VOLUNTEER FOR AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE

The practice and potential of employee volunteering in Turkey
Acknowledgements

Special thanks go to DP World Yarımca, Headline Diversity, Istanbul Bilgi University, and the RW Institute for their contributions to the Capacity Mapping Project.

Thanks go to Arzu Pınar Demirel, and Gökçe Dervişoğlu Okandan for writing this report. Without them, this report would not have been completed.

Finally, thanks to Chris Jarvis for choosing Turkey among first 6 countries in the world when starting Capacity Mapping Project and Regional Impact Councils.
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 volunteering to advance the achievement of the SDGs.

DP World Yarımca Port, which is established on an area of 46 hectares and operates as a container port in the Gulf of İzmit, has an annual capacity of 1.3 million TEU and currently employs 500 people.

Headline Diversity is the first Diversity and Inclusion consultancy in Turkey. We support organizations to build inclusive workplaces where people feel a sense of belonging, being respected and valued regardless of their gender, race, physical abilities, and all types of differences.

Our purpose is to be an international university that expands the boundaries of science and art, embraces freedom, takes a lead in the development of society, provides a place where students and faculty share a passion for learning, and where all members, both academic and administrative, dedicate themselves to this end.

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.
Measurement
73% of the 33 companies surveyed, measure the impact of their volunteer activities in various ways, with 42% measuring the impact of employee engagement, 21% the impact on their community partner, and 12% the impact on the employee wellbeing respectively.

Volunteering hours
The total number of hours volunteered by employees of the surveyed companies, are more than 32,372 in one year. At 18% of the companies, all the volunteering occurs only during work hours.

Rapid growth
48% of surveyed companies stated that volunteerism was on the rise within their companies, indicating significant growth compared to previous years.

Inclusion
72% of the volunteers are head office/corporate office employees. 67% of the companies offer opportunities for stakeholder (like family members of employees, suppliers, customers etc.) participation in their volunteer activities.

Communication
76% of companies are intentionally communicating volunteer opportunities to employees through a developed communications plan.

Recognition
Half of the participants state they only have an informal recognition system where formal recognition stays by 27%.

SDGs alignment
79% of companies report alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), those most frequently aligned with corporate volunteering are #4 (Quality Education-66%), #5 (Gender Equality-54%), #3 (Good Health and Well-Being-48%), and #13 (Climate Action-33%).
The imperative to be perceived as a good corporate citizen is taking center stage – so much so that it has become a key element of business strategy. Non-financial performance measures, such as those resulting from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) actions, have become a significant, if not expected, aspect of the corporate annual report. Governments, non-governmental organizations, investors and consumers are demanding leadership in the management of social and environmental issues related to a company’s operations, sourcing, supply chain, production and sales. Consequently, as the influence of corporations grow, so do the expectations of both internal and external stakeholders.

Employee volunteering has long served as a key mechanism to engage employees, on a voluntary basis, in broader CSR strategic initiatives. The role of these programs is becoming even more central as successful strategies depend on three critical factors: a) impact, b) authenticity, and c) awareness. Each of these factors, multifaceted on its own, is also interlaced with the other. Without meaningful and measurable impact, it becomes difficult to share stories and create awareness. The authenticity of the citizenship action, and impact, determines whether the awareness results in a positive or negative impression. And the resulting awareness, to a great degree, decides the level of investment in citizenship activities going forward.

Employee volunteering is an evolution beyond traditional corporate philanthropy and a one-way flow of investment in communities to enable a more dynamic exchange between employees and key stakeholder groups representing community and civil society. 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 an organization-to-issue threshold typically represented in most community investment projects whereby private sector organizations are viewed as the primary actor in providing solutions.

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. Volunteering has traditionally been understood within specific cultural and socio-economic settings. Now, with multinational companies encouraging the mobilization 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 the nations in which those companies operate. Yet while these considerations are challenging, the belief that employee volunteering offers material and measurable benefits¹ for companies, employees and communities is gaining widespread acceptance.²

Corporate volunteering and giving programs allow employees to mobilize their personal resources with support from their employer for broad social benefits. Employees not only leverage the assets of the business but combine these assets across wide social networks using trust and localized norms of cooperation.

