Poised for Impact:

Greater Philadelphia Corporate Volunteer Council's playbook on actions to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

Introduction

About the Sustainable Development Goals

On September 25, 2015, 193 world leaders adopted the post-2015 development agenda, "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." The agenda, which was agreed to by consensus, is a plan of action for:

- *People*—to end extreme poverty and ensure that all human beings can fulfill their potential in a healthy environment.
- *Our planet*—to protect earth from degradation so that it can support the needs of present and future generations.
- *Prosperity*—to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous lives in peaceful, inclusive and just societies.

The overall plan cannot be attained without peace or without partnerships; it must be attained by mobilizing global solidarity. The agenda is an ambitious set of 17 goals and 169 targets meant for all countries and all people. The goals are integrated and indivisible, and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental (source: IMPACT2030).

About this playbook

This publication draws from the experience of the Greater Philadelphia Corporate Volunteer Council (GPCVC) in its journey to mobilize collaborative corporate volunteer efforts to support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As an IMPACT2030 Action Team, The GPCVC documented its efforts for this case study to help communities around the world take effective action to build private sector coalitions that collectively work toward achieving the global goals.

Corporate Volunteer Councils (CVCs) across the US, supported by organizations such as Points of Light and United Way, provide a foundation for Action Teams to mobilize for IMPACT2030. Since 2011, United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey has spearheaded collaborative efforts and directed the GPCVC in the Philadelphia region. This collaboration of regional companies and United Way not only helped to create an environment conducive to local level corporate collaborations, but also provided an institutional framework that set the stage for private sector collaborations to effectively target SDGs in their respective regions.

About IMPACT2030

IMPACT2030 is an initiative led by the private sector—in collaboration with the United Nations, civil society, academia and other stakeholders—with the mission to activate human capital investments through employee volunteer programs to advance the achievement of the SDGs. Through its Action Team approach, anchored by IMPACT2030 Partner companies, it is creating a cross-sector and cross-industry global movement that is maximizing opportunities to collaborate and scale impact.

"As part of IMPACT2030, Philadelphia will work with our local and regional businesses to develop a comprehensive volunteer plan (…) We will also strive to create a volunteer model that works for other cities because the reality is no government program in any country can succeed without community support. Creating a model that can adapt to the various challenges other cities will face will be difficult, but I believe it is an essential part of our commitment to IMPACT2030."

Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney addressing the IMPACT2030 Summit, The United Nations, September 2016

The emergence of corporate volunteerism

Corporate volunteerism has evolved tremendously in the last 30 years and given rise to the term "corporate citizen."

Previously, companies often encouraged their employees to volunteer mostly for altruistic reasons, to help build strong, vibrant communities within which those companies would operate. However, companies quickly noticed direct and indirect business benefits from being perceived as a good corporate citizen. Research showed that consumers favored organizations that cared about their communities, and more recent studies indicate that top talent is increasingly attracted to companies with a strong community focus.

Dedication to corporate volunteerism continues to evolve across the world, and more private sector companies are assimilating it into their onboarding materials and corporate cultures. Corporations are periodically volunteering with nonprofits, from troops of employees wearing company-branded t-shirts to building a "day of service" into their annual agendas. Further, many companies are recognizing assets unique to their business can be shared with nonprofit and community beneficiaries through skills-based volunteering. The strong partnerships being forged between the corporate and nonprofit sectors (and even governments) are mutually beneficial and will continue to sustain the global growth of corporate volunteerism.

"Over time, there has been a horizontal spread in which corporate employee engagement and citizenship has become commonplace. There has also been vertical engagement, in which it has become more sophisticated from hands on direct engagement to skill based engagement and pro bono work."

Michelle Nunn, CEO of CARE International

IMPACT2030's initiative to accelerate the global achievement of the SDGs through multi-sector collaboration has further highlighted the importance of communities and partnerships to come together for local action. Building on the work of predecessors, CVCs provide a model for convening groups to be mobilized as regional action teams that demonstrate collective outcomes of the SDGs. Lessons from the GPCVC experience can be used to accelerate the journey whether a region has an existing convening entity looking to align with the global goals, or a region is seeking guidance on how to get started.

