



EUROPEAN  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
INITIATIVE



CONNECTING COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS WITH THE SDGS



LOCAL ACTION  
FOR GLOBAL  
**GOOD**



# IMPRINT

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» *“Be a global citizen. Act with passion and compassion. Help us make this world safer and more sustainable today and for the generations that will follow us. That is our moral responsibility.”*

Former UN Secretary-General, Ban-Ki Moon, 2015

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# INTRODUCTION



ECFI has been committed to raising awareness of the relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among community foundations. It has been a thread running through all our work – as a topic on the agenda of peer learning activities, in presentations and conferences, in research and in communications. It has become evident that there remains scepticism and indeed resistance in the field to embrace the SDGs, coming from a feeling that they are either far removed from the daily work of community foundations or that the potential for impact on such high-level issues is so limited. This document seeks to demonstrate that the work of all community foundations is highly relevant to the SDGs and that by adopting a ‘whole-of-organization approach’ which takes into consideration mission, investment, strategies and programmes, communications and operations, there is

scope to use the framework to enhance their role, credibility and effectiveness as catalysts for change. This can attract partners and funding, can motivate staff, board members and volunteers and can consolidate the position of the community foundation in its locality.

In this document we make the connection between local action and global good, using the SDG framework. We highlight examples of how community foundations have embraced the SDGs in a variety of ways, and set out actions that can be taken in order to embrace the SDGs. We hope this will inspire you to learn more, start the necessary conversations, and align your organization and work, creating a virtuous circle where the SDG framework helps you and your community foundation which, by default, is contributing to achieving the Goals.

Dr. James Magowan and Anja Boellhoff  
Coordinating Directors, European Community  
Foundation Initiative

## CONTEXT




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»» *“This report by ECFI is a treasure trove of positive examples of how community foundations contribute to the agenda.”*

Dr. Annette Kleinbrod is Advisor for International Development Cooperation of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and seconded to the Association of German Foundations

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### COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED FOR THE 2030 AGENDA!

The 2030 Agenda, with its 17 sustainability goals and 169 sub-goals, is a global action plan to achieve peace and prosperity for all people, now and in the future. The aim is to shape global economic progress in harmony with social justice and in compliance with the ecological limits of our planet. Overall, it goes significantly beyond what we have discussed so far in the area of climate and environment. It has a holistic approach and cross-links between the individual SDGs. This simply means that if one goal is neglected, it will also affect the achievement of the other goals.

It is a very ambitious goal to implement the SDGs at national and international level by 2030. They call on everyone to act: governments, businesses, financial institutions, academia, civil society and every individual. We will only be able to achieve them if we break new ground together, are open to new forms of cooperation and realize the transformative nature of the agenda.

At the same time, however, the agenda is also a global concept that was developed at the UN level and adopted by a UN resolution. It is therefore quite different in style and approach from the way many civil society actors orientate their engagement work at the grassroots level.

In my work, I am often asked whether foundations, and especially the local community foundations, can contribute to this international concept. Of course they can! Community foundations are urgently needed for the implementation of the SDGs. They are more suitable than any other organizational form to establish contacts between citizens and other stakeholders in the implementation of the Agenda, especially with actors from politics, business, science and the academia. Due to the neutrality of community foundations, they are a very well-suited vehicle to provide a platform for meetings and exchange. They also create the opportunity for citizens to participate



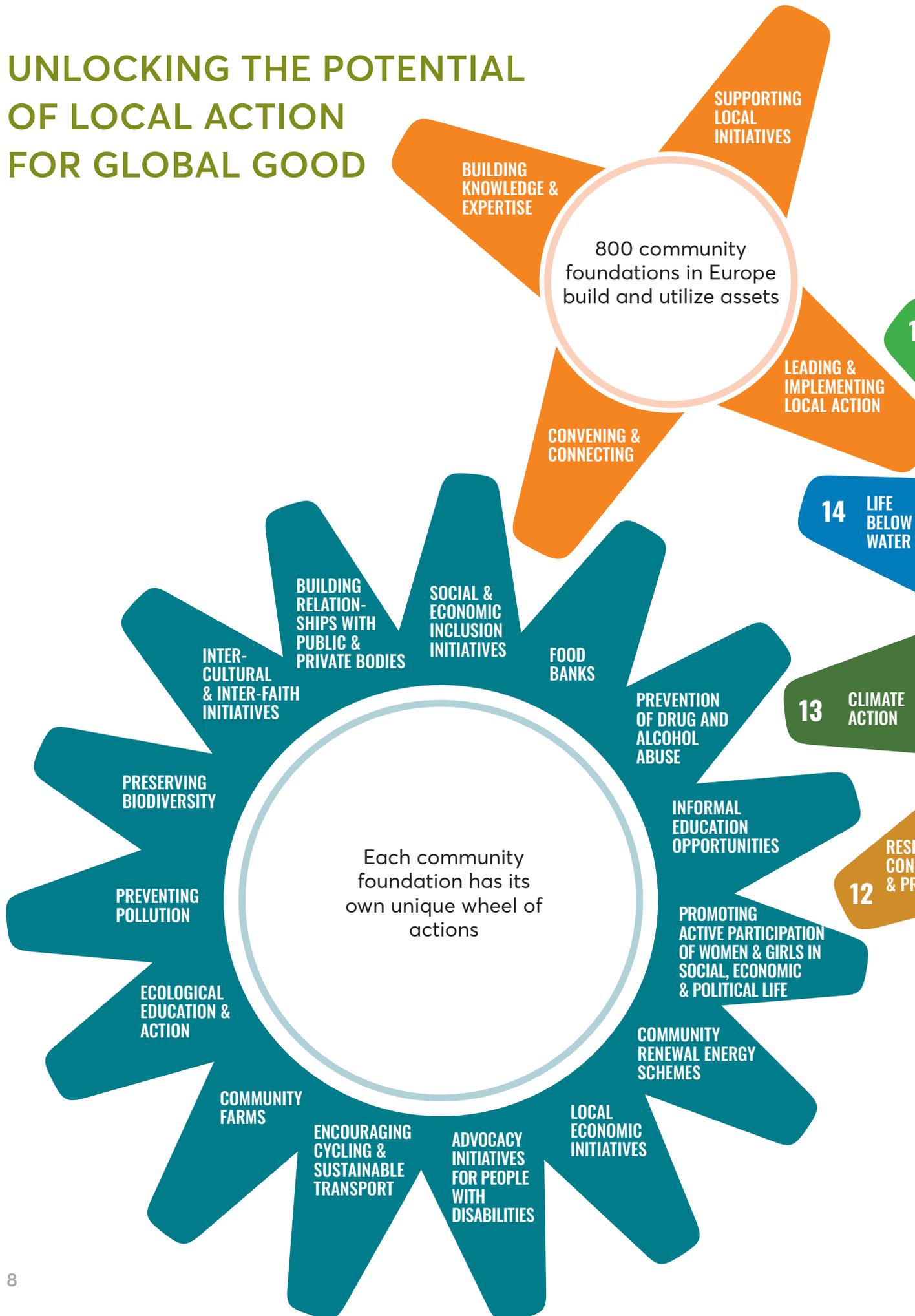
'Sustain', first congress  
in February 2019 in Munich