The most global and encompassing realization of this reality is the private sector led partnership with the United Nations, IMPACT2030. The initiative is a collaboration of companies around the world, of all sizes, to mobilize their employees in volunteer efforts towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. As Peter Bodin, Chairman of the Board of Directors for IMPACT2030 and Global CEO of Grant Thornton notes, “The mission of IMPACT2030 is founded on the belief that when companies join forces and harness the skills, expertise and creativity of their people as a force for good, they can change the world.”³

Currently, there is limited insight as to the scale, scope, and overall practice of employee volunteering around the world. Complicating matters further, there is a lack of understanding as to the overall awareness of the SDGs among employees who are active in corporate volunteering and community investment programs. In order to properly assess the capacity and potential of the private sector to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs through the voluntary efforts of employees, the following questions must be addressed at a regional level:

- What companies currently have some form of employee volunteering?
- What is the valuation of employee volunteering as part of overall corporate community investment?
- How many other companies are likely to develop a formal employee volunteering program supported by broader corporate community investments?
- What is the current awareness of, and/or active alignment to, the SDGs across employee volunteering programs?
- What are the barriers to increasing the application of employee volunteering programs to helping achieve the SDGs by 2030?

This report is the result of IMPACT2030’s desire to establish an international network of Regional Impact Councils to map the capacity of employee volunteering to help achieve the SDGs. This work, when fully realized, has the potential to bring the efforts of millions of professionals across the globe and the resources to bear in creating sustainable solutions to challenges that require a mass response.

On behalf of the IMPACT2030 board and our member companies around the world, I want to acknowledge the work of the Turkey Impact Council to bring never before seen insights on the practice and potential of employee volunteering in Turkey. I believe this report provides incredible benefit to the field of Corporate Social Responsibility as we collectively work toward mobilizing employees as primary actors across multiple geographical scales, achieving real progress to achieving the SDGs.

³ Innovation in human capital investments for the SDGs, IMPACT2030 Innovation Award Case Studies
Transforming our world with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development

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

In 2015, world leaders agreed to 17 Global Goals (officially known as the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs). These goals have the power to create a better world by 2030, by ending poverty, fighting inequality and addressing the urgency of climate change. Guided by the goals, it is now up to all of us, businesses, governments, civil society, academia, and the general public to work together to build a better future for everyone.

We’ve made some progress but nowhere near enough to deliver on the promises made by all nations in 2015 to meet the SDGs by 2030. 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 trillion to $US 6 trillion. Given the current commitments of governments and other organizations globally, this leaves a world-wide funding gap in the range of $3 trillion to $5 trillion annually.

This kind of capital investment demands that we rethink our approach to sustainable change. Employee Volunteering can be one way that we rethink our approach. An evolution beyond the traditional corporate models of philanthropy and one-way investment in communities, employee volunteering can enable businesses to be both more involved in development and enable a more dynamic exchange between corporate employees and community groups.

The Capacity Mapping Project is designed to develop this understanding. It is an innovative effort to measure the capacity of employee volunteers to help achieve the SDGs by 2030 on a regional level. The UAE is the first region to complete Capacity Mapping in their region. Turkey is the second country participated in this global project and gained insight and understanding of the scale, scope, overall practice of employee volunteering, and integration of the SDG’s into corporate volunteering programs. The SDGs will not be realized without business. Given the current commitments of governments and other organizations globally, this leaves a worldwide funding gap in the range of $3 trillion to $5 trillion annually.

$12 trillion a year in business value across four economic systems alone by 2030

Creating more than 380 million jobs

5 Global Policy Watch, Funding Needs for UN’s 2030 Development Agenda
7 Realized Worth, Investing Human Capital: A New Approach to Achieving the SDGs, 2020
8 Better Business, Better World, Business and Sustainable Development Commission CEO Guide to the Sustainable Development Goals
Turkey through the lens of the SDGs

Turkey’s country profile on achieving the SDGs according to Sustainable Development Report 2020.⁹

**OVERALL PERFORMANCE**

- **Index score**: 70.3
- **Regional average score**: 77.3

**SDG Global rank**: 70 (OF 166)

**CURRENT ASSESSMENT - SDG DASHBOARD**

**SDG TRENDS**

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**UNITED IN PURPOSE**

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If a child hungry for science, democracy and peace, is waiting for your light in somewhere, you have no right to go out. You will light! Even if it’s just seconds away from death.

