



INVESTING FOR THE FUTURE

The Practice and Potential of Employee
Volunteering in the UAE

Acknowledgements

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Partners



IMPACT2030 is a private sector-led initiative, in collaboration with the United Nations, social and public sectors, and academia, with the unique mission to activate human capital investments through employee volunteer programmes to advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



SiMPACT is facilitator of LBG (The London Benchmarking Group) Canada, a network of companies actively using business insights and impact measurement to achieve excellence in community investment, employee volunteering and giving.



The RW Institute (RWI) is a think tank out to solve unsolvable problems facing corporate community investment. The RWI vision is to create a powerful movement of volunteers working in communities across the world to address our most intractable problems.



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UAE-based Companies Who Contributed Data to this Report

- Unilever
Chalhoub Group
Jebel Ali Free Zone (Jafza)
DP World
DLA Piper Middle East LLP
Majid Al Futtaim
EGA
Omnicom Media Group MENA
Al Ahli Holding Group
Dubai Chamber
WORLD SECURITY
General Electric
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Key Finding Highlights



Measurement:

71% of the 48 companies surveyed actively attempt to gather impact data across metrics of productivity, employee well-being, employee engagement and impact on the community partner.



Impact:

70% measure the impact of their volunteer activities in some manner, with 56% measuring the impact on their community partners and 50% measuring the impact of employee engagement.



Participation Rates:

37% of employees participate in employee volunteering in the UAE which is significantly higher when compared to the participation rate of 31% in the USA.



Communication:

79% of companies are intentionally communicating volunteer opportunities to employees through a developed communications plan.



Rapid Growth:

60% of surveyed companies stated that volunteerism was on the rise within their companies, indicating significant growth for 2019.



SDG Alignment:

90% of companies report alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, those most frequently aligned with corporate activity are #4 (Quality Education-71%), #3 (Good Health and Well-Being-67%), and #9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure-42%).

PARTNERSHIPS FOR PROSPERITY



H.E. Abdulla Lootah

Director General of the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority, Vice Chairman of the National Committee on the Sustainable Development Goals in the UAE Federal Government

In the UAE, we firmly believe that the purpose of global development is to enrich the lives of current and future generations of our citizens and people around the world. This is why the UAE is one of the most prominent and active players in global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The UAE has played an important role in the formulation of Agenda 2030. We aimed to ensure a consensus on the importance of sustainable development as a key outcome of the Rio+20 Summit. For almost three years thereafter, we worked with the global community to institutionalise the SDGs until they were adopted in 2015, and to make the UAE one of the first nations to join the global journey towards human prosperity via sustainability.

Deeply enmeshed in this process was a critical role for the private sector. In the UAE, we firmly believe that public-private partnerships can play an integral role in fulfilling the global sustainability agenda.

Leaders around the world are exploring the different ways that disruptive partnerships can impact their nation's economic and social developmental vision and strategy. The private sector, with its wealth of experience in innovation as well as research and development, can play a great role in aggregating the sustainability message, pushing cross-border insights, and using the process to create sustainable prosperity nationally and internationally.

The UAE National Committee on the Sustainable Development Goals is a government body with a mandate to overview the nation's fulfillment of the SDGs. This year, the committee formulated the Private Sector Advisory Council, an innovative initiative that aims to create opportunities for collaboration on the SDGs between the UAE government and industry leaders from local, regional and international private sector organisations and across various verticals such as aviation, manufacturing and consulting.

Just like the UAE, many nations today aspire to export their knowledge and best practices of their suitability experiences. Via innovative partnerships with the private sector, nations will not only be able to share their thought leadership across borders, but will also gain access to experiences from around the world on how to achieve greater prosperity for their people, economy and environment.

In recent years, many new forms of voluntary activities by companies to achieve economic and social goals have emerged. We firmly believe the SDGs can redefine an advanced, more meaningful definition concept of "corporate" in "corporate social responsibility."

I have full confidence that these collaborative efforts, including the UAE National Committee on SDGs, the Private Sector Advisory Council and numerous partnership programmes and initiatives with our national and international partners, will have a tremendous positive impact on our global drive to build prosperous and sustainable life for future generations and leave no one behind.

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In the UAE, we firmly believe that public-private partnerships can play an integral role in fulfilling the global sustainability agenda.”

DIPLOMATS AT THE SERVICE OF THE SDGS



H.E. Bernardino León

Director General of Emirates Diplomatic Academy

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were born from the recognition that sustainable development can only be achieved when all stakeholders from all countries join their efforts and work towards the same goals. At the Emirates Diplomatic Academy, we are developing the diplomats of tomorrow and the leaders of the coming decades. Our nine-month training programme focuses on providing our Emirati diplomat trainees with a well-rounded set of academic knowledge and professional skills, ranging from international law and economics to multilateral negotiations and crisis management.

One of the key values for a successful diplomat is being respectful and tolerant to other point of views. In the same spirit of promoting tolerance, the UAE has appointed a Minister of State for Tolerance and declared 2019 as the Year of Tolerance. At the academy, our students are exposed to a number of opportunities to shape this essential value of tolerance during their training. These include field trips to other countries and UN conferences, organising and speaking at events and especially volunteering.

In a fast-paced society, driven by technology, where we expect our counterparts to be responsive 24 hours a day, giving time back to the society is an enormous gift. This year, all our diplomat trainees will be volunteering for the Special Olympics, which will take place in Abu Dhabi in March 2019. We strongly feel that today's diplomats should perceive civic engagement not just as an 'add-on' but a core part of their duties both professionally and personally as representatives of their countries. And in doing so, through engaging with people of determination and of different cultures, our

students will learn from different perspectives how to be an 'ambassador of tolerance'.

According to the UN 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report, there are an estimated one billion volunteers worldwide. Volunteering is also at the core of the 2030 Agenda. In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/70/129) on a plan of action for 'Integrating Volunteering into Peace and Development', which notes that "volunteerism offers valuable opportunities for youth engagement, leadership and participation to contribute to the development of peaceful and inclusive societies, while also allowing youth to acquire skills, build their capacities and increase their employability." This is particularly true in our region where youth, volunteering and diplomacy can play an impactful role by coming together.

Perhaps nowhere else in the world is youth as much in the focus today as in the Middle East and North Africa region. Youth employment, inclusion in society and engagement decision-making are top priorities of many governments in this region. In the UAE likewise, the leadership is placing a great deal of emphasis on youth inclusion and leadership. The most salient examples have been the creation of the post of Minister of Youth Affairs and the establishment of youth councils across the government. This strategic approach will undoubtedly help shape a generation of future leaders that are equipped to tackle the major sustainable development challenges ahead, including persistent conflict, social inequity and environmental degradation.

At the same time, the UAE government has been working to strengthen the culture of volunteering across the board. The UAE is already a regional leader in charitable giving. Forthcoming major global events, such as the Special Olympics and the World Expo 2020, which will rely on large numbers of volunteers, will help broaden the focus into 'charitable doing'. The Expo 2020, which is expected to attract 25 million visitors from around the world, is a major opportunity for UAE diplomacy to showcase the UAE's role in supporting the 2030 Agenda regionally and globally. It is also a significant opportunity for UAE youth, including our diplomat trainees, to make a positive contribution and learn lessons that transcend the classroom.

Young people equipped with a strong sense of civic engagement will be needed in all sectors of society to turn the SDGs into reality, not just in diplomacy. I invite all educational institutions in the UAE and beyond to set up permanent volunteering programmes and opportunities for both their students and staff, which are aligned with supporting the SDGs and also help foster a more inclusive and tolerant society.

PARTNERING FOR IMPACT

Sue Stephenson

Co-founder and Interim CEO of
IMPACT2030

www.impact2030.com



The ambitious nature of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) places responsibility on all companies to play a role in helping to eradicate poverty, improve opportunity, advance equality and protect the planet. At IMPACT2030, our mission is to harness the power of people and partnerships to maximise the impact on these Goals. We believe that a commitment to the investment of human capital through employee volunteering programmes is a powerful tool for companies to accelerate impact on local and international development, unleash the passion and creativity of their people towards a common vision of the SDGs, and inspire the private sector to positive action.

IMPACT2030 is proud of the launch of the *Investing for the Future: The Practice and Potential of Employee Volunteering in the UAE* report. Developed in collaboration with the RW Institute and SiMPACT, we are very grateful to the multiple stakeholders across the UAE that supported this important research. The results highlight the immense potential of the region's private sector sharing its talent

with communities as a critical lever to ensure sustained impact.

Anchored by SDG 17, Partnerships for the Goals, IMPACT2030 is also focused on helping companies see that by working together across industries and sectors they can identify shared priorities, amplify the impact of their human capital investments to tackle societal issues, and align these efforts to measurable outcomes. Traditionally, human capital investment programmes have been developed and deployed in an isolated company-by-company approach without the power of a unified strategy. At IMPACT2030, we are currently testing new models for collaboration and connecting companies with a network of United Nations' agencies, government agencies, social-sector organisations and civil society to help reimagine the potential of multi-sector collaboration and the vast untapped potential to channel the time and talent of skilled professionals as a global movement for good.

Foreword



Chris Jarvis

Co-Founder, Chief Strategy
Officer, Realized Worth

Executive Director, RW
Institute

Founding Board member,
IMPACT2030

It is my privilege to present this report, *Investing for the Future: The Practice and Potential of Employee Volunteering in the UAE*, the world's first regionally-focused report on the capacity of employee volunteering to meaningfully contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Employee volunteering holds tremendous potential as a positive vehicle for business involvement in local and international development initiatives. Employee volunteering is an evolution beyond traditional corporate philanthropy and a one-way flow of financial investment into communities to enable a more dynamic exchange between the private sector and key stakeholder groups representing community and civil society.

