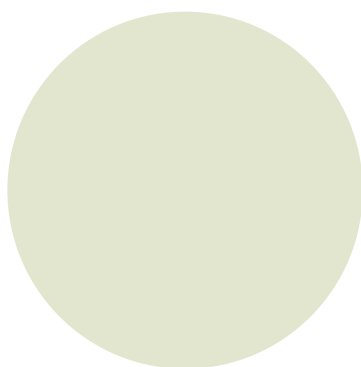
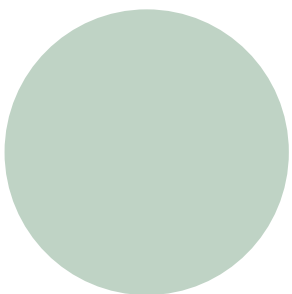
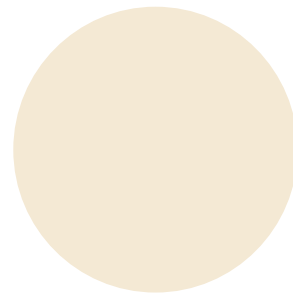
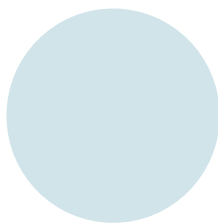
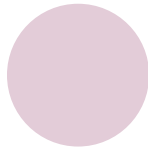
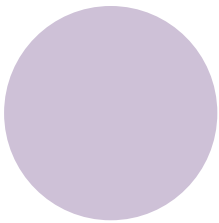
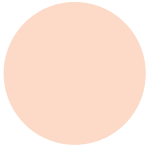




FROM SDG TALK TO ACTION

How community foundations across Europe are embracing the SDGs through a *whole-of-organisation* approach



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ECFI, THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND THE WHOLE-OF-ORGANISATION APPROACH

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a blueprint, shared at the global level, to achieve a better and sustainable future everywhere, for everyone. It is a universal call, consisting of 17 Goals and 169 targets, adopted by all UN Member States in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which sets out a 15-year plan to achieve them. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic that has highlighted global connectedness and interdependence, exposed deep systemic inequalities, and shone a light on the relevance and significance of the local dimension and action, the urgency and need to achieve the Goals is more pressing than ever.

Set out as general global goals, the high ambitions of the SDGs may seem far removed from the day-to-day work of community foundations. However, these organisations are very well positioned to understand and address a complex array of interdependent issues at the local level. They act within defined geographical areas, have a long-term institutional presence, and they are dynamic and agile. Community foundations can build and leverage not only local financial resources but also physical and human ones. They have a deep and comprehensive knowledge of the locality. They are well placed to create and foster connections and strengthen relationships among people, institutions, Third Sector organisations, the private sector, and many others. In this sense, they can be critical players, and sometimes leaders, that can help drive transformation at the local level that contributes to achieving global aspirations locally.

The European Community Foundation Initiative (ECFI) has been working to raise awareness of the SDGs among community foundations across Europe. It has focused on building a growing appreciation among practitioners of the added value that fully embracing the 2030 Agenda would bring to the organisations on different levels.

To this end, ECFI has drafted and published "Connecting Community Foundations with the SDGs," a guide, translated from English into seven languages (Italian, Ukrainian, Russian, Albanian, German, Romanian, and Spanish). This guide aims to demonstrate how the work of community foundations is relevant to advance and achieve the SDGs within their community and beyond, connecting the global level to the local one. It outlines in detail the *whole-of-organisation* approach, to embracing the SDGs. When adopted, this enables community foundations to review, through an SDGs lens, five dimensions of the work of their organisation: mission, investment, strategies and programmes, communications, and operations, to enhance their role, credibility, and effectiveness as catalysts for change.

