



SDG 16 represents the global commitment to peaceful and inclusive societies and justice for all.



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS
OF CANADA

**The Learning
Institute**

Many community foundations are exploring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within their planning, granting, convening, Vital Signs and more. This Fact Sheet is part of a series that focuses on specific SDGs to engage and inspire community foundations of all sizes to deepen their work around these goals.

What is this approach?

The **targets of SDG 16** include reducing all forms of violence, promoting the rule of law and reducing corruption, protecting fundamental freedoms, and developing effective and accountable public institutions. Around the world, lethal violence is slowly decreasing, with murders declining from 6 victims per 100,000 population in 2015 to 5.7 per 100,000 in 2019 ([source](#)). However, war between and within states is reaching levels not seen since World War II, with 54 state-based conflicts recorded in 2019 ([source](#)). Black Lives Matter protests have drawn global attention to continuing racial injustice and police violence. Eight of the 100 largest police departments in the United States kill Black men at higher rates than the U.S. murder rate. The United States ranks sixth in the world for homicides caused by police, with a total of 1,099 ([source](#)). In 2021, there were 36 police killings in Canada, for a rate of 9.7 per 10 million. Yet, Canada ranks 10th out of 163 countries in the [Global Peace Index](#) and ties for **11th out of 180 on the Corruption Perceptions Index**. Canada faces challenges in its performance on human rights, especially with regard to Indigenous peoples and Canadians from racialized communities. Canada is facing increased scrutiny of racism in the justice and police systems.

The foundation of Canada's national approach to SDG 16 is the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and it is guided by the [National Crime Prevention Strategy](#).

An important component of Canada's progress on Goal 16 relates to the self-determination of Indigenous peoples, which is an inherent right and a necessary condition if social and economic disparities are to be addressed. It gives communities the autonomy to administer their affairs in a manner consistent with their own unique political structures, priorities and capacities.

— [CANADA VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW 2018](#)



Canada's national approach to SDG 16 is led by Justice Canada and focuses on:

- Strengthened judiciary and court systems through enhanced openness and transparency.
- Improved national security and safeguarding of Canadians' rights and freedoms.
- Safer communities through evidence-based policies and programs in crime prevention, policing and corrections.
- The implementation of community-based crime prevention initiatives that address early risk factors among vulnerable populations and respond to priority crime issues.
- Strong, culturally appropriate institutions as an essential part of Canada's path to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.
- A whole-of-government approach to preventing and responding to **gender-based violence**.

Canada's national approach to SDG 16 incorporates its commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) calls on federal and provincial governments to reform the justice system and address historical abuses and violations against Indigenous peoples ([Call to Action 26](#)).

The TRC Calls to Action include:

- Cultural competency training for lawyers and legal professionals ([Calls to Action 27 and 28](#)).
- Elimination of the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in custody ([Calls to Action 30 and 38](#)).
- Support for community alternatives to imprisonment for Indigenous offenders ([Call to Action 31](#)) and a commitment to recognize and implement Indigenous justice systems ([Call to Action 42](#)).

- Culturally appropriate support for Indigenous inmates and those transitioning from incarceration ([Calls to Action 35-37](#)).
- Better data on Indigenous victims of crime, and care and support for victims ([Calls to Action 39 and 40](#)).

All communities want peace, justice and security while facing unique challenges in relation to their histories, cultures and how their identities intersect with systems of power and privilege.

Local approaches to SDG 16 include:

- Community restorative justice initiatives that focus on healing rather than punishment.
- The work of municipal governments to shift funds from policing to social services for communities that are overrepresented in crime statistics.
 - Community crime prevention initiatives that bring together diverse members of the community to identify potential causes and solutions to crime. This includes community programs for mental health professionals as first responders instead of police.
- Programs that support community members who have been victims of crime including shelters for women, gender-diverse people and two-spirit people.
- Primary prevention education programs that engage men and boys to end gender-based violence.
- Youth programs that provide pathways out of, and away from, criminality.
- Community campaigns and support services to end hate crimes.

Why is it important for grantmakers?

For Canadians, safety is the second most important criterion when it comes to living in a good community ([source](#)). SDG 16 is the eighth most funded SDG in Canada, with foundations providing over \$128 million in 2016/2017 ([source](#)). The work of grantmakers has contributed to the steady decline in Canada's crime rates. A total of 88% of Canadians are either satisfied or very satisfied with their personal safety from crime ([source](#)). However, an intersectional lens reveals that safety and violence are not experienced equally by all Canadians. Sexual assault is the only form of violent crime that has not declined in Canada, and 30% of women have been victims of this crime ([source](#)). Some 45% of sexual assaults, physical assaults and robberies against women involve a woman with a disability ([source](#)).