Mobilising employees to voluntarily take action in communities where they live and work is a powerful idea. This type of community investment generates multiple entry points for the private sector to partner with communities and governments around the world to co-create highly localised and relevant approaches to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The voluntary prosocial actions of employees include a massive array of social networks as well as the social capital represented across those networks. This enables businesses to operate beyond the more siloed organisation-to-issue approach typically represented in most collective impact projects whereby organisations are often viewed as the primary actor in providing solutions. IMPACT2030 believes that the emphasis should be on mobilising employees as primary actors, working together with multiple stakeholders and across multiple geographical scales. This approach to mobilising human capital holds the promise of real progress towards achieving the SDGs.

Given the global interest and the relatively nascent nature of employee volunteering, there is considerable space for growth and improvement in both practice and knowledge. We expect this research, supported by numerous stakeholders across the UAE, to provide new insights towards the rapid and positive evolution of the practice. Practically, this report confirms the potential across the UAE to invest the voluntary efforts of thousands of professionals, with support from their employers, to create sustainable solutions to challenges as outlined in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

VOLUNTEERING AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

MOHAMMAD AL HASHIMY
DP WORLD

DP World has a long heritage of creating opportunities for our employees to give back in their communities. Today, through our global sustainability programme, "Our World, Our Future", we encourage our 45,000 employees across 40 countries to take time during the workday to volunteer on local projects that make the world cleaner, healthier, safer, and more productive.

"Our World, Our Future" creates volunteer opportunities around four key themes: social welfare, education, health, and the environment. To help employees feel like they're part of something bigger, we align our activities around a designated Global Volunteering Week and around an in-school Global Education Programme.

IMPACT2030 is a key partner in this work, helping us to set objectives and align our efforts with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As the Regional Voice Lead, we expose other businesses in the UAE to the SDGs as well, helping them ensure that their volunteerism is linked to real, measurable change. Serving as Regional Voice Lead lets us share what we have learned through our own volunteerism efforts, including serving as a thought partner to our peers on programmatic and evaluation strategy.

The SDGs are our world's best hope for creating a brighter future, and they cannot be achieved without private sector collaboration. We are proud to contribute, both by serving as a role model and by building peers' capacity as a IMPACT2030 Regional Voice Lead, to the development of UAE-based employee volunteering programmes that help tackle issues around poverty, inequality and climate change. By working together, we can multiply the impact we make on behalf of the greater good.

We also know that our world's greatest challenges won't be solved today. That's why we have led the pilot of the World's Largest Lesson initiative alongside Linklaters and PwC, to introduce the SDGs into school classrooms and engage future generations. We are eager to see the change that these young people will make as they become our world's next leaders.

Leading the development of the IMPACT2030 capacity mapping report was another key initiative we took to catalyse increased employee volunteering across the region. This report lays out challenges and opportunities to corporate volunteering efforts in the UAE, and creating a blueprint for companies that are developing employee volunteering efforts at a regional, national and international level and helping regional stakeholders better align their employee volunteering programme goals with the SDGs.

Private companies' ability to effect change is immense, particularly when it is strategic and coordinated across sectors. The SDGs and IMPACT2030 are, respectively, an ideal platform and an ideal partner for coordinated, strategic action.

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The SDGs are our world's best hope for creating a brighter future, and they cannot be achieved without private sector collaboration. ”

Mohammad Al Hashimy is the Deputy Group General Counsel and Company Secretary for DP World.

DP World is the Regional Voice Lead for IMPACT2030.



FOSTERING A CULTURE OF CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP IN THE UAE

HUSAM AL SAYED
EMIRATES NBD

In 2016, Emirates NBD became one of 11 financial institutions in the United Arab Emirates to have signed the 'Dubai Declaration of Financial Institutions in the UAE on Sustainable Finance,' as part of the Group's commitment to align its corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through our collaboration with IMPACT 2030, we are committed to advancing the UN SDGs through our volunteering activities.

At Emirates NBD, we firmly believe that we have responsibilities not only towards our customers, employees, and shareholders, but also to the communities in which we serve. The bank is a pioneer in the UAE and Middle East in the field of corporate volunteering, thanks to the contribution and support of our employees as part of the bank's award-winning Exchanger programme.

Since its launch in 2015, Exchanger has evolved into one of the UAE's leading corporate volunteering programmes, successfully embodying the values that guide our social investment practices. The programme enables employees to contribute time towards a variety of different causes including empowering people with disabilities, promoting financial literacy, women's empowerment, health and wellness, environment, and community development. We are proud to note that our corporate volunteers have completed over 75,000 hours of volunteering service, creating direct impact

on more than 145,00 UAE community members.

Programmes like Exchangers are an integral part of Emirates NBD's CSR commitment and goal to increase community volunteering nationwide. We take inspiration from the UAE government, which has been at the forefront of efforts across the region to build a spirit of community service and encourage volunteering among citizens and residents alike. This is reflected in initiatives such as the UAE's National Strategy for Voluntary Work 2021, which seeks to improve and consolidate voluntary work and make the UAE a regional and global leading country in volunteering.

As a member of IMPACT 2030, Emirates NBD is part of a taskforce for a research paper that carried out a capacity mapping of corporate volunteering in the UAE, the first research of its kind globally. Through such efforts, we aim to lead by example for private sector organisations in the UAE and wider region. As the world grapples with a myriad of pressing issues such as poverty, inequality and climate change, we believe the private sector is uniquely poised to create real and sustainable change, through the volunteering efforts of corporate employees. By fostering a culture of volunteering and community service, companies, organisations and government entities can work together to promote sustainable development and build a better future for new generations.

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By fostering a culture of volunteering and community service, companies, organisations and government entities can work together to promote sustainable development and build a better future for new generations.”



Husam Al Sayed is the Chief Group Human Resources Officer for Emirates NBD.

Investing for the Future in the UAE

The Sustainable Development Goals: a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future

The UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, commonly referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Global Goals, is one of the most ambitious plans of our time. Divided into 17 goals that reflect the world's greatest environmental, social, economic, and political challenges, the SDGs provide a framework for people from all backgrounds, sectors, and regions to work together towards a better future.

The SDGs represent an historic effort "to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity."¹ But achieving real and lasting change in the world is neither simple nor cheap. Estimates on the annual cost of achieving the SDGs (across all sectors) range from about \$US 3.9 trillion² to

\$US 6 trillion³. Given the current commitments of governments and other organisations globally, this leaves a world-wide funding gap in the range of \$3 trillion to \$5 trillion annually.⁴

Former UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon's, remarks at the 2015 UN Private Sector Forum⁵ ring with urgency:

"I am counting on the private sector to drive success. Now is the time to mobilise the global business community as never before. The case is clear. Realising the Sustainable Development Goals will improve the environment for doing business and building markets. Trillions of dollars in public and private funds are to be redirected towards the SDGs, creating huge opportunities for responsible companies to deliver solutions."

Is there an additional \$US5 trillion in cash to be found to invest in achieving the SDGs on an annual basis? And if so, can financial capital alone solve global challenges? Making up this shortfall requires innovative thinking and new models for sustainable community investment that encompass multiple forms of investment capital, including the human capital⁶ that may be accessed through employee volunteering.

¹United Nations Development Programme, What Are the Global Goals?, <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

²United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, World Investment Report 2014, https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/wir2014_en.pdf

³Global Policy Watch, Funding Needs for UN's 2030 Development Agenda, <https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/blog/2017/05/29/funding-needs-for-uns-2030-development-agenda/>

⁴United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, World Investment Report 2014, https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/wir2014_en.pdf

⁵United Nations Secretary-General, Secretary-General's remarks at the United Nations Private Sector Forum, September 2015, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2015-09-26/secretary-generals-remarks-united-nations-private-sector-forum>

⁶ Human capital refers to "the importance of people – their abilities, their knowledge, and their competences – to economic growth.", <https://www.oecd.org/insights/37967294.pdf>

The UAE commitment to the SDGs

The SDGs reflect an optimism about humankind's shared future, and a recognition that each person has a role to play in the co-creation of our shared future. The UAE continues to show its commitment to the fulfillment of the SDGs on a federal level through the development of the National Committee on the SDGs in the UAE Federal Government, whose mandate it is to align the work of all UAE ministries around the SDGs, as part of existing development frameworks such as Visions 2021 and 2071. This alignment can be seen in Emirate-level strategies that have a shared goal of reaching

the SDGs by 2030, such as the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030, Environment Vision 2030 (Abu Dhabi), Plan Abu Dhabi 2030, Dubai Autonomous Transportation Strategy and the Dubai Industrial Strategy 2030, among others. Additionally, the National Committee's report, *the United Arab Emirates and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, states that "Engagement with the private sector to achieve national development goals is part of the operating model of the UAE government."⁷ This commitment to partner with the private sector in achieving the SDGs provides a strong basis for the need and relevance of this report.

⁷UAE Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority, United Arab Emirates and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Excellence in Implementation: Executive Summary, Voluntary National Review, UN High Level Political Forum 2018, http://fcsa.gov.ae/en-us/Lists/D_Reports/Attachments/14/UAESDGs-EN.PDF



IMPACT2030: Achieving the SDGs through employee volunteering

IMPACT2030 is a private sector-led initiative, in collaboration with the United Nations, social and public sectors, and academia, with the unique mission to activate human capital investments through employee volunteer programmes to advance the achievement of the SDGs. In this role, IMPACT2030 works to support companies and coalitions across the globe as they find entry points to align corporate community investments with the SDGs.

It is important to recognise that the practice of formal volunteering, as covered in this report, has traditionally been understood within specific cultural and socio-economic settings. Yet now, with multinational companies mandating the mobilisation of employees locally and globally, these contextual understandings of volunteering are being challenged. This is a concern for both companies intending to be sensitive to the diverse cultural settings of its global workforce as well as for the nations in which

those companies operate. Yet while these considerations are challenging, the belief that employee volunteering offers material and measurable benefits⁸ for companies, employees and communities is gaining widespread acceptance⁹.