Building on this, for the past two years ECFI has been co-designing and delivering workshops in different European countries in collaboration with national Community Foundations Support Organisations (CFSOs). Aspects have been delivered in the local language, where appropriate. While they were initially thought of as in-person meetings, due to the pandemic they have been successfully reimaged in an online format, divided into four sessions, lasting 90 mins each. The first one is usually



carried out by ECFI and provides a full overview of the SDGs, their relevance and value for community foundations, and an introduction to the *whole-of-organisation* approach. The other three entail practical exercises and are usually led by CFSO representatives in the local language. In this way, a far greater audience could be reached, and members of the organisations at different levels could be involved.

As of today, seven countries have been involved: the United Kingdom, Germany,

Italy, Russia, Austria, Ukraine, and Romania. This research aims to provide an overview on how ECFI, along with national support organisations, has delivered the workshops, outlining, in particular, the participants' response and reactions, the challenges faced and sharing tips and insights for those who would like to do the same in their countries. Secondly it explores what action has been taken as a result of participation in the workshops. Finally, different stories from the field are presented.

CO-DESIGNING AND DELIVERING THE WORKSHOPS ON SDGS ACROSS EUROPE

RUSSIA

The conversation around the Sustainable Development Goals has recently become more and more relevant in Russia, especially within the profit and non-profit sectors. For example, in February 2021, the Forum of Partnership, organised by the UN Global Compact in Moscow in collaboration with the Russian Donors Forum, took place: during this event, both private companies and Third Sector organisations agreed that the SDGs provide a shared language to bridge these two worlds and facilitate collaborations. And that is particularly true for community foundations, as highlighted by James Magowan, Co-ordinating Director of ECFI, during the event¹. However, on the institutional level (both State and local), the 2030 Agenda has not been fully embraced yet as a strategic framework and common language.

Delivery of the workshops

ECFI has organised the workshop online in collaboration with CAF Russia, involving 9 organisations and 10 participants in total. First, the organisers provided the Russian version of the 'Connecting Community Foundations with the SDGs' guide to those attending the workshop. Later, they shared it with a broader audience.

» *"The information presented during the workshop was comprehensive and practical enough to let Community foundations kick off the conversation and start taking small steps towards embracing the SDGs".*

Irina Nokoua, CAF Russia.

After the SDGs workshop, CAF Russia decided to further focus on the topic. Indeed, its annual community foundations' school initiative, developed in collaboration with Perm Alliance of community foundations² will focus this year on the SDGs and how organisations contribute to their achievement. The event will be held in November and 50 practitioners are expected to join. Furthermore, CAF Russia will support 5 community foundations, within the Perm Alliance, that will work individually more deeply on how to embed the SDGs in their work.

GERMANY

The Alliance of German Community Foundations has recently been promoting the SDGs. As part of its programme, it launched a dedicated area³ on its website, which 'deep dives' into the SDGs - their

1 [SDGs - Tools for business practice: A view from Moscow](#), Daria Isaeva, Russian Donors Forum (2021)

2 Perm Alliance of community foundations is a partnership of 7 community foundations of Perm region and 8 from other regions of Russia.

3 [Bürgerstiftung und SDGs](#)

relevance for community foundations, and provides reports and resources for the organisations. At the beginning of 2020, and following an introductory workshop with regional co-ordinators, the CFSO organised a series of in-person meetings that gathered together organisations at the regional level - an interactive, safe space where community foundations could present and share their initiatives and projects to peers and have a meaningful dialogue around the SDGs. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, however, these meetings could only be held in three regions - Baden-Württemberg, Northern Germany, and the Bavarian area⁴.

At State level, the German Government was one of the first countries to integrate sustainability in its national strategy in 2002⁵. Moreover, when the 2030 Agenda was introduced, the German government included the SDGs as the main priorities in its programming, providing an interconnected approach in achieving them⁶.

Delivery of the workshops

ECFI designed, and with the assistance of the Alliance of German Community Foundations implemented two online editions of the workshop, and a third is being planned. In the first one, 17 representatives from 14 organisations have joined, ranging from staff to board members. 22 participants

from 12 organisations joined the second one. A few organisations that joined the first batch of the workshop decided to participate, with different representatives attending, in the second online edition as well, to widen and strengthen their understanding of the *whole-of-organisation* approach.