"I have witnessed corporations becoming much more innovative with their volunteer programming for their employees. While general labor like painting and cleanup of schools and neighborhoods are still popular volunteer activities, businesses sometimes find greater value in matching their unique higher pro bono skills and expertise to nonprofit needs. These can include providing technology, marketing, budgeting, and even human resource advice and support to charities."

Wendy Spencer, Former CEO of the Corporation for National & Community Service

Collaborating for change: learning from the GPCVC

The GPCVC is a case study of success in mobilizing private sector collaborative engagement in supporting the SDGs.

The GPCVC was named an IMPACT2030 Action Team in 2017, and is moving rapidly toward coordinated action behind the SDGs—largely by leveraging a pre-existing structure for a convening entity.

The Philadelphia area had active CVCs dating back to 1984. The current organization was re-established in 2010, catalyzed by Philadelphia's designation as a Bloomberg City of Service. The mayor's office played a key role, but transferred leadership responsibility to United Way in 2011. The regional United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey now serves as a lead convener to coordinate programming and facilitate collaboration with local government and nonprofits.

Consisting of over 40 members, the GPCVC boasts committed leadership from companies with headquarters or a significant presence in the region.

In its early years the GPCVC mostly focused on aligning shared values, which enabled the group to define a common objective of collectively creating impact through volunteerism and shared best practices. A modular membership system was eventually adopted to allow for new members, while others took a strong leadership role as part of the steering committee or other committees.

The development of the SDGs prompted the GPCVC to move toward collective action and reporting. When the GPCVC was named an IMPACT2030 Action Team, it took pivotal steps to dedicate efforts to the SDGs, and to lay the groundwork for replicable best practices for collaborate private sector efforts for the SDGs. By leveraging IMPACT2030's SDGs mapping assessment, conducting a regional needs analysis, and developing an action, plan the GPCVC enabled companies to align current efforts in the common language of the SDGs, while communicating individual and collective outputs.

"The key building blocks to launch our IMPACT2030 Action Team are in place thanks to the decades of progress that the leaders in service and the service movement have made across this country, establishing service as a key part of the solution in local communities."

Diane Melley, VP of Global Citizenship at IBM

Organizing for impact: key components for success

The GPCVC experience revealed four key success factors for successful collaboration incorporating corporate volunteerism.

1. Establish a convening entity

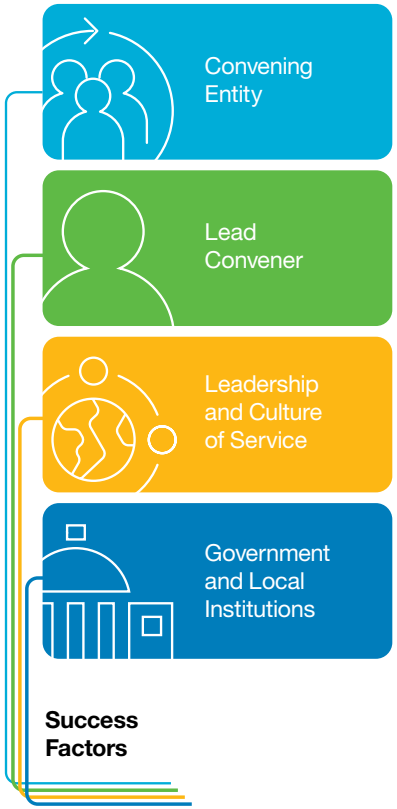
Making use of an established convening entity, in the form of the GPCVC, undoubtedly accelerated progress for greater Philadelphia. However, for regions that do not have an existing CVC or equivalent, a convening entity remains essential for coordinating corporate volunteer efforts effectively. A formal convening body that provides a venue for shared experiences enables future action.

2. Name a lead convener

The role of a lead convener was indispensable to the Greater Philadelphia region's successful mobilization. As a lead convener of the GPCVC, United Way ensures the sustainability of the group through regular programing and facilitation of meaningful discussions. United Way's convening role includes providing paid staff support for the GPCVC. Defined leadership enabled strategic decisions on membership, such as the decision to initiate the group with purely private sector membership to enable relevant dialogue.