Therefore, as a global movement, the IMPACT2030 initiative works to enable and foster a dialogue involving the worldwide community. Not only is the dialogue global in scope, it is inclusive of many key actors looking to achieve the SDGs in their communities. Individuals from regions across the globe are invited to share their unique experiences and learnings, as well as the barriers facing key stakeholders of the respective regions in the practice of employee volunteering. To do this well, IMPACT2030 has placed a priority on developing innovative structures and processes whereby the opinions of actors from different regions can be efficiently and effectively heard.

⁸Rodell, J. B. 2013. Finding meaning through volunteering: Why do employees volunteer and what does it mean for their jobs? *Academy of Management Journal*, 56: 1274-1294.

⁹Caligiuri, P., Mancin, A., & Jiang, K. 2013. Win-win-win: The influence of company-sponsored volunteerism programs on employees, NGOs, and business units. *Personnel Psychology*, 66: 825-860.

The UAE Year of Giving: The Critical Role of Employee Volunteering

This report was commissioned as a result of the declaration by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan that 2017 would be the “Year of Giving” in the UAE. Najla Al Awar, the UAE Minister of Community Development at the time, declared that the strategic initiatives outlined as part of the UAE’s Year of Giving will “seek to organise volunteerism on the individual and corporate level and make it a way of living in the UAE society. Volunteering is certainly a significant contributor to the national economy and social well-being”. The purpose of commissioning the report was to gain a better understanding of the capacity of employee volunteering in the UAE and the opportunities to contribute to the betterment of communities across the Arab world. This is in-line with the stated desire¹⁰ of The National Strategy for the Year of Giving to “Develop

research and case studies for organisations to examine their initiatives and implement improvements where needed.”

In March of 2017, DP World and the RW Institute¹¹ hosted the initial workshop to begin mapping the capacity of employee volunteering to contribute to achieving the SDGs. Using the well established London Benchmarking Group (LBG)¹² model as a data collection and reporting framework, the SiMPACT Strategy Group¹³ facilitated the data collection and evaluation. The LBG model is recognized by the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) as a recognised international standard for community investment management, measurement and reporting.

The process of producing this report included the following steps:

- 1 Creating a regionally focused IMPACT2030 Action Team to drive the project.
- 2 Conducting surveys of both the existing employee volunteering activity as well as the potential for new employee volunteering across the UAE.
- 3 Exploring the potential to apply the human capital represented in employee volunteering towards helping achieve the SDGs in the UAE and the broader Arab world.
- 4 Outlining opportunities and barriers to be addressed by multiple stakeholders (including the regional capacity to take advantage of employee volunteering).
- 5 Producing the final report to share with multiple sectors in the UAE that have a shared interest in investing in the future of the UAE.

The findings from this research are highly encouraging. Companies in the region understand and are motivated by the SDGs. The combined contribution of the 48 companies surveyed totaled 65,012 hours in 2016 with an average 37% participation rate. Additionally, 90% reported some intentional employee volunteering alignment with the SDGs. Within that group, 38% reported that at least 50% of their volunteering was aligned, while a further 32% aligned 25% or more of activities.

¹⁰UAE National Strategy for the Year of Giving, <https://www.giving.ae/en/year-of-giving/volunteering>

¹¹<http://www.rw.institute>






¹²<https://www.lbg-canada.ca/about-lbg/lbg-model/>

¹³<https://simfactsg.com>



The research suggests there are ample opportunities for growth. Among companies that have not yet aligned to the SDGs, a full 85% reported that they intended to align volunteer activities with the SDGs in the near future. Furthermore, the impact is reaching beyond the workplace, with many companies involving the families of staff as well as their customers. In short, there is a strong foundation of employee volunteerism contributing to the SDGs in the UAE, and the conditions for continued growth are in place.

This report provides critical insight in the following areas:

-  Unique understanding of the existing ways in which companies in the UAE are investing their human capital in achieving the SDGs and their capacity for continuing to do so
-  Potential barriers to achieving impact through employee volunteering that might be resolved through collaboration with a broad set of stakeholders
-  Clarity on the value of the human capital contributions of companies towards achieving the SDGs in the UAE through employee volunteering
-  An invitation to a broader set of long-term opportunities for enhanced cooperation around investing corporate human capital in achieving the SDGs as well as practical examples already in place
-  Practical steps the private sector may take in contributing to meeting the “increasing need to involve volunteers in activities, programmes, initiatives and campaigns that support humane, environmental and social issues.”¹⁴

¹⁴UAE National Strategy for the Year of Giving, <https://www.giving.ae/en/year-of-giving/volunteering>

Figure 1: the Sustainable Development Goals



Barriers to Address, Opportunities to Build On

The landscape for SDG-aligned employee volunteerism in the UAE is promising, with public, private, and NGO stakeholders all prioritising the practice. The scope and scale of the challenges that the SDGs seek to address are massive and all parties need to come together to address key barriers and build on existing opportunities.




Building Private Sector Linkages

A primary goal of the SDGs is to create connections and network effects, multiplying the positive impact that any individual stakeholder might have on the world. Though individual companies within the UAE are making substantial contributions to the SDGs, there is an opportunity to strengthen linkages between individual company employee volunteering projects across the country. Additionally, there are opportunities to connect corporate human capital investments within the UAE to development opportunities across the Arab world.

When companies work together through employee volunteering there is greater

potential to address the SDGs by means of a ‘continuum of effect’. Rather than attempting to address complex environmental and social issues through the human capital represented within one company or industry, a collective approach has the potential to address social and environmental issues at a system wide level through a diversity of industry expertise, core competencies, and cross sector partnerships across multiple scales (local, national and regional). This approach would provide an innovative approach to achieving the UAE’s desire to “coordinate volunteer efforts between the public and private sectors through shared initiatives and programmes that aim to have an extensive impact on communities.”¹⁵

The research contained within this report recommends maximising the potential of employee volunteerism within the UAE by:

-  Creating opportunities for companies to invest in community development through partnerships with other companies that will minimise cost and improve return on investment. This will require further dialogue with supporting public, private, and NGO partners to encourage this type of cooperation
-  Exploring how local employee volunteer investments could better connect to similar efforts in other Emirates for greater and sustained impact at a national level
-  Using digital platforms to enable companies based in the UAE to bring the value of employee volunteering to the broader Arab world through mentoring, promoting entrepreneurship, access to the digital economy and education support
-  Exploring case studies of successful employee volunteering from other regions as well as sharing examples of impactful approaches that might shape global best practices

¹⁵UAE National Strategy for the Year of Giving, <https://www.giving.ae/en/year-of-giving/volunteering>

Call Out: P&G Leave Your Mark Campaign

In August 2018, P&G teamed up with Carrefour supermarkets for the 'Leave Your Mark' campaign. The campaign included planting one Ghaf tree for every P&G product sold at Carrefour supermarkets throughout the UAE, in honour of the Year of Zayed. This initiative, undertaken in collaboration with UAE non-profit Goumbook, led to the planting of over 20,000 Ghaf seeds, by 100 employee volunteers and family members from

P&G, Carrefour, DP World and other companies. More than 20,000 Ghaf seeds were planted in just one hour, to set a new Guinness World Record. These entities showed the power of creating connections through partnerships while harnessing local federal initiatives such as the Year of Zayed to bring awareness to the need for the protection of the UAE's indigenous Ghaf tree.

Employees from DP World and P&G planting Ghaf seeds at P&G's Leave Your Mark campaign.







Building Linkages Between Academia and the Public and Private Sectors

As UAE priorities move towards becoming a hub of SDG-aligned research in the Arab region through the SDG Center of Excellence for the Arab Region¹⁶, a future opportunity to build on in the area of employee volunteering is greater partnerships between academia and the public and private sector. Employee volunteering holds tremendous potential as

a positive vehicle for business involvement in local and international development initiatives. Region-specific research through partnerships between academia and the public and private sectors in the UAE has the potential to enhance the understanding and prioritisation of SDG-aligned employee volunteering both locally and regionally.

Some of the practical value generated through improved and expanded connections between practice and research would be:

-  **Scientific evidence:** to explain observations of business benefits¹⁷ such as improved employee engagement, retention and productivity
-  **Advanced programme design:** informed by research explaining how best to encourage people to adopt new behaviours such as volunteering
-  **Lasting impact:** through a better understanding of how groups of individuals transform systems resulting in long-term culture change
-  **Volunteer experiences:** designed to stimulate neuroplasticity¹⁸ creating changes in neural pathways and synapses

Advancing the practice of employee volunteering in this manner will require an interdisciplinary approach that includes a variety of disciplines such as neuroscience, behavioural science, cognitive science, social science, Transformative Learning Theory, Identity-Based Experiential Learning Theory and more. This type of interdisciplinary research process allows for a conversation beyond a mere evaluation of 'what we are seeing' to explain 'why we are seeing it'.

As noted in the article "Employee Volunteering: A Review and Framework for Future Research",¹⁹ CSR managers and practitioners looking for better research are faced with a fragmented and multidisciplinary approach to the topic. Therefore, a key recommendation of this report is the creation of formal dialogue between researchers across multiple disciplines and those responsible for implementing and managing employee volunteering alongside stakeholders from other sectors of society in the UAE. An example of this type of dialogue is the RW Institute (RWI), which was founded to explore interdisciplinary common ground and directly connect academics with CSR managers. The Institute is an association of stakeholders who are committed to innovative projects, research, analysis and public policy development to remove existing barriers and promote the practice and theory of corporate citizenship on a global scale.

