

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS
OF CANADA



THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
AND YOUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION —

Guidebook and Toolkit

Partners

Working Together to Advance the SDGs in Canada

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and Community Foundations of Canada have engaged in a multi-year partnership to build the capacity of the community foundation movement to embed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across their work. The partnership involves the development of a suite of learning opportunities, SDG-focused programming and collaboration opportunities among community foundations across Canada, across sectors and across borders. This report has been written by Community Foundations of Canada and was commissioned by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to build the capacity of community foundations to advance the Sustainable Development Goals in their own communities.



Community Foundations of Canada

Canada's 191 community foundations are part of a national network working across sectors to help Canadians invest in building communities that are sustainable, resilient and inclusive. Together, we are relentlessly pursuing a future where everyone belongs. Our movement has grown dramatically over the past 27 years and, today, more than 90% of Canadian communities have access to a community foundation. Collectively, the network stewards combined assets of more than \$6.2 billion and we've put hundreds of millions back into communities. For more information, visit www.communityfoundations.ca.



Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, established in 1926 in Flint, Michigan, by an automotive pioneer, is a private philanthropy committed to supporting projects that promote a just, equitable and sustainable society. It supports non-profit programs throughout the United States and, on a limited geographic basis, internationally. Grantmaking is focused in four programs: Civil Society, Education, Environment and Flint Area. In addition to Flint, offices are located in metropolitan Detroit, Johannesburg and London. With year-end assets of approximately US\$3.1 billion in 2019, the Foundation made 364 grants totalling more than US\$133 million. For more information, visit www.mott.org.

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About this Guidebook and Toolkit

This Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Guidebook and Toolkit is meant for staff and board members of community foundations at all stages of engaging with the SDGs.

The Guidebook and Toolkit is intended to meet community foundations where they are at, to provide practical examples, ideas and steps for aligning current community foundation work with the SDGs, and to provide next steps to deepen their impact through the SDGs. This document is divided into two sections. The first section is an SDG Guidebook. It will introduce the SDGs and provide global, national and local context for the Goals. It will explain why Community Foundations of Canada (CFC) and community foundations are well positioned to align with the SDGs and how the SDGs can deepen collective impact.

The Guidebook includes:

- An overview of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs
- How the global community came together to adopt the SDGs
- Key concepts that underlie the SDG Framework and relevance to the work of community foundations
- What CFC is doing to advance the SDGs

The second section of this document identifies practical approaches to align current work to the SDGs through an SDG Toolkit. In many cases, community foundations in Canada are already doing work towards meeting the SDGs, and the Toolkit is designed to show how to align current work with the SDG Framework.

The Toolkit is intended to support community foundations to:

- Identify first steps to take
- Identify existing alignment
- Plan for future alignment
- Learn from examples of other community foundations
- Provide resources, tips and tools



How to use this Toolkit

Consider the Toolkit a “menu of options” to choose from. Community foundations are as unique as the communities they serve, and the approaches chosen to align with the SDGs will also be unique to each community foundation. Community foundations are already working towards the Goals. However, we know more needs to be done. The Toolkit will provide tools to guide next steps, for bolder, creative and innovative ways to meet the SDGs.



SECTION 1 —

Guidebook

About the SDGs

The vision set out in *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* is bold, daunting and, yet, full of potential.

It is a challenge, a call to action, for everyone, everywhere to work towards this future. In September 2015, Canada and 192 other United Nations member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a historic commitment that embraced a common vision and blueprint for a sustainable future. The SDGs replace and build on the work started with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were agreed upon in 2000 and drove progress in development for 15 years. Unlike the MDGs, which focused on developing countries and a narrow scope, the SDGs form an Agenda with a wider reach and scope, and broader engagement globally. The 2030 Agenda is a 15-year global framework centred

on a diverse set of 17 interconnected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with 169 targets and 232 individual indicators. The SDGs are based on five pillars for sustainable development: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. The SDGs acknowledge that sustainable development needs to happen everywhere and that inequality exists within all communities. As such, the SDGs are to be implemented in all nations, with a focus on community-level actions, and indicators are meant to ensure that “no one is left behind.” To accomplish this, participation has to be from everyone, all segments of society and all stakeholders. The Goals are a call to action and every one of us has a role to play for a more sustainable future.

Five pillars of sustainable development

PEOPLE

End poverty and hunger in all their forms and dimensions, and ensure that all human beings can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

PLANET

Protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.

PROSPERITY

Ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.

PEACE

Foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

PARTNERSHIP

Mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

Data from [Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations, 2015](#).



”

In these Goals and targets, we are setting out a supremely ambitious and transformational vision. We envisage a world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want, where all life can thrive.

— United Nations

Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The Decade of Action calls for accelerating sustainable solutions to all the world's biggest challenges — ranging from poverty and gender to climate change, inequality and closing the finance gap.



The Decade of Action

The deadline of 2030 is pressing and although progress has been made, it has not been at the speed or scale needed to meet the Goals. This decade has been named the “Decade of Action” to accelerate progress to achieve the Goals by 2030. The Decade of Action involves global action in leadership and resources, local action to implement the Goals within communities and people action by many stakeholders to push for transformation.

Visit www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/decade-of-action to learn more.

Core principles of the SDGs

When engaging with the SDGs, the following core principles are useful in framing and deepening community foundation work.



LOCAL-LEVEL ACTION

The realization of the Goals at the local level will depend on local actors and on a bottom-up approach. In order to be successful, changes have to empower local communities to be decision-makers and implementers.

Relevance for community foundations: As organizations working at the local level, community foundations have a strong mandate in their roles as conveners and partners for implementers. All of the other core principles discussed below can be applied using the lens of local-level action.



UNIVERSALITY

The SDGs are a universally shared vision for humankind everywhere, and every country shares responsibility for playing a part in implementing this global vision. Although there are different pathways—the specific focuses and implementation of the SDGs in communities, regions and countries may differ—the underlying purpose and vision remain universal.

Actioning in community foundations: The work in local communities contributes to the greater purpose of achieving the Goals. As the case study from the Foundation of Greater Montréal demonstrates ([page 37](#)), the Goals can help rally communities around a common cause and language, and reach new audiences, including donors, partners and peers.



“

Universality implies that all countries will need to change, each with its own approach, but each with a sense of the global common good.

— Ban Ki-moon

Former Secretary-General of the United Nations, 2015



♥ FOR EVERYONE, INCLUDING THE MOST VULNERABLE

The SDGs focus on “leaving no one behind,” speaking to the inequalities that exist within and between communities, regions and nations. The SDGs promote inclusive action through participatory processes at a local level and give power and voice to traditionally marginalized stakeholders. In a Canadian context, this concept speaks to the importance of considering the needs of all peoples and of including and giving power to diverse groups and Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Actioning in community foundations: Belonging is a core part of community foundations’ work, and the SDGs are a challenge to prioritize the needs of diverse groups in the pursuit of inclusion in all its forms. The Clayoquot Biosphere Trust study focused on inequalities in their community related to tourism and the need for a living wage ([page 29](#)).

↔ INTERCONNECTED AND INDIVISIBLE

The SDGs are interconnected in a number of ways, with connections between scales, across boundaries and among the five pillars, noting that focusing on prosperity and people cannot happen without a healthy planet, and without the conditions of peace and partnerships. The SDGs are indivisible, as work towards one Goal has an impact on other Goals. One Goal cannot be achieved unless all Goals are. In this way, the SDGs focus on system change rather than solving individual issues.

Actioning in community foundations: Thinking of how issues connect can elevate the work and impact of community foundations by digging into issues to see the less obvious connections and by understanding the impact of global and regional factors. The Community Foundation for Lennox & Addington case study ([page 27](#)) shows how adopting an SDG mindset can deepen thinking about local issues.

💬 MULTI-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

The importance of partnerships to achieving the Goals is so important that they have been included as a Goal within the Framework (SDG #17 **Partnerships for the Goals**) and as one of the five pillars for sustainable development. There is widespread recognition that the SDGs can be achieved only if there is unprecedented cooperation and partnership across all sectors of society.

Actioning in community foundations: The focus on partnerships is an opportunity to leverage the knowledge and expertise of community foundations in partnering, as well as expand current partnerships, to work towards the Goals. For example, the Victoria Foundation is partnering with local government in their work to meet the Goals.

How the SDGs work



**AMBITIOUS AND ASPIRATIONAL**

The SDGs lay out aspirations for how humanity has to adapt for a sustainable future. The targets for the SDGs are openly ambitious in scope, challenging everyone to be equally ambitious in the approach to meet the Goals. There is a need to move beyond the status quo and conventional approaches to achieve truly transformative changes.

Relevance for community foundations: There is a need to be ambitious, bold and innovative in community foundations' approaches to meet the Goals. The London Community Foundation case study ([page 39](#)) demonstrates how an innovative approach to impact investing can lead to transformative changes to meet the Goals.