Figure 1

GPCVC success factors



3. Recruit passionate corporate leaders who create a culture of service

The culture of service in the region set the stage for successful collaboration. In the GPCVC, leaders are passionate and bring an outcome-based mindset to the discussion. They engaged in thoughtful dialogue to align on shared values about the importance of corporate volunteerism. Their outcome-based mindset facilitated the adoption of the SDGs as the group's common language, in recognition of the need to effectively communicate work across sectors. Active and engaged corporate leadership is the key determinant of success. Members must be committed to taking initiative and driving action, and at times providing financial resources needed to support their human capital investment.

4. Solicit support from local government and institutions

The city of Philadelphia vocally advocated for collaborative volunteer efforts toward the SDGs. Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney addressed the IMPACT2030 Summit at the United Nations to affirm the city's commitment to the goals, specifically focusing on education. While the GPCVC was initially only comprised of private sector membership, the local Chief Service Officer for Philadelphia was added as a GPCVC member once the group was established and had reached alignment on shared values. Local universities and think tanks joined the effort by driving research on NGO needs, informing decisions on areas of focus and reporting collectively on the SDGs.

The GPCVC organizational chart in the appendix provides a sample structure for a regional action team.

"It is a key focus of IMPACT2030 to help companies scale their impact through our multi-sector Action Team approach. We applaud the efforts of the GPCVC, one of the first IMPACT2030 Action Teams to be formed, in developing this case study to highlight how they have identified shared priorities and are collaborating to address larger critical challenges in their local community."

Sue Stephenson, CEO of IMPACT2030

The Impact Expansion model: initiating, activating, and expanding

Reflecting on the progress and stages of their own evolution, the GPCVC members developed a model for regional private-sector-led collaboration to further their efforts towards the SDGs. The Impact Expansion model outlines three phases along the journey to collaborative action for the SDGs.

Though derived from the Greater Philadelphia experience, the model can be applied to regions looking to initiate or advance efforts towards the global goals. Following a similar path can enable participants to more effectively communicate their impact in the language of the SDGs, thus building a stronger internal case for corporate volunteerism. It also provides the opportunity to influence other companies to take action.

Initiating

The first phase in the Impact Expansion model is *initiating*, where a convening entity is established and private sector members are engaged (see figure 2). The establishment of a functioning convening entity is essential. In the Philadelphia region this entity was a CVC, but that does not need to be the case. The best practice for a convening entity is to provide an open forum for businesses to establish shared values and begin to collaborate with a noncompetitive outlook.

Regions in the initiating phase will see immediate benefits such as identification of volunteer opportunities, improvement of internal programs through shared best practices and learnings, and a greater understanding of aligning SDGs with corporate volunteer practices. However, it can be argued that the primary benefit of the initiation phase is the potential it brings for future action.

"It has been helpful for companies to see what others are doing in the space, and look beyond their own corporate identities."

Mei Cobb, Volunteerism Director
United Way Worldwide

Figure 2

The Impact Expansion model

Collaboration in Action Spotlight

Read by 4th and the Eye Mobile

Read by 4th is a city-wide initiative in Philadelphia that works to enable students in low income areas to read at level by 4th grade. Members of the GPCVC, including Wells Fargo and Chubb, support this initiative through coaching programs. Read by 4th partners with the Eagles Eye Mobile, a service provided by Eagles Charitable Foundation with volunteers from Lincoln Financial Group and Santander, to ensure children in low income areas have access to needed vision care. Read by 4th, supported by GPCVC members and 91 other partners, together with the Eagles Eye Mobile, have contributed to the distribution of over 56,000 glasses and a 5% increase in PSSA reading scores.

Activating

Progression to the *activating* phase requires strengthened membership commitment. A convening entity is in the activating phase when it consistently brings an active core group of corporate members together to discuss corporate volunteerism and paths forward. At this stage, the convening entity can develop tiered membership models to allow seasoned participants to advance the group agenda, and simultaneously create an entry point for new private sector members. Membership beyond the private sector is also considered, including local government and volunteer infrastructure organizations.