¹⁶Sustainable Development Solutions Network, November 2018, <http://unsdsn.org/news/2018/11/20/sdg-center-of-excellence-for-the-arab-region-launched/>

¹⁷LinkedIn, Angela Parker, April 2018, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/research-how-why-employee-volunteering-works-chris-jarvis/>

¹⁸Eagleman, D., Downar, J. (2016). Brain and Behavior: A Cognitive Neuroscience Perspective, New Oxford University Press, New York.


¹⁹Rodell, J. B., Breitsohl, H., Schröder, M., & Keating, D. J. (2016). Employee Volunteering: A Review and Framework for Future Research. Journal of Management, 42(1), 55–84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206315614374>


Enhancing Systems and Technology


The work of tracking volunteer activity and measuring its impact is no small feat. Companies, public entities, and NGOs are often each spending substantial time and resources tracking the same activity, leading to duplication of efforts and a more complicated process for volunteers and programme administrators.

Given the essential role of technology in supporting and tracking community investment in the UAE through employee volunteering to help achieve the SDGs, it is essential to understand what technology solutions are currently available to the region. A specific recommendation of this report is to invest in a comparative analysis of available workplace giving platforms currently used or potentially available to companies in the region, to help guide the selection of technology solutions, decrease inefficiencies in procurement and enable advances in the technologies supporting corporate citizenship programmes.

Based on interviews with several companies included in this report, additional recommendations are to:

 Work with the Ministry of Community Development to explore opportunities to better integrate federal and Emirate level volunteer registration systems with corporate and NGO systems and technology. This should include an evaluation of the ability of the federal system, volunteers.ae²⁰, and the Dubai Community Development Authority's, CDA Volunteers App²¹, to integrate with one another. The goal of these efforts should be streamlining of processes to ensure the needed data is available to all relevant stakeholders and there is limited duplication of data entry

 Provide more training to employees within each company to fully utilise the capacity of existing technology that connects them to volunteer opportunities and tracks their impact. This is a critical step towards better data collection and reporting

 Examine current technology platforms on their ability to adapt to future technologies. Such an evaluation will help prevent stakeholders from being "locked-in" to technology platforms that may become obsolete

²⁰ www.volunteers.ae

²¹ <https://www.cda.gov.ae/DubaiVolunteer/#/allCompaniesAndTeams>



Employees from DP World and P&G planting Ghaf seeds at P&G's Leave Your Mark campaign.

A Culture of Generosity

The leadership, community and companies of the UAE are generous and devoted to creating a better world. It is no surprise that SDG-aligned employee volunteerism has grown quickly across the country.

Traditional Islamic teachings such as Zakat, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, have long encouraged charitable giving for the benefit of others. These values easily align with many of the current priorities coming out of corporate citizenship efforts, such as employee volunteering. This historic culture of giving back is a powerful asset, and all stakeholders benefiting from employee volunteering must work together to:



Develop shared methodologies of reporting that not only include the outputs of employee volunteering (hours, people, projects) but also outcomes and long term impacts. This will ensure a volunteers' time is well spent and individual employees are able to see the impact of their work. Currently, 71% of companies actively attempt to gather impact data across metrics of productivity, employee well-being, employee engagement and impact on the community partner. However, this data tends to be output-oriented and lacks the power of strong storytelling that comes from understanding the long-term benefits of employee volunteering efforts (outcomes and impacts)



Create opportunities and compelling communication strategies to support year-round volunteering in SDG-aligned activities to engender a lifelong commitment to volunteering. The common practice of seasonal or event-based volunteering has limited potential in helping employees adopt volunteering as a lifestyle behaviour



Hold formal dialogues, on an ongoing basis, to better understand what employee volunteering investments are best aligned to the government's vision for achieving the SDGs. Community partners should consider creating volunteer opportunities calibrated to achieving those SDG priorities within the UAE and "facilitate collaborations between humanitarian organisations and charities in the UAE to create a system of expertise and information exchange."²²



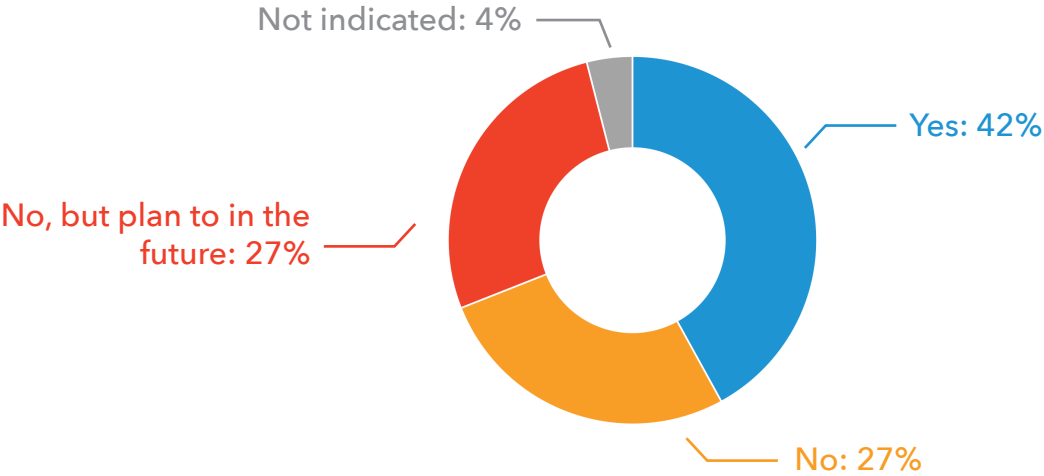
Companies based in the UAE should consider using platforms such as IMPACT2030 and regional initiatives to collectively connect with federal initiatives such as the Year of Tolerance to better align and promote their employee volunteering strategies. The goal would be to "Increase volunteer work in the country through awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of volunteering, and that encourage all sectors of society to participate."²³

These recommendations will enable stakeholders to ensure corporate human capital investments have the greatest possible impact on the SDGs, align with government priorities, represent traditional Islamic values and provide the greatest personal experience for volunteers.

²² UAE National Strategy for the Year of Giving, <https://www.giving.ae/en/year-of-giving/volunteering>

²³ UAE National Strategy for the Year of Giving, <https://www.giving.ae/en/year-of-giving/volunteering>

Figure 2: Employee Awareness of the SDGs



- **42%** of companies are encouraging employees to be aware of the SDGs.
- **A further 27%** of companies are planning to educate employees about the SDGs in the future.

Call Out: UPS and Emirates Foundation Road Code: Creating Innovative Employee Volunteer Programmes Through Partnerships




Global logistics provider UPS exceeded its goal of educating new drivers on safe driving techniques by 44% in 2018, one year after launching the UPS Road Code™ initiative in the UAE in 2017 with over 48,000 teenagers participating in the programme worldwide. The international safe driving programme was launched locally, in partnership with Emirates Foundation, an independent national organisation supported by Abu Dhabi Government, to facilitate public-private funded initiatives for empowerment of youth across the UAE. Aiming to

encourage the safety and wellbeing of drivers, safety training was provided to 112 sites across the US, Canada, China, Great Britain, Germany, Mexico and UAE with a commitment to creating the most accident-free environment possible.

Diversity of Employee Volunteering Opportunities

Due to sophisticated social support systems in the UAE, the diversity of employee volunteer opportunities tends to be limited. The most common volunteer opportunities focus on school-aged youth, people of determination, environmental initiatives such as beach clean-ups and tree planting, care-packing initiatives aimed at labourers in the construction industry, and Ramadan iftar initiatives.

Such a limited set of opportunities can lead to a level of apathy from employee volunteers who participate in similar programmes repeatedly. In response, the private, public and NGO sectors should work towards greater collaboration and innovation to create a wider range of SDG-aligned employee volunteering initiatives. Expanding the types of volunteering opportunities in the region would require:

-  Exploratory sessions involving companies, NGOs and other beneficiaries to co-create mutually beneficial employee volunteer programmes in areas currently over looked. Such sessions would help address the regional goal to “Increase volunteer work in the country through awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of volunteering, and that encourage all sectors of society to participate.”²⁴
-  Continued build out of skills-based volunteering capacities in the region to apply in areas currently underserved by employee volunteering such as mentoring, medicine and engineering. As the National Strategy for the Year of Giving notes, this will require companies to “develop specialised training workshops in order to help potential volunteers perform at an expert level, and provide certification programmes in order to entitle these volunteers to contribute, and represent the UAE, at international humane missions.”²⁵
-  Development of easily applied processes and systems to better help NGOs, social groups and community organisations to identify their needs in ways which are easily translated to an employee volunteer programme

²⁴ UAE National Strategy for the Year of Giving, <https://www.giving.ae/en/year-of-giving/volunteering>

²⁵ UAE National Strategy for the Year of Giving, <https://www.giving.ae/en/year-of-giving/volunteering>



Our Research

Methodology

Research was conducted by SiMPACT Strategy Group, an expert in social return on investment (SROI). The methodology of the research included surveys of 48 companies with operations in the UAE who currently practice employee volunteering. The responses were collected over a 60-day period between August and October 2017. Additional one-on-one interviews were conducted with a number of surveyed companies throughout 2018 to gain

deeper and more qualitative insight into the survey results.

Surveyed companies ranged from multinationals with 5,000+ employees in the region to startups with fewer than 250, and represented 12 of the largest industries in the UAE, including retail, real estate, manufacturing, construction, finance and insurance, hospitality, education, transportation, and professional and technical services.