Türkan Saylan

Some people continue to enlighten us. They inspire us to think about what is truly meaningful and valuable, to contribute to humanity, no matter small or large, to act. Especially in times of Corona, when we had to get out of the routine of our daily lives that we are used to. We remembered seeing uncertainty and change as a part of life and being bound to each other. Even if we are lucky and successful enough to build beautiful, peaceful and prosperous lives for ourselves and our close circle, there is no guarantee of its continuity. The United Nations has been warning for years, drawing attention to the deep-rooted problems of the world, like climate change, inequality, and injustice with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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⁹ UNSDSN Sustainable Development Report, 2020
IMPACT2030 is the only business-led initiative designed to unite the private sector to scale the impact of their human capital investments to advance the SDGs. IMPACT2030 is mobilizing its network—representing millions of employees around the world—and connecting companies, United Nations agencies, governments, community stakeholders and NGOs on the ground to advance the SDGs.

IMPACT2030 has three strategic pursuits:

**ACTIVATE**

Activating a global network of committed companies and their employees through inspiration, thought-leadership and recognition. According to the United Nations, volunteers are critical to the world achieving the SDGs. It simply is not possible to attain the SDGs without a wide range of people engaged at all stages, at all levels, at all times. Many of the SDGs call for long-term attitude and behaviour changes. Volunteers facilitate changes in mindsets by raising awareness or championing those changes and inspiring others.12

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12 United Nations, *Volunteerism and the Global Goals*
COLLABORATE

Facilitating cross-industry, cross-sector collaboration through collective action to scale the impact of human capital investments around the world. IMPACT2030’s unique vantage point is enabling to foster transformative collaboration at a local and regional level, identify shared priorities for collective action around human capital investments, and activate companies’ capabilities and resources to expand reach and impact.

MEASURE

Developing a unified framework and protocol to measure the contributions, outcomes and impact of human capital investments on the SDGs. There has been an evolution of how companies are being valued by investors as it relates to ESG, Human Capital and Corporate Social Responsibility, and how the value of good data around human capital investments is taking on greater significance in the private sector. IMPACT2030 is uniquely positioned to measure human capital performance, facilitate real investment, and shape the way companies integrate long-term goals like the SDGs.13

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The investments of employee time, skills and knowledge into communities, enabling employees to serve community needs through programs that are promoted and supported by the company.”

Definition of Human Capital Investments developed by IMPACT2030 for WBCD’s Social and Human Capital Protocol 2018.

13 Evan Harvey Global Sustainability Officer at Nasdaq, Chair at IMPACT2030 Metrics Council

VOLUNTEERING FOR STRONG FUTURE

In today’s world, where solidarity, collaboration and synergy among stakeholders has become more important than ever, it is obvious that platforms such as IMPACT2030 are one of the most effective means of creating a better, more sustainable and more people-oriented future for all of us.

We can see that corporations are assuming a more effective role than ever before in the sustainable development process and have the strength to change the world when they trigger the skills, experience and creativity of their employees as a power of wellbeing. For this reason, it is highly important for corporations to take action right away and put their employee volunteering potential into practice.

Sabancı Holding implemented the Sabancı Volunteers Program in 2015 for the purpose of popularizing the volunteering concept in our country and contributing to Sustainable Development Goals, and with our belief that the passion and specialty of employees could open the doors to a better world.

This program, which we have operated for many years with the involvement of our employees, is aimed at strengthening the volunteering culture of our country. It covers awareness training for all employees of the whole Sabancı Group and bringing social projects into practice through our volunteer teams. Within the scope of the program, problems encountered by women, the youth and the disabled are particularly focused on.

Sabancı Volunteers Program has implemented 72 projects since its beginning. More than 2,000 women and young people have benefited from these projects. Furthermore, over 40,000 Sabancı employees have participated in the online training on social gender inequality within the scope of the program. The fact that the Sabancı Volunteers Program has been elected by the United Nations as a model program within Turkey, is a particular source of pride for us.14

In its fifth year, Sabancı Volunteers has become one of the largest corporate volunteering programs in Turkey.