Collaboration across societal sectors has emerged as one of the defining concepts of international development in the 21st century.

— The Partnering Initiative

Maximising the Impact of Partnerships for the SDGs

It is important to be aware of the critiques and challenges, and keep these in mind when considering local approaches to the Goals, including work with different stakeholder groups and partners. Despite these challenges and critiques, heeding the call to action is already reaping benefits for communities, and the benefits of fully realizing the SDGs far outweigh the negatives.

Challenges

- **Time:** The SDGs have a tight deadline for action, and a main challenge is working at a pace that can meet the Goals. Some community foundations may also be concerned about “what’s next?” as the deadline for the 2030 Agenda approaches.
- **“Lost in Translation”:** Despite the benefits of a shared language, it is also a new language, and any new language requires time and capacity to learn.
- **Capacity:** Community foundations have limits to human and financial capacity. The Toolkit provides some first steps that do not require extensive capacity, but deepening work will require additional resources.
- **Partnerships:** Some partners may not yet be willing or able to come to the table. For example, local governments are key to success, but many have a range of existing responsibilities and may not have the capacity to work towards the Goals.
- **Silos:** Many organizations and funders that community foundations work with operate in silos. Trying to break out of these silos can be difficult, costly and time-consuming but is necessary to meet the Goals.

Critiques of the Goals

- The focus on “development” that underpins the Goals values continued growth, which may be inconsistent with the environmental sustainability goals.
- There is little mention or consideration of Indigenous rights within the SDGs, and the Framework and process have been criticized for their lack of engagement with Indigenous communities.
- The Goals are non-binding and allow each country to set its own national plan.
- The SDGs are broad in scope and resemble a “wish list” rather than an action plan.
- There is a lack of explicit consideration of culture and cultural values.

The SDGs and COVID-19

When a crisis hits, it can be difficult at first to see how the SDGs can apply to the work at hand.













However, the core principles of the SDGs explored in previous pages are often highly relevant to all phases of a crisis, particularly for the recovery and rebuild stages. This is illustrated through the example of a recent crisis: the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a global pandemic, COVID-19 has been **universal** in its reach and universal where every country is required to act and where people around the world had one shared vision: to flatten the curve. The pandemic clearly identified that, while **everyone** was vulnerable, existing inequalities made us experience the pandemic unequally in our own communities. The figure below illustrates that, while the pandemic appeared as a "health emergency," in reality, it emphasized how **interconnected and indivisible** the SDGs and humanity truly are. The response required new **multi-sector partnerships** as we worked with new fundraising partners to create response

funds and as companies around the world adapted global supply chains to make ventilators. Millions of **local-level responses** culminated in global action. Finally, like the call of the SDGs for us to be **ambitious and aspirational**, the pandemic showed us how we can be bold and courageous to create the future we want to see.

The pandemic has also demonstrated that rapid, bold and united action is possible and can have immediate impact. In Canada, all levels of government, and all political parties, are working together, alongside civil society and corporate partners, to address long-standing societal issues that have come to the forefront during the pandemic. This coordinated response provides a precedent for how the SDGs can be achieved.

How COVID-19 affects the SDGs

	<p>Vulnerable populations to fall below poverty line due to loss of income.</p>		<p>Women facing economic loss and violence. Frontline workers at risk are mostly women.</p>		<p>Slums at risk of exposure due to high population density and poor sanitation.</p>
	<p>Food production and distribution could be disrupted.</p>		<p>Inadequate access to handwashing facilities due to supply disruptions.</p>		<p>Lowered environmental footprints with less commitment to climate action.</p>
	<p>Devastating effects on health.</p>		<p>Disrupted access to electricity due to supply and personnel shortages.</p>		<p>Conflict areas at high risk for the spread of COVID-19 and death from the virus.</p>
	<p>School closed for many. Remote learning is less effective/inaccessible for some.</p>		<p>Economy suspended. Lower income due to less work and unemployment for some.</p>		<p>Reduced globalization. Importance of public health cooperation highlighted.</p>

The National Picture: Canada and the SDGs

The Government of Canada has pledged to meet Canada's SDG commitments both at home and abroad.

In 2018, the federal government began to mobilize their efforts with the launch of an SDG Data Hub and the presentation of Canada's first Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the High-level Political Forum at the United Nations. The VNR is a voluntary report to the global community, providing an opportunity for Canada to review national progress towards the SDGs and to share experiences, successes and lessons learned with audiences worldwide. In 2019, the government released an interim report, *Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy*, after engaging with diverse stakeholders across Canada, including a number of community foundations. The document identified five national priorities:

1. Leadership, governance and policy coherence
2. Awareness, engagement and partnership
3. Accountability, transparency and reporting
4. Reconciliation and the 2030 Agenda
5. Investing in the SDGs

Reconciliation in Canada and the SDGs

In the [Alliance 2030](#) newsletter *UNDRIP and the SDGs: There's no sustainable future without Indigenous rights* Riley Yesno writes "In order for there to be large-scale improvements to the conditions for Indigenous people in Canada (and the achievement of the SDGs) Indigenous nations must have not only the fiscal capacity to make necessary, community-specific and culturally-relevant decisions, they must also have the legal autonomy to do so without interference or imposition from other bodies of power. Indigenous communities must have their inherent rights recognized, including their right to self-determination. Without these rights recognized all solutions aimed at drastically improving conditions for Indigenous people, no matter how well-intended, will ultimately be colonially imposed and unsustainable."



The interim report is a major step towards a national strategy

Various organizations across Canada have been working to monitor the country's progress in meeting the Goals. The government's interim report, [Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy](#), stated, "Four years into the global implementation of the 2030 Agenda, progress has been made with many of the goals and targets. However, [Canada] is not proceeding at the pace needed to achieve this ambitious agenda."

CFC and community foundations across Canada can accelerate and galvanize efforts in local communities so that Canada overcomes challenges to meeting the Goals.

Across the country, there are millions of people struggling to meet their basic needs. In all communities, there are segments of society who are more likely to live in poverty, face discrimination and encounter social exclusion, including Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, women, girls, youth, people of advanced age, the LGBTQ+ community, newcomers to Canada and people with a disability. The Government of Canada has started to track the SDG indicators with national-level statistics at the [Sustainable Development Goals Data Hub](#). The Data Hub allows anyone to explore how Canada is progressing on different indicators at the local and national levels.

CFC's Chief Executive Officer, Andrew Chunilall, attended the [High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development \(HLPF\)](#) in 2018. He states that "there's a real awareness of social fragmentation in Canada—a divide that becomes more apparent when we look at Canada through the rural/urban lens. We see that more and more people are moving into cities and so we require greater investment in those spaces, which further perpetuates the social gap. There is so much more to Canada than its urban centres—we can't dismiss the rest of the country. We have to ensure that both rural and urban environments are compelling places to live, work and play." Visit www.alliance2030.ca/reflections-united-nations-high-level-political-forum-interview-andrew-chunilall for more of his reflections on Canada and the SDGs from the 2018 HLPF.



We have to ensure that both rural and urban environments are compelling places to live, work and play.

— Andrew Chunilall
CEO, Community Foundations of Canada

The Opportunity for Community Foundations: Aligning to the SDGs

The alignment of the SDGs at a global, national, regional and community level is already happening.

CFC and the SDGs

Community Foundations of Canada has placed the SDGs at the centre of their work, informing, engaging and collaborating with local community foundations and community leadership around this important agenda. They are also using expertise in partnering to expand their network of partners working towards the 2030 Agenda.

The role of philanthropy in the SDGs

Key stakeholders across all sectors are invested in the outcomes of the 2030 Agenda. Philanthropy has a vital role to play in working towards the Goals and is a key partner in SDG implementation. The work of philanthropy is, by its nature, already aligned to the Goals, and mobilizing within our sector can help accelerate progress to the 2030 Agenda.

Philanthropy's role

MOBILIZING

financial resources

ADVOCATING

public policy and actions

COMMUNICATING

about the SDGs and convening conversations

INVESTING

in innovation

PARTNERING

with other sectors
(government, industry, etc.)

EMPOWERING AND AMPLIFYING

voices of marginalized groups

Why the SDGs?

When the 2030 Agenda creating the SDGs was first signed, CFC explored if, and how, this global agenda set out by the UN might be relevant for the community foundation movement in Canada. Adopting the 17 SDGs was imperative to the work of CFC. From the onset, CFC focused on local-level action and partnerships for the Goals. The global agenda provided the opportunity for CFC and community foundations to track sustainable development in a way that is easy to understand and communicate with other communities, governments and potential partners

Partnering for the SDGs

CFC has been deeply involved in convening conversations and exploring ways to build collaboration and connections within philanthropy and across sectors to work towards the Goals. In February 2018, the SDGs were at the forefront of the first-ever North American Community Foundations Summit. The gathering provided the opportunity to explore the role of community philanthropy in meeting the SDGs and to discuss innovative approaches to building stronger, more inclusive and more resilient local communities.