Figure 3: Diversity of Surveyed Companies By Size

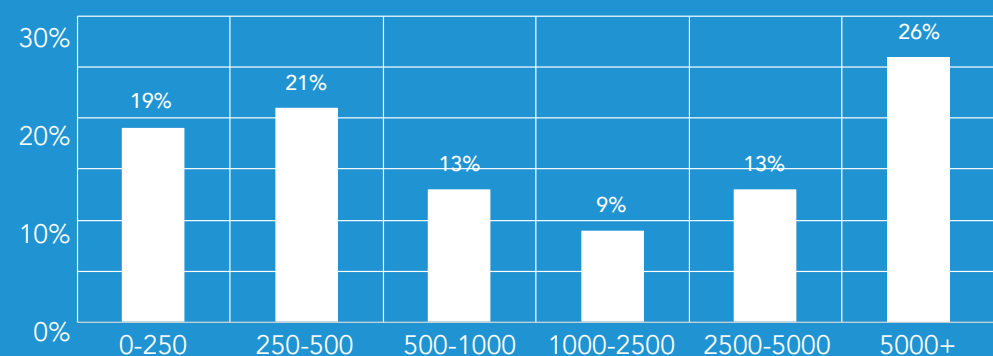
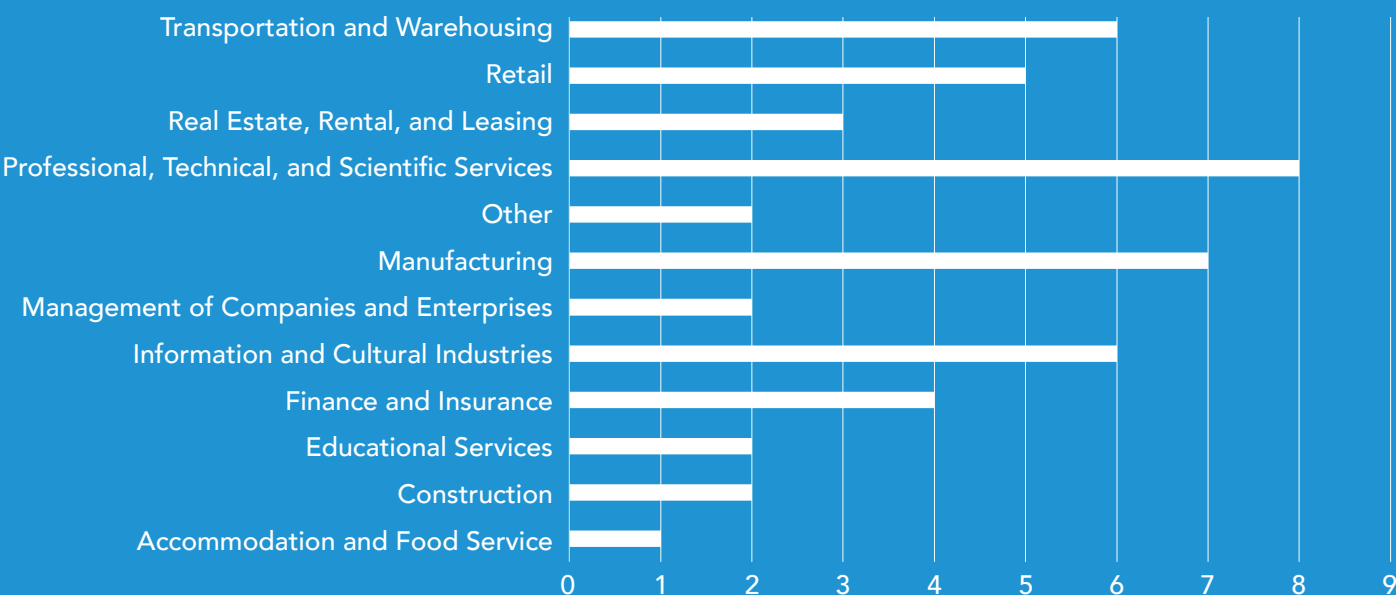


Figure 4: Diversity of Surveyed Companies By Industry



Key Findings

The research shows that employee volunteerism in the UAE is broadly supported in corporate culture and practice. Companies are encouraging sustained involvement towards a lasting impact on communities and this improves the morale of employees. Nearly two thirds of companies who encourage volunteering are bringing employees' family members into the activities, and 79% involve their customers, vendors or other stakeholders. Recognising that volunteering needn't be confined to the workday, 73% of companies offer opportunities for community involvement that extend beyond working hours. These progressive attitudes and approaches hold the promise of even further advancements in models of employee volunteering in the UAE as well as influencing global understandings of best practices.

The aggregate impact of employee volunteering in the UAE is substantial.

65,012
hours in 2016

Among surveyed companies, employee volunteers gave more than 65,000 hours of their time in 2016.

73%
of respondents encourage volunteering both during and outside of work hours.

The majority of companies, 73% of respondents, are encouraging their employees to volunteer outside of work hours as well as during work hours. Interestingly, 32% of employee volunteering occurred during work hours while 38% occurred during non-work hours. This may indicate either a preference among employees to volunteer during paid work hours or an inability to track volunteer hours among employees who are volunteering on their own time.

37%
average participation

Participation rates are high in the UAE at 37% compared to other parts of the world, such as the USA with an average of 31% participation, as reported among Fortune 500 companies.²⁶

The high levels of participation among employees (37%) is significantly higher than the UAE national average of 23% indicating that the private sector is playing a leadership role in promoting the practice of volunteering.²⁷

Participation rates at larger companies are substantially high indicating a strong corporate commitment to the practice. However, smaller organisations typically achieved higher participation rates overall.

²⁶ CECP, in association with The Conference Board. Giving in Numbers: 2018 Edition (page 16). <https://www.conference-board.org/giving-in-numbers/>

²⁷ Data based on a five-year score and averages: data represents average participation in countries surveyed in three or more different calendar years in the period 2013 to 2017. The CAF World Giving Index 2018, <https://www.cafonline.org/about-us/publications/2018-publications/caf-world-giving-index-2018>

Figure 5: Average Number of Volunteer Hours Reported by Surveyed Companies

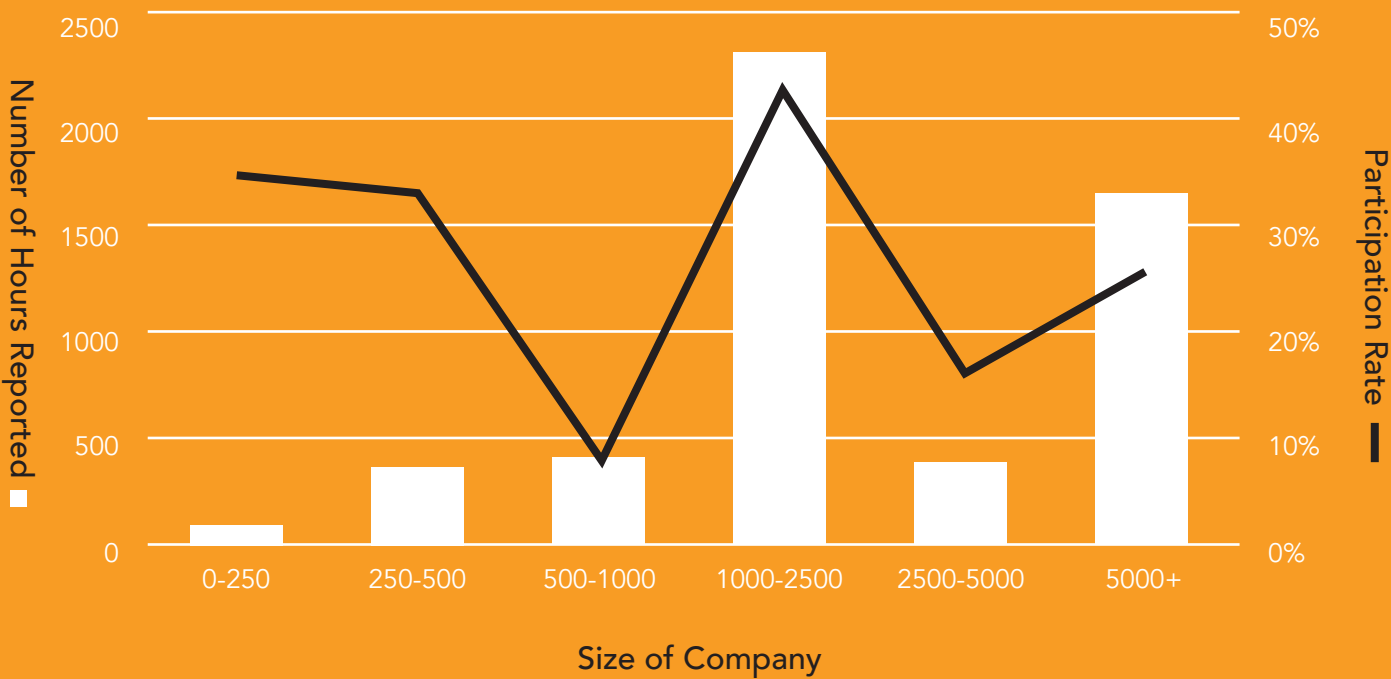


Figure 6: Surveyed Companies Offering Volunteering During and Outside of Working Hours

