
How community foundations can engage with the Sustainable Development Goals



INTRODUCTION

In September 2015, Canada and 192 other UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda is a 15-year global framework centred on an ambitious set of [17 Sustainable Development Goals](#), 169 targets and over 230 indicators. The 2030 Agenda envisions a world of peace and prosperity, free of poverty and environmental degradation.

The universality of the 2030 Agenda means that developing and developed countries alike will implement the Agenda by identifying the targets and indicators relevant to their country, and the populations and demographics that must be included in the process to ensure that no one is left behind in the achievement of the SDGs.

CANADA AND THE SDGs

As a country, Canada is in the early stages of its national SDG implementation. While reports from the [Brookings Institute](#) and the [Auditor General](#) have found that Canada is lagging behind on its progress on the SDGs, we have also seen great momentum building from a growing group of civil society organizations, academia and the private sector. The federal government is also [beginning to mobilize](#) its efforts, with the recent launch of an [SDG Data Hub](#) and the presentation of Canada's first [Voluntary National Review](#) at the [High Level Political Forum](#) at the United Nations in New York City (July 2018). Goal 17 — Partnerships for the Goals — suggests that a successful sustainable development agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society.

In a Canadian context, the slogan of the SDGs, “Leave no one behind” speaks to the importance of considering the needs of diverse groups, including Canada’s Indigenous peoples. If adopted in conjunction with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the SDGs can become a shared set of criteria for mutually agreed-upon outcomes that function as a vehicle for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples as well as for fostering a sense of belonging for all.



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HOW COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OF CANADA IS TAKING ACTION ON THE SDGs

Community Foundations of Canada is one of several organizations from civil society (among other sectors) working on the SDGs. Large parts of the work we, as well as community foundations across the country, are already leading connects directly or indirectly to the 17 goals. At a strategic level, we are exploring ways to build collaboration and connection between sectors around the SDGs. In February 2018, the SDGs were at the fore of our first-ever North American Community Foundations Summit with Mexico and the US. More recently, we joined the official Canadian delegation to the High Level Political Forum, as Canada presented its Voluntary National Review to the UN. We will continue to inform national and international conversations on the subject to help Canada progress against these critical targets.

Concretely, Community Foundations of Canada is one of the co-founding members of [Alliance 2030](#): a digital network and searchable database (originally borne out of Alliance 150) designed to allow 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 through storytelling and information sharing. To date, more than 2,500 organizations have registered for Alliance 2030 and are working to raise awareness and build engagement around the 2030 Agenda.

We are also turning to the SDGs as part of some of our ongoing work. Our Vital Signs program is one such example. Starting in 2018, our data sets and indicators for this innovative community knowledge and mobilization program will be aligned with the goals. Our hope is that this will facilitate more information-sharing and exchange among Canadian and even international community foundations participating in the program, and collectively help us track our progress towards the SDGs as a movement.



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SOME OF THE WAYS YOUR FOUNDATION CAN ENGAGE WITH THE SDGs

For community foundations, the SDGs can unlock exciting new opportunities for partnerships, but also for conversations and learning by using a shared set of data indicators across communities and countries. Best of all, your foundation is already doing work that contributes to the goals.

HOW YOU CAN DO MORE

Integrating the [SDGs](#) into your [Vital Signs](#) program is perhaps the most obvious way of tracking your community's progress towards the goals. Using standardized statistical indicators creates a link from each of your community issues to one or more of the goals. This way, your grantmaking can also align with the goals at the same time that it satisfies your community's most critical issues.

Foundations can also compare the data they have collected with that of other communities who have tracked statistics on the same issue, both in Canada and abroad. By comparing data, potential solutions and other learnings can be shared.

KEEPING YOUR FINGER ON THE PULSE OF THE SDGs IN CANADA

Reading the latest news at Alliance 2030 will mean that you stay up to date on progress towards the goals in Canada and about some of the innovative work being done to get us there. Signing your foundation up as a member of Alliance 2030 is free and allows you to publish articles, commentary, projects, events and even funding opportunities.

LEARN MORE

Examples of how our movement is implementing the goals:

- [Fondation du Grand Montréal uses SDGs to guide grantmaking](#)
- [Victoria Foundation 2017 Vital Signs report](#)
- [Clayoquot Biosphere Trust 2016 Vital Signs report](#)

How the goals allow us to work or interface globally

- Read more about our work at the [NACF Summit](#)

Additional Reading

- United Nations: [Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)
- United Nations: [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)
- Brookings Institute: [A Canadian North Star: Crafting an advanced economy approach to the Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- Brookings Institute: [Who and What Gets Left Behind? Assessing Canada's Domestic Status on the Sustainable Development Goals](#)

- Auditor General Report: [Canada's Preparedness to Implement the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- Government of Canada: [Canada's Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(Voluntary National Review\)](#)
- Community Foundations of Canada: [The Next 150: A National Conversation on Canada and the Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- Community Foundations of Canada: [Bringing Canadian Civil Society Together Around the Sustainable Development Goals](#)

Resources

- [Vital Signs and the Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [Connecting Vital Signs to the SDGs](#)
- [Alliance 2030](#)
- [Statistics Canada's SDG Data Hub](#)
- [IISD's SDG Knowledge Hub](#)