CFC knows that achieving the 2030 Agenda depends on extensive partnerships and, as a convener, they are active in bringing together key partners and exploring ways to build collaboration and connection within and between sectors. In 2019, with other partners, CFC opened the [SDG Hub](#), Canada's first collaborative work and event space dedicated to advancing the SDGs. CFC is actively working with community foundations across the country, and this Guidebook and Toolkit is one of the steps to accelerate impact within the movement to achieve the Goals.

CFC and Partnership for the SDGs

CFC is active in diverse partnerships for the Goals, along with Alliance 2030 and The Equality Fund.

Alliance 2030

[Alliance 2030](#) is a national network of organizations, institutions and individuals committed to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by the year 2030. It currently has over 2,500 members.

Following their efforts around Canada's 150th, Community Foundations of Canada founded Alliance 2030 in partnership with a number of national partners, based on the belief that these goals can be accomplished in Canada and abroad by working creatively and collaboratively at both the local and the global level.

Alliance 2030 is building a searchable database of all the work that is being done across Canada in alignment with the SDGs, amplified by high-quality storytelling through a blog and podcast series. This digital space allows member organizations to easily connect with like-minded Canadians so they can share learnings, find the support they need and stay up to date on the current state of the SDGs. The Alliance also takes this work into communities, creating spaces for their members to come together and forging relationships across sectors to connect partners with the support they need to succeed.

Visit www.alliance2030.ca to access the SDG podcast [No Little Plans](#) and to read stories from community foundations and other partners working towards specific SDGs.

The Equality Fund

"Designed by women, for women, the Equality Fund brings together philanthropists, investors and government to deliver unparalleled resources supporting gender equality outcomes in Canada and around the world." — [The Equality Fund](#).

Community Foundations of Canada, along with 26 community foundations across Canada, is part of a ground-breaking collaboration that combines government funding with international feminist grantmaking, multi-sector philanthropy and a new innovative investment arm to transform and sustain funding for women's organizations and movements in Canada and internationally.

"The global conversation about women is clear: invest in women and the ripple effect can be felt everywhere. That is just as true whether that woman is in Scarborough, Iqaluit or Nairobi. We must connect the dots global to local, and community foundations deeply understand this fact," said Sharon Avery, President & CEO of Toronto Foundation.

Visit www.equalityfund.ca for more information about this exciting partnership.

Implementing the SDGs

CFC has engaged with the federal government on the development of their strategy for implementing the 2030 Agenda. CFC was honoured to join the official Canadian delegation to the High-level Political Forum, as the Government of Canada presented their Voluntary National Review to the UN.

In 2019, CFC worked with the Government of Canada to conduct a consultation with community foundation members to learn more about their experience and feedback on the 2030 Agenda. Recommendations were provided by community foundations and compiled in a report to the federal government to influence the development of a national strategy. These recommendations included creating opportunities for engagement and collaboration; supporting coalitions and networks working towards the Goals; creating opportunities for intergovernmental coordination and engagement; investing in updating SDG data; identifying proxy indicators that align with the SDGs; and developing education materials for all Canadians. To that end, the federal government is providing grants to organizations working on the SDGs, developing SDG training opportunities for all federal government employees and co-creating partnerships to advance the Goals.

Tracking progress towards the SDGs

The national *Vital Signs* program prioritizes the collection of data that aligns to the 2030 Agenda to make relevant and standardized indicators available to community foundations that are participating in the *Vital Signs* program. This allows community foundations to measure and track their community wellbeing in the context of the 2030 Agenda so they can monitor progress at the local level and benchmark to other communities around the world. Community foundations often conduct additional local research and engagement to further align their data collection and better understand their communities through the SDG Framework. CFC has engaged with Statistics Canada in an ongoing conversation about building on SDG data that is available at the community level. In 2021, community foundations will have the opportunity to use a digital platform to host and share community data aligned to the SDGs.

Voluntary local reviews

CFC is also supporting community foundations engaging in a local parallel process to the VNR, called the Voluntary Local Review (VLR). This process allows communities to share strategies, successes and failures with other communities and levels of government.

Support for community foundations

CFC has provided encouragement and training to community foundations to help conceptualize how a global agenda is relevant at the local level. The SDGs are a focus of several CFC Learning Institute peer and online sessions. The SDGs are also a core part of the biennial Community Foundations Conference programming. A recent investment made by the Mott Foundation will allow CFC to pursue this work on a deeper level. In addition to this SDG Guidebook and Toolkit, CFC is developing a robust learning curriculum for community foundations over the next two years.

Organizational alignment

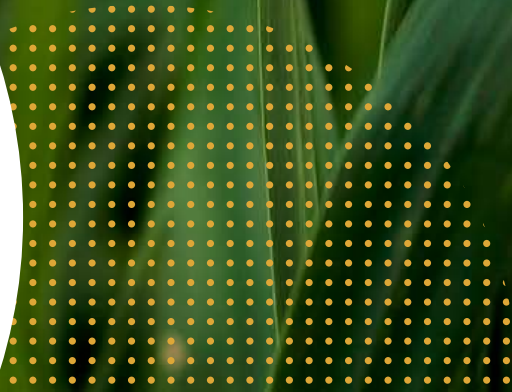
CFC uses the SDGs as a framework to implement and work towards its purpose. CFC aligns their work to the pillars of strengthening community, shifting power and taking the long view, which echo the SDGs' pillars of people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships.

CFC refreshed their partnership strategy to align more closely with the SDGs. When CFC connects with partners, they share their learning journey around the SDGs to encourage adoption of the Goals across sectors. CFC actively seeks partnerships that reflect the SDGs and their intersections.



Our foundations operate at the ground level in communities, but they are also part of regional, provincial, national and international networks.

— Andrew Chunilall
CEO, Community Foundations of Canada



The SDGs in local community foundations

The 191 community foundations across Canada are well positioned to play a pivotal role in advancing the Goals. There is widespread recognition that much of the work implementing the SDGs has to happen at the local level, using community-based approaches. Community foundations are a good fit as SDG champions and implementers because community foundations are:

- Holders of community knowledge: community needs, capabilities, capacity, assets and priorities
- Well connected to diverse stakeholders and partners
- Community leaders and conveners, with the ability to bring people together and spark conversations and action
- Already doing the work towards the economic, social and environmental goals that are set out in the SDGs.

Using the SDGs to talk about the work of community foundations



A SHARED LANGUAGE

The SDGs provide a shared language to talk about the work that community foundations do. A shared language is a powerful tool to better communicate with others and shape the narrative of local impact. A shared language also breaks down barriers among organizations and governments, allowing us to identify commonalities and come together with shared vision, goals and measurements.



ADDRESS THE COMPLEXITY OF LOCAL ISSUES

Community foundations work locally on the issues that matter most to the community. However, the issues community foundations address intersect and span beyond community boundaries, and the SDG shared language can help frame broader conversations about systems change.

Using the SDGs is an opportunity for engagement



ENGAGE NEW AND DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING YOUTH

This is especially true when we embrace the SDG pledge to “leave no one behind.” This is an opportunity for community foundations to challenge themselves to shift the power even more. Youth, in particular, are mobilizing around the issue of climate action (SDG #13). The SDGs provide an opportunity to support and work alongside the next generation to meet the Goals.



NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATIVE WAYS OF COLLABORATING

Expanding partnerships is integral to achieving the Goals. Community foundations hold strong local partnerships and can demonstrate leadership by convening partners. Working towards the Goals will require extensive new and existing partnerships, as well as innovative ways to partner. Our expertise in convening partners will be invaluable in this process.



ATTRACT NEW DONORS

A key partnership opportunity exists with new donors. The SDGs provide a powerful narrative to speak about impact to potential donors. Using the SDGs, donors can see how the work of a local community foundation connects to a broader, global agenda. By being a partner in this work, they can see that they are a part of something bigger. Some donors are already seeking to support work that will contribute to achieving the SDGs. When community foundations talk to donors about aligning work to the SDGs, community foundations are well positioned to attract new donors.



CONNECT US ACROSS SCALES

Embracing the SDGs provides community foundations with an opportunity to work on issues that scale beyond local communities. Through the SDGs, community foundations are able to share successes and innovative solutions more widely, as well as learn from others working towards the SDGs. The SDGs unite a global community.

Canadian youth and the SDGs

The National Consultation on SDG Engagement by SDSN Canada Youth stated, “Young people from across the country are confident that achieving the SDGs will lead to a better future for their generation. In order to get there, they see climate action as a critical priority, one that must be supported by creating a just and equitable transition that ensures no Canadian is left behind. Time is of the essence and the need to embrace this transition cannot wait any longer” (page 5).