Regions in the activating phase will see value in the established level of trust that has been built over time. Trust among members fosters productive and constructive discussions, which can lead to partnerships with compatible organizations. Cross-sector collaboration opens new opportunities for employee volunteer activities, and a better understanding of community needs.

Collaboration in Action Spotlight

IBM and Community Schools

In partnership with the Mayor's Office of Education and Office of Civic Engagement & Volunteer Service, IBM associates are providing an innovative STEM skills sharing program for students and professional development for teachers. Through this program, students will learn to code and explore the Internet of Things and cognitive capabilities—creating a space to share IBM's leading skills in the most cutting edge technologies with the upcoming generation of innovators.

The public-private partnership was facilitated by the involvement of both parties in the GPCVC.

Expanding

The GPCVC is transitioning from the activating to *expanding* phase, using the newly established structure to address social issues relevant to the region's needs. The outcomes will be reported in the language of the SDGs.

Once members are ready to implement a set of coordinated activities and operate with an outcome-based mindset, they are beginning to move into the expanding phase. This commitment can be propelled by developing an understanding of needs versus capacity in the region. Multiplayer volunteer efforts across corporations begin to emerge, and it is evident to employee volunteers that they are part of a larger regional and global movement.

Expanding is not end of the journey, but rather the point at which iteration, adjustment, and collective outcome-based reporting is integrated into regular operations. The expanding phase can be viewed as a springboard for systemic change. Regional teams can look toward aggregated reporting across corporations.

Collaboration in Action Spotlight

Days of Caring and Day of Action

Corporations across the GPCVC have come together to sponsor events dedicated to service within their communities. United Way and Dow held Day of Action, where employee volunteers created STEM activity kits to encourage summer learning. United Way partners with AmerisourceBergen, Independence Blue Cross, and other GPCVC members to sponsor Days of Caring across the city, with projects ranging from beautification to tutoring support in regional schools. The activities for these events engaged nearly 3000 volunteers and benefited over 16,000 students, and thousands of students are served annually across the region by employee volunteer programs.

Getting started: the GPCVC perspective

Stakeholders to involve in early stages of regional collaboration
Understanding whom to engage is crucial to starting a regional action team that can progress to action and outcomes. Figure 3 displays a set of guidelines to inform stakeholder involvement.

Considerations for the financial sustainability of the convening entity
Corporate supporters have provided seed money and sponsorships for the GPCVC at both the initiation and activation stages. Typically, Corporate Volunteer Councils require a membership fee to join, which could be on a sliding scale. GPCVC's membership fee is nominal ($100 per company) and corporate sponsorship provides funding to support initiatives like IMPACT2030.

It is important to note that while the focus of these collaborative efforts is to mobilize human capital investment, impactful projects involve materials, logistics and agency staff capacity whose costs are usually underwritten by the participating corporations. Large scale collaborative initiatives and projects necessitate careful budget planning as well as corresponding fundraising to generate the required financial resources to support the action plan and collective impact of corporate volunteers.

Figure 3
Stakeholder Guidance

Stakeholder	When to involve?	Who is the ideal member?	What is their role?
Lead Convener	Initiating	• Organization with strong cross sector ties • Knowledge of corporate volunteer programs • Network of NGOs • Organizations like United Way or Points of Light	• Facilitator • Organizer • Liaison
Corporations	Initiating	• Companies with local headquarters • Global corporations with large local footprint • Corporate leaders that are eager to participate, dedicated to values, and action oriented	• Leading voices • Share practices & lessons • Design collaborative programs and shape internal programs
Local government	Activating	• Chief Service Officer or equivalent • Office of Civic Engagement or equivalent • Participating representative should be well informed of corporate involvement in local projects	• Align public sector volunteer opportunities to capabilities of the convening body • Convey community needs
Volunteer Infrastructure NGOs	Activating	• Coalition organizations with large networks of volunteer opportunities • Organizations like the Chamber of Commerce or United Way	• Align nonprofit volunteer opportunities to capabilities of the convening body • Convey community needs

Activities that accelerated GPCVC Action Team growth

Assess SDG Alignment

In order to understand the areas of focus for the corporations in a convening group, the GPCVC conducted an SDGs Mapping session that aligned existing employee volunteer efforts to the relevant SDGs. The SDGs Mapping exercise took the form of a facilitated session conducted by IMPACT2030 and hosted by United Way (lead convener). This activity is ideal for action teams that are in the activating stage, and looking to progress to expansion.