Violence Against Indigenous Women

Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people are:

- 12x more likely to be murdered or missing than non-Indigenous women and girls.
- 3x more likely than non-Indigenous women and girls to be killed by someone they know.
- 3x more likely to experience sexual assault than non-Indigenous women and girls.
- 3x more likely to experience domestic violence than non-Indigenous women and girls.

— [GENDER EQUALITY IN CANADA: PEACE](#)

Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people are three times more likely to experience sexual assault than non-Indigenous women, while the incidence of gender-based violence doubles for women-identifying people who are part of the gender-diverse community ([source](#)). There is a significant opportunity for grantmakers to do more in preventing violence against women and girls, including those with disabilities, those from BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of colour) communities, gender-diverse people and two-spirit people.

SDG 16 is also about protecting fundamental human rights. Nothing is more fundamental than the right to life. Both Black and Indigenous Canadians find themselves overrepresented in deaths from police violence ([source](#)), with Indigenous people 10 times more likely to be shot and killed by police than non-Indigenous Canadians ([source](#)). In 2016, the United Nations expressed deep concern about the human rights of African Canadians ([source](#)), and in 2019 the UN Human Rights Committee expressed its continued concern about issues of violence against Indigenous women and the violation of Indigenous peoples' land rights ([source](#)). Canadians who are Black, Indigenous or people of colour continue to experience systemic racism and threats to their fundamental right to freedom through over-policing and over-incarceration. The Ontario Human Rights Commission has documented evidence of over-policing of Black Canadians, while a recent study revealed that in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Kingston, Ontario, “Black people were three times more likely than white people to be stopped by the police” ([source](#)). While the focus has often been on men, Black women also experience police discrimination and racial profiling ([source](#)), and the number of incarcerated Black women is rising, currently representing over 6% of all female prisoners, despite making up only 3.1% of Canada’s female population ([source](#)). These challenges combine with the fact that Black Canadians have traditionally been underfunded by grantmakers ([source](#)), which presents a challenge for funders to confront their own relationship to systemic racism and an opportunity to take action.



In 2016, the United Nations’ Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent emphasized its ‘[deep] concern about the human rights situation of African Canadians.’ This concern is merited and is largely provoked by Canada’s long history of anti-Black racism.

— UNFUNDED: BLACK COMMUNITIES OVERLOOKED BY CANADIAN PHILANTHROPY

Advancing progress on SDG 16 is also an opportunity to support Canada’s national journey of reconciliation. The TRC Calls to Action identify multiple changes to the justice system that are needed to address the disproportionate number of Indigenous peoples who are in prison or victims of crime. More than 30% of Canadian inmates are Indigenous ([source](#)), and Indigenous women make up 40% of the female prison population ([source](#)). While many community foundations and place-based grantmakers are funding crime prevention initiatives, there is an opportunity to work more closely with Indigenous leaders and organizations to support their work, to support pathways away from crime, and to confront racism and discrimination in the police and legal systems.

Community foundations share a commitment to relentlessly pursuing a future where everyone belongs. Nationally, CFC and 18 community foundations have signed the [Philanthropic Community’s Declaration of Action](#), which represents a commitment to the shared goal of reconciliation and decolonization through philanthropic work. Community foundations are also responding to the [Unfunded](#) report, which revealed that [Black-led organizations receive less than 0.1% of funds from Canadian foundations](#).

Individual community foundations are engaged in a diverse range of programs that are advancing SDG 16 in communities across the country:

- Many communities are monitoring community safety through their Vital Signs reporting, including the [Community Foundation of Mississauga](#), which has recorded a decrease in violent crime, sexual assault and hate crimes.
- Many community foundations are supporting crime prevention programs, including the work of the [Surrey Crime Prevention Society](#), which adopts a youth-focused and holistic approach to community safety. to support their training for first responders to sexual assault.
- Funding to address gender-based violence, including the work of the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation, which helped funders connect with [Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan](#) to support training for first responders to sexual assault.
- [London Community Foundation's support for Indigenous women, addressing the legacy of cultural genocide](#) through workshops held by Deshkan Zii Bi Indigenous Women's Association.
- The numerous community foundations who support restorative justice initiatives including Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation's support for the [Together Project](#) which brings "restorative justice responses to Islamophobic hate incidents."
- [Edmonton Community Foundation's](#) support for the podcast *Is This For Real?*, which shares Black experiences of living in Edmonton, including topics of policing and anti-Black racism.