As Sabancı Holding, we are aware of the fact that volunteering is a very valuable asset in providing for a strong future and a better world, and it is our belief that social development is just as important as economic development. Our goal is to encourage as many people as possible to participate in projects that will be useful for society. For this purpose, we will persistently work and ensure that our focus is on the social benefits all the time.

14 Sabancı Group employee volunteering activities were chosen by United Nations Volunteers from Turkey as an example, so the Sabancı Group was included in the report representing the private sector.
As a trade enabling company active from the beginning to the end of the supply chain, we facilitate that products, delicately produced in one corner of the planet, are carried to any other place where they are in need, and this 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. As DP World Yarımca, we are a professional family of 56 thousand people working with an entrepreneurial spirit that strives to increase global welfare and a brighter future. Being a part of this family living these values, energizes us as we start each new day.

As a global company that provides direct services in 54 and indirectly in 206 countries, we are aware that diversity such as religion, language, race, and gender are our greatest strength. We continuously invest in this diversity and inclusion to contribute to global sustainability.

United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With the words of United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres: “We need global action, local action and people action.”

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 be serving as a role model with global excellence and local expertise, we look to our customers as permanent partners. We are constantly producing innovative solutions to create the most efficient, secure and profitable trading solutions.

In doing so, we approach the environment and the scarce global resources consciously and keep these principles in mind at every step we take. As DP World Yarımca, we continue our work for both our associates and stakeholders and the environment in the region we are operating in. We participated in the Women’s Empowerment Principles - WEPs application with our 16 percent female employees at our terminal.

We contribute to the sustainability concept with the “Minding My Waste Project”. The project was initiated in primary schools in Körfez-Kocaeli, and aimed at raising awareness among students of 24 primary schools on waste and recycling. More in particular, the reduction and recycling of single-use plastics. In this pilot implementation of the project in Körfez, 1,500 students have been reached directly last year. 6 thousand people, including their families, were educated on waste. Along with the school principals, 78 teachers and 100 DP World Yarımca employees participated directly in this project.

Encouraged by the positive results, we have expanded our project this year to the entire Kocaeli province reaching nearly 15,000 students. With the motto “Our World Our Future”, we develop policies towards both our employees and the environment. While doing all this, our ultimate goal is to leave a beautiful world behind us.

We strive to leave a beautiful legacy to future generations with our philosophy that combines the transparency of the sea, the robustness of the railway and the inclusiveness of the port.
This report reveals very crucial information on how the private sector in Turkey approaches and promotes employee volunteering and how they aim to mobilize their employees in order to pursue the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The effort of starting to measure activities around SDG’s are very timely since it is transforming the perception of the role of private sector and bringing firms one step ahead in the corporate responsibility discussion. It is an inclusive, integrative and collaborative practice that reflects the multi-stakeholder character of the SDGs. This report heralds the future of employee volunteering programs in Turkey through which the employees, the companies, the communities and the planet will benefit.

The Center for Work Ethics Research at Istanbul Bilgi University is founded on the principles of corporate transparency, accountability, responsibility and sustainability. We partner up with diverse stakeholders, including NGOs, universities and companies, to raise awareness about and to support the endorsement of these values. The university was also established around, but not limited to, these goal areas. It is an inclusive, democratic and environmentally responsible institution which aims to create social and environmental good through national and international projects, research centers, conferences as well as related academic degrees and programs. The university is a member of PRME-Principles for Responsible Education and Global Compact and supports Sustainable Development Goals via various administrative and academic activities and units. As a part of this culture, our Center values the power of employee volunteering programs towards the achievement of SDGs and sees them as an opportunity for multi stakeholder participation and integration.

Employees are the most valuable human capital, As the Turkey partners, we present this report with pride and gratitude, it is the first study and yes it has its limitations, such as a limited sample size and lack of data gathered through the observation of well-developed and running corporate volunteering programs in Turkey and in-depth interviews with their founders and managers, but starting measuring these activities in a globally comparative scale and adding members to the Impact Committee every day who are not only members of a corporate community but also responsible executives who become agents in their organizations for advocating SDG’s emphasizing the importance of quantitative and qualitative measurement and serve for the accountability of their social process in a major shift in the perception we would like to change among White and blue collars. Yes, we believe it will be a reference point for mobilizing the employees in order to pursue SDGs under the IMPACT2030 vision.
Capacity mapping results

Methodology

The research was developed by SIMPACT Strategy Group, and the RW Institute globally for IMPACT2030. The project management of the capacity mapping in Turkey was undertaken by Headline Diversity. The survey analysis and report process were conducted by the Steering Committee formed with DP World, Headline Diversity, and the Center for Work Ethics Research at Istanbul Bilgi University.