Document regional NGO needs

Once member corporations have mapped their own activities to the relevant global goals, a needs assessment involving local nonprofit and government stakeholders can help to match associated efforts to areas of high need in the region by SDG. Local partnerships with academic institutions or universities can drive this work, or it can be initiated through the extended network of NGO partnerships of your convening entity.

Create an action plan for collective impact

Creating an action plan as a collective action team is crucial to gaining commitment from membership and corporations. This activity is particularly useful once a needs assessment and capacity mapping have been conducted, as it can bring together the supply and demand information to narrow the group's focus. However, an action plan can be drafted independently of these activities as well. The key components of an effective action plan for regional convening groups include milestones, timeline, targets, and corporate commitments.

Guidance shown in the appendix provides approaches on how to begin these activities in your region.

Thinking ahead: what might be next for the GPCVC

1. **Cross corporations: collective output and outcome reporting**
   - Set common key performance indicators across the convening entity to report on outputs as a collective.
   - Conduct a baseline study to measure progress.
   - Incorporate a balance of quantitative and qualitative indicators (e.g. testimonials from a teacher can be just as valuable as test scores).
2. **Cross borders: inter-regional and international exchange of best practices**
   - Initiate a dialogue through online forums or by convening events between action teams and CVCs in other regions to share learnings.
   - Establish externships, where members of groups in the expanding phase can visit meetings in other regions or countries to guide progress for initiating or activating.
   - Publicly share learnings through publications, articles, or blogs.
3. **Cross barriers: incorporate feedback and iterate**
   - Maintain a pioneer mindset by failing forward to learn and drive rapid improvements.
   - Embrace feedback from crucial participants in the process to gain insight into where to improve.
   - Consider new ways to involve local small and medium-sized businesses, such as tiered membership or mentorship guidance from more developed programs within the convening group.

About the sponsors of this playbook

The Greater Philadelphia Corporate Volunteer Council

The Greater Philadelphia Corporate Volunteer Council is a coalition of member companies dedicated to increasing the collective impact of employee volunteer engagement by fostering greater collaboration within and across the business and non-profit communities. GPCVC is driven by United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey. In 2017, GPCVC was invited to serve as the regional lead for the United Nations IMPACT2030 Action Team.

Learn more at www.unitedforimpact.org/gpcvc.

The Greater Philadelphia Corporate Volunteer Council
–Driven by United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey

IBM Corporate Citizenship

IBM is a founding partner of IMPACT2030, and an active leading member of the GPCVC. The "Poised for Impact" playbook was sponsored through IBM Corporate Citizenship's Impact Grant program, through a grant provided to United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey. The IBM Corporate Citizenship Impact Grants program delivers strategically designed consulting and software solutions that leverage the breadth of IBM capabilities and technologies to empower organizations as they work in our communities to overcome society's toughest challenges. Impact Grants are one of several IBM Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives which comprehensively enable the company to deliver higher-value solutions to the nonprofit sector, affect significant social issues and impact communities across the globe.

Learn more at www.ibm.com/ibm/responsibility.

