



# LOCAL LEADERSHIP, GLOBAL IMPACT:

Community Foundations and the  
Sustainable Development Goals

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# FOREWORD

**The SDGs have one major aim:  
to leave no one behind as we build a better world by 2030.**

**C**ommunity foundations, no matter where in the world they are based, share a major trait: they work with partners in their communities to solve complex local problems. No two are alike. And in today's interconnected world, community foundations are critical leaders who can drive change locally in order to make progress globally.

In September 2015, the United Nations unveiled the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), an ambitious roadmap for how to change our world. These 17 goals are a global to-do-list for solving our biggest social problems, with time-bound targets that are applicable to every country in the world as we work to improve the quality of life for everyone, everywhere.

While the SDGs represent a global agenda, they require local action to achieve them. All partners — from government to the private sector, civil society and philanthropy — must work together to create a better future for all.

Today, there are more than 1,800 community foundations operating around the world. Most direct their grant dollars to support local and regional priorities, but community foundations are also important global actors. Their work to address problems like hunger and unemployment is the same work needed to achieve the SDGs.

To date, the role of community foundations in global development has been largely overlooked. However, the ability of community foundations to be hands-on within their local communities can provide local governments and donors with the insights needed to achieve the ambitious goals within the SDGs.

This report is about the relevance of the SDGs for community foundations everywhere, because we believe that these place-based, locally-led institutions are critical elements for achieving the SDGs. It's inherent in human nature to want to be part of something bigger than ourselves. The SDGs provide that framework. They give community foundations a roadmap and language for doing, and talking about, local work already in progress. They are also a way to attract new funding.

At the core of the SDGs is a commitment to targets and measuring progress. With 17 goals and 169 targets, the SDGs might seem overwhelming at first but these specific targets and metrics can make it easier for community foundations to leverage the SDGs. This is as true for a community foundation working in rural Kansas as it is for a community foundation working in urban Kenya.

I am excited for you to read this report. Using the framework of the SDGs, community foundations can leverage their knowledge and expertise and make an even bigger global impact.

## **Vikki Spruill**

*President and CEO  
Council on Foundations*



**Community foundations need to be brought to the table, both within individual countries and on a global scale.**

## CONTEXT **for this Report**

**W**hile the contributions of the broader philanthropic sector are well-known in the international development realm, community foundations globally have yet to play a major role in conversations about the SDGs. And many community foundations around the world are unaware of the SDGs and how they are relevant to their work. We believe community foundations are important partners for governments around the world if we are to achieve the overarching aim of the SDGs to “leave no one behind.”

The February 2018 North American Community Foundations Summit in Mexico City introduced the SDGs to community foundations from across the continent. This first-of-its-kind gathering connected community foundations of different sizes, geographies, and capacities around shared community challenges, from immigration to climate change and social inclusion. By framing shared challenges within the universal framework of the SDGs, these important grassroots actors will drive change to achieve the essence of these global goals and improve the quality of life for all.

This report is a foundational document and companion to the Summit, bridging a gap in understanding how community foundations around the world can operate through the lens of the SDGs, and showing the rest of the international development community the ways in which community foundations can play a transformational role in achieving the SDGs.

Connection and collaboration are key — and the SDGs provide an avenue for community foundations all over the world to become more connected and to make greater collective impact.

## Introducing

# THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

## A framework to create a better future for all.

**A**t the turn of the 21st century, world leaders gathered at the United Nations to adopt the Millennium Declaration, a joint statement of values, principles, and commitments to make globalization a positive force for all communities around the world.

The need to take action was urgent. At that time, nearly half the population of people living in low-income countries lived on \$1.25 a day.<sup>1</sup> Twenty-three percent of the world's population was undernourished.<sup>2</sup> More than three million people were newly infected with HIV every year. Nearly a quarter of the planet lacked access to clean, safe drinking water.

As part of the Declaration, eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted as a set of time-bound targets designed to make progress toward ending poverty, improving health and the environment, and increasing access to education.<sup>3</sup> The MDGs marked the beginning of an unprecedented era of global development, driving the world's most successful anti-poverty movement in history. It galvanized action from the public and private sectors, and spurred major philanthropic involvement that yielded unprecedented results.

While tremendous progress was made over 15 years, not all targets in the MDGs were met. In September 2015, as the era of the MDGs came to an end, the U.N. adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), that build on the lessons learned from the MDGs. The SDGs are

about people, planet, and prosperity — and about driving development in an inclusive way that leaves no one behind.

There are key differences between the MDGs and the SDGs. The eight MDGs were criticized by many for not being inclusive enough — both in the way they were decided and for the challenges they aimed to tackle. The SDGs took a whole new approach.

The process of developing the SDGs was far more inclusive. The SDGs were the product of one of the largest consultation processes ever undertaken. The United Nations launched a global survey, MyWorld2015, to understand what issues matter most, and used feedback from 9.5 million people around the world to inform development of the final goals.<sup>5</sup>

A few community foundations even partnered with the U.N. to promote the survey. In Mexico, the Corporativa de Fundaciones A.C. in Guadalajara convened public and private sector partners, as well as universities, to ensure that more than 400,000 individuals in western Mexico participated in the MyWorld2015 survey.