ITALY

Assifero, the Italian Association of Grantmaking Foundations, began to promote the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda among its members as soon as the UN member states officially adopted them. In 2016, it launched an internal survey, in collaboration with some students at Bocconi University, to understand the level of knowledge of the SDGs among its members. The results showed that these concepts were still far too distant from foundations and philanthropic institutions, likely because the 2030 Agenda was just being adopted. Since that moment, however, Assifero has included raising awareness of the Goals in its long-term strategy, especially among its members. To this end, it became, in 2017, an active member of ASviS⁷, the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development, an organisation that brings together almost 300 participants

4 The notes of the meetings can be found at the following link: [Bericht von den Regionaltreffen der Bürgerstiftungen im Frühjahr 2020 zum Thema](#)

5 [Nachhaltigkeitspolitik](#)

6 [Deutsche Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie Weiterentwicklung 2021](#)

7 ASviS' full description available on [its website](#)

among civil society and aims to raise the awareness of the Italian society, economic stakeholders and institutions about the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to mobilise them to pursue the Sustainable Development Goals.

Delivery of the workshops

In September 2020, Assifero co-designed, with ECFI, an in-person two-day workshop hosted by Messina Community Foundation within the Italian Festival of Sustainable Development that gathered more than 2,000 events focused on the SDGs across the country. Over 40 representatives from 14 organisations, mainly community foundations from the South but also a few representatives from Northern local-based organisations, joined the workshop. Also, community foundations in the process of being established participated as well. During the first day, James Magowan (ECFI) provided an in-depth overview of the relevance of the SDGs for community foundations and the *whole-of-organisation* approach. This session was broadcasted online to let a wider audience follow and join the conversation. On the second day, held in Italian, the work was primarily focused on practical exercises and active exchange among participants, who reviewed and reimagined their organisation through an SDGs lens. Each member went home with a concrete set of actions to implement within their organisation. Before the event took place, participants were provided with all the material and slides translated into Italian. Thanks to Assifero's partnership with ASviS, they could also attend for free the ASviS e-learning course on the SDGs and their relevance⁸.

UNITED KINGDOM

UK Community Foundations (UKCF) first began talking about the SDGs in 2018, leading to a member-led session on the topic at its bi-annual conference in 2019 that captured members' attention and aroused interest. Following on, Northamptonshire Community Foundation led on the establishment of a UKCF SDG Working Group in February 2020, as a space for sharing learning and progress in how members were aligning with the SDGs. The SDG Working Group included input from ECFI. Now in 2021, with the support of funding from the Mott Foundation, UKCF has launched a series of SDG Peer Learning online workshops for its network, each focusing on a different area where the Working Group had identified the potential for SDG integration⁹.

UKCF is also working to embed the SDGs within its own organisation, exploring their potentialities for the association's work, carrying out internal team strategy sessions to understand how each department can best promote the SDGs. This work entails both understanding how UKCF's national programmes and internal processes can be aligned to the SDGs and how the team can encourage members to embrace and promote the Goals. It has also investigated how to integrate the Goals in its monitoring and reporting practice to provide and share the impact of its activities and the overall network on the SDGs' background.

While the focus on distributing rapid emergency funding during the COVID-19 pandemic led to slower progress on SDG alignment at UKCF and across the

8 For additional information on the workshop you can read Carola Carazzone (Secretary General of Assifero) article "[Building a SDG community of practice among community foundations](#)"

9 See section of UKCF website "[Sustainable Development Goals - Connecting the Local to the Global](#)"

membership than originally anticipated, this work continues and now once again accelerating.

Delivery of the workshops

Given the rising interest for the SDGs among its members, UKCF began to collaborate with ECFI through the SDG Working Group and held two editions of the workshops, one in August 2020 and then again in November. A wide variety of organisations (25 in the first edition; 10 in the second) and many representatives decided to join. The first group was generally more engaged and with a higher level of knowledge on the topic.

