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Back Matter

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Executive Summaries

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Doing Philanthropy at the Time of the Sustainable Development Goals: The Case of Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo

Fulvio Bersanetti, M.A., Filippo Candela, Ph.D., and Paolo Mulassano, Ph.D., Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo

In 2020, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo applied the Sustainable Development Goals as a framework and restructured its operations to focus on three programmatic efforts — Planet, People, and Culture — aligned with those goals. This article provides a case study of the Compagnia di San Paolo’s path to adoption of the framework and the impact of that work using quantitative indicators. The article concludes with a comparison between Compagnia di San Paolo’s approaches and some international best practices to provide a better understanding of the foundation’s long-term positioning in the international context.

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A Case Study on the Use of the SDGs With a Collective Impact Initiative in Southwest Florida

Tessa LeSage, M.P.A., FutureMakers Coalition/Collaboratory; Aysegul Timur, Ph.D., Florida Gulf Coast University; and Dakota Pawlicki, M.P.A., CivicLab

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals can be a useful framework on which to design, evaluate, and communicate collective impact initiatives. Using as a case study the FutureMakers Coalition, a collective impact initiative launched by the Southwest Florida Community Foundation to transform its region’s workforce, the field can gain insights into how the goals can strengthen collective impact work locally and nationally. The foundation facilitated the setting of a common agenda and the use of the SDGs to help build consensus among 251 active partners on how to measure progress toward the coalition’s shared goal.

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Walking the Talk on Sustainable Development Goals: The Case of Community Foundations in Canada

Marta Rey-Garcia, Ph.D., University of A Coruña and the Canadian Philanthropy Partnership Research Network; and Rosane Dal Magro, M.B.A., Canadian Philanthropy Partnership Research Network

The United Nations 2030 Agenda creates an opportunity for philanthropic foundations to become more collaborative and transformative in their work toward global goals. This article provides global and national context to adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals by Canadian community foundations through a multiple case study. Special attention is paid to the roles played in collective action by the Community Foundations of Canada, grassroots actors, and innovative practices in that process of adoption. Social innovation originating in grassroots work that is diffused horizontally by the Community Foundations of Canada to its member foundations was key antecedent to adoption. Enduring collaboration dynamics involving community foundations, prior engagement with data collection and a shared measurement framework, and space for local discussion and adaptation around the framework are identified as key enablers for adoption. Early effects of adoption for mapping, reporting, and aligning purposes include reframing current work and promoting new activities and leadership roles, paving the way for new partnerships, and providing a coherent planning framework and strategic focus to grantmaking.

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Where to Start? A Tool for Thinking about the SDGs and Community Foundation Work

Katie Leone, M.A., and Tessa LeSage, M.P.A., Collaboratory

This article aims to support community foundations in moving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development forward in practical ways by exploring the use of a point-of-entry wheel to create a shared language that can help community foundations align their local efforts with the global goals. Since 2012, Collaboratory has been exploring the potential for integrating sustainability — encompassing economic, social, and environmental pillars — as a strategic framework to advance its mission in a five-county region in Southwest Florida. The article examines how the foundation developed the wheel and applied it to its philanthropic work, presenting examples of success and failure and discussing where the tool has been most helpful and has added undue burdens. Collaboratory found that the process of SDG alignment made its local philanthropic work more coherent, relevant, and adaptable over time. The foundation also identified areas where further peer-learning between practitioners in the field is needed to refine approaches and processes and to build philanthropic capacity around the global goals.

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Localizing the 2030 Agenda With Community Data: Lessons From the Community Foundations of Canada's Vital Signs Program

Beth Timmers, Ph.D., International Institute for Sustainable Development; and Alison Sidney, B.A., Community Foundations of Canada

This article analyzes the critical role that community indicators can play in philanthropy's ability to localize the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the associated Sustainable Development Goals to address complex societal and environmental challenges. Measurement is an integral component of Agenda 2030, and communities are increasingly using indicators to align their plans, inform granting decisions, and track equity and sustainability outcomes. This article highlights case studies from three community foundations in Canada that have successfully localized the 2030 Agenda by aligning their Vital Signs data and associated programming with the SDGs to coordinate community action. Community indicator initiatives like those used in Vital Signs research are useful tools to help philanthropic organizations accelerate community-level SDG implementation and tackle complex, intersecting challenges related to sustainability, equity, and justice. In turn, a data-driven approach to localizing the SDGs can strengthen the philanthropic sector's ability to target its impact on the issue areas and populations that need it most.

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The Transformative Power of the 2030 U.N. Sustainable Development Goals

Anna Wasescha, Ph.D., West Central Initiative; Christa Otteson, M.A., Vela Strategy; and Sarah Casey, West Central Initiative

The West Central Initiative, a mostly rural community foundation and regional development organization in Minnesota, integrated the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals into its strategic plan in 2019. This article describes the strategic planning process that led to adoption of the goals, articulates how they have helped evolve the interplay of economic development and philanthropy, and identifies lessons learned from the first two years of working with the goals. The new, transformative vision for the foundation centers diversity, equity, and inclusion as essential building blocks of both successful regional development and place-based philanthropy. Any region — anywhere — with a successful regional economy that also is supported by effective community philanthropy would look like the Sustainable Development Goals, realized.

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