The development of the SDGs was a three-year effort by all countries in the U.N. General Assembly. The process resulted in a comprehensive set of goals and targets involving human components as well as economic development, sustainable infrastructure development, and action to combat climate change.

**“The SDGs set forth a bold agenda... These goals act as a call-to-action for both the public and private sectors to help address crucial challenges such as ending poverty, ensuring access to high-quality education, and protecting national resources.”<sup>6</sup>**

Emmett D. Carson, Ph.D.  
*CEO & President  
Silicon Valley Community Foundation*

## MDG PROGRESS 1990-2015<sup>4</sup>



The global under-five mortality rate declined by more than half, dropping from 90 to 43 deaths per 1,000 live births



The maternal mortality rate fell by 45%



1.9 billion people gained access to clean drinking water



The number of out-of-school children of primary school age worldwide fell by 43%



Overall, there are 17 Sustainable Development Goals with 169 achievable targets. These universally agreed-upon targets also offer a revolution in the way data is used to drive international development. By having agreed-upon, time-bound targets for the SDGs, we can standardize indicators across communities and invest in data collection at national and sub-national levels. This new ability to report on progress toward the Goals creates an opportunity for transparency, as governments can report on progress in accessible ways.

All of the SDGs are inextricably linked. With the right financing, collaboration, and coordination, each of the Goals can be achieved.

A little more than two years into this new era, there is more momentum, more partnership, more accountability, and more excitement about the fact that progress toward one goal makes a positive impact toward numerous others.

- 64 countries have voluntarily reported their progress on the SDGs for domestic and international implementation<sup>7</sup>
- Over 9,500 companies are signatories of the U.N. Global Compact, pledging commitment to the SDGs<sup>8</sup>
- More than 65 mayors agreed to implement the SDGs in their cities<sup>9</sup>
- Dozens of collaborative projects have been tracked by the SDG Fund Private Sector Advisory Group, documenting new forms of public-private partnerships to achieve the SDGs<sup>10</sup>
- Children from 110 countries will soon learn about the SDGs from Thomas and Friends, offered in 33 languages, as part of a new collaborative effort between the U.N. and Mattel, Inc.<sup>11</sup>

The current state of funding for global development shows a stark contrast between the price tag to eliminate poverty and protect the planet by 2030, and the actual financial resources that are available. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimates that achieving the SDGs will take between \$5 to \$7 trillion USD.

The SDGs will require approximately 1.5-2.5% of world GDP per year. Financial innovation — whether through impact investing, blending public and private financial instruments, or developing new types of public-private partnerships — can help ensure the resources needed are available. Community foundations, and the financial capital at their disposal, can also help meet these financial targets.

**“This time the agenda included everybody and we must work to have them achieved. We are leaving no one behind.”**

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
*President of Liberia*

# THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



**Goal 1**  
End poverty in all its forms everywhere.



**Goal 2**  
End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.



**Goal 3**  
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.



**Goal 4**  
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote learning opportunities for all lifelong.



**Goal 5**  
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



**Goal 6**  
Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.



**Goal 7**  
Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.



**Goal 8**  
Promote sustained, inclusive economic growth, full employment, and decent work for all.



**Goal 9**  
Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.



**Goal 10**  
Reduce inequality within and among countries.



**Goal 11**  
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.



**Goal 12**  
Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.



**Goal 13**  
Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



**Goal 14**  
Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources.



**Goal 15**  
Protect and promote terrestrial ecosystems, forests, land, and biodiversity.



**Goal 16**  
Promote peaceful societies, accountable institutions, and access to justice for all.



**Goal 17**  
Strengthen global partnerships for sustainable development.





## Global Challenges Local Solutions Fund in Poland

### SUMMARY

Using the SDGs as a frame for your grantmaking can create new opportunities to fund innovative approaches to local challenges.

The [Global Challenges Local Solutions \(GCLS\) Fund](#), launched in July 2016, is the latest initiative of the Academy of Development of Philanthropy in Poland, a philanthropic organization started in Warsaw in 1998. The Fund, set up to distribute grants awarded by the GCLS Program, will make annual grants linked to the SDGs, seeking to support community foundations and other forms of local philanthropy throughout Europe.

The Global Challenges Fund promotes the concept of community foundations within Europe (which currently has about 670 community foundations). The Fund will establish a searchable database of “good practices” — local solutions for global challenges — that community foundations can pilot in order to engage communities in achieving the SDGs and build more inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable communities.

In 2017, the Global Challenges Fund hosted its first European grant competition and awarded grants to 12 projects led by community foundations across Europe that will utilize the SDGs framework. These projects include work such as a project by the Odorheiu Secuiesc Community Foundation in Romania to address

air pollution and obesity among children by implementing a biking program for students that promotes healthy, active lifestyles and raises awareness of the need to protect the natural environment. The Snow Mountain Community Fund in Poland will also implement a new project that focuses on gender inequality and the need to empower women and girls by building teenagers’ self-esteem, addressing the legal aspects of equality and violence against women, and building leadership capacity for women.