ROMANIA

There was a sense in Romania with the field having been fully occupied and stretched to its limit in implementing its response to the Covid-19 pandemic, that there would be little appetite for consideration of the SDGs. However, when things settled and following consultation by the Federation the process commenced with translation of the guide 'Connecting Community Foundations with the SDGs' to raise awareness and provide a resource for the field.

Delivery of the workshop

The workshops in Romania were the result of a long process of engagement of community foundations by the Romanian Federation of Community Foundations which was mindful of crafting of content in close collaboration with ECFI. The first introductory session kicked off in April, with 5 organisations joining in, and the second one, which was held in the local

language and involved two external relevant speakers from the private and public Romanian context, in May. After that, however, the workshop was interrupted because of an increasing lack of availability of participants, who did not prioritise the relevance of the SDGs for their day-to-day work.

UKRAINE

The Centre to Support Civil Action (ISAR Ednannia) in Ukraine, which is implementing the School for Community Foundations project, was a natural ally to reach the community foundation field and to promote the SDGs and in particular to explore the potential of connecting CSR activities and the work of community foundations through an SDG lens.

Delivery of the workshop

The workshops in Ukraine were held completely online, and consisted of 4 sessions; the first introductory one led by James Magowan (ECFI) and the others by Olga Nikolska (ISAR Ednannia). This initiative was highly appreciated for being practical and giving to community foundations' representatives the possibility to dig deeper into the SDGs and their targets and to reflect on how they can be connected to what their organisation is already doing.

LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ **Make it relevant at national level:** in organising the workshops, try to integrate them in an existing discourse, established programmes or link them to national events and other initiatives taking place. In this way, this work would be clearer and more relevant to community foundations.
- ✓ **Involve community foundations in establishment:** it will be a great way to facilitate the SDGs integration at the very early stage of the establishment process and lay the foundation for the organisational development in this direction.
- ✓ **Translate material when possible:** the language barrier is still an issue for many community foundations' representatives across Europe. Therefore, if it is possible, translate the material provided by ECFI into your local language.
- ✓ **Take advantage of the online opportunities to expand your reach:** Delivering the workshops online is an excellent opportunity for many staff and board members of the same organisation to join. Hence, you could widen and enhance the learning process for the organisation. It could also be a great way to engage with potential members.
- ✓ **Level the playing field:** remember that the level of knowledge on the SDGs varies from one community foundation to another and among staff members within the same organisation. Make sure you provide additional resources and materials to participants well in advance to ensure a uniform starting level of knowledge on the topic.
- ✓ **Map relevant stakeholders and make alliances at the national level:** If there are other organisations or individuals in your country that carry out relevant work on the SDGs, you might want to involve them in the workshop or make strategic alliances to exchange content and experience and enhance the learning process for community foundations.
- ✓ **Do not be scared by heterogeneity:** the workshops are for everyone and will make sure that participants will leave with an understanding of the relevance of the SDGs to the work of community foundations and a plan of how to embrace and embed them in their organisation, whatever stage they are at in their SDG journey.
- ✓ **Choose the timing carefully:** Make sure that the timing and frequency of workshops is optimal for most of your community foundations' representatives: having too much on their plate might affect their ability to concentrate and subsequently impact on the workshop outcome!

INVESTIGATING HOW THE WORKSHOPS PROMPTED ACTIONS

Several methods were deployed to investigate community foundations' perception of the workshops, lessons learned and whether they put them into practice. Firstly an in-depth interview was carried out with each national community foundation support organisation's representative to have a clearer general picture on each country's situation. Secondly, a survey was developed, adapted, tailored and translated where appropriate, for participants in each country. This tool was also open to community foundations that did not participate in the workshops to gather insights into the organisations' perception on whether and how they feel they are advancing the SDGs at the local level. The survey was distributed both online (through Survey