and contribute to discussions and processes, even if doors initially seem closed. Another asset is that community foundations are very familiar with their respective local area and have the agility to find appropriate solutions, no matter how complex the challenges are.

This report by ECFI is a treasure trove of positive examples of how community foundations contribute to the agenda. Very inspiring! I look forward to continuing to work together with community foundations and many other stakeholders to create a development towards a better future that leaves no one behind.



# UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF LOCAL ACTION FOR GLOBAL GOOD





## COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS IN ACTION: A WHOLE-OF-ORGANIZATION APPROACH

Community foundations, being concerned with defined geographical areas, and having long-term institutional presence, are well placed to understand and address a complex array of interdependent issues at local level. Through their ability to build and utilize physical, financial and human assets; their knowledge of the locality; and their role in building trust and fostering connections and relationships between people and institutions, community foundations are important players, and in some cases leaders, that can help drive transformation at local level. **They therefore provide an important connection between local actions and global aspirations.**

The scope of the SDGs is so broad, it is hard to imagine that a community foundation could not be contributing in some way to one or several of them through the support of grassroots action and community empowerment. Furthermore, the universality and interconnected character of the Goals means that action in relation to one Goal may translate into impact on several. It is therefore important to develop a comprehensive understanding of whole of the SDG agenda and to adopt a 'whole-of-organization approach'.

**By embracing the SDGs, and aligning with the Goals, community foundations can demonstrate how their strategies and work are relevant and impactful** – this can attract partners and funding; can motivate staff, board members and volunteers; and can consolidate the community foundation's position as a connector between the public, private and non-governmental sectors in its territory.

In this section we reflect on practice from around the world, in particular Europe, where community foundations have utilized the SDGs in order to focus and enhance their impact. We look at how they have developed an understanding of the SDGs and connected this to their mission and work – highlighting both the challenges that they had to overcome, the opportunities that arose and the difference made. We refer to examples where community foundations have:

- redefined their mission
- adjusted investment strategies in order to be consistent with the SDGs
- designed and implemented strategies and programmes aligned to the SDGs
- used the common language of the SDGs in communications (in particular, in planning and reporting); as a way of engaging with citizens and other relevant stakeholders; and to leverage resources)
- considered their own operations and their SDG footprint



A whole-of-organization approach involves consideration of everything from mission to operations through an SDG lens.



Our research indicates that almost 60% of community foundations in Europe already recognize a connection between their work and the SDGs. For most, this is through alignment between some actions (programmes or grants) and one or two Goals. Some have extended this to a strategic level, for example by using the SDG framework as the basis of their area needs analysis and in helping with planning, monitoring and evaluating. A small number are moving towards a 360°, whole-of-organization approach. This, we believe is achievable for all community foundations, and indeed could become a defining characteristic. What better response could there be to this universal call to action?

» *'The community foundation for Munich promotes sustainable urban development in Munich. Social justice, ecological and economic responsibility in a global context are its guiding principles.'*

Extract from the mission of the Munich Community Foundation

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Northamptonshire Food Poverty Network participating in #EndHungerUK campaign week, November 2019



## SDGS IN COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS' DNA



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» *“The Foundation’s vision is to create a culture of giving that strengthens and supports the local community in a global context, which is why we will also measure our giving to reflect the UN Sustainable Development Goals.”*

Rachel Mc Grath,  
Northamptonshire Community Foundation

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At the heart of a community foundation is its mission – a statement defining the purpose of the organization related to its own values, operating context and vision. Embedding the SDGs in the DNA of the community foundation may not be the first step but doing so ensures that the commitment is long-term and holistic. Most community foundations already can connect their mission with the broad objectives of the SDGs. For example, in Freiburg and Munich, both of which predated the SDGs, recognition of the value of local action in a global context and sustainability was embedded in their statutes and mission.