The methodology of the research included surveys of 33 companies with operations in Turkey who currently practice employee volunteering. The responses were collected via online survey in the last quarter of 2019. Surveyed companies ranged from multinationals to Turkish companies, from with 5,000+ employees to fewer than 250 employees and represented in 15 of the largest industries in Turkey, including Manufacturing, IT, Media & Telecommunications, Retail, FMCG, Financial & Insurance Services, Transport & Warehousing, Construction, Health Care, Public Administration & Safety, Energy, Electricity & Gas, holding and Other Services.

Key findings

The research shows that employee volunteerism has been started to be supported in corporate culture and practice in Turkey. Companies are taking bigger stances on impact issues and started to mobilize employee passion for societal causes.

More than half of the participants are representatives of multinationals in Turkey, with the efforts of internationally recognized standards they incline to develop an impact-based strategy. Although the participation rate is not set among most of the participant companies the outcomes show an increase of participation by 48% and this increase is mostly associated with improved communication and strategic change.

Figure 1: Diversity of surveyed companies by size

Figure 2: Diversity of surveyed companies by industry
Among surveyed companies, employee volunteers gave more than 32,372 hours of their time in 2019.

A tracking system for volunteering hours and participation is an important topic among survey participants. However 39% of the companies are not keeping track. Their value system for keeping track mostly rely not on their own mechanisms but value, created by community partner by 24%.

20% is the participation rate according to the companies answers. However this question is skipped by many, so this participation rate doesn’t show the average rate. 27% of the companies have a stated employee annual participation rate objective at their policies.

The companies are encouraging all employee profiles to volunteer (full time, part time, contractor, student, other) ranged across every company size.

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67% of the companies offer volunteering opportunities for their stakeholders like family members of the employees, suppliers, customers or general public.
Nearly 60% of the companies have a program budget to support the employee volunteering strategy. There is a significant change in the employee engagement by more than 50% if volunteer activity and strategy were set. Companies encourage participation and engagement with communications strategy and workshops.

Figure 6: Stakeholder participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family members of workers</th>
<th>48%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General public</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppliers</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: Annual employee volunteering opportunities

- All employees are eligible to one paid day of volunteering each year: 6%
- All employees are eligible to greater than one paid day of volunteering each year: 24%
- Select employees are eligible to greater than one paid day of volunteering each year: 3%
- Employees may apply to volunteer on a paid ad hoc basis: 12%
- Employees are invited to participate in non-paid company organized volunteering: 33%
- Other: 21%

Figure 8: Companies providing international volunteering opportunities to employees

- Unsure: 9%
- Yes: 30%
- No: 61%

Figure 9: Companies having policy to guide their volunteering programs

- Unsure: 6%
- Yes: 58%
- No: 36%

Figure 10: Companies having a communications strategy to promote volunteering and encourage participation

- Unsure: 9%
- Yes: 76%
- No: 15%
Half of the participants state they only have an informal recognition system where formal recognition stays by 27%. Only one tenth of the participants relate volunteering efforts to performance management based on their salaries.

Almost 60% of the companies which encourage volunteering are bringing the discussion to the senior level and some of them are in progress to raise awareness of top management.

It is also a valuable insight that the companies mostly have an Executive Champion by 58%. Executive Champion is an individual on the senior executive team that publicly supports the volunteering strategy and advocates for increasing volunteer participation.

Senior leaders are as important as community investment team in shaping the teams and efforts. (Both categories by over 30% selected)

Almost 40% of managers are required to demonstrate that they have been encouraging employees to volunteer.