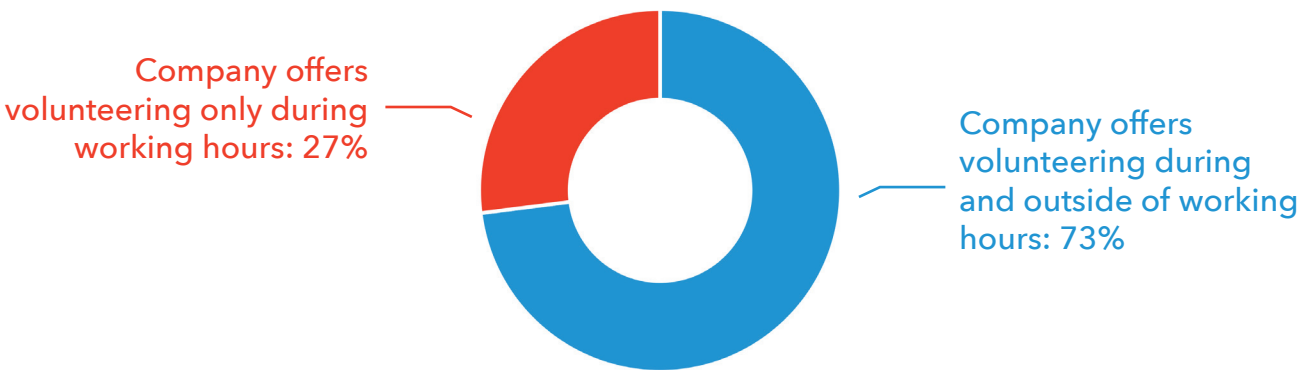
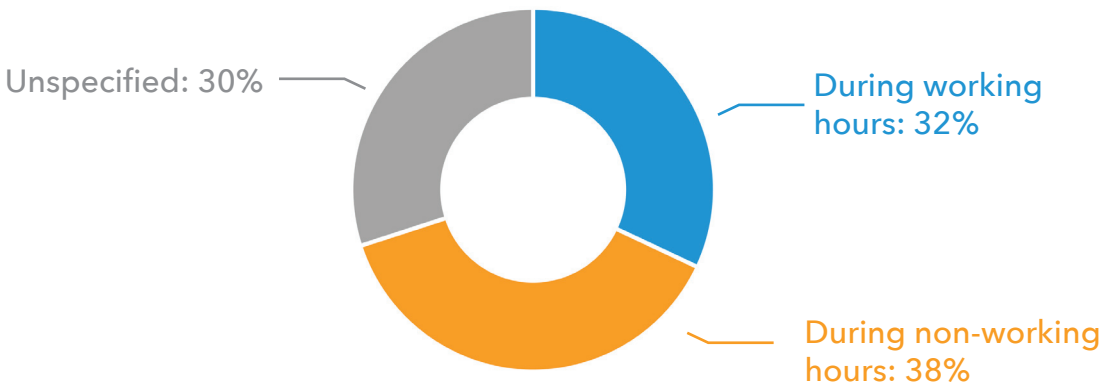


Figure 7: Proportion of Hours Volunteered During Work, Outside of Work, and Unspecified



The culture of employee volunteerism within the region is strong.

60%

of surveyed companies stated that volunteerism was on the rise within their companies, meaning that employee volunteering is anticipated to show significant growth in 2019.

Nearly 50%

of surveyed companies regularly encourage volunteering at home and internationally.



More than one in three employees at the surveyed companies volunteered during 2016, which is well above global averages.

The companies encouraging all employee profiles to volunteer (full time, part time, contractor, student, other) ranged across every company size. 56% reported that all employees were encouraged to participate, while one-fifth of survey respondents (20%) reported volunteering was only available to a subset of the employee base.

Nearly a third of companies match their employees' time with charitable contributions. This practice aligns well with the objectives of the National Strategy for the Year of Giving to "Provide incentives and rewards for volunteers to encourage them in further volunteering."²⁸

²⁸ UAE National Strategy for the Year of Giving, <https://www.giving.ae/en/year-of-giving/volunteering>



Figure 8: Companies Providing International Volunteering Opportunities to Employees

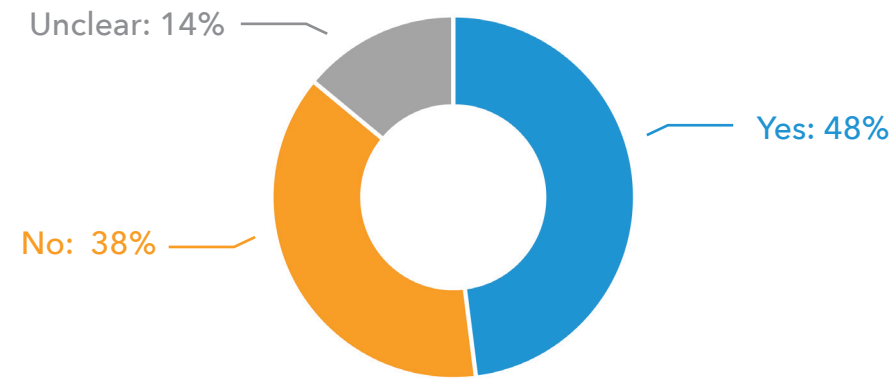


Figure 9: Annual Change in Participation in Employee Volunteering Programmes

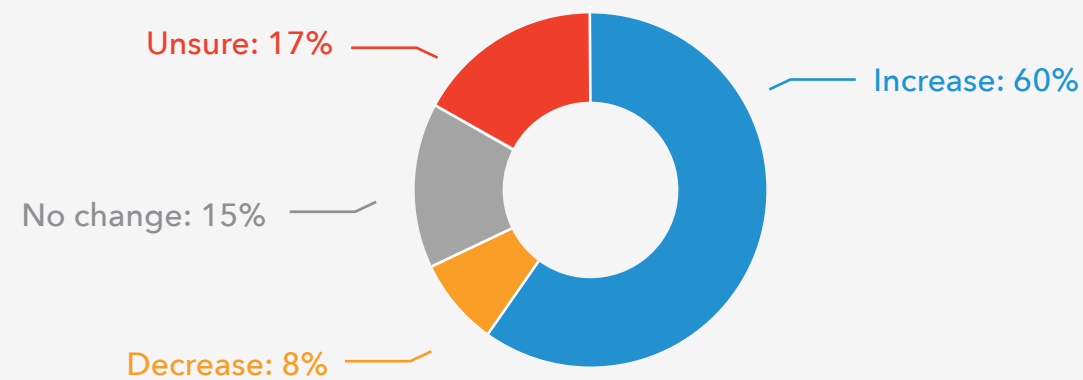
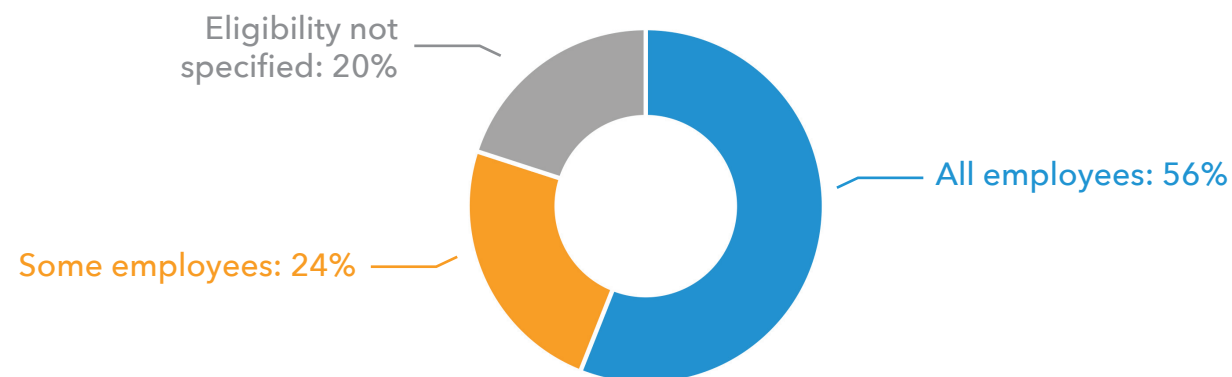


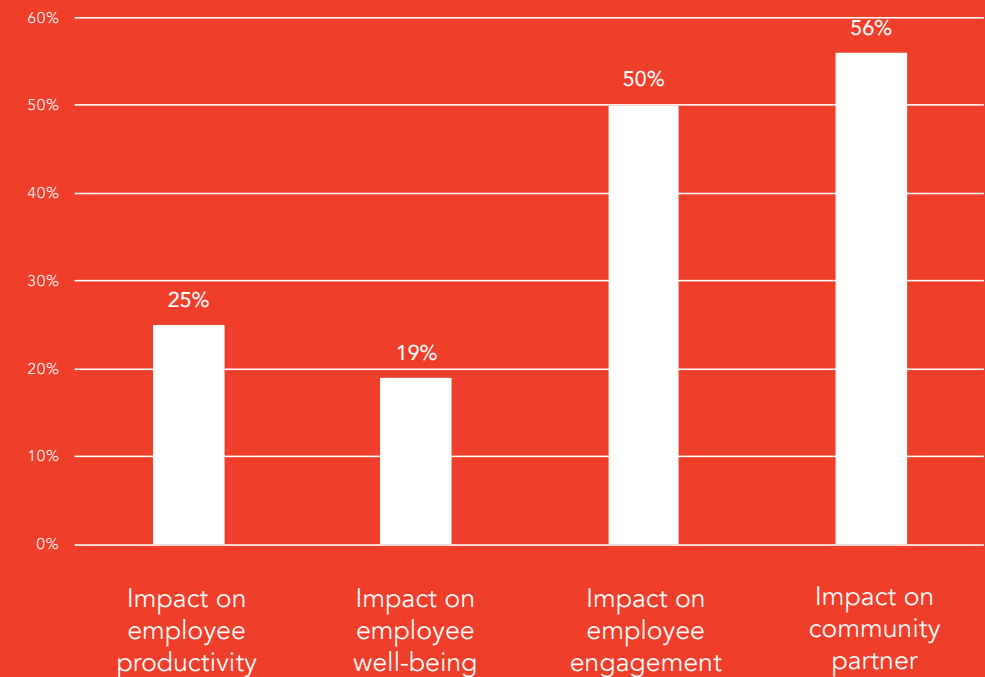
Figure 10: Proportion of Employees (all profiles) Eligible to Volunteer



The SDGs play an important role in understanding existing employee volunteering in the UAE.

More than 70% of companies surveyed measure the impact of their volunteer activities in some manner, with 56% measuring the impact on their community partners and 50% measuring the impact of employee engagement.