Common principles to get started

To get to the heart of SDG 16, consider using an intersectional lens to understand how safety and violence are experienced by members of your community, including BIPOC folks, women-identifying people, youth and people with disabilities.

01 Learn and understand

- Understand how community members experience safety, security and policing differently through Vital Signs reporting that gathers data on diverse community populations and Vital Conversations that include diverse voices.
- Read the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), and explore how you can incorporate its principles into your work. See this [guide for funders and UNDRIP](#).
- Learn more about community approaches to policing and community restorative justice practices. See [these resources from Justice Canada](#).

02 Relationship building

- Build relationships with Indigenous communities, and explore community alternatives to imprisonment and the revitalization of Indigenous justice systems. See the work of the [Katzie First Nation in British Columbia](#).
- Engage with youth-led organizations to identify pathways out of crime and to co-develop programs and funding strategies to support them. See the work of [Check Your Head](#) and [Pathways to Education](#).
- Build connections with Black communities and other racialized community members to understand their relationship with police and the legal system, and to identify opportunities to support locally led organizations.

03 Strategic grantmaking

- Incorporate a focus on gender in grantmaking that addresses crime, violence and community safety. See the work of the [Canadian Women's Foundation](#) and [this research report from Public Safety Canada](#).
- Fund programs that raise awareness of, and address, hate crimes. See Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation's support for the [Together Project](#).
- Provide targeted funds for community-based justice initiatives, including community policing and restorative justice programs that focus on healing rather than punishment. See this [directory of restorative justice organizations](#).
- Provide targeted funds for youth-led projects, especially those that support youth who are at greater risk of being targeted by police racism and entering pathways to crime.

04 Lead and collaborate

- When convening community conversations on safety and crime prevention, make sure that a diversity of community members are present, including BIPOC folks, women-identifying people, youth and people with disabilities.
- Work with municipal councils and explore options to convene community discussion to discuss shifting resources from policing to other forms of crime prevention, including social support and mental health services.
- Use your capacity for advocacy to raise awareness of the rights violations that Canadians are experiencing, and support the work of movements that are struggling to address these issues.
- Sign the [Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action](#), and commit to addressing reconciliation and decolonization through your grantmaking.

Resource list

Our Commitment to Anti-Racism

- A starting point for community foundations that want to work more closely with BIPOC Canadians to address issues of racism in the police and justice systems.
- Provides a wealth of resources for understanding and applying anti-racism principles including a glossary of key terms.

Involving the Philanthropic & Corporate Community

- A short overview of how grantmakers can address violence through their work.
- Briefly touches on the role of research, convening, capacity building and policy support, and provides a list of strategies.

The Circle: How We Work

- The Circle's website is focused on working with Canada's philanthropic sector, and alongside Indigenous organizations, to support reconciliation.
- The website hosts the Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action, which foundations are welcome to sign, and a variety of peer learning opportunities.

A Funder's Toolkit: Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

- Pages 15-32 introduce UNDRIP and explore key thematic areas of the Declaration.
- Pages 43-66 provide key tools for incorporating UNDRIP related to organizational assessment, policy creation, community protocols and a grant proposal checklist.

Grantmaking with a Racial Justice Lens

- A 52-page report that provides steps for grantmakers to expand from a racial equity approach to one advocating racial justice.
- Pages 8-11 make the case for a racial justice approach.
- Pages 19-38 look at how to invest in racial justice, including what grantmakers can fund and how.

A Diversion Toolkit for Communities

- A 145-page guide that illustrates what is involved in establishing a community restorative justice program, including the role of community leadership and funders.
- Pages 19-62 introduce restorative justice approaches, including evidence of their impact.
- Pages 63-118 provide an overview of the process of establishing and operating a community restorative justice initiative.

#FundSafeFutures Toolkit

- A short fact sheet that makes the case for shifting funding from police departments to communities, and the role that funders can play. Focused on the U.S., but still relevant.
- Pages 1-3 include key questions to ask about funding and policing as well as links to more information on community-based safety strategies.
- Pages 3-4 provide do's and don'ts for funding work around criminalization.

Youth, Gender and Violence: Building a Movement for Gender Justice

- Pages 4–5 provide an overview of recommendations for grantmakers to fund responses to gender-based violence.
- Pages 10–14 present a funders dialogue on addressing gender-based violence, with a focus on a gender justice approach.
- Pages 19–23 provide grantmaker strategies for funding gender justice.

Principles for Feminist Funding

- Page 1 includes key principles and values for donors and philanthropists.
- Page 2 has tips for strengthening grantmaking approaches.

Gender Lens Investing: Adapting Your Investment Policy Statement

- A how-to guide on adapting your investment policy to include gender lens investing (GLI).