Acknowledgments

AmerisourceBergen Corporation

Bank of America

The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia

City of Philadelphia

The Dow Chemical Company

Grant Thornton

Greater Philadelphia Corporate Volunteer Council

GSK

IMPACT2030

Independence Blue Cross

The Main Line Chamber of Commerce

Phenom People

RevZilla

Satell Institute

United Way Worldwide

United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey

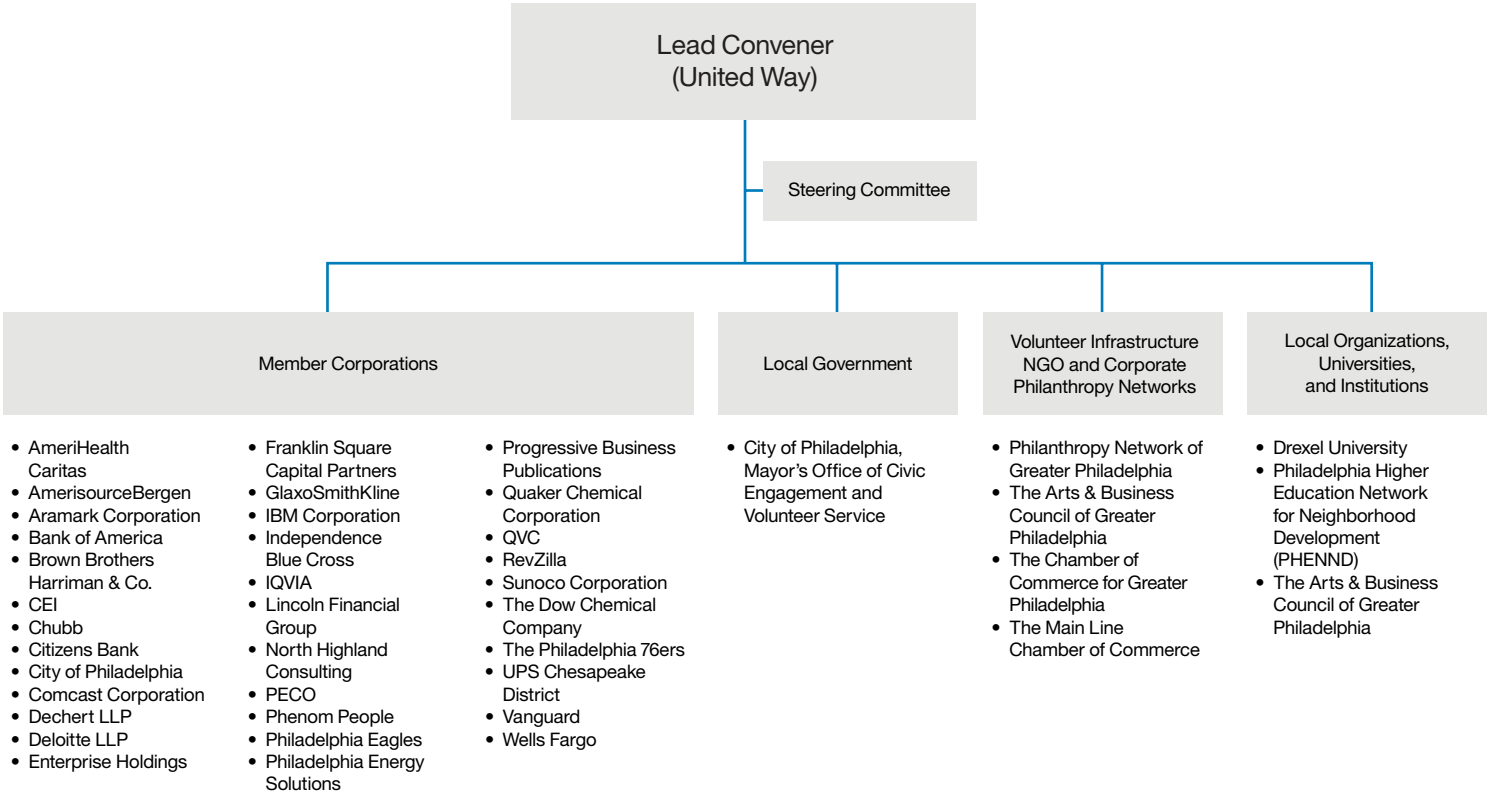
Vanguard

A special thank you to Wendy Spencer, former CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service and CEO of the Florida Governor's Commission on Volunteerism, and Michelle Nunn, former CEO of Points of Light and CEO of CARE International, for their contributions to the development of this playbook. We would also like to thank Sue Stephenson and IMPACT2030 for their support and participation in this initiative.