The guiding principle behind this initiative is the idea that it is impossible to solve global issues like those within the SDGs without grassroots initiatives, designed and run by local communities.

Change often comes from the bottom up. To empower local communities and encourage them to participate in community building and take part in such processes, we must foster solidarity by cherishing the values of community philanthropy (tolerance, empathy, care, and peace) and inspiring one another to learn, even across borders, in order to improve life for all.



## Making Local Impact through a Global Lens in Southwest Florida

### SUMMARY

Tracking local data linked to the SDGs can educate others on the Goals and drive change on issues that matter most in your community.

Sustainability means different things to different people. [The Southwest Florida Community Foundation](#) defines sustainability as quality of life, and provides a framework for measuring progress toward its mission — cultivating regional change for the common good. But it can be difficult to understand what this means or looks like in action.

Understanding that sustainability is not a box you can check off but rather a process for continuous improvement, the Foundation is striving to create a universal understanding of sustainability. This process started with the Foundation aligning its “causes” with the SDGs using the STAR (Sustainability Tools for Assessing and Rating) Community Rating System. The STAR Community Rating System provides seven goals, 45 objectives, and 500+ outcomes and activities that provide a common language about sustainability, as well as a practical tool for creating a system for measuring change or impact at the community-level. Utilizing a framework allows the Foundation and the organizations they fund, as well as community partners, to better measure the impact of projects and programs over time, while draws a line to how the work in the community has a direct connection to that at a national and global-level.

The framework has been made into a map of the “causes”, or sustainable goal areas, with objectives and outcomes. Those applying for grants are asked to identify the “cause” being addressed in their proposals so that grant-making outcomes are then aligned with the framework. All sections of the Foundation’s website, including news, articles and collateral material, are tagged to align with the “causes” to foster a greater depth of understanding and advance a common language around the goals aimed at creating a more sustainable Southwest Florida.

Beyond measurable impact, this alignment aims to support Southwest Florida organizations, partnerships, communities, and the region in demonstrating relevance to potential funders in and outside of region. And it creates a mechanism for collaboration around solutions that require cross-sector, collective leadership. The framework allows the Foundation to demonstrate evidence and the potential to scale and replicate promising efforts within our region and beyond. Finally, it helps philanthropists envision the impact of their contributions and plan for their legacy. With the recognition that one organization cannot achieve community-level goals on its own, the SDGs and the STAR Community Rating System are helping the Foundation understand its collective efforts, successes, areas for improvement, and potential challenges to success.

# COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS:

## Acting Locally to Achieve Globally

**A**lthough the first community foundations were established in North America more than 100 years ago, three-quarters of the community foundations operating today were created in the last 25 years.<sup>12</sup> With a large number of newer community foundations based in emerging economies of Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia, this is a movement that has spread beyond the original base in the Global North and beyond traditional models of endowed, North American foundations.

**Globally, there are more than 1,800 community foundations today, present in every region of the world.**

Today's community foundation movement is finding resonance in a range of global cultural and socio-economic contexts. All over the world, these growing grassroots organizations are also supported by new philanthropic infrastructure, building capacity and strengthening their connections to each other. Support organizations for community foundations include the [Global Fund for Community Foundations](#), based in South Africa and created in 2009.

For those who are less familiar with the work of community foundations, the [Community Foundation Atlas](#) is a key tool in locating community foundations around the world.

### Data from the Community Foundation Atlas show that:

- Community foundations are gaining momentum globally. The number of known community foundations nearly doubled from about 1,000 in 2000, to more than 1,800 in 2014.
- Their potential remains largely untapped. Seventy-five percent of the world's community foundations were established between 1989 and 2014. The impact of older community foundations shows that newer ones can be major agents of social change.
- They are gaining financial strength. Nearly 80 percent of community foundations reported an improvement to their organization's financial status between 2011 and 2014.

**“Forces such as economic inequality, environmental degradation, human migration, and political conflict are no longer an ocean away. We are feeling them closer and closer to home.”<sup>13</sup>**

Andrew Chunilall  
CEO

*Community Foundations of Canada*

# “At a very profound level, community philanthropy organizations are building trust in the communities they serve.”<sup>14</sup>

Jenny Hodgson  
Executive Director  
Global Fund for Community Foundations

**At their core, they build assets, capacity, and trust within a community to strengthen local development for all. While no two are the same, most share a number of key characteristics:**

- They are grantmaking, public charities
- They operate within a defined geographic area
- They raise money and serve needs of all citizens within the community
- They identify and aim to solve local challenges
- They attract funds from many donors with a wide array of interests
- They enjoy strong relationships with local governments and other decision makers

Several large, global grantmaking institutions were active in designing the SDGs. Since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, foundations have come together to discuss the relevance of the Goals and philanthropy’s role in achieving them via the SDG Philanthropy Platform. The website [www.sdgfunders.org](http://www.sdgfunders.org) tracks philanthropic spending towards the SDGs, and the community pages on [www.sdgphilanthropy.org](http://www.sdgphilanthropy.org) highlight collaborations among foundations to leverage the SDGs in Colombia, Ghana, Kenya, Zambia, Indonesia, and around the world.