From this starting point both community foundations have aligned their investment strategies, funding policies and foundation work/day to day business with these Goals.

Northamptonshire Community Foundation, one of 46 which cover almost the entire geography of the UK, is playing a leading role in the movement there to encourage more comprehensive consideration of the relevance of the SDGs, which it demonstrates this through its own practice. Having been established in 2001, the board and staff recently reviewed and amended its values and vision to demonstrate their recognition of and commitment to the SDGs.

With this vision Northamptonshire Community Foundation expresses the feeling as a local actor which is embedded into a wider international network, rich in good practice and collectively strong for empowering the voluntary and community sector ecosystem. After discussion at their impact committee and through their senior staff team they agreed in 2019 to include the SDGs in their Business Plan 2019–2022 and commit to working towards some, or all, of these Goals through their work.



## MISSION-RELATED INVESTMENT FOR MORE IMPACT



FreiburgerBürgerstiftung

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» *“When investing assets, ethical and ecological aspects must also be taken into account.”*

Hanna Lehmann,  
Freiburg Community Foundation

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With regard to investment, economic aspects such as financial return, security and liquidity have traditionally been the primary pillars of an investment strategy. Community Foundation Freiburg and others have added to this a fourth dimension – sustainability.

In their guidelines for the investment of endowment they defined the need to invest primarily in sustainability-oriented companies and investments according to ethical, ecological and socially responsible criteria. With this they prevent the foundation's assets from supporting industries whose activities and products run counter to the principles and objectives of the foundation, e.g. the

defence industry, nuclear energy, child labour and others. Additionally, they put a special value on working with local saving banks.

The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland has shifted from an approach to investment which was based on screening out tobacco, alcohol, armaments, etc. and divestment from fossil fuels, to a positive screening for those showing leadership in employment policies, environmental protection and human rights. More recently it has built a portfolio around positive practices based on the SDGs. To date this has not resulted in any fall in performance.

## LEADING THROUGH LOCAL STRATEGIES AND ACTION



Fondazione  
di Comunità  
di Messina

»» *"Agenda 2030 provides a powerful framework to deal with the complexity at a local level: the transformative capacity of the foundation in its community and beyond is deeply linked with the ability to embrace at the same time all the SDGs, as interdisciplinary and interdependent, and acting coherently."*

Gaetano Giunta,  
Messina Community Foundation

Community foundations are generally very well networked in their localities and can bring together the knowledge and expertise of all those involved in the city/region in an appropriate manner. As long-term, neutral, independent and non-profit institutions, they are ideally suited as umbrellas for civic initiatives and also as reliable contacts for the relevant local administration. According to ECFIs survey, community foundations have acted in respect of all SDGs, but specifically to Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16 and 17. The experience from Global Challenges Local Solutions (see page 26) shows a focus on Goals 1, 4, 11 and 17. Many examples of alignment between projects and specific Goals can be found in the GCLS reports here. 🌐

At local level the interdependence of the Goals becomes all the more relevant.

The Messina Community Foundation has been at the forefront of social and economic innovation and transformation for a decade by mobilizing citizen-led action for the utilization of a wide range of assets (including those previously under Mafia control) for public good.

'Sustain', first congress  
in Munich in February 2019





» *“In my opinion, community foundations, in particular, are very suitable for promoting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. No one can implement the SDGs without the people they affect. And as community foundations, we are, as very few other foundations, in close contact with the citizens of a city.”*

Carmen Paul,  
Munich Community Foundation

The Community Foundation Munich was founded in 2000 by six Munich citizens. The idea was to carry on the processes initiated by the local Agenda 21.

Carmen Paul reports how the community foundation, after 20 years, is now significantly broadening the topic of sustainability.

The Munich Community Foundation has used its convening role to establish the Munich Sustainability Initiative together with other organizations. In cooperation with 50 local organizations, they held the first major SUSTAIN congress in February 2019 with the question of how citizens can contribute to the implementation of SDGs at local level. Together with stakeholders from business,

politics, city administration and science, eight working groups, so-called manufactories, worked out recommendations for action on SDG-relevant topics for discussion with citizens. About 400 people participated in this congress. As a follow up there are quarterly follow-up meetings and another congress will be held in 2021.



SUSTAIN, first congress in Munich in February 2019





» *“The NMGAF shows its commitment to SDGs matching the local data, suggestions and evidence reported in the focus groups as part of the global action to improve the quality of life for all communities around the world. With this we established the first steps towards building a common agenda in partnership with public, private and governmental agencies and organizations, engaging community leaders in an ongoing discussion and a plan for the next Vital Signs activity.”*

Daniele Giudici,  
North Milan Greater Area Foundation

Other community foundations use their competence as a centre of knowledge and their strength as a community leader with Vital Signs in alignment to the SDG framework. Vital Signs is the data-driven methodology developed by Community Foundations of Canada that uses public data complemented by local knowledge to measure the vitality of a community and to help determine relevant solutions to improve the quality of life in their locality. Canada is leading the way here having begun to align the work of 191 community foundations with national data sets. Examples exist in eight European countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine and UK) where this or other

approaches have been applied by community foundations connecting their area-based needs analysis and planning to the SDG framework.

