NAF’s dynamic partnership with KPMG began in 2010 as an investment in the NAF finance and accounting curriculum and professional development opportunities for teachers. This relationship has since grown to include KPMG’s involvement in additional NAF career themes and an extraordinary commitment to employee engagement.

KPMG LLP, the audit, tax, and advisory services firm, operates from 87 offices in the U.S. and has achieved distinction as a top employer among organizations committed to diversity. Through its Foundation, KPMG focuses on providing resources to students at every stage of their academic career. Over twenty years ago, KPMG Foundation created The PhD Project to offer funding and incentive to PhD candidates of color.

The firm’s commitment to improve public education, particularly among racial and ethnic minorities and people from lower income backgrounds, reflects KPMG’s corporate responsibility and bottom line goals. To date, the KPMG Foundation and KPMG LLP together have contributed $1,785,510 to NAF.

To ensure that the local relationships with NAF academies were as effective as possible, KPMG’s Corporate Citizenship department created the KPMG/NAF Engagement Toolkit. It details not only all of the ways that KPMG employees can partner with academies, but also includes data on why such an investment is necessary.

“Engagement with NAF academies is very appealing to our employees,” explains Meghan Bracken, National Director for KPMG Corporate Citizenship. The company cultivates a volunteer culture and recruits hundreds of college graduates each year. “Our people are very committed to their communities and the opportunity to work with youth that have an interest in finance was a perfect fit. We soon realized that we could expand beyond that.”

NAF Academies of Finance provide an obvious pipeline to diverse talent. Yet KPMG recognizes that NAF academy students are, by definition, honing valuable workplace communication skills and technical training. KPMG is an exemplary provider of the NAF gold standard internships and cultivates NAF students of finance, engineering, and information technology.

KPMG’s “NAF Champions” make it happen at the local level. “Once we make the introduction between the Champion from KPMG and the NAF academy director, they take over,” says Ms. Bracken. “They identify the activities that will be the most beneficial to the students and then match an available KPMG resource. It’s a very individualized approach.”

The KPMG Toolkit prepares volunteers down to the last detail. Knowing in advance about the time commitment, appropriate activities for students in each grade, fundraising duties, classroom presentations, and more, attracts volunteers who are aware of and drawn to that commitment.

“We have very committed but busy people, so they appreciate knowing exactly what volunteering entails,” says Ms. Bracken. She and others in her department work closely with NAF’s national team to ensure the quality of KPMG/NAF interactions. “Miami is particularly lively, and so is Los Angeles, Dallas, Atlanta, New York—every place where academies are accustomed to dealing with corporate partners.”

KPMG regularly attends and presents at the NAF annual conference, NAF Next. This event is a great way to hear directly from academy directors and students who have worked with their Champions.

“Students who have interned with us tell us they were overwhelmed by how much the firm embraced them and the projects they were able to work on,” Ms. Bracken shares. “Our professionals tell us that they are struck by how poised and professional the NAF students are and that they are impressed with how well prepared they are for the business world.”

KPMG’s foresight to create such a thorough and detailed engagement toolkit positions them to have a lasting impact far beyond its own offices. Together, NAF and KPMG are strategizing about how to build on KPMG’s deep understanding of what corporate engagement with NAF is all about, attract additional partners, and show them how it’s done.

“Students who have interned with us tell us they were overwhelmed by how much the firm embraced them and the projects they were able to work on,” Ms. Bracken shares. “Our professionals tell us that they are struck by how poised and professional the NAF students are and that they are impressed with how well prepared they are for the business world.”

Meghan Bracken
National Director, Corporate Citizenship
KPMG