27% of the participant companies are not gathering information about the impact. 58% do not track the value of volunteering. However, as companies develop their own signature programs related to volunteer activities which are strategically curated and aligned to internationally recognized metrics like SDGs, the benchmark between participants as private sector representatives will increase and Impact Council meetings, and talks will provide best practices which suggest a holistic perspective for these valuable contributions.
Alignment of corporate volunteer efforts to achieve the SDGs

79% of the participants state that their volunteering strategy intentionally aligned with the SDG’s. 96% intend to align or continue to align volunteering efforts to the SDGs in the near future. Half of the companies align more than 50% of their total volunteering activities with the SDGs.

As you can follow the distribution 66% of the participants are supporting causes related to education, 54% gender equality, 48% good health and well-being. As Volunteering Committee and individual employees are able to select their own volunteering opportunities at 45% of the companies, these SDGs may also represent individual choices of the employees.
Barriers to corporate volunteering

The landscape for SDG-aligned employee volunteerism in Turkey is promising.

The 33 companies which are involved in the capacity mapping research seem to approach employee volunteering with the world standards of strategy, communication plan, training, integration into SDGs, etc. But apart from some of the main companies that are doing exemplary work on corporate volunteering, the question of the prevalence of employee volunteering throughout Turkey comes to mind.

The absence of participation from the leading 500 companies in Anatolia’s list does not show that these companies are not involved in employee volunteering activities. It sheds light on the fact that although various donations, charity runs and direct volunteer activities are carried out with the informal initiatives of groups or individuals within the company in order to help people, employee volunteering is not formal and is not carried out within the scope of impact measurements.

Employee volunteerism in Turkey is carried out systematically by certain large companies. However, there is no rapid increase in the number of active companies and employee volunteering is not spread throughout Turkey. Only 0.8% of those who volunteer in Turkey say that the non-governmental organization in which they volunteer is recommended by their workplace. Including employee volunteering in external communication, sharing signature programs, and especially taking advantage of the power of storytelling can inspire other companies. 67% of the companies started to involve their stakeholders in volunteering activities; however, this ratio is 21% for customers and 18% for the supplier network. Increasing stakeholder engagement and expanding the ecosystem can pave the way for companies of various sizes to start volunteering.

Traditionally, there is a culture of volunteering and giving in Turkish society, but the potential of corporate volunteerism is not fully utilized. In the world, it is observed that social impact-focused works are now removed from the category of “good if done” and are seen as “indispensable” for companies, and are positioned as part of the business and differentiation strategy. Volunteering increases the motivation of employees and strengthens the spirit of solidarity. Making a positive impact on the world empowers the reputation and employer brand of the company. With this point of view, employee volunteerism will be owned by the top management, the participation of middle management will be ensured, and the return to both society and companies will be maximized. It will also contribute to the dedication of resources to volunteering programs so that they can have a deeper impact.

16 Istanbul Bilgi University, Volunteering in Turkey, 2019
17 Headline Diversity, Employee Volunteering Whitepaper, 2018
33% of the respondents think that underdeveloped not-for-profit and social sector volunteering opportunities influences their ability to achieve impact.

Transparency and professionalization in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are positive developments that will also affect private sector partnerships and investments. But in Turkey, there is a general decrease in people who believe that NGO’s are effective in solving societal problems.\(^{18}\) However, in areas where improvement is needed, both direct and pro-bono support of the private sector will increase efficiency and create a win-win situation.

Measuring the impact of the corporate volunteering program is important. However 27% of the surveyed companies are not gathering information about the impact. The corporate volunteer programs create a multidimensional impact. Not only is there an impact on the social issue, but also on the employee engagement and the development, company reputation, and on the business itself. Developing effective metrics focus on measuring corporate contributions (e.g. value of employees’ time, management costs), and also the outcomes and social impact will show the business value of corporate voluntarism.