Throughout this process, however, community foundations have not been drivers in developing the SDGs, or establishing new platforms for engagement around the Goals. The lack of engagement from community foundations likely is due to several challenges.

In high-income countries like Canada, Germany, and the United States (home to about 67 percent of the world’s community foundations<sup>15</sup>), the SDGs are likely one of the first U.N. frameworks signed by national governments applicable to challenges at home as well as abroad. For the MDGs, most high-income countries supported implementation and monitoring of the SDGs only in other countries. The universal nature of the SDGs means for many, and especially for domestic-facing community foundations, this may be the first U.N. framework that explicitly sets targets for reducing poverty, ending hunger, and ensuring quality education for all within their own country.

In the Global South, many community foundations are younger and smaller. These organizations are often operating at a grassroots level, which may limit direct engagement with federal governments and U.N. agencies who are driving national strategies for SDG implementation. Yet, if community foundations are not included in creation of national plans for achieving the targets within the SDGs, it will be no surprise if globally-led and nationally-designed plans lack the local expertise, resonance, or buy-in needed to succeed for the long-term and truly change the lives of those most likely to be left behind.

**Globally, we estimate that foundations will contribute at least \$364 billion toward achieving the SDGs.<sup>16</sup>**

## Case Study



# Empowering Women and Girls in Nepal

### SUMMARY

Community foundations can lead work on specific Goals that ensure local voices are at the table.

**Tewa**, a local women's fund in Nepal, promotes work that focuses on SDG 6 – attaining gender equality, empowering women and girls everywhere. Since 1998, they have focused on giving a voice to women in the

local communities in Nepal. Tewa is currently working to support resilience among rural women's groups, recognizing the importance of sustainability, particularly in the face of both natural and manmade disasters.<sup>17</sup>

## Case Study



# Ending Hunger in Brazil

### SUMMARY

Community foundations can leverage their convening power to bring diverse groups together around issues that matter most locally.

The Instituto Comunitario Baixada Maranhense is a community foundation based in the northeast region of Brazil working toward achieving SDG 2 to end hunger, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture. The Institute supports a programme of agroecology for young people, providing small seed grants, along with advice and technical assistance to help introduce new agricultural practices and demonstrate how to use agriculture to generate a sustainable

income. Rural youth groups also participate in drama and sports, and use community IT centres. As a trusted local leader on critical issues, the Institute is helping the local community generate sustainable farming to build local incomes and strengthen community integration, playing a key technical role around local challenges of jobs and agriculture and strengthening trust within the community.<sup>18</sup>



## The SDGs for Corporate Donors

### SUMMARY

The SDGs can be a platform for community foundations to engage corporate donors.

**Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF)** collaborates with its corporate partners to facilitate philanthropy that advances the SDGs. Making grants through corporate advised funds (CAFs) is one of the many ways that SVCF enables its corporate donors to turn the world's ambitious vision for global sustainable development into reality.

In 2015 SVCF conducted an analysis of how its corporate partners aligned their corporate advised funds (CAFs) with the SDGs. The analysis revealed that SVCF's corporate advised funds contributed \$41 million to the SDGs in 2015. The top five SDGs by percentage of CAFs grants were aimed at achieving quality education, good health and well-being, eliminating poverty, creating sustainable cities and communities, and ending hunger.

**Based on the findings of its analysis, SVCF recommended ways in which many other organizations could include the SDGs in their strategic planning, including:**

- Collaborating with like-minded funders to accelerate progress on a particular Goal, such as Quality Education.
- Considering investing in issues that are not receiving a large proportion of corporate funding. Issue areas such as climate action, clean water and sanitation, and clean energy are relevant both on a local and global scale. Additionally, there is an opportunity for corporate funders to demonstrate

leadership to selected stakeholders by investing in these less common areas.

- Utilizing the SDGs as an exercise to revisit the strategy, goals, and indicators for CSR programs. The U.N. has outlined 230 indicators to measure success across the 17 goals.

**SVCF currently offers the following investment initiatives specifically aligned with the SDGs:**

- Silicon Valley Regional Fund
  - Sustainable Cities and Communities (#11)
- Center for Early Learning
  - Quality Education (#4)
- All of SVCF's [board-approved, discretionary grantmaking strategies](#) are aligned with the SDGs, and are provided as investment opportunities for donors as well.
- SVCF's Social Impact Pool is an investment option for donors and nonprofits establishing funds at SVCF. The pool selects investments for alignment with the SDGs.

The Foundation has also hosted interactive discussions for companies throughout Silicon Valley on integrating the SDGs into their corporate responsibility programming.<sup>19</sup>

# THE SDGs AND COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS AROUND THE WORLD

## South America

**Fact** 11 community foundations

**Fact** Latin America and the Caribbean have many small, indigenous philanthropic institutions that identify themselves as women's funds, community foundations, and human rights funds. Many were established with international funding but have a shared commitment to social justice and support long-term, locally-owned development solutions.<sup>20</sup>

“The leadership of Colombia, integrating the SDGs through government, philanthropy, business, and civil society, has the power to inspire other nations to build philanthropy pathways that lead to the SDGs being implemented on the ground. If we showcase more of the long and prosperous future SDGs and philanthropy have, perhaps one day the story of SDGs in Colombia will be told as often as the story of El Dorado.”