Youth are one of the nine major groups who must be included for broad participation to be sure that the SDGs are successful. The success or failure to achieve the 2030 Agenda will have the greatest impact on our youth, who will inherit the world that we create. In short, the stakes are higher for our youth. So much so that today’s youth are being called Generation 2030.

Youth have the capacity and desire to contribute to meeting the 2030 Agenda and have to be given decision-making power to create a sustainable future. A national consultation with Canadian youth found that their top priority is SDG #13 **Climate Change**. Achieving the 2030 Agenda will require new ways of thinking and doing, and our youth have knowledge and ideas to help us meet the global Goals.

Canadian youth would like the 2030 Agenda to consider...

CREATING

intergenerational relationships and justice

IMPROVING

systems, especially in power and politics

PROVIDING

an energy transition and climate action

DEVELOPING

a new understanding of prosperity

”

Young people from across the country are confident that achieving the SDGs will lead to a better future for their generation.

— SDSN Canada Youth
National Consultation on SDG Engagement



SECTION 2 —

Toolkit

Tools for Community Foundations to Advance the SDGs

Each community foundation is at a different place in its journey to align with the SDGs, and each will find its own pathway forward.

This will be guided by which SDGs resonate in a community, the resources and capacity a community foundation has and what opportunities for partnerships emerge. The Toolkit is meant to provide a menu of options, from first steps to fully integrating with the SDGs. Although these tools are presented in order, in reality, there is no linear pathway. Community foundations are invited to begin wherever there is potential for alignment—where SDG engagement has traction. There are many entry points to starting engagement with the SDGs and many different tools to help along the way.

Note: At the time of writing, community foundations and community-minded organizations are addressing the immediate impacts of COVID-19, and many are at capacity. While the stage of immediate response to a crisis is likely not the best time to introduce a new concept such as the SDGs to staff and board, following the immediate response, SDGs can provide a useful conceptual frame to shape work moving forward. Refer to the case study on COVID-19 on [page 12](#) to see how a crisis such as COVID-19 connects to the SDGs.

SDGs 101: Learn and share

These first steps are meant to help community foundations learn more about the SDGs, explore current alignment and share SDG messages with staff, board and partners. Taking any of these first steps will open up new opportunities and new avenues to explore and help determine where to engage deeper with the SDGs.

First steps



START A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR STAFF AND BOARD

Share what you have learned to raise awareness and get input of how this journey will look in your community foundation (see our key messages for where to start).



LEARN AND SHARE KNOWLEDGE WITH THE NETWORK OF COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

- Connect with a neighbouring community foundation already working on the SDGs.
- Connect with CFC for tools and guidance.
- Encourage staff and board members to participate in the SDG Learning Community.



LOOK FOR AN OBVIOUS INTERSECTION

Our work already aligns with the SDGs, and in many cases we just need to make the connection. You may have a more general alignment with the overall Goals, or you may identify that your foundation is already working toward one or more specific SDGs.



CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO LEARN MORE

Is there a specific SDG that resonates for your organization? Do you have questions or want to learn more? Use the [resources list](#) provided as a starting point.

JOIN IN THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION

- Keep your finger on the pulse of what is happening at the national level with [Alliance 2030](#). Become a member (for free!) to read the latest news and contribute to the national conversation by sharing articles, commentary, projects, events and funding opportunities.
- Contribute to the conversation by sharing the work your organization and grant recipients are doing to advance the SDGs in your community.
- Participate in the [CFC Learning Institute](#), including our SDG-focused webinar series.
- Subscribe and listen to the [No Little Plans](#) podcast. Share and discuss what you hear with your board and staff, and feature it on your website and social media.
- Create opportunities to initiate conversations with partners about the SDGs to help you better understand your local landscape. Identify other stakeholders in the community who may be interested, beyond your current network.

Sharing the SDG message



EXPLORE STRATEGIES

Embed the SDGs into your external communications and outreach activities.



USE THE KEY MESSAGES

Get inspired to develop SDG-focused content as part of your organization's communications and engagement work. For example, consider how you might reference your alignment to the 2030 Agenda in your existing activities, or reference links specific to SDGs in project announcements and materials such as annual reports, media releases, blog posts, social media posts, speaking engagements and more.



ENCOURAGE YOUR GRANT RECIPIENTS

Get them to take up the challenge and start to make the connections, too. You are welcome to share this Guidebook and Toolkit with them!

- Other possible strategies: Connect your SDG work online to broader conversations using hashtags such as #SDG, #SDG5 and #GofortheGoals.
- Contribute your own original SDG content to the web and social media and share Alliance 2030 SDG content.
- Use the [SDG icons and visual content](#) to build recognition for these symbols and what they stand for in your communications with grant recipients.



USE AN EXISTING EVENT/INITIATIVE TO INTRODUCE THE SDGs TO THE COMMUNITY

- Include a brief overview of the SDGs in a PowerPoint presentation.
- Mention how the event/initiative contributes to the SDGs. Identify specific Goals it connects to, or link it more broadly to the concepts of the SDGs.

SDG Next Steps: Engage, Collaborate and Align

Some community foundations have already started their SDG journey and are looking for opportunities to take the work further.

There are many options available to foundations that may be keen to deepen their engagement. The following section provides suggestions and inspiration. You will find examples and stories exploring the ways community foundations of various scales are doing some of this work, as well as resources to support your community foundation.

There are many ways and points of intersection with the SDGs in community foundations' work. We have identified six entry points where community foundations can integrate the SDGs.

Align your community foundation with the SDGs



Vital Signs and Community Data

For many community foundations, *Vital Signs*, the most extensive community-data driven program in Canada, is the entry point to engaging with the SDGs.

With 232 individual indicators, the SDGs depend on data to track progress towards the 2030 Agenda. Community foundations have already been tracking progress on the SDG areas that have been the focus of our communities for decades. Aligning CFC's data collection to SDG indicators improves our ability to understand where a community is doing well and the areas in need of improvement in line with the global agenda. Collecting SDG-aligned data allows us to track progress and work toward sustainable community development that is inclusive to all members of our community.

Vital Signs is a powerful tool towards tracking progress to the 2030 Agenda because it:

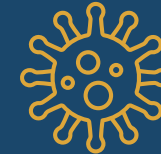
- Is created through a collaborative process with community members and partners
- Identifies and prioritizes community needs and gaps, and who in the community is most in need
- Establishes a baseline against which progress towards the Goals can be measured
- Informs strategic planning and helps to set priorities that will lead to the greatest impact

About *Vital Signs*

Vital Signs is spearheaded by Community Foundations of Canada and led by community foundations in Canada and around the world. More than 90 community foundations in Canada and 41 around the world have participated in *Vital Signs* through reports, [Vital Conversations](#) and more. *Vital Signs* uses local knowledge to measure the vitality of a community and support locally relevant solutions and action towards improving collective quality of life.

Ways to align with the SDGs in *Vital Signs*

- Use the SDG shared language in your report
- Align your *Vital Signs* themes and indicators to the SDG Framework
- Include messaging about the SDGs to raise awareness in your community
- Talk about the SDGs in your *Vital Signs* engagement with stakeholders
- Host Vital Conversations around the SDGs



Vital Signs during the COVID-19 pandemic

Community foundations are relying on the community knowledge gained from past *Vital Signs* to anticipate and rapidly respond to community needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes identifying community members and organizations who will be most severely impacted and identifying issues that will be exacerbated by the pandemic.

CFC is pausing the dissemination of nationally released data in 2020 (sourced from 2016 to 2019) as conditions in communities drastically and rapidly change. Some community foundations are actively conducting research and documenting the effects of COVID-19 in their communities, to be better able to respond to local needs.

Twenty community foundations in Canada have referenced or incorporated the SDGs into their *Vital Signs* reports.

In 2018, CFC began aligning *Vital Signs* data with the SDGs through the national data sets and support for community foundations in their local alignment. In 2019, CFC shifted the *Vital Signs* theme area language to better reflect the alignment of *Vital Signs* data with the SDGs. Aligning *Vital Signs* programming and communication to the SDGs presents an opportunity to measure local progress on Canada's pursuit of the 2030 Agenda and to link your local-level work to a broader global movement and purpose.

Deepening engagement through Vital Conversations

Community foundations may choose to conduct [Vital Conversations](#) alongside a *Vital Signs* report, as a follow-up to, or instead of, a *Vital Signs* report. Vital Conversations provide an opportunity to spark dialogue about the local relevance of the SDGs with community members. Vital Conversations also allow for the opportunity to broaden reach, partner with others who are interested in the Goals and listen to community members to set local priorities.

What is a Vital Conversation?