\(^{18}\) TUSEV, *Individual Giving and Philanthropy in Turkey*, 2019

### Opportunities to improve systems, programs, and processes

This report reveals that the general view of employee volunteering in Turkey is open to developing new strategies, tactics, and tools. Predominantly private sector representatives of participant companies consider employee volunteering as an executive-level concern. The private sector also seeks to build interactive and participatory relationships with all parties in volunteering practices which aligns with SDGs. From this point of view, the opportunities below can be addressed for maximizing the employee volunteering capacity in Turkey:

#### 1 E-volunteering and digitalization for effective sustainable efforts

While remote working is reshaping the future of the new world of work, the need for online volunteering opportunities will rise too. Although not all the NGO’s offer online volunteering opportunities, companies could support non-profits to develop meaningful digital programs. Online volunteering offer volunteers to participate from their homes and give back, which will expand the access to the different regions within the country. Furthermore, using digital platforms internally within the company establish a dialogue between different stakeholders and is easy to measure due to the digital footprint.
The pandemic has highlighted the enormous potential of the human capacity to adapt to change and to support each other. This spirit is perfectly encapsulated in the scale of volunteering.”

Amina Mohammed
UN Deputy Secretary-General

The rise of skills-based volunteering and pro-bono

Among the array of corporate citizenship programs, skills-based volunteering is the most rapidly growing in the world. The rise in popularity of these programs is large because a strong business case can be made for skills-based volunteering programs, which have been shown to increase employee engagement and retention, while also measurably enhancing the skills and talents that employees bring back to their desks.20

The transformation of employee volunteerism from projects to a key driver for culture of engagement will enhance the synergies between talent and leadership development, employee experience and social impact work. Collaboration between Corporate Communication and CSR departments with Human Resources will enable all groups to work together to achieve shared goals and increase their collective value to the company.

Strategic business positioning

Businesses acting as businesses, not as charitable donors, are the most powerful force for addressing the pressing issues we face. Selecting a social cause that naturally, benefits the business will make a difference. With this approach, volunteering could have a far bigger impact in developing purpose-driven culture within the company and driving positive change in the community. Providing meaningful opportunities for employees to be engaged in their communities, will give them sense of purpose and belonging they are looking for. Especially millennials and Gen Z’s believe business success should be measured on more than just financial performance—things like making a positive impact on society and the environment, and valuing diversity and inclusion.22

Increase visibility of senior leadership to inspire action for social change

The fact that employee volunteering is taken into account by senior level could be an advantage for developing long term policies, spreading the idea of volunteerism among employees, inspiring employees for participating, and engaging stakeholders. In order to create substantial developments in the field of employee volunteering, bottom up engagement is crucial. That is only possible with a supporting corporate culture and with the leadership of senior executives.

Senior leadership could play a key role as a messenger of corporate values and priorities including commitment to community investment through volunteering. These leaders are able to speak publicly about the importance of the impact for the communities served or the social and equality issues being addressed. They could inspire action for social change with signature programs and meaningful volunteering stories.

22 The Deloitte Global Millennial Survey, 2020

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22 The Deloitte Global Millennial Survey, 2020
Path to forward

In a pandemic characterized by extreme uncertainty, nobody knows when we will be able to return to our normal lives, or what the new normal will look like. But some areas have begun to become clear. The world that awaits us will be more digital.

Secondly, corporate activism, which has started to stand out as a trend in the world for some time, has also begun to make itself felt in Turkey. For example, while violence against women in Turkey increased steadily and discussions of the Istanbul Convention aims to protect women against violence flared, leading companies made statements announcing that Turkey should not exit the convention.23

Both trends cross paths with employee volunteering. We may still lack adequate infrastructure for online volunteering. However, it seems clear that use of online tools and virtual volunteering programs are needed. As remote working becomes more prevalent, this and social isolation should not lead to a pause in social impact programs and volunteering, just when solidarity is most needed.

With the rise of corporate activism and purpose-driven companies, there will be a need to go beyond traditional CSR and philanthropy programs and to be more creative. Employee volunteering responds exactly to this need.

While increasing its social impact, directing the time, effort, skills and creativity of its employees, which are the most valuable assets of a company, to social and environmental issues, also indicates its sincere stance. Millennials have high expectations for the actions of business when it comes to social purpose and accountability; and they want to work for companies that uphold these values. A robust employee volunteering program provides millennials with an immediate and tangible opportunity to experience the kind of integrated approach they are looking for.

The results of the Capacity Mapping Project, and the discussions at the meetings of Turkey Impact Council which we have launched in a strong change wind of Corona times, sheds light on opportunities for voluntary work in the future. Employee volunteering can help companies create a real social impact, grow the collective movement with IMPACT2030, offer their employees the meaning they seek, and develop socially responsible leaders. Mobilizing millions of employees towards a common goal can advance the solution of a prominent problem.