By using the SDG framework linked to Vital Signs, North Milan Greater Area Foundation (NMGAF) has positioned itself as a centre of knowledge and a community leader. With this approach it brought the 17 Goals to life, connecting them to its work, its engagement with others, and to the day-to-day work of local organizations. It connected local to global, helped identify indicators, provided a focus for action, and has provided the basis for the development of a common agenda among a range of stakeholders.

Northern Milan Greater Area Foundation





» *“There remained little interest and appreciation of the relevance to the work of the foundation, however I wasn't to be deterred as I firmly believed that putting one's own actions into a global context, understanding that it takes all of us to achieve the Goals, to make the Goals our own, is the great challenge facing all those who are committed to the issue. A recurring presence of the theme seems inevitable to me here.”*

Susanne Hauswaldt,  
Braunschweig Community Foundation

Hamburg and Braunschweig, both community foundations that started 20 years ago and which have grown successfully, have been inspired by the Canadian Vital Signs model but started a national adaption for Germany. ImpULS Hamburg was the first to offer a community-led needs analysis aligned to the SDGs. Braunschweig is following in early 2020. Even with difficulties in convincing her board and colleagues, Susanne Hauswaldt, CEO of the Braunschweig Community Foundation, persisted with the idea. The first Braunschweig impULS Report will be published in 2020 and the community foundation actively uses it to place city-related issues within the framework and context of the SDGs. They explain the

idea of the SDGs and show the connection between every citizen, their actions and the Goals of the UN. With impULS the community foundation makes the connection between local action and the SDGs, through the work of the foundation, and in broader discussions with other stakeholders on needs in the city.



IMPULS,  
Community Foundation  
Braunschweig



Ústecká komunitní nadace

» *“We see a lot of untapped potential in promoting the SDGs and raising awareness of them among the general public. As one of the solutions, we plan to initiate the engagement of the local university and establish intensive cooperation with it regarding the SDGs.”*

Petr Veselý,  
Usti Community Foundation

With support from the GCLS programme Usti Community Foundation sought to raise awareness and understanding of the SDGs, in particular among local NGOs and citizen initiatives and also among foundation donors. As a result, it mobilized local non-profit initiatives and, thanks to the willingness of local donors,

was able to support 21 projects submitted by them across 4 Goals (1, 3, 4 and 11). The ideas and activities of the projects focused on improving local conditions and responded to local priorities while contributing to the solutions sought for the global challenges and sustainable development issues.



School for Life, Usti,  
Czech Republic



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Tuzla Community Foundation  
in conversation with citizens.



## USING THE COMMON LANGUAGE OF THE SDGS



» *“Community foundations have a critical role to play here. In summer 2019, we organized community conversations and meetings with community members where we promoted the SDGs and facilitated discussions about research areas and community issues raised by citizens. Eight community conversations were held with more than 300 participants – the majority having never heard about the UN SDGs.”*

Jasna Jašarević,  
Tuzla Community Foundation

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Realizing the SDGs is not just about mobilizing financial resources – it requires systemic change that involves new ways of working between the public, private and non-governmental sectors. Community foundations will always be a minor actor in respect of finance, however they are well placed to play a catalytic role through their own independent action and through brokering connections, stimulating discussion and promoting collaboration.

Communicating consistently around a unified set of priorities can help establish partnerships not only between private giving and public good but also among other relevant stakeholders in order to leverage the knowledge and resources required to effect change. The common language of the SDGs is valuable at all stages, from initiating dialogue, through taking action, to reporting.

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Tuzla Community Foundation  
Expert Group meeting





The Northamptonshire Community Foundation intends to identify the Goals which particular donor and programme funds have addressed in impact reporting, engage in network-wide discussions on best practice, promote activity in PR and communications and develop a workshop to support community groups and charities to think about how their work reflects one or some of the UN SDGs.

Munich Community Foundation and Freiburg Community Foundation use 'sustainability' in all projects they fund. In their criteria they explicitly ask applicants to show how they follow sustainability.

» *“As Munich Community Foundation we only support projects that meet the Goals of the Agenda.”*

Carmen Paul,  
Munich Community Foundation



Tuzla Community Foundation in conversation with citizens, Živinice 2019.



## START WITH YOURSELF – THE SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION

Every community foundation should take a thorough look at itself through an SDG lens and consider if it walks the talk in respect of the SDGs. Asking, for example:

- Does it raise awareness about the SDGs among its own board, staff and other volunteers and actively champion the SDGs?
- Does it seek to encourage and promote effective partnerships and collaboration between the public, the private sector and civil society?
- Does it encourage equality, inclusion and accountability in its governance and decision-making through its employment or engagement of volunteers?
- Does the organization have appropriate policies and work practices in relation to sustainable consumption and production?

Furthermore, it should consider what is the most effective way of utilizing its physical, financial and human resources – to support others to effect change or to take the lead itself, and if the most valuable resource at its disposal, its convening power, is being used effectively.

Last but not least, everyone can contribute every single day in contributing to a sustainable organization like Freiburg, where volunteers as well as board and executive officers only use sustainable ways of coming to the office. Or, as in the Association of Foundations in Germany, where staff look for ways to reduce plastic, paper and waste. There are many ways where we as individuals working in and for community foundations can start a circle of change and ask ourselves where and how we all can contribute.