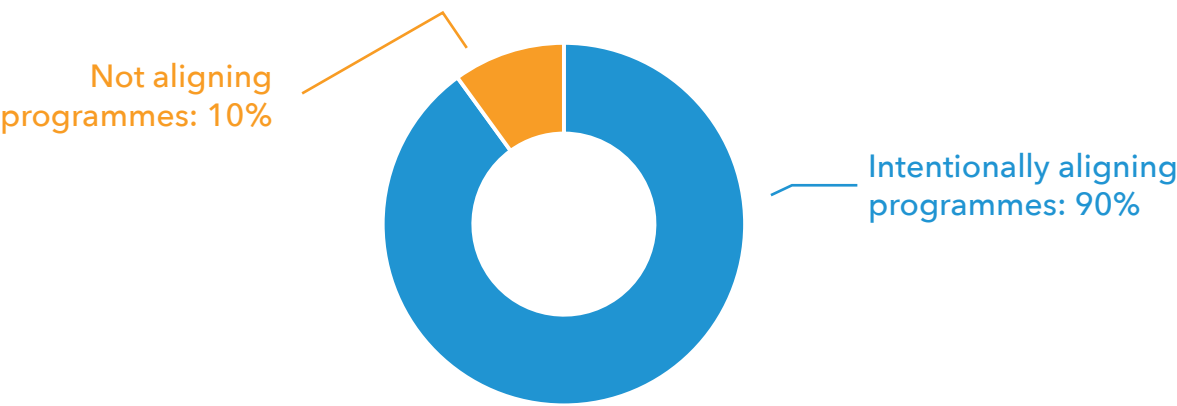
Figure 11: Types of Impact Data Gathered by Surveyed Companies



In the UAE, 38% of survey respondents align more than 50% of their volunteering activities with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, while a further 32% of respondents align 25% or more of volunteer activities.

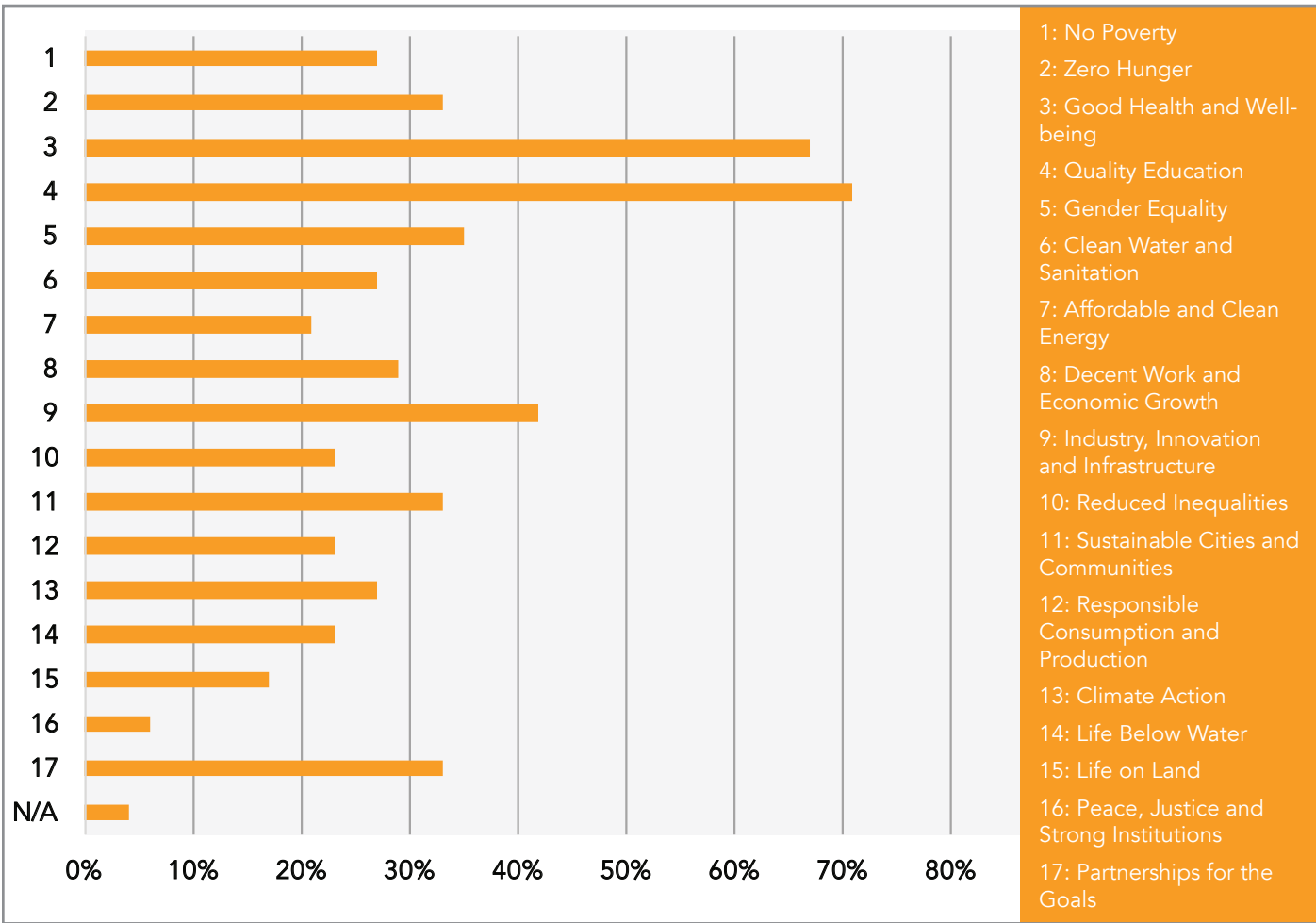


Figure 12: Surveyed Companies Intentionally Aligning Volunteer Programmes with the SDGs



Of the 90% of companies reporting alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, those most frequently aligned with corporate activity are #4 (Quality Education-71%), #3 (Good Health and Well-Being-67%), and #9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure-42%). Only two SDGs had less than 20% of survey participants reporting alignment, which illustrates common social, environmental, and economic development interests among companies across the region.

Figure 13: Proportion of Volunteer Programmes Intentionally Aligned with SDGs



More than two thirds of surveyed corporations currently educate their employees about the SDGs or are planning to do so going forward. The emphasis aligns with PwC research in the region indicating that 51% of UAE citizens “think it’s very important that business signs up to the global goals.”²⁹

Call Out: The World’s Largest Lesson
Uniting Youth in Action Through the SDGs

In line with SDG #4, Quality Education, DP World, PwC, and Linklaters joined forces to teach the ‘World’s Largest Lesson’ to UAE Youth. ‘The World’s Largest Lesson’ is a programme delivered in partnership with UNICEF and is designed to introduce children and young people across the world to the SDGs, and to unite them in action.³⁰

Employees from all three companies volunteered in Dubai schools to teach youth about the SDGs. The results of the pilot found that 78% of children who participated said they felt more confident to talk to people about SDGs outside school, and 92% said they cared more about social and environmental issues after learning about the SDGs.

“I think it’s fantastic that these kids are gaining more of an awareness of the SDGs and they’re going to have more of an understanding of what our world needs when they get to an age where they are in a position to change the world and they’re in a position to lead their industries...”

Tom Bruccoleri, Subject Leader for Secondary Mathematics at Hartland International School

²⁹ PwC, Make it your business: Engaging with the Sustainable Development Goals, https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/sustainability/SDG/SDG%20Research_FINAL.pdf

³⁰ <http://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/>



Opportunities to Improve Programme Systems and Processes

Employee volunteerism continues to grow in both popularity and programmatic sophistication across the UAE. However, the data has identified several system and process areas requiring further attention.

Findings and Recommendations

1

Develop an impactful communications plan about employee volunteering opportunities.

While 79% of companies are intentionally communicating volunteer opportunities to employees through a developed communications plan, **the remaining 21% of companies lack a definable communications plan** aimed at involving employees in volunteer programmes. A strong communication plan will include key messages that clarify why the company offers employee volunteering opportunities and how the programme benefits the company, the community and the employee themselves.

A successful communication strategy should:

- Identify all impacted audiences and fashion messaging appropriate for the contexts of those groups
- Identify credible sources to deliver messages including key leaders
- Outline the timing of the message via various channels
- Specify format for sharing messages based on audience and delivery channel (face to face, internal platforms, presentations, meetings, etc.)
- Plan for repetition of messages 5 - 7 times

2

Recognise employee contributions through volunteering.

Recognition of employees' contributions through volunteering is a critical component towards the long-term success for these programmes. Yet **only 58% of surveyed companies recognise or celebrate their employees for participation in volunteer activities**. The need for recognition to play a formal role in employee volunteering programmes is underscored by the UAE's National Strategy for the Year of Giving which recommends that volunteers be provided "incentives and rewards for volunteers to encourage them in further volunteering."³¹

³¹ UAE National Strategy for the Year of Giving, <https://www.giving.ae/en/year-of-giving/volunteering>

3

Allocate resources to volunteer programmes to deepen impact.

A full **60% of companies surveyed have a dedicated budget for volunteer activities**. The remaining 40% of companies will need to allocate financial resources to grow their programmes and deepen the impact. Budgets for employee volunteering programmes vary widely across industry sectors and global markets.

Elements of a programme budget might include:

- Large group events throughout the year
- Technology platforms to support giving and volunteering
- Administrative support and programme management
- Training and support materials for key volunteer leaders
- Financial contributions for nonprofit and community partners
- Materials and supplies for volunteer events (including t-shirts)
- Rewards and incentives
- Data collection and reporting support

4

Increase visibility of senior leadership encouraging employee volunteerism.