A Vital Conversation is a facilitated conversation with members of your community, and can be used as a tool to:

EXPLORE

an emerging issue in your community

LEARN

about the lived experiences of specific demographics

IDENTIFY

pressing community issues and co-create next steps for potential solutions

INSPIRE

a call to action

GENERATE

qualitative data and paint the picture of issues and trends in your community

Community Foundation for Lennox & Addington

The SDGs at work in a smaller community foundation.

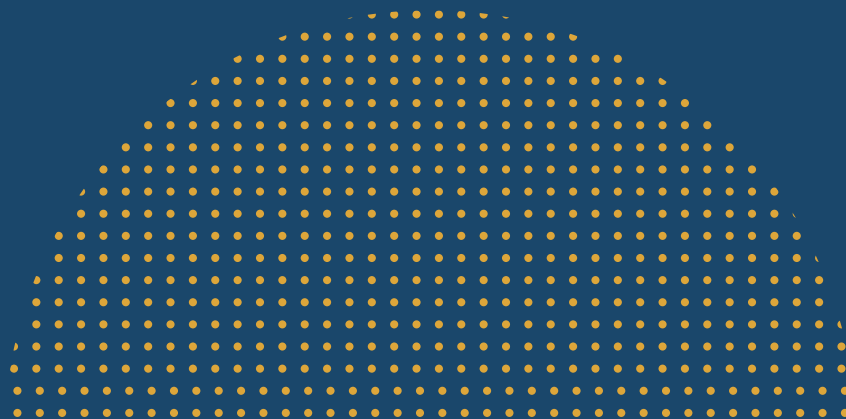
Inspired by learning about the SDGs at Community Foundations of Canada's 2019 National Conference in Victoria, the Executive Director of the Community Foundation for Lennox & Addington, Bob Childs, saw the potential of using the SDGs to inform their work and deepen connections among local issues.

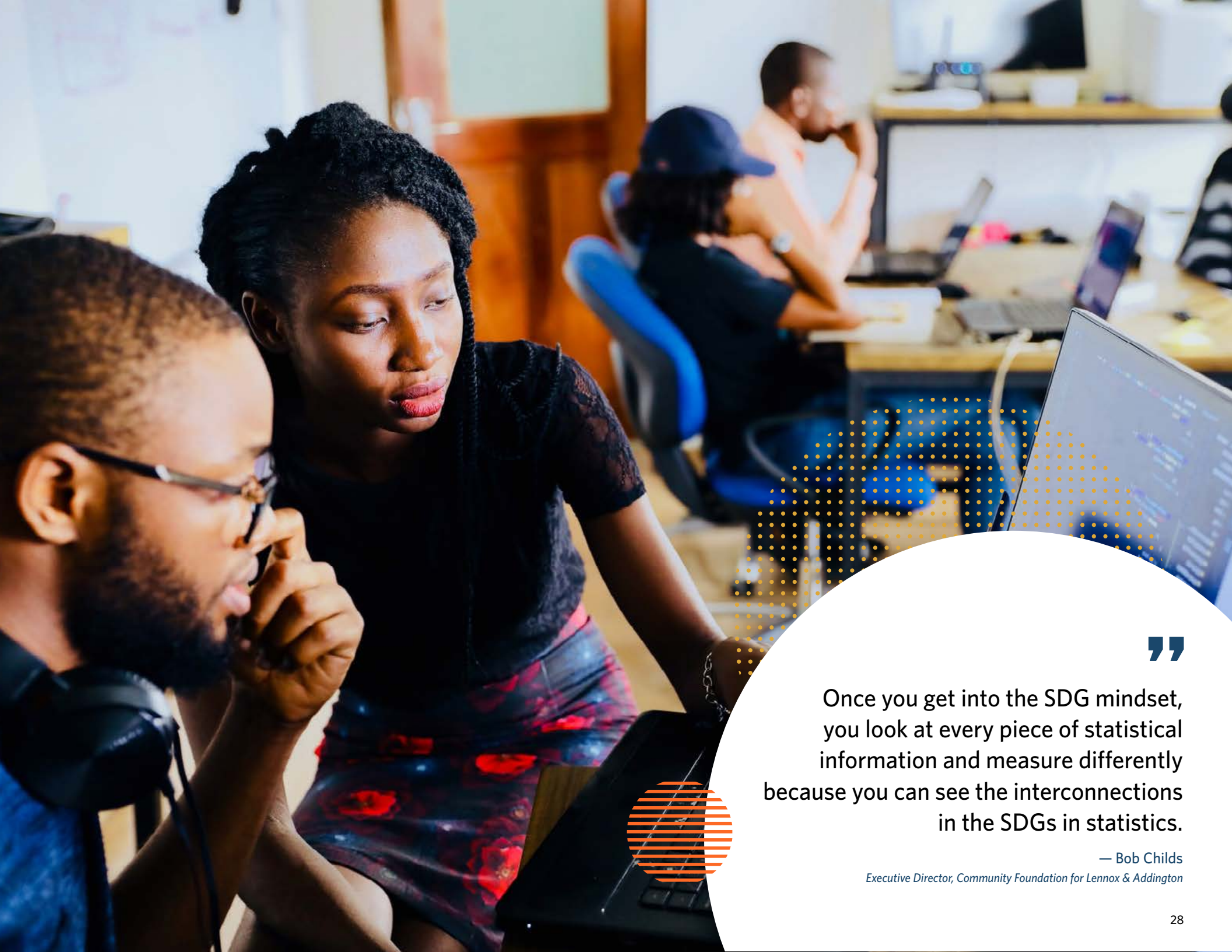
The timing was serendipitous: the Community Foundation for Lennox & Addington was embarking on the 2019 *Vital Signs* as a "soft re-introduction" of their recently rebranded community foundation, and they were on a tight deadline and had limited resources with new staff and energy. With the opportunity to start *Vital Signs* from scratch, Childs felt this was the time to "leap right in and create our own road map using the SDGs."

They conducted five focus groups on topics related to the interconnections of 12 of the 17 SDGs. Framing the consultations in the SDG Framework resonated with the community, and priority setting with a multi-sector panel in the community resulted

in the identification of needs aligned closely with three SDG areas—SDG #1 **No Poverty**, SDG #3 **Good Health and Well-Being** and SDG #13 **Climate Action**. A *Vital Signs* report was launched in December 2019, which told the story of the community, using the lens of 12 of the 17 SDGs and focusing on the three priority areas.

The Community Foundation for Lennox & Addington is now looking at the next steps for their work aligning to the SDGs. With *Vital Signs* engagement providing a strong mandate to focus on the three priority SDGs, they are currently looking at how and where to align granting, how to engage donors and how to spread awareness through their social media messaging. As the foundation explores the opportunities of SDG alignment, Childs consciously brings the SDG mindset into his daily routine and continues to share information and engage interested partners to discuss how to use the SDG Framework to deepen their work.





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Once you get into the SDG mindset, you look at every piece of statistical information and measure differently because you can see the interconnections in the SDGs in statistics.

— Bob Childs

Executive Director, Community Foundation for Lennox & Addington



Clayoquot Biosphere Trust

Working on the global and the local using the SDGs.

The Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT) is the only organization in Canada that is both a UNESCO biosphere reserve and a community foundation. As a part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves, CBT has a mandate to adopt an SDG lens in their work. In 2016, CBT participated in the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves, which brought together more than 1,000 representatives to address issues related to the SDGs, such as education for sustainable development and the economic viability of nature conservation, and biodiversity protection. As a community foundation, the organization also has a commitment to the local community. Grounded in the Nuu-chah-nulth (Nuučaanuł) principle of *hišukniš čawaak*, everything is one, CBT aims to understand the complex and changing social-ecological systems within the region and the necessary pathways to support sustainable ecosystems and communities.

The systems-based SDG Framework has provided the lens and language to link the local work of the organization with the global UNESCO biosphere reserve responsibilities. The start of this work involved integrating storytelling that localized the SDGs within their 2016 *Vital Signs* report. CBT combined this with linking local-level data to specific SDG targets in their 2018 *Vital Signs* report, providing a baseline against which to measure local progress towards the Goals.

The strength of CBT's approach to the SDGs is in their ability to use their collaborations and local research for awareness raising, convening and action. As a biosphere reserve, they are part of collaborative research and monitoring partnerships to understand the local ecosystem and the impacts of climate change. Understanding the holistic nature of the SDG Framework, CBT also works to conduct research into the living wage in the community and, in 2019, this was linked directly to achieving the Goals.

The 2019 Living Wage for the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve Region stated, "The living wage is a valuable tool for understanding what contributes to poverty and the high cost of living in our region. By understanding these factors better, we are able to take action to address income inequality and leave no one behind."