## BUILDING A NATIONAL NETWORK TO LEARN FROM OTHERS

Community Foundation Support Organisations can play an important role in educating, partnering, innovating, supporting and building solutions together. According to ECFIs survey, only half of European CFSOs already promote the understanding of SDGs among community foundations in their country. The reasons for not being active are mainly a lack of time and capacity, not a lack of interest. Others feel that the level of awareness and knowledge in their country is too low to start with this new topic, although it might be valuable.

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» *“Now, there is an increased interest in the topic, and we want to develop knowledge inside the organization in order to contribute to this conversation.”*

Rucsandra Pop, ARC, Romania

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The UKCF biannual conference offered the opportunity for leaders from the field to participate in a session facilitated by Martha Wilkinson, CEO Devon Community Foundation, and to consider the relevance of SDGs at local level. From this point on the 46 community foundations in the UK will continue their conversation on the national level through a UKCF SDG Working Group.

The Alliance of Community Foundations in Germany is using six regional meetings to engage German community foundation representatives in reflecting on the relevance of SDGs to them. As a support

organization for the development of the more than 400 community foundations in Germany, the Alliance is using these annual regional meetings to spread the idea of the strength that community foundations can have on the local level if they align their work to the SDGs.

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» *“The regional curators themselves, a group of highly experienced volunteers from the field, will organize these SDG meetings according to local and regional knowledge and need. In a workshop, participants define their individual opportunities in changing strategies and operational work.”*

Ulrike Reichart, Leader of the Alliance of Community Foundations in Germany

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In the Ukraine the community foundations themselves are piloting an innovative system of cross-sectoral cooperation in 13 local communities. With 'Smart Interactions (SI)' they defined concrete SDGs as targets to achieve with the help of the SI. For example SDG 16.7 (Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels), SDG 8.9 (By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products), SDG 1.A (Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources), SDG 4.7 (Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development,



including, for example, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development).

The Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland and Community Foundations of Canada are already very strong in awareness raising and education relating to the SDGs. Whereas the Academy offers grant assistance through its Global Challenges Local Solutions Programme, the Canadians offer a variety of activities to promote the SDGs.

ECFI has initiated the 'SDG wake-up call', to raise awareness of the relevance of the SDGs among community foundations. It has been a thread running through all ECFI's work – as a topic on the agenda of peer learning activities, in presentations and conferences, in research and in communications. ECFI is now following a more pro-active approach in providing support in building an understanding of the relevance of the SDGs and aligning with the Goals, and in using the SDG framework to demonstrate how their strategies and work are relevant and impactful. ECFI will engage with CFSOs and where appropriate co-design and deliver workshops on the topic. In addition, we will continue to gather and publish stories of practice from the field on our website here. 

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»» *"We host webinars and in-person training sessions about the SDGs. We link our existing and upcoming projects and communications to the SDGs. We recently also conducted a consultation process with our members to provide the federal government with feedback on community priorities, to help the government set priorities for their national strategy on implementing the SDGs. We are also incubating an online community network for community foundations and other civil society actors to engage in the SDGs in Canada – the Alliance 2030. Lastly, we are incubating a physical space in addition to our head office that will act as an SDG hub in Canada."*

Alison Sidney,  
Community Foundations of Canada

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## HOW TO GET THERE – 10 ACTIONS TO EMBRACE THE SDGS

The lofty ambitions of the SDGs may seem far removed from the day-to-day work of community foundations. However, if it is accepted that community foundations are catalysts for change at local level, then the SDGs are not only relevant but also offer a framework that can help community

foundations make a critical connection between local action and global objectives. As described in the chapter 'Community foundations in action', this can consolidate and enhance the role, position and impact of community foundations.



## WHERE TO START?

Embracing the SDGs may seem daunting. Below are suggested some manageable actions:

1. **Develop your own knowledge about the SDGs (the 17 Goals and 169 targets)**
2. **Build your own resource of reference material and good practice**
3. **Explore and learn from what other community foundations have done**
4. **Think about how your work, and the specific needs in your locality, are relevant to the global goals and develop an idea of your SDG footprint**
5. **Identify who you should connect with in your locality and build a coalition of interest**
6. **Consider how to get a conversation started about the SDGs within your own organization, in particular within your board**
7. **Be clear about the benefit of embracing the SDGs within your organization and the implications of adopting a whole-of-organization approach (mission, investments, strategies and programmes, communications, operations)**
8. **If there is an appropriate relevant project, consider applying to the Global Challenges Local Solutions Fund**
9. **Align your work with the SDGs, noting interdependent clusters**
10. **Identify sources of data, or methods to gather data, that will enable you to measure your progress and impact**



# CHANGE COMES FROM THE BOTTOM – HOW THE ACADEMY STIMULATES THE FIELD

BY KAJA PETRYKA



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*Kaja Petryka is Coordinator of International Projects in the Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland.*

 <https://www.filantropia.org.pl/eng>

 <http://www.localsolutionsfund.org/>

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## THE ACADEMY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHILANTHROPY IN POLAND

The Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland was established in 1998 with the strong belief that through the development of modern philanthropy a world can be created in which people trust and help each other, share experiences and solve problems together. It supports local communities, awards socially involved companies, and encourages people to help others.

## GCLS

Among other initiatives the Academy provides with 'Global Challenges Local Solutions' support to organizations and communities from all over Europe that want to act locally for SDGs.