Senior leadership plays a key role as a messenger of corporate values and priorities including commitment to community investment through volunteering. These leaders are able to speak with authority about the business reasons for employee volunteering as well as the importance of the impact for the communities served or the environmental issues being addressed. In this role, senior leaders are champions who provide the mandate to all other roles responsible for supporting and advocating for employee volunteering. The success or failure of the new programme is tied to the visible and ongoing support of these champions.

Companies in the UAE understand the importance of this role, with **71% reporting to have an executive champion who is leading by example in encouraging volunteerism**. This model should be encouraged and adopted more broadly across the region. Senior leaders who are successfully communicating and modeling employee volunteering:



Work with CSR teams to raise awareness among their peers and the broader organisation



Create a desire to participate in and support the future state of employee volunteering and giving at the company



Provide recognition and reinforcement of new understandings and behaviours related to employee volunteering activities

5

Promote awareness of employee volunteer programmes for middle management.

The essential role of middle management support should not be underestimated. Many managers do not understand the benefit of allowing time for their employees to volunteer. In the majority of cases, they do not have a stake in the programme and have not experienced the benefits of volunteering for themselves. At many companies, programme participation rates are due almost entirely to the buy-in (or lack thereof) of business area managers. In the UAE, **only 44% of companies have some type of strategy to gain middle manager buy-in and support of employee volunteering projects.**

The lack of middle management awareness and participation in employee volunteering programmes is typically cited as the number

one barrier to the success of a company's employee volunteering programme. Research supports this observation³² by acknowledging the tension that exists between the responsibility to contribute to the company's profit goals versus the desire of the organisation to promote strong corporate social initiatives. The "often-unheralded middle manager at the center of this effort as one of the key figures in acknowledging and navigating the demands of both logics."

Middle manager support is critical not only because they can act as barriers to broader awareness and participation but they are also on "ground level" within their department's volunteer base, and are more likely to understand how best to position and promote employee volunteerism in their business area.

³² Sharma, G., & Good, D.J. (2013). The work of middle managers: sensemaking and sensegiving for creating positive social change. Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 49(1), 95-122.



Employees from Emirates NBD volunteering through the Exchanger Programme

Call Out: Emirates NBD Exchanger Programme The Benefit of Institutional Support

One of the key similarities of the surveyed companies with existing employee volunteer programmes is the marked institutional support for this type of corporate social initiative. Companies surveyed tended to have support for employee volunteer programmes through dedicated budgets, senior executive support for the programme(s), an approved volunteer policy and a dedicated communications strategy to encourage volunteering. The Emirates NBD Exchanger Programme is one such Employee Volunteering programme. Established in 2015, the Exchanger Programme enables Emirates NBD personnel to volunteer for a variety of causes throughout the year.

In 2018, the programme created opportunities for employees to be involved in 420 volunteering activities, amounting to 35,651 volunteer hours and 5,791 volunteer deployments.



Manal and other volunteers participating in Emirates NBD Exchanger Programme

“Being involved in the Exchanger Programme is a rewarding experience. I have been part of Exchanger for more than 3 years. I truly appreciate the organisational support for providing volunteering opportunities and volunteering hours to the employees. I get to look at a variety of activities through the online calendar for the year which is super easy to sign up through and join the crew during the weekday or weekends. As a result, I have extended my relationships with colleagues from different areas of the Emirates NBD group. Besides that, I have learnt a lot by engaging with people of determination in a way that has given me a new perspective on life. What’s amazing is also that my friends and family can join as well. I definitely encourage volunteering to anyone who is able.”

Manal Al Ansari
Emirates NBD Exchanger

THE POWER OF EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING



Mina Zarif

Emirates NBD Exchanger

“

I feel proud to work at an organisation like Emirates NBD because of their Exchanger Programme. There is real institutional support for employee volunteering and giving back to the UAE community. Not only are we encouraged to get involved, but there is the institutional support through dedicated volunteer leave days and a sophisticated internal infrastructure which makes finding volunteer opportunities easy. They're giving us the opportunity to do actual good in the world and even open up some of the events to family and friends of staff. Emirates NBD actually makes a difference to the local community through the Exchanger Programme. It doesn't feel like it is just a photo op and these opportunities build a sense of community within the company. Every time we volunteer, barriers between levels of seniority at the company are broken down and we are able to engage with the communities in which we volunteer in an impactful and authentic way. This creates an atmosphere which makes me feel proud to work here.”

The Path Forward

The findings from this process are highly encouraging. They show that substantial progress has been made in aligning voluntary human capital investments from the private sector to the SDGs in the UAE. With the proclamation of the Year of Giving in 2017 by the President of UAE, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, an important emphasis has been placed on developing the required infrastructure to sustain employee volunteering for the long-term. The private sector's emphasis on the importance of employee volunteering demonstrates a broad interest in building on early successes as well as a willingness to address barriers by means of greater collaboration among stakeholders.

The work of IMPACT2030 aligns well with the ongoing efforts outlined in the National Strategy for Volunteerism 2021³³ to promote “volunteerism and increasing the number of volunteers in the state so that the UAE becomes a philanthropy leader both regionally and globally by 2021.” To that end, IMPACT2030 partners with a presence in the UAE, are committed to applying their employee volunteer programmes towards achieving the SDGs and have developed this report. The recommendations of this report will enable IMPACT2030 leaders in the UAE to work together to identify shared priorities and collaborate on issues to make significant, transformative impact.

³³UAE National Strategy for the Year of Giving, Strategic Initiatives, <https://www.giving.ae/en/national-strategy/strategic-initiatives>

Additional Resources

- Volunteerism Guidelines in the workplace Entities for the government - <https://www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/Userfiles/Assets/Documents/fa82efb.pdf>
- KPMG: UAE's year of giving - <https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/ae/pdf/year-of-giving.pdf>
- The inspiring initiatives of UAE's Year of Giving by the Sustainable Knowledge Group - <https://sustainabilityknowledgegroup.com/the-inspiring-initiatives-of-uaes-year-of-giving/>
- The UAE Volunteer Platform - <https://www.volunteers.ae/index.aspx#home>
- The United Arab Emirates' Government portal - volunteering opportunities/initiatives in the UAE - <https://government.ae/en/information-and-services/charity-and-humanitarian-work/volunteering>
- The United Arab Emirates' Government portal - National Strategy for the Year of Giving - <https://government.ae/en/about-the-uae/strategies-initiatives-and-awards/federal-governments-strategies-and-plans/national-strategy-for-the-year-of-giving>
- The Year of Giving website - <https://www.giving.ae/en/year-of-giving>
- United Arab Emirates and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - http://fcsa.gov.ae/en-us/Lists/D_Reports/Attachments/14/UAESDGs-EN.PDF
- Anchored by Sustainable Development Goals No. 17, Partnerships for the Goals, IMPACT2030 has the unique mission to activate human capital investments globally through pro-bono, skills-based and direct employee volunteer programmes to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. <https://www.impact2030.com>
- The RW Institute brings together various entities representing all sectors of society to work towards shaping the future of corporate citizenship. <http://www.rw.institute>
- The LBG Model is the recognised global standard for managing, measuring and reporting community investment. <https://www.lbg-canada.ca/about-lbg/lbg-model/>
- The World's Largest Lesson provides free and creative resources to teach lessons, run projects and stimulate action in support of the Goals. <http://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/project-everyone/>
- Find articles and research to support the development of systems, processes, tools and resources to engage experienced, enthusiastic volunteer leaders in the practice of Transformative Volunteerism. <https://www.realizedworth.com/rw-blog/>

IMPACT2030 Private Sector Founding and Collaborating Partners

Founding Partners





Chevron	PIMCO
Dow Chemical	PwC
Google	Realized Worth
Grant Thornton	The Ritz-Carlton
GSK	SAP
IBM	TCS
Johnson & Johnson	TD Bank Group
Medtronic	UPS
Pfizer	WE Communications

Collaborating Partners

Abbott	eBay
Anglo American	Edelman
ARM	Emirates NBD
Arconic	Franklin Templeton
AT&T	Hasbro
Avnet	Iberdrola
Bank of America	KPMG
BD	La Caixa Bank
Berkshire Bank	Linklaters
Blackbaud	Marriott International
Caesars	Mars
Cemex	Merck
Cox Enterprises	Pernod Ricard
CIBC	PRA Health Sciences
Citi	Singtel
Deloitte	Target
DP World	Telefonica

Impact Council

The Impact Council of the UAE is comprised of individuals from regionally-based organisations, representing the private sector, public sector, academia and civil society, with a shared interest in achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals through employee volunteering. Council members work together to:

-  Identify locally based companies and business associations interested in advancing the practice of employee volunteering and introduce them to the work and goals of IMPACT2030 and the SDGs
-  Capture local and regional data on the status and the practice of employee volunteering as well as regional or international barriers (cultural or legal), gaps in private sector capacity, best practices and standards relating to employee volunteering
-  Promote the work of IMPACT2030 and advocate for partner and stakeholder projects within a geographical area
-  Assist with the reporting and tracking process of employee volunteerism on a regional level

The Impact Council of the UAE

- Jess Castelyn, Office of Social Responsibility, New York University - Abu Dhabi
- Elena C Cruz, Head of Brand & Corp. Responsibility, Emirates NBD
- Mashaal Al Fardan, Global Sustainability Officer, DP World
- Alex Malouf, Corporate Communications, Procter & Gamble Middle East
- Jedidah Njonjo, Specialist, Human Resources- ISMEA District, UPS- Middle East FZE
- Swati Randev-Verma, Corporate Responsibility, PwC
- Kate Willoughby, Head of Group Sustainability & Impact, DP World | Regional Voice Lead for IMPACT2030
- Michele Wong, Associate Vice President, Corporate Social Responsibility, Emirates NBD

For any questions relating to this report or to connect with the UAE Impact Council, please contact contact@rw.institute.