Karolina Mzyk-Callias  
UNDP Project Manager  
SDG Philanthropy Platform

“The SDGs are a sign of hope for our youngsters. Today, the phrase ‘our future is in the hands of youth’ makes more sense than ever. Let the SDGs invade their spirit.”

Daniel Henriquez  
Director  
High Performance School (COAR), Lima, Peru<sup>21</sup>



## North America

**Fact** 1,032 community foundations

**Fact** The Cleveland Foundation was the first community foundation in the world, established in 1914 in Cleveland, Ohio.

**Fact** Silicon Valley Community Foundation is the world's largest community foundation, making more than \$1.3 billion dollars in grants to local, domestic, and international organizations in 2016.<sup>22</sup>

“Community foundations are at the nexus of many different sectors – individual, family, business, government. Their power is in bringing those groups together to problem solve and advance social progress locally.”

Tony Pipa  
Senior Fellow  
Brookings Institution

“The SDGs are as meaningful in Canada as they are everywhere else in the world, and we are committed to implementing them at home while we also work with our international partners to achieve them around the world.”

Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada

“By aligning our Vital Signs data and stories with the Sustainable Development Goals, we are connecting the local to the global to measure change and impact at all scales.”

Rebecca Hurwitz  
Executive Director  
Clayoquot Biosphere Trust

**Fact** Mexico has more community foundations than any other country in Latin America and most are less than 15 years old.<sup>23</sup>

“Every one of the 17 Goals are very local. We all have water problems, poverty problems, gender equity problems, and quality of job problems. The magic of the SDGs is that you can bring them to your community, as they make sense for everyone.”

David Perez Rulfo  
Director General  
Corporativa de Fundaciones





## Africa

**Fact** 31 community foundations

**Fact** Philanthropic institutions in Africa are engaged in the SDGs through several platforms, including the SDG Philanthropy Platform, which created new state, philanthropy, and private sector platforms in countries such as Kenya, Zambia, and Ghana.

“Working in partnerships will increase SDG achievement more quickly than through any approach by a single actor. Different actors increase the diversity of approaches and innovation, which is likely to lead to more lasting impact. Partners do what they are good at. We are committed to continue walking on this path, despite its challenges.”

Janet Mawiyoo  
Chief Executive Officer  
Kenya Community Development Foundation

“At the Southern Africa Trust, we are leading efforts in promoting the role of philanthropy and developing resource mobilisation frameworks for financing development in the region, including supporting resource governance initiatives.”

Bhekinkosi Moyo  
Chief Executive Officer  
Southern Africa Trust

**Fact**

The Community Foundation for South Sinai in Egypt was founded in 2006 to assist in local, sustainable economic development and promote equitable rights of the Bedouin communities of the Sinai desert.<sup>24</sup>

**Fact**

The High Atlas Foundation, which serves rural communities in Morocco, participated in the Open Working Group which worked to define the SDGs starting in 2012.<sup>25</sup>



## Europe

**Fact** 670 community foundations

**Fact** Germany accounts for 57 percent of all European community foundations. Only 10 countries in Europe have 10 or more community foundations.

“The SDGs provide a powerful, unifying framework for our work with community foundations across Central Europe. These countries have different contexts, cultures and challenges, and the SDGs provide a long-term approach for finding solutions.”

Kaja Petryka  
*Coordinator of International Projects  
The Academy for the Development of  
Philanthropy, Poland*

**Fact** Stakeholders in the Netherlands are working together to promote domestic SDG implementation. The SDG Charter is a growing, multi-stakeholder platform of over 80 Dutch companies, NGOs, knowledge institutes, and philanthropists who have declared their wish to partner and contribute to the SDGs.

**Fact** While civil society organizations broadly are struggling, community foundations were one of the most successful areas of Russian philanthropy in 2013. They are becoming especially important in leading social and economic development as conveners of partners within communities.<sup>26</sup>



## Asia, Oceania, and the Middle East

**Fact** 62 community foundations

“The SDGs present community foundations with a platform to engage with government and other sectors around a common agenda. They will create opportunities for collaboration in which community foundations can become active participants.”

Kate Buxton  
*Executive Officer  
Australian Community Philanthropy*

“Through the Social Trust Fund we want to create a local model for social justice philanthropy in Indonesia, one that is rooted in excellence and focuses on addressing the root causes of poverty and social injustices, and on empowering society at large. Our vision statement, ‘making philanthropy work for a better world for humanity’ reflects this commitment.”<sup>27</sup>

Amelia Fauzia  
*Director  
Social Trust Fund*

**Fact** The first community foundation in India, the Bombay Community Public Trust, was established in 1991 with the assistance of the Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy based in Mumbai.<sup>28</sup>

**Fact** The Synergos Institute introduced the concept of community foundations in Bangkok in a meeting of fourteen government/non-government organizations in 2005. Two community foundations were registered in 2006 (Lampang and Udonthani) and the Phuket Community Foundation was registered in April 2007.<sup>29</sup>

**Fact** The Dalia Association, established in 2007, was the first Palestinian community foundation. It focuses on demonstrating how local development processes can be accomplished in more participatory ways.<sup>30</sup>



## Vital Signs in Canada

### SUMMARY

Community-led needs analyses can align with the SDGs and provide a tool for tracking progress toward the Goals in your community.