The Global Challenges Local Solutions Fund (GCLS) is the first European fund connecting communities and the SDGs. It is a grant-making programme that supports community foundations and local philanthropic organizations throughout Europe in addressing global challenges on the local level. Kaja Petryka gives us insights into achievements since the programme started in July 2016.

The Global Challenges Local Solutions programme believes that self-organizing communities supported by local philanthropic resources are key to addressing our societies' problems and improving quality of life.

Even the biggest, most crucial social problems can be better solved at the local level, in other words starting from the bottom. Or at least ideally they would be solved this way. If there is no support and understanding at the local level, if at the local level leaders are not engaged, they won't marshal resources towards solutions, and the problems will remain unresolved.

We are strongly convinced that local communities should play the key role in the process of a global problem resolution. It is impossible to solve global issues such as SDGs (e.g. to end poverty in all its forms everywhere, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) without grass-root initiatives, run by local communities. Change comes from the bottom up, so if we want to empower local communities and encourage them to take part in such processes, it is necessary to foster solidarity by cherishing the values of community philanthropy (tolerance, empathy, care and peace) and to inspire them by promoting good practice.

However, the activities undertaken by local communities need outside support to make them sustainable and effective. Such support can be offered by community foundations (CFs) and community philanthropy organizations – the institutions that harness local resources,





Community Donation Fund  
Sliven Foundation

but they also channel social capital and provide community leadership for change. They act as a major engine of community philanthropy and can serve as tutors and guides who share best practice and the variety of methods for solving social issues with local communities.

Donors are hesitant to support innovative initiatives of community foundations because they are considered risky investments; obtaining financial support for the technical assistance is equally difficult. For this reason, and based on our experience within the V4 Community Foundations Maturity Programme, which operated in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary, we have learned about the importance of outside support for such organizations, which serves as the impulse for the development and change in local communities. This is why we decided to establish the Global Challenges Local Solutions Fund – a long-term funding programme to provide small grants to community foundations throughout Europe for the purpose of identifying and implementing local solutions to global challenges. Projects implemented by our grantees need to refer to Sustainable Development Goals.

### Within the programme we:

1. organize a **European Grant Competition** to financially support local activities addressing SDGs and to collect good practices,
2. organize a **European education campaign** showing that SDG-related issues and projects exist in every community, and teaching how to tackle them,
3. facilitate the **European network of community foundations** engaged in establishing various activities addressing SDGs locally by organizing thematic groups and international meetings.

While implementing the programme, we learned that community foundations are divided into two groups. One is willing to implement projects based on SDGs. Some of them have done so before and are very happy to do so. The second group believes that SDGs are not so important and work more inside the organization, within their own projects, and do not want to get involved in new initiatives. It is mainly for the latter group that we will conduct educational activities and promote our good practices.

We want to make the community foundations aware that many of them already implement SDGs in their activities but do not know about it and show them how important it is to start solving global challenges from the local level.



Community Donation Fund  
Sliven Foundation

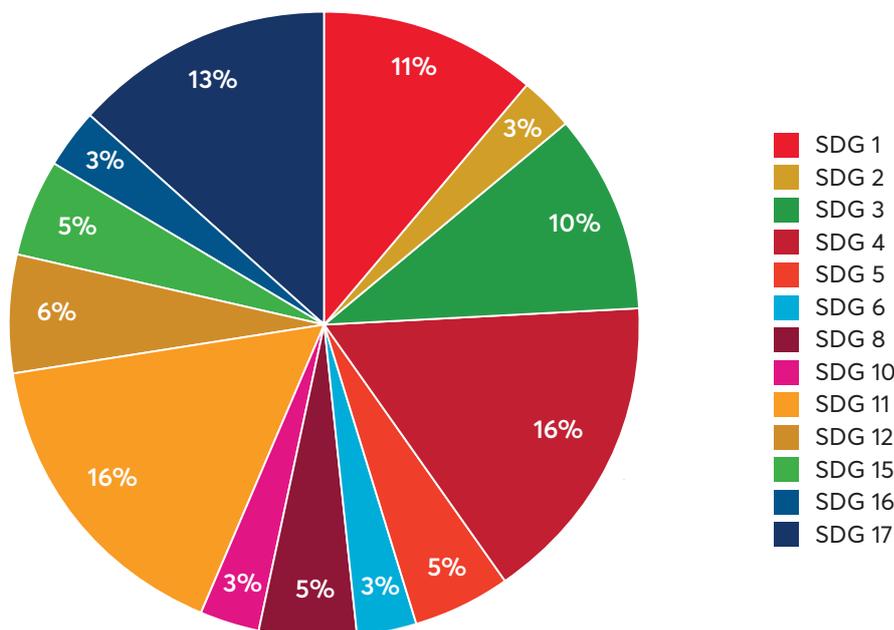
Obrenovac Youth Foundation



Over the three years of the Global Challenges Local Solutions Programme we have received 136 applications from 17 countries (Romania, Slovakia, Italy, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Poland, Czech Republic, UK, Hungary, Serbia, Ireland, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Latvia, Malta, Spain, Macedonia).

Projects implemented by our grantees related to most Goals are shown below, with the most common being:

- SDG 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere,
- SDG 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all, at all ages,
- SDG 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,
- SDG 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls,
- SDG 11 Make cities and all urban settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.