Recently, the SDG Framework has been used to understand the confluence of the planet, people and prosperity goals of sustainable development to examine a pressing local need: sustainable tourism. CBT partnered with the local municipal government to host a Vital Conversation and raised awareness about the pressures, vulnerabilities and opportunities in the tourism sector. They also started conversations on how to move towards sustainable tourism for a better community and to meet both the global and the local mandate of CBT.

Granting and Evaluation

Community foundations often align their grantmaking to the community issues that are identified as key priorities through *Vital Signs* research.

Granting alignment

Aligning a granting program to the identified SDGs can include integrating the SDGs as a consideration with your current granting program and/or creating an SDG-specific granting stream. The first step in granting alignment is having a conversation within your community foundation. Think about how you are currently granting, including if there is a logical place to start within your current granting, and to what extent your community foundation wants to make changes to align with the SDGs.

Aligning community foundations

- Funding innovative solutions that have the potential to lead to systemic change to achieve the SDGs
- Funding programs and initiatives to ensure there is a social safety net so that “no one is left behind”
- Using evaluation criteria and/or a question on the application about SDG alignment
- Creating a specific granting stream for action on the SDGs or a specific priority SDG; community foundations may partner with or engage a donor with specific interest in one SDG

Steps to start considering alignment

01 Look at past granting

- Look at your most recent granting cycle. How well aligned were the grants to the SDGs?
- Are there specific grants that are more aligned, or are there patterns showing where SDGs are most often funded?

02 Decide how to determine alignment

- How can you or grant applicants identify how a project works towards the SDGs?
- Do grant applicants have the capacity and knowledge about the SDGs to answer questions on a grant application? Be sure to include grant applicants in the conversation, and see sample wording for including the SDGs in your grant applications ([page 31](#)).
- How will you deal with grant applications that meet immediate needs (granting to shelters, emergency food programs, etc.) versus those that look to implement longer-term solutions?



Including grant applicants

It is important to consider how to engage with grant applicants around the SDGs. Some questions to guide this are:

- What is the current level of grantee engagement with/knowledge of the SDGs?
- What conversations do you need to have with an organization to understand how the organization and/or its funded initiatives align to the SDGs?
- What opportunities do you have to raise awareness of and start conversations with grantees?
- Do you have a grant application workshop where you can share your SDG alignment values with grant applicants?

03 Discuss how best to align in your foundation

- Are you going to have all granting streams aligned?
- Is there one stream that is already aligned that can be the starting point?
- Is there an opportunity to start a new granting stream focused around priority SDGs? Is there a donor who is interested in a specific SDG?

04 Identify opportunities around granting alignment

- Are there priority SDGs to mobilize granting resources around? Are there partners to bring into the granting discussion?
- What convening can your community foundation do with grantees around the SDGs?
- In formal reporting and in impact discussions, how can you reference the SDGs?

Sample grant wording for community foundations

The [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) were developed by the United Nations in agreement with its member states in a collective effort towards global sustainable development. The 17 SDGs are broad in scope and meant to be achieved by 2030. Many organizations across the country, including [\[insert name of foundation\]](#), are working towards achieving these Goals to create a better future for our community and our world. We are aligning our granting to work towards the SDGs [\[specifically SDGs #, # and #\]](#).

Please see [\[Vital Signs report, website, other foundation resources\]](#) for more information about our foundation's work on the SDGs and the SDG priorities in our community.

This wording is adapted from the Victoria Foundation's granting application.

Strategies for building alignment into your granting application



REFERENCE VITAL SIGNS

If your *Vital Signs* is aligned to the SDGs, use that as a reference for grantees.



USE AN SDG CHECKLIST

If you are asking grant applicants to indicate alignment to the SDGs, you may wish to use an alignment checklist with all (or a subset of chosen priority) SDGs.



USE QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE ALIGNMENT

If you are looking to determine the extent of alignment to the SDGs, frame the key concepts of your chosen SDGs as questions in your grant application. For example:

What priority populations will these funds benefit and in what ways?



How does your initiative help alleviate poverty in our community?



Partnerships and Convening

The SDGs provide community foundations the opportunity to broaden and deepen partnerships, and tap into the global SDG movement.



Partnerships are both an SDG unto themselves (SDG #17) and a key lever to advancing the 2030 Agenda. Community foundations engage in multiple types of partnerships, and there is ample opportunity to leverage your partnership work to catalyze collaboration, including:

Peer organizations

These organizations may already be working in alignment to the Goals or do work that can be linked to the Goals. These organizations may have interest in and some knowledge of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Organizations representing traditionally marginalized groups

Working within the SDGs, it is important to prioritize the voices and lived experiences of diverse, marginalized groups. Consider how you are making space for these groups to contribute to the conversation, and whenever possible, provide financial and capacity support. Marginalized experiences are connected across all SDGs, so make sure these voices are heard and supported.

Donors

Engaging with existing and potential donors is paramount to secure resources needed to work towards the Goals. Start a conversation about how donors can be involved in work towards the 2030 Agenda.

Government

There is a clear need for buy-in from various levels of government to achieve the Goals. However, not all governments at all levels have aligned, and you need to consider the most appropriate entry point to achieving government buy-in.

Private sector

Many private sector partners are already aligning to the SDGs. CFC has been actively partnering with some private sector partners at the national level to work to achieve the Goals. There are opportunities to identify local private sector partners and leverage some of the work done at the national level to start conversations about local-level partnerships.

Finding an issue as an entry point to deeper engagement

Community foundations that have had success collaborating with partners who may be reluctant to engage with the SDGs used the strategy of finding one common concern or issue as a soft entry point, then deepening the conversation by making the connections to other issues using the SDG Framework.

Steps for partnering for the SDGs

01 Broadcast your intention

Let partners and your extended network know you are in the process of aligning your work to the SDGs and that you are interested in partnerships for the Goals (see also “Communications and Knowledge Sharing” on [page 40](#)).

02 Scan your network

Identify who is currently working towards the Goals and who is best positioned to align. Although you may be more likely to engage with not-for-profit/philanthropic organizations at this stage, stay open to all types of partners who express interest.

03 Extend your network

Who are the key partners who need to be brought into the partnership? Remember to use an SDG lens in your scan. How can you work to reduce inequalities and empower those who are traditionally left out?

04 Identify champions

Identify the individuals who are emerging as champions within their organizations or sector.

05 Have conversations

Listen, learn and share with champions and interested partners. What is the best way to work together? What are your common interests?

06 Convene partners

Open the conversation to bring more partners into the fold. Convene a larger conversation to spark action towards meeting the 2030 Agenda in your community.

07 Share back and act

After convening a broader conversation, share back to partners to prioritize and catalyze action. This may also be an opportunity to identify and bring in voices and perspectives that are needed to move forward.

Victoria Foundation

Partnering for the SDGs.

When the Victoria Foundation's CEO, Sandra Richardson, first learned about the Sustainable Development Goals, a light bulb went off. The framework was a global extension to what the Victoria Foundation had been working towards locally. She brought a challenge to her entire staff to find the synergies and inject the SDGs in their work. The Foundation's staff responded by working to align many facets of their work. The 2018 *Vital Signs* was based around the SDGs, introducing the framework to a wider audience.

The Foundation aligned their Community Grant program to the SDGs and incorporated them in their operational planning. SDG alignment has become a part of the Victoria Foundation's culture. As Robert Janus, Director of Communications, explains, "We don't discuss any initiative at the Victoria Foundation without considering SDG alignment."

At the core of the Victoria Foundation's success in working towards meeting the SDGs is collaboration and partnership. The Foundation engaged early with partners. In May 2018, they started partnering with the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC) to host the Greater Victoria BC 2030 meeting. The gathering brought together over 70 people—including representatives from local government, business groups, the mayor and elected officials, and community groups—who were interested in learning more about the SDGs, what work was currently being done in Greater Victoria and how progress towards the Goals could be made stronger through partnership and collaboration. The result was a summary report and action plan of potential next steps for Greater Victoria organizations to remain engaged with the SDGs.

The collaboration opportunities that started with Greater Victoria BC 2030 continued to grow. In November of 2018, the Foundation published *Civil Society Impact*, a research study completed in partnership with the University of Victoria that measured both the economic and the social activity of the charitable sector

in Greater Victoria. Importantly, the SDGs were used as the framework for measuring social impacts. As a result of that study, the Victoria Foundation has had discussions with a diverse range of partners, both established and new, including the local Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, the University of Victoria and the Capital Regional District Finance Department.

A significant partnership to work towards the Goals is with local government. The Mayor of Victoria, who has been an early proponent of adopting the SDGs, approached the Foundation in late 2019 to discuss the opportunity to participate in the NewCities "Leading by Example" conference in Victoria in early March 2020. The focus of the conference was to raise awareness of the SDGs, share leading international examples relevant to Canadian contexts, integrate local and Indigenous knowledge into approaches towards the SDGs, encourage engagement and collaboration from all sectors, and inspire and directly support action. The Victoria Foundation chose to lead the development and distribution of a series of conference legacy grants, called "Leading by Example Grants," to highlight and help support work towards meeting the SDGs in Greater Victoria.