A number of investments aimed at supporting the SDGs are already underway in Canada, as the country's 191 community foundations are increasingly engaged in using local data and knowledge to drive community philanthropy. [Vital Signs](#), an initiative of community foundations, leverages local knowledge to measure the vitality of communities and support action toward improving collective quality of life.

The program aims to inspire civic engagement and provide focus for public conversation, all with the goal of helping community foundations identify pressing priorities and better respond to the needs of their community. First started by the Toronto Foundation in 2001, Vital Signs is now a global phenomenon that has engaged nearly 100 [communities across Canada and around the world](#).

By gathering relevant data and hosting conversations in the community, Vital Signs uses quantitative and qualitative data to better inform the strategic direction and grantmaking decisions of a community foundation. Vital Signs is also used by residents, businesses, community organizations, universities and colleges, and government leaders to take action and direct resources where they will have the greatest impact.

As part of an international philanthropic movement, Canadian community foundations are connecting what's happening locally to a broader agenda for action. Vital Signs data and qualitative research clearly aligns with the 17 goals and is starting to be used to benchmark the progress of well-being in communities against a set of global targets.



## Tracking Philanthropy's Investment in the SDGs with Local Data in China

### SUMMARY

Grantmaking data linked to the Goals can document philanthropy's investment in the SDGs during the 15-year agenda.

In early 2017, [China Foundation Center](#) (CFC) collaborated with the United Nations Development Program on the Philanthropy for Sustainable Development in China project, which will analyze China's current understanding of the SDGs and the Chinese philanthropic sector's contribution to the Global Goals. Using CFC's existing local data platform, partners hope that Chinese philanthropy will better understand their current contributions to the SDGs and collaborate around key SDGs and targets in the future.

The project comprehensively depicts the distribution of China's philanthropic actors under the SDGs, their contribution to the 17 SDGs, and highlights the philanthropic sector's great potential to further achieve the SDGs in China. The key findings are based on in-depth data analysis, and present the results through various data visualization tools and a real-time, publicly accessible platform.

When the SDGs launched in 2015, Chinese foundations were already addressing all 17 goals in their work, with more than 80 percent aligning to issues within the SDGs. The largest number of foundations are focused on the SDG commitments to end poverty, improve health, ensure quality and equitable education, reduce inequality, and improve the quality of cities, though most foundations working toward SDG commitments are advancing work around SDG 4 (Education).

As data are collected through 2030, this project and related tools will inform Chinese philanthropies and international partners on where the SDGs are going and what gaps need to be filled.<sup>31</sup>

# 10 STEPS TO GETTING STARTED ON THE SDGS

**These ten steps will help community foundations and place-based grassroots groups leverage the SDGs to improve the quality of life for all by 2030.**

## **1 Learn: Study all 17 SDGs**

Two useful resources to increase your knowledge include the [U.N.'s Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform](#) and the [SDG Philanthropy Platform](#). Identify others in your community who are already using the SDGs in their work and lean on them for better understanding of how the goals are relevant locally.

## **2 Contextualize: Map the SDGs to Local Challenges**

Identify the most pressing challenges within your community. Then, identify no more than four SDGs that are most relevant to the needs of your community. You may want to use data on your current grantmaking, or review community strategic plans to map the SDGs to existing areas of work locally. Choosing a smaller number of target Goals that are relevant in your community will ensure the SDGs are contextualized locally, and easily understood by all.

## **3 Define Targets: Use Existing Data to Create Local 2030 Goals**

Using trusted data sources, including community-led needs analyses like Vital Signs, develop local targets to quantify your desired impact. The universal nature of the SDGs provides standardized methods for measurement. Using local data consistent with the SDGs' global indicators can make for an "apples to apples" comparison with other communities globally. Knowing the exact target for each Goal you prioritize, and the current baseline for these challenges, makes them less abstract and ensures all partners are aware of what it means to achieve these targets by 2030.

## **4 Track Grantmaking: Communicate and Grow Your Base**

What SDGs are you already supporting in your current grantmaking and programs? Showing how your existing work links to the SDGs can be a powerful tool for communicating with partners about the SDGs' relevance and will position your community foundation as a partner. It may also make sense to align your grantmaking to SDGs, thereby requiring grant proposals and project reports to track how they are making an impact on the SDGs.

## **5 Educate: Tell Others About the SDGs**

Use your convening power to spread the word that the SDGs, while created by the U.N. and adopted by national governments, were designed based on input from more than 9.5 million people around the world. Educate your donors, grantees, staff, and partners about the SDGs and how they are relevant in your community.

## **6 Partner: Build a Local & Vocal Coalition**

Establish a coalition to lead local action on the SDGs. Coalitions should be public and transparent. They should be vocal about their aspirations and goals and clearly outline the commitments and contributions they will make. Community foundations can be the nexus for helping stimulate action from citizens and nonprofits on the ground in every community globally, and ensuring that government plans to achieve the SDGs are linked to the community's real needs.