In the years 2017–2019 we distributed 29 grants for the total amount of approximately USD 500,000. Grants have been awarded to organizations from: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Poland, Romania, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, UK, Slovakia, Latvia, Italy, Serbia, Ukraine, Croatia and Hungary.

As regards the level and quality of the proposals, we can certainly say that the proposals are getting better and better. Organizations are trying to describe as clearly as possible the involvement of SDGs in their projects. We also see an increase in community involvement in projects. More information about impact will be published in early 2020.

In 2020 we will host a meeting for all our grantees, organize some webinars and other educational activities, and we will launch another grant round. To community foundations that want to be up to date with our plans we recommend following our profile on Facebook. If interested in funding they should prepare a project that relates to the SDGs, that educates the local community about SDGs, and that wants to engage the local community in solving global challenges at the local level – and then apply through our website. We recommend reading about good practices, information on which can be found here:

 <http://www.localsolutionsfund.org/good-practices/>

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Bike Education in Odorheiu, Romania





# CANADA – READING THE FIELD

BY ANDREA DICKS




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*Andrea Dicks is President at Community Foundations of Canada.*

 <https://www.communityfoundations.ca/our-purpose/>

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Community Foundations of Canada is the national network of 191 community foundations in Canada – reaching 90 percent of communities from coast to coast to coast. We partner across sectors to help Canadians build strong and resilient communities, and are working to tackle the issues outlined in Agenda 2030, from climate change to gender equality, through an intersectional lens.

## COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OF CANADA & THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In September 2015, Canada, alongside 192 other countries, adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a fifteen-year global framework centred on seventeen Sustainable Development Goals. While Canada was slower than some to act on this commitment, a number of community foundations were quick to explore what it might look like to advance this global agenda in the context of their local communities: as grantmakers, convenors, impact investors and catalysts of community knowledge and data.

As a framework, the SDGs make sense. While ambitious, they already speak to many of the issues that community foundations are working to address in their communities.

As a shared language, they also provide fertile ground to support the development of new cross-sector partnerships to help us grow our impact even further.

Recognizing the potential of this local-global framework, and building on the early leadership of communities like Tofino, Grand Prairie, Montreal and London (among many others), CFC adopted the SDGs as its guiding framework in 2018. Since then, we have been working closely with community foundations and a growing network of partners across Canada and globally to create meaningful opportunities for learning, collaboration and impact. A few examples of this work are outlined below:



2018 London Community Foundation – SDG workshop

### Building a National Network

Alliance 2030 is a national, cross-sector network of 1,600+ members committed to working towards the SDGs in Canada and abroad. Hosted by CFC and launched alongside the Government of Canada and a network of partners in 2018, Alliance2030.ca is quickly becoming a central hub for Canada's engagement in the SDGs, providing access to a growing database of SDG-aligned organizations, projects, events and resources. Through Alliance 2030, CFC also launched "No Little Plans", a podcast that explores real stories in Canada through the lens of the SDGs.

### Supporting SDG-aligned community data through Vital Signs

Vital Signs is Canada's most extensive community-driven data program. Spearheaded by CFC and led by community foundations across Canada and around the world, Vital Signs has become an important tool to measure the vitality of a community and support action towards improving collective quality of life.

In 2018, CFC partnered with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) to map Vital Signs indicators to the SDGs and will deepen this work with the launch of a Vital Signs data platform in 2020. Together, these resources work to strengthen local SDG-aligned reporting and decision-making and enhance Canada's Voluntary National Review (VNR) and Voluntary Local Review (VLR) processes.

### Capacity building for community foundations

In 2019, CFC launched a new SDG Learning Institute in partnership with the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation with a focus on strengthening the capacity of philanthropy in Canada and globally to advance the SDGs. This multi-year learning initiative will build awareness, skills and expertise at the community level to unlock the transformative role that community foundations can play in advancing the SDGs.

### National Centre for Canada and the SDGs

In the heart of Canada's capital, CFC has led the development of an SDG "hub", a 16,000 square foot space dedicated to catalyzing cross-sector collaboration around the SDGs. Launched in 2019, this new "National Centre for Canada and the SDGs" provides physical co-working, lab and event space, co-stewarded in partnership with Impact Hub Ottawa.

### Driving SDG-aligned Community Outcomes

CFC is also working alongside community foundations and partners at scale to advance specific SDGs in Canada. A few examples of this work include:

- **Goal 5 (Gender Equality):**  
CFC is the domestic partner for the \$300 million Equality Fund, which has created a sustainable source of funding for women's organizations and movements advancing gender equality. As part of this initiative, CFC has is working in partnership with the Government of Canada to



advance gender equality through community foundation grantmaking. CFC will also be releasing three Vital Signs reports in 2020 focused on the state of gender equality in Canada.

- **Goal 9 and Goal 17** (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure): CFC has partnered with the Government of Canada to support the implementation of the \$22 million Investment Readiness Programme, supporting capacity building in Canada’s social finance sector.
- **Goal 4** (Quality Education): In partnership with the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), CFC, alongside more than 80 community foundations, launched the RBC Future Launch Community Challenge, an opportunity for youth to scale ideas that respond to an urgent social, economic or environmental need in their community. While this programme creates specific educational and employment training opportunities for youth, its outcomes will address multiple SDGs at the community level.

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All In 2019 – Community Foundation Conference closing plenary 1.