The Victoria Foundation's alignment to the SDGs continues to lead to meeting like-minded individuals and organizations, all working towards a common vision for a sustainable future. The partnership opportunities emerging from this continue to be central to advancing the Victoria Foundation's work and to mobilizing collective action towards realizing the global goals on a local level.

"I believe in the power of collaboration to produce lasting change, and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals provide a concrete way for all of us—governments, businesses, non-profits and individuals—to get on the same page and create the future we all need," Sandra Richardson states in the Victoria Foundation's 2018 *Vital Signs* report.



We don't discuss any initiative at the Victoria Foundation without considering SDG alignment.

— Robert Janus

Director of Communications, Victoria Foundation

Organizational Alignment

Building SDG alignment into your organizational planning and culture can ensure that the commitment to the SDGs is considered in all aspects of your work.

This ensures that you are positioned to take advantage of the opportunities that arise from alignment. It also sends a strong message to partners that your community foundation is fully invested in meeting the Goals. Your community foundation can be a model organization working to “be the change” needed for a sustainable future.

Places to align

- **Overall vision, mission and values:** It is likely that your vision, mission and values are already aligned to the SDGs. Make explicit goals and outcomes related to the SDGs in your next review of your vision, mission and values.
- **Strategic planning:** In your next strategic plan, set strategic goals and objectives related to the SDGs. This can help internal yearly benchmarking of how far your organization is in alignment.
- **Operational planning:** In yearly operational plans, have specific operational goals and targets related to the Goals.
- **Special committee:** Create a committee dedicated to tackle questions about how to embed alignment in all activities across your organization.

Making changes to your everyday operations

Questions to consider in internal alignment to meet specific SDGs:

01 How diverse are your board, staff and committees?

Make a goal to increase diversity to reflect your community.



02 How can your community foundation reduce its footprint?

Implement three changes to the way you operate to reduce your environmental footprint.



03 Does your community foundation promote stable work and a living wage?

Determine the living wage in your community and join the many community foundations in Canada who have committed to being a living wage employer.



Ongoing work

- Keep the conversation going. Work with your board, committees and staff to continually identify when/if there is the potential for alignment in your operations.
- Make time in board and staff meetings to check in on how your alignment is going. Have SDG alignment as a standing agenda item at your meetings, with dedicated time and a guiding question each meeting. Alternately, dedicate a meeting yearly (or semi-yearly) specifically to check in and make decisions on the alignment process.

Foundation of Greater Montréal

An early adopter of the SDGs.

The Foundation of Greater Montréal (FGM) was an early adopter of the SDGs. Their work is evolving as they continue to identify opportunities and deepen their involvement through the lens of the SDG Framework. Currently, all of their granting and activities are aligned to the SDG Framework, and they are challenging themselves to use the SDG lens in all aspects of their operations.

The FGM's engagement started through discussions and research when undertaking their 2017 *Vital Signs* focused on children. UNICEF's Report Card 14, which was based on the SDG Framework, informed their report. FGM saw that aligning their report provided an opportunity for *Vital Signs* to contribute to the global SDG discussion. Feeling strongly that it was important to use the SDG Framework, with only a short time before the print deadline, they overhauled the entire report. The result was a *Vital Signs* focusing on children that used 10 of the SDGs to frame the entire report.

The *Vital Signs* report demonstrated how far behind Greater Montréal was on certain SDGs, specifically SDG #1 **No Poverty** and SDG #2 **Zero Hunger**, providing a clear call to action. FGM adapted their Grantmaking Community Initiatives Program to the SDG Framework in 2018, allowing them to fund strategically, choosing SDG #2 **Zero Hunger** as the first major issue. This was a catalyst for partnering in Montréal's Zero Hunger Initiative, with 12 community partners coming together to work collectively to meet SDG #2. FGM has continued to align with the SDGs in their 2020 *Vital Signs* report released last June.

Seeing the benefit of the SDG lens to deepen their work, FGM embraced sustainable development as a pillar of their 2018–2021 strategic plan. As a result, FGM considers the SDGs in all aspects of their work. Sharing this priority with their network, the Foundation's 2018 annual report opened with a strong statement: "The Foundation of Greater Montréal (FGM) is now aligning all its actions with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a worldwide movement to

transform our world." The report is organized around the SDGs, including a section to outline how they are working towards this commitment in partnerships and granting. In its 20th Anniversary *Vital Signs* report, the Foundation used the SDG Framework as "the North Star that guides FGM in its commitment to the community and in giving support to its donors" (page 3).

As the Vice-President of Philanthropy and Community, Tasha Lackman, notes, aligning to the SDGs is an ongoing process and involves continual discussions and dialogue among the Board, committees, staff and partners, asking "What more can we do?" As new opportunities for alignment arise, FGM continues to engage, learn and innovate with the SDGs, so they can work in collaboration to respond locally to global issues.

FGM's evolving granting program

FGM has evolved their granting program, with a mandate to align all granting activities with the SDGs. In 2019, FGM granted over \$12.7 million to advance the SDGs, focusing on six priority SDGs:



For example, to address SDG #1, FGM has teamed up with multiple partners on the Collective Impact Project, an innovation-driven, collaboration-based accelerator of change that seeks to increase the impact of collective action to fight poverty in 17 neighbourhoods on the Island of Montréal.

Social Finance

The SDGs will require significant financial capital to be achieved— an estimated US\$5–7 trillion¹ annually—that will require mobilizing public, private and philanthropic investment.

The *Impact Investing Guidebook for Foundations* states, “Foundations can integrate the SDGs into every step of the investment process to ensure that your portfolio and investments align with and work towards achieving them. Recently, product issuers have moved towards structuring products that go beyond simply aligning with the SDGs to targeting progress towards achieving specific goals” (page 18).

To achieve the SDGs will also require local-level innovation. Leveraging the opportunity of impact investing is a key way that philanthropy can help to realize the 2030 Agenda. Start the conversation with your board/finance committee. How can we best mobilize our financial resources for the SDGs?

1. [United Nations Secretary General's Roadmap for Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)

Different approaches

- Sourcing SDG-aligned or specific Goal-targeted investments
- Divesting from non-aligned activities
- Using your shareholder power to advocate for the SDGs
- An SDG Impact Fund for local loans and investments towards the SDGs

Impact investing

Impact investments are “investments made with the intention to generate positive, measurable social and environmental impact alongside a financial return” — Global Impact Investing Network, 2020.

The Impact Investing Guidebook for Foundations has more information on SDG-aligned investing and includes a call-to-action for all foundations.

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Foundations can integrate the SDGs into every step of the investment process to ensure that your portfolio and investments align with and work towards achieving them.

— *The Impact Investing Guidebook for Foundations*
2019 Primer, Rally Assets

London Community Foundation

Impact investing for the Goals.

As the President and CEO of London Community Foundation (LCF), Martha Powell, noted, the motivation for engaging with the SDGs in London came as LCF realized that “What we define as a community is expanding its boundaries. We’re really part of the global community.” The SDGs provide the lens with which to understand and engage with issues within this new definition of community. By aligning to the SDGs in a number of their activities, LCF has become a local leader on the SDGs and a catalyst for change in their community.

The Foundation used the 2018 *Vital Signs* as a way to launch themselves into the SDG space and conversation, aligning the *Vital Signs* report to the framework. This resulted in LCF’s taking on a role as a local go-to organization for the SDGs. To build momentum from this report, the organization embarked on a TED Talk style of [Vital Conversations](#) in 2019, including breakout discussions that challenged participants to discuss the key *Vital Signs* issues through the lens of various SDGs. The result was a better understanding of the depth of local issues and mobilization of stakeholders around these issues.

As LCF scanned their activities for next steps, they identified an innovative avenue of applying the SDG Framework: impact investing. The Foundation rebranded the highly successful Social Loan Fund, providing an opportunity for aligning funding

to the SDGs. The more comprehensive Social Impact Fund builds on the success of the original fund, which had both financial and social returns. The program expanded to provide social purpose organizations a wide range of financial instruments (including lines of credit, letters of guarantee, mortgages and loans).

London Community Foundation identified the need to measure impact and make decisions about investments through the Social Impact Fund, and has partnered to explore innovative ways to achieve this objective. A group of students from Ivey Business School at Western University developed a framework, based on the SDGs, to measure the impact of proposed projects. The framework identified 11 impact areas aligned with priority SDGs, with indicators, parameters and metrics for each, which can be used to estimate overall social impact. The tool was piloted in 2019 to evaluate already funded projects, demonstrating the actual social impact realized by past investments. Although the tool is still being modified, it has the potential to help London Community Foundation make more informed funding decisions and measure how the Social Impact Fund contributes to progress towards the Goals.