## **7 Innovate: Leverage Global Ideas for Local Pilots**

As your coalition co-designs initiatives to pilot and scale local solutions, leverage the universality of the SDGs as an opportunity to learn from successful models piloted elsewhere, and share your successful approaches with others. Online platforms for learning exchange can help, as can utilizing infrastructure groups like the Global Fund for Community Foundations who can help link you to other community foundations around the world.

## **8 Co-Create: Build Solutions Together**

Building cross-sector ownership of solutions from the very beginning can ensure broad support from a variety of sources, leading to resource mobilization, awareness raising and accountability over time. Leading the co-creation process positions your community foundation as a local leader driving long-term change around the issues that matter most to your community.

## **9 Monitor: Track Progress & Report Out**

As you continue to monitor local challenges, work with partners to communicate broadly when your community is not on track. This might mean developing an online community dashboard that is updated regularly and accessible to the general public and local media. Report on progress at your annual gathering of nonprofits, businesses, or philanthropists or consider making awards for local leadership around the SDGs.

## **10 Support: Build an Enabling Environment for Success**

Work across sectors to ensure that the enabling environment needed — from legal frameworks regulating nonprofits to sufficient federal budgets to provide critical social services — is in place and doesn't shrink over time. Make sure to share how initiatives progress. This helps to maintain ownership and awareness throughout the community, and drive accountability.



## Learning from Abroad to Build a Culture of Health

### SUMMARY

The common language of the SDGs provides opportunities to learn from experiences in other countries and pilot new global approaches in your community.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has taken a keen interest in learning how lessons from abroad can be applied to improve health, equity, and well-being in the United States. As part of its “Global Ideas for U.S. Solutions” program, the Foundation has vetted and funded a variety of innovative projects from around the world to be piloted in the United States. This approach to learning from the world in order to inspire and implement change at home is a powerful example of how to leverage the SDGs as a tool for identifying new-to-you solutions for complex local challenges.

For example, a model used in **Cardiff, Wales** to address the scourge of violence in public places was credited for reducing admissions to local hospitals by at least 40 percent. The Cardiff Violence Prevention Model used emergency room and police report data to glean a full picture of where assaults were occurring, enabling community leaders to match resources and identify interventions that would reduce violence. Police resources were focused on “hot spots” of violence, streets were pedestrianized, and pubs switched from glass to plastic containers thereby reducing the number of injuries from fights where broken glass was used as a weapon. With a grant from RWJF, the CDC Foundation is now sponsoring a pilot of the model in DeKalb County, Georgia.

Slum Dwellers International (SDI) works with the urban poor in 33 countries in **Africa, Asia, and Latin America**. SDI helps inhabitants of informal settlements map their land, secure land tenure, and develop solutions for “slum upgrading” that improve housing, provide economic opportunities, and build and sustain infrastructure. Partners at University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) are working with SDI to bring these solutions and its community-building approach to Richmond and East Oakland, California. “What all our work recognizes is that you can’t treat people in a healthcare center and then send them back into the communities that are making them unhealthy in the first place,” says Jason Corburn, a professor of city planning at UC Berkeley.

In **Cuba**, a strong emphasis on health prevention has helped prevent medical conditions from escalating to the stage where they become a burden to the formal health system. For example, home visits from health workers and local community clinics brings basic healthcare closer to citizens. MEDICC takes U.S. doctors, public health leaders, and policymakers to learn from Cuba’s approach. A hospital in the Bronx, in New York City, is testing a Cuban practice of keeping medical records by families, instead of by individuals, so that they can develop a more holistic understanding of an individual’s situation, family histories and conditions at home that may exacerbate health challenges.



## Philanthropy Infrastructure and SDGs

### SUMMARY

Community philanthropy networks can build awareness, understanding, and engagement about the SDGs.

The infrastructure organizations that support philanthropy can be key drivers in building awareness and understanding of the SDGs by community foundations around the world. These organizations work to build capacity of community foundations, advocate on their behalf, and connect community foundations to each other. They can also represent community foundations to U.N. actors and the global development sector as well as develop resources to build awareness and engagement around community foundations and the SDGs. Since the SDGs were adopted in 2015, several networks of community foundations have worked to build understanding of the SDGs:

**Australian Community Philanthropy (ACP)** uses the SDGs as a constant touchstone. With a base of 11 million citizens and 57 community foundations in areas such as Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, and Western Australia, ACP is a large platform for community foundations to engage each other on the SDGs. This gives Australian community foundations a platform to engage with government and other sectors around a common agenda, and ensures they are aware of, and can support, the unique role community foundations play.

For the past year, **The Community Foundations of Canada (CFC)**, a national network of 191 community foundations, has been engaging its movement in activities related to the SDGs. CFC co-hosted two “National Conversations on Canada and the SDGs” in 2017, which brought community foundations and nonprofits together with leaders from the public and private sectors to discuss how Canada can advance its domestic SDG agenda. CFC is also helping to support community foundations

looking to implement the SDGs through cross-sector partnerships. With Vital Signs, a number of community foundations in Canada and internationally have started to map community data and indicators for well-being against the SDG targets.<sup>32</sup> All this is helping to connect what’s happening in Canadian communities to a global agenda for action.