All In 2019 – Community Foundation Conference closing plenary 2.

## URLs

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION TO FOUNDATIONS AND SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS MENTIONED IN THE REPORT, PLEASE FOLLOW THESE LINKS:

ACADEMY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHILANTHROPY IN POLAND

<https://www.filantropia.org.pl/eng>

<http://www.localsolutionsfund.org/>

ALLIANCE OF COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS IN GERMANY

<https://www.buergerstiftungen.org/de/>

ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS (ROMANIA)

<http://arcromania.ro/arc/en/>

COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OF CANADA

<https://www.communityfoundations.ca>

<http://communityfoundations.ca/vitalsigns/sustainable-development-goals/>

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION BRAUNSCHWEIG (GERMANY)

<https://www.buergerstiftungbraunschweig.de>

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FREIBURG (GERMANY)

<http://www.freiburger-buergerstiftung.de>

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION MUNICH (GERMANY)

<http://s494310414.website-start.de/>

North Milan Greater Area Foundation (Italy)

<http://www.fondazioneordmilano.org/comunita-vitali-english-version/>

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (UK)

<http://www.ncf.uk.com>

TUZLA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA)

<http://www.fondacijatz.org/>

USTI COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (CZECH REPUBLIC)

<https://www.komunitninadace.cz/en>

**FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, FOLLOW THESE LINKS:**

**UNITED NATIONS SDGS KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM**

General website

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>

Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld/publication>

SDG indicators

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database>

**ROCKEFELLER PHILANTHROPY ADVISORS**

Philanthropy and the SDGs: Getting Started (Volume I): Gain an understanding of why and how you can work with the SDGs.

<https://www.rockpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/04-12-RPA-SDG-Guide-A-Final-WEB.pdf>

Philanthropy and the SDGs: Practical Tools for Alignment (Volume II): Learn how to plan, assess, report and take action on the SDGs.

[https://www.sdgphilanthropy.org/system/files/2019-05/Philanthropy%20and%20the%20SDGs\\_Practical%20Tools%20for%20Alignment.pdf](https://www.sdgphilanthropy.org/system/files/2019-05/Philanthropy%20and%20the%20SDGs_Practical%20Tools%20for%20Alignment.pdf)

**COUNCIL ON FOUNDATIONS**

From Global Goals to Local Impact (2016)

<https://www.cof.org/content/global-goals-local-impact>

Local Leadership, Global Impact: Community Foundations and the Sustainable Development Goals (2018)

<https://www.cof.org/content/local-leadership-global-impact-community-foundations-and-sustainable-development-goals>

**CANDID**

[SDGfunders.org](http://sdgfunders.org)

<http://sdgfunders.org/>

# URLs

## **SDG PHILANTHROPY PLATFORM**

SDG Indicator Wizard

<https://www.sdgphilanthropy.org/sdg-indicator-wizard>

(The SDG Indicator Wizard is an online tool that enables organizations to map their own mission and goals to the SDGs. It was created by the SDG Philanthropy Platform, and the widget can be imported into other websites.)

SDG Philanthropy Platform partners with foundations to align their work with the SDGs and collaborates with like-minded organizations to scale impact.

<https://www.sdgphilanthropy.org/>

## **SDG TRACKER**

SDG Tracker presents data across all available indicators from the 'Our World in Data' (<https://ourworldindata.org/>) database, using official statistics from the UN and other international organizations.

<https://sdg-tracker.org>

# ABOUT ECFI – EUROPEAN COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS INITIATIVE

The European Community Foundation Initiative (ECFI) is a collaborative initiative committed to strengthening and promoting the community foundation movement in Europe.

ECFI is hosted by the German Association of Foundations (Bundesverband Deutscher Stiftungen) and is run in partnership with the Centre for Philanthropy (Centrum pre filantropiu) in Slovakia. ECFI works with community foundations (CFs) and community foundation support organizations (CFSOs) primarily through facilitating and stimulating interactions to enable learning, knowledge-building and empowerment. ECFI is also engaged in the mapping and analysis of CF activities and in disseminating information that will facilitate development of the field. ECFI strives to be a central point of contact for wider engagement within the global community foundation movement.

## ECFI'S THEORY OF CHANGE

ECFI believes that creating spaces and opportunities for cross-national dialogues, relationship-building and sharing experiences and practices of CFs and other philanthropy practitioners (on a variety of themes of global and cross-national importance) at various levels will impact the capacity, capability, connections and credibility within the CF movement. Specifically ECFI will:

- facilitate individual and organizational learning and expertise;
- inspire individuals and organizations to leadership and joint action;
- produce practice-based knowledge;
- empower CFs in dealing with difficult issues in their communities and own development trajectories;

- grow mutual solidarity and strengthen the CF field overall;
- complement face-to-face interactions with virtual spaces and online tools and resources.

## ECFI'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Facilitating interaction and learning, sharing new knowledge and fostering collaboration among CFSOs in Europe to strengthen the support infrastructure
- Inspiring and facilitating growth in the CF field in Europe
- Stimulating CFs in Europe to exercise their community leadership role and collaborate on pressing issues, including inequality, migration and climate change
- Building and sharing knowledge about the CF field in Europe
- Leveraging financial resources and other support for the development of the CF field in Europe
- Increasing awareness and understanding of the SDGs and their relevance to the work of community foundations in Europe

## CONTACT

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Robert Bosch **Stiftung**

