reduce confusion.
- Pair new members with experienced members when possible.
- Divide volunteers who speak the local language for translation support.
- Have volunteers share their most desired stations in advance.

What is a reflection and how should it be facilitated?

All Brigades host reflections at the end of each day for volunteers and team members to come together, bond, and provide feedback on their experiences so far.

- Start each day by reminding the team of the end-of-day reflection and any specific topics to focus on. Clearly outline when reflections will be held and who will lead them.
- Encourage different members to lead the reflection each night for diverse perspectives.
- Keep the space judgment-free and focused on learning, not "right" answers.
- Chapter Leaders model openness and respect by initiating reflections.

Reflection ideas:

- Note card swap — everyone writes the most meaningful moment anonymously, then swap SNAPS — anonymous kudos to peers (via a Google form or paper)
- Guiding questions: "What surprised you today?" "What did you learn?"
- One shoutout to a peer, one highlight of the day
- Rose, Bud, Thorn (rose: one good thing, bud: looking forward to, thorn: one hard thing) "What would you change for tomorrow?"
- "What quality did you notice in a doctor/community member you respect?"

Journaling provides a meaningful way to reflect. Consider providing journal prompts at the end of each reflection to create a shared Brigade narrative.

ADVICE

- Rely on your in country Coordinator! Don't be afraid to ask for help.
- Find strengths in your volunteers and ask for their support to lead by example.
- Be social! Don't just stick to your friends. A good chapter leader socializes with everyone.
- For large groups, break into smaller groups first to initiate comfortable conversation, then bring it to the big group.
- Remember there are no right or wrong reflections. The goal is to help you and your team process experiences and grow individually and as a team.



Thank You!

Thank you for your commitment to Global Medical Brigades and to the communities we serve. Your leadership makes a lasting difference.

medicalbrigades.org

globalbrigades.org