Communications and Knowledge Sharing

Community foundations play an active role in championing, influencing and galvanizing action for community building.

There is a definite need to play the role of ambassadors and champions for the 2030 Agenda. When we act as champions in our work with partners, our networks and the public, we can mobilize our communities to action for the SDGs and the issues that we care about the most. We can integrate the shared language of the Goals into all public-facing work.

Knowledge-sharing broadcasts our intentions and positions community foundations as part of the broader global SDG movement. As more actors begin to work with the SDGs, they will see that community foundations are already working towards the Goals, and we can be leaders in bringing other partners on board. *Vital Signs* is just one of the ways we share knowledge and can have influence.

Sample SDG wording for your community foundation website

In 2015, the United Nations members adopted the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in this agreement are the centre of this agreement and will only be met through local-level action. **[Name of community foundation]** is committed to achieving the SDGs and is using the SDG Framework in our initiatives, granting and activities. We have identified SDGs **[x]** as priorities in our community. Through the SDGs, community foundations are connecting their local efforts to a broader and ambitious global agenda to improve the world around us.

By broadly sharing knowledge of the SDGs and of what our communities are doing, we are also able to learn from others in the SDG movement, deepening our perspectives and opening the way for the innovative solutions that are needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda.



FIRST-STEP ACTIONS

- Share the Goals on social media. Use the shared language of the Goals to discuss local issues and initiatives on Twitter and other social media.
- When participating in public forums and discussions, use the shared language of the Goals.
- Add SDG wording to your website (see sample SDG wording for your community foundation website to the left).
- Follow and share SDG-related content, including [Alliance 2030](#).



DEEPENING ENGAGEMENT

- Align your annual reports to the community to the SDGs.
- Have an overall media strategy or targeted SDG media campaign.
- Use storytelling to localize the Goals. Be sure to add your story to Alliance 2030.



ADVOCATING FOR THE GOALS

- Identify who is currently advocating for changes to meet the SDGs in your community.
- Support and amplify the voice of activists advocating for changes to meet the Goals.
- Identify systematic issues and key priorities, and current advocacy around these issues.
- Connect with government representatives about community priorities, the SDG Agenda and key policy changes that would help to drive progress and achieve the Goals.
- Share your SDG-aligned *Vital Signs* report with local politicians and policy-makers to ensure they understand key community priorities through an SDG lens.
- Identify your powers of influence and who you could connect with around the Goals, including donors.
- Invite decision-makers to [Vital Conversations](#) to spark dialogue about the global agenda and how it is locally relevant.

Storytelling to localize the Goals

Storytelling is a powerful way to connect the SDGs with local values, practices and initiatives. Who in your community needs to be heard from? What is the story that connects the issue or solution to the SDGs?

Guidebook and Toolkit Resources

Agenda 2030 and the SDGs at the global level

[Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform](#) (The United Nations, 2020)

[Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) (The United Nations, 2015)

Canadian organizations working on the SDGs

[Alliance 2030](#)

[Atlantic Council for International Cooperation](#)

[BC Centre for International Cooperation](#)

- [Interactive Map of Current Initiatives](#)

- [Where Canada Stands Report](#)

[Waterloo Global Science Initiative](#)

- [Generation SDG Blueprint: Empowering Canadians Through Sustainable Development](#) (WGSi, 2018)

Government of Canada and the SDGs

[Canada 2030 Agenda](#)

[Statistics Canada Sustainable Development Goals Data Hub](#)

Philanthropy and the SDGs

[Community Foundations of Canada](#)

[Connecting Community Foundations with the SDGs](#) (European Community Foundation Initiative, 2019)

[Philanthropy and the SDGs](#) (Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, 2019)

[The SDG Giving Landscape](#) (CAF America, 2019)

Youth and the SDGs

[National Consultation on SDG Engagement](#) (SDSN Canada Youth, 2019)

[Your Voice Matters Report](#) (Atlantic Council for International Cooperation, 2019)

Appendix A

Key messages to share about the SDGs and Agenda 2030.

GENERAL

- Agenda 2030 is the commitment by 193 United Nations member states to achieve sustainable development by 2030.
- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are 17 interconnected goals that act as a blueprint for achieving a more sustainable future. The deadline for achieving the Goals is 2030.
- The SDGs apply everywhere and are meant to be implemented by everyone.
- The Goals are indivisible and interconnected; we cannot achieve one goal without achieving them all.
- To be successful, the Goals require partnerships and innovation.
- Work towards the SDGs includes the work that community foundations are doing on community belonging.
- Key tenet is that “no one is left behind”: community wellbeing is dependent on everyone being included.

LOCALIZING THE GOALS

- The SDGs are meant to be bottom-up, and localizing the issues and solutions to meet the Goals is key to success.
- The SDG Framework applies to our current local issues, allowing us to frame them within and make linkages to the global SDG movement.
- The 2030 Agenda provides us an opportunity to shape sustainability in our community and decide together what success looks like.
- Working together to define priorities will ensure Agenda 2030 implementation is locally relevant and driven.

KEY MESSAGES FOR PARTNERS

- Collaboration and partnerships are at the core of the Goals; we need to work together to achieve them. SDG #17 is **Partnerships for the Goals**.
- Many of us are already working on issues that align with the SDGs. The SDG Framework gives us a shared language to discuss our work and impact, and brings the boundary-spanning and interconnectedness of our issues (and their solutions) to the forefront.
- The Framework provides the opportunity for new types of collaboration and partnerships, and makes it possible to engage with new stakeholders.
- The SDG Framework gives us an opportunity to collaborate for collective impact towards a shared vision.
- Using the Framework connects our community actions to the broader SDG movement.

SPECIFIC TO GOVERNMENT

- The SDGs are being used at various levels of government and in civil society in Canada, from the Government of Canada to local municipalities.

Appendix B

Facilitated discussion and activities: Engaging partners for the Goals.

The inclusion of SDG #17 **Partnership for the Goals** emphasizes how integral to success partnerships and collaboration are. Success will involve various stakeholders, from other organizations working on pressing issues in the community, to industry, government and civil society. This tool is intended to help community foundations convene stakeholders, to start (or continue) conversations about the local relevance of the SDGs and build consensus around key local priorities and actions.

To determine who should be engaged in your community, use “Steps for Partnering for the SDGs” on [page 33](#) in the Toolkit.

AGENDA 2030 AND THE SDGs AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL

Raise awareness about the SDGs with partners

- Invite guest speakers working with the SDGs to share their stories of impact.
- Invite partners interested in the SDGs to share five-minute reflections on a key question, such as “What would achieving the SDGs mean for your organization?”

QUESTIONS FOR A FACILITATED DISCUSSION

Current work towards the SDGs in our community

1. What is the level of knowledge about the SDGs in our community?
2. Who is currently working in alignment to the SDGs? Who is explicitly aligning? Who is working on similar purposes but not currently linking their work to the SDG Framework?

Setting priorities

3. What do you see as our community’s biggest challenges in implementing Agenda 2030 and the SDGs?
4. Recognizing that much of our current work is aligned to the SDGs, what work is currently happening in our community to advance the SDGs?
5. What sustainable development priorities should we set in our community? What is our justification for choosing these priorities?

Creating partnerships

6. How can we work together to achieve these priority SDGs?
7. Who else needs to be involved to achieve these priority SDGs? What kind of partnerships do we need? Do we have existing networks that should be supported and enhanced, or do we need new ones to achieve the Goals?

Implementing change

8. Who are the implementers?
9. What supports do we need for successful implementation?
10. How can those most at risk of being left behind be included and engaged in all aspects of the implementation process?

Achieving the Goals

11. What does achieving the SDGs mean to our community?
12. How do we know when we have succeeded? What indicators and measures do we need to track?

ACTIVITIES TO GUIDE DISCUSSION

SDG dot-mocracy

- Have all 17 SDGs at the table, and have participants at the event vote on what the priority issues are in the community.

SDG “card game”

- Organize individuals into small groups. Have each group draw two SDG card icons, and focus in on the local relevance of those two SDGs.

SDG linkages (for facilitation based around a specific priority, issue or SDG)

- If the conversation is centred around a key priority, issue or SDG, give each small group one of the other SDGs, and ask them to discuss how that SDG relates to the priority SDG in your community.

For more tips on how to convene conversations, consult the [Powerhouse Convening Guide](#).



Together, the SDGs present a unique opportunity for the community foundation movement. In the spirit of belonging, we are heartened by the work already happening and look forward to working together on this journey to truly leave no one behind.

— Andrew Chunilall

CEO, Community Foundations of Canada

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS



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