The Regional Impact Councils established by IMPACT2030 in key geographies of the world choose one of the 17 global goals of the United Nations and focus on it. At Turkey Impact Council, we chose to focus on the 5th global goal, Gender Equality. It is a vital challenge to ensure gender equality and as Turkey Impact Council members, we volunteer to accept this challenge.

23Headline Diversity Blog, List of the companies which support Istanbul Convention, 2020

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24Information on the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly and the President Volkan Bozkir, Priorities of the President, UNIS/INF/567
Impact Council of Turkey

Turkey is the only country in the world, which launched the Impact Council, while we continued to face the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. We aimed to commence a collective action to turn a crisis into a catalyst.

Partnerships are a multiplier of impact. With this belief in mind, IMPACT2030 works to facilitate collaboration across sectors and entities so that they might identify shared priorities, unleash the passion and creativity of their people, and scale impact on the SDGs. To initiate and sustain this type of cross-sector and cross-industry collaboration, IMPACT2030 has launching Regional Impact Councils in key geographies. These Impact Councils set the stage for the mobilization of large regional scale human capital investments to address local SDGs issue areas. A Regional Impact Council is comprised of individuals from regionally-based organizations, representing the private sector, public sector, academia and civil society, with a shared interest in achieving the UN’s SDGs through employee volunteering. There are only 6 Regional Impact Councils in the world yet. These countries are the USA, Canada, UAE, Australia, New Zealand and Turkey.

Every Impact Council chooses one orienting goal to expand reach and impact. We reviewed the low scored SDGs in Turkey at our first Impact Council meeting. SDG 5—Gender Equality was selected as the Council’s orienting goal with 100% votes. Impact Council of Turkey focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

Figure 16: Employee volunteering programs of Turkey Council’s member companies having an impact on gender equality

Femicide and domestic violence are on the rise in Turkey. The pandemic has further exacerbated the negative effects of domestic violence. However, not all the news about gender equality in Turkey is bad. There are 342 WEP’s (UN Women’s Empowerment Principles) signatories in Turkey. Turkey is among one of the two countries in the world with the most WEP’s signatories. Gender equality is a priority for many companies now. It is time for companies to expand human capital investments and begin making tangible progress towards achieving SDG 5. We will move the needle from conversation to action.

No country has achieved gender equality yet. However, this is the decade of action. With an Impact Council committed to the cause, even in the toughest of times, we are optimistic about the change we can achieve.

UNSDSN Sustainable Development Report, 2020

Women’s Empowerment Principles Signatories
Special thanks go to all members of the Turkey Impact Council.

Additional resources


3. Innovation in human capital investments for the SDGs, IMPACT2030 Innovation Award Case Studies


5. Global Policy Watch, Funding Needs for UN’s 2030 Development Agenda


7. Realized Worth, Investing Human Capital: A New Approach to Achieving the SDGs, 2020


9. UNSDSN Sustainable Development Report, 2020

10. The Worldbank global development data

11. UN Women, The economic costs of violence against women, 2016

12. United Nations, Volunterism and the Global Goals

13. Evan Harvey Global Sustainability Officer at Nasdaq, Chair at IMPACT2030 Metrics Council

14. Sabancı Group employee volunteering activities were chosen by United Nations Volunteers from Turkey as an example, so the Sabancı Group was included in the report representing the private sector.

15. Economist Anatolia 500 list, 2019

16. Istanbul Bilgi University, Volunteering in Turkey, 2019

17. Headline Diversity, Employee Volunteering Whitepaper, 2018

18. TUSEV, Individual Giving and Philanthropy in Turkey, 2019


22. The Deloitte Global Millennial Survey, 2020

23. Headline Diversity Blog, List of the companies which support Istanbul Convention, 2020

24. Information on the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly and the President Volkan Bozkır, Priorities of the President, UNIS/INF/567

25. UNSDSN Sustainable Development Report, 2020

26. Women’s Empowerment Principles Signatories

For any questions relating to this report or to connect with the Turkey Impact Council, please contact turkeycouncil@impact2030.com