**The Council on Foundations** also partners with community foundations across the U.S. to engage philanthropy in conversations about the SDGs and their relevance both domestically and globally. In 2015 and 2016, the Council convened more than 350 foundations in six US cities to discuss how the SDGs are relevant to domestic challenges in the U.S. These convenings aimed to strengthen the role of philanthropy in achieving the Goals domestically and this growing hub of cities provides a platform for community foundations to build connections around the SDGs across the country.

Philanthropic infrastructure organizations act as conveners in order to share knowledge — sometimes across borders — and create partnerships to achieve ambitious goals like the SDGs. As an example of cross-border partnerships to build awareness of the SDGs, **Comunalia** in Mexico, Community Foundations of Canada and the Council on Foundations hosted the first-ever North American Community Foundations Summit in Mexico City in February 2018.

Through 2030, the role of these philanthropy support organizations will be increasingly important as we work to strengthen the awareness and use of the SDGs by community foundations around the world.



# CONCLUSION

## Convening Power + Community Knowledge = SDG Success

**W**hen partners come together to innovate, united behind a single goal, progress will happen, and we can ensure that no one is left behind.

Community foundations have already started to use the SDGs to make a bigger impact locally, and current examples from around the globe demonstrate the beginning of what's possible. No single way is the correct way. The guidance in this report serves as an initial discussion for how community foundations can use the SDGs as an international lens for their local work.

A key ingredient needed to achieve the SDGs comes naturally for community foundations: the power to convene. Unmatched convening power, together with a mission that relates directly to improving the social fabric of communities, makes community foundations ideal partners to achieve the SDGs.

Community foundations alone, however, cannot achieve the scale needed to truly accomplish the ambitious targets within the SDGs. They are one part of what must be a global strategy that relies heavily

on partnerships, within a truly enabling ecosystem that prioritizes pursuing SDG outcomes, achieving set targets, and holding governments accountable for improving lives for their citizens.

For governments, nonprofits, foundations, and multinational agencies, community foundations are a critically important partner and convener that can ensure that locally-relevant programming reaches deep into last-mile communities.

And for community foundations, the SDGs can provide a framework that unlocks a new, global approach for planning, monitoring, and evaluation that could also lead to new funding streams and improved quality of life for all in their communities.

As one critic recently noted, however, the Goals are not apolitical<sup>33</sup> — they are grounded in a deep commitment to progress. And we must all be held accountable in ensuring they are reached.

**Only together can we make sure no one is left behind.**

**“Greater involvement of philanthropy in SDG policy formulation and implementation at the national level requires government understanding of the role and potential of philanthropy.”<sup>34</sup>**

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## Acknowledgements

This report was authored by Natalie Ross, Vice President for External Relations at the Council on Foundations, with support from Mala Persaud at Fenton.



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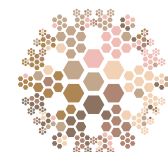
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LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND.

The 2018 North American Community Foundations Summit and this companion report would not have been possible without our three co-host organizations:



COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS  
OF CANADA



Comunalia  
Alianza de Fundaciones  
Comunitarias de México

We thank our partners who graciously and enthusiastically lent their insights, expertise, and case studies to this report:

- › Vikki Spruill, Natalie Ross, Brad Ward, Maxsalia Salmon, Nicolette Gerald, and Kelsey Gerber, *Council on Foundations*
- › David Perez Rulfo, *Comunalia and Corporativa de Fundaciones A.C. (Mexico)*
- › JP Bervoets and Sara Lyons, *Community Foundations of Canada*
- › Tony Pipa, *Brookings Institute*
- › Kate Buxton, *Australian Community Philanthropy*
- › Kaja Petryka, *The Academy of Development of Philanthropy in Poland*
- › Edmund Cain, Emily Skehan, and Elizabeth Cheung, *Conrad Hilton Foundation*
- › Lauren Bradford, Inga Ingulfsen, and David Rosado, *Foundation Center*
- › Jenny Hodgson, *Global Fund for Community Foundations*
- › R.T. Ryback, *Minneapolis Foundation*
- › Tessa LeSage, *Southwest Florida Community Foundation*
- › Asociacion de Fundaciones Empresariales (Colombia)
- › China Foundation Center
- › Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (Canada)
- › The Instituto Comunitario Baixada Maranhense (Brazil)
- › The Kenya Community Development Foundation
- › Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- › Silicon Valley Community Foundation
- › Southern Africa Trust
- › Tewa (Nepal)

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An active philanthropic network, the Council on Foundations, founded in 1949, is a nonprofit leadership association of grantmaking foundations and corporations. It provides the opportunity, leadership, and tools needed by philanthropic organizations to expand, enhance, and sustain their ability to advance the common good.

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The Alliance of Community Foundations of Mexico (Comunalia) is a joint effort to bring about transformation in the country, with a focus on local development and strategic social investment. Its aim is to strengthen collaborative work among community foundations in Mexico in order to achieve a greater reach and impact.

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