Appendix

GPCVC organizational structure

Mapping session guidance and template



Sample agenda

I. Overview of Sustainable Development Goals
II. Why work collaboratively? Examples of regional collaboration
III. Collaborative exercise to align existing programs to goals (see *mapping*, next page)
IV. Estimation of hours commitment per corporation
V. How will mapping exercise be used? Discussion of next steps

What to expect

- There will likely be a range of familiarity with the Sustainable Development Goals within your group. Some global organizations may be intimately familiar and have made commitments, while others are considering how their organization might participate.

  TIP: Start from the beginning to ensure everyone is on the same page. Provide an overview of the goals and their purpose, as well as tangible examples.

- Especially within a large network, some corporate members may be hesitant to make a commitment.

  TIP: Helping members to understand that the goals can be used as a language with which they can communicate impact through existing programs can alleviate concerns. Organizations can map their programs without committing to the SDGs. When the regional team creates an action plan, a commitment is expected.

Illustrative output of a mapping exercise

The following template can be used to assess and map corporate capacity within a given convening entity. The Sustainable Development Goals are listed vertically, and the associated subgoals are displayed horizontally. Corporations and other members of convening groups can place their names under the goals and subgoals for which they have corporate volunteering initiatives.

Sustainable Development Goals

1 NO POVERTY	1.1	1.2 *Co. A* *Co. D*	1.3	1.4 *Co. A*	1.5	1.6	1.7							
2 ZERO HUNGER	2.1 *Co. C*	2.2 *Co. B*	2.3	2.4 *Co. X* *Co. Y* *Co. Z*	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.8						
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	3.1	3.2	3.3 *Co. C*	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9 *Co. E* *Co. F* *Co. G*	3.a	3.b	3.c	3.d	
4 QUALITY EDUCATION	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4 *Co. B* *Co. Z* *Co. X* *Co. Y*	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.a	4.b	4.c				
5 GENDER EQUALITY	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5 *Co. Z* *Co. X*	5.6	5.a	5.b	5.c					

Needs assessment guidance

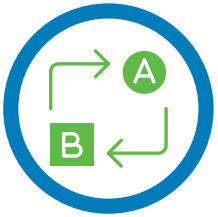
To document regional needs, the following guidance can be utilized as a starting point for setting a research methodology, deciding on potential partners to involve, and outlining expected outcomes.

Methodology

- Gather data to analyze community needs. For example, the GPCVC is conducting interviews of leaders in local government and institutions, and analyzing United Way data.
- Identify 2–4 addressable challenges that are underserved in the community
- Prepare to align CVC resources against these needs

Potential Partners

- Government and Nonprofit Leaders
- Universities, Research Institutes and local "Think Tanks"
- Lead Convener
- Corporate Supporters



Expected Outcomes

- View of community landscape and critical needs
- Narrowed focus for CVC on key areas where community can really make a difference
- Confidence that CVC engagement will drive meaningful and measurable impact

Action plan sample template (illustrative)

	Need #1 (SDG 4.6) **Education: Mentoring Youth**	**Need #2**	**Need #3**
Goal(s)	*Activate 200 community role models to empower youth in underprivileged communities*		
Timeline	*By Q2 2018*		
Milestones	*Identify 10 schools / programs with volunteer capacity*		
Assessment of Corporate Capacity	*Company X has 25 employees who currently mentor children at _____school*		
Leadership / Owners	*Company X*		
Metrics / KPIs	☐ *Self-efficacy surveys* ☐ *Test scores*		

Resources

United Way Worldwide

IMPACT2030

Points of Light, Corporate Volunteer Council Network

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

UN Volunteers Toolkit: How Volunteerism Can Contribute to Achieving the SDGs

10 Things You Can Do Right Now to Help Accomplish the SDGs

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New Orchard Road
Armonk, NY 10504

Produced in the United States of America
December 2017

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CXW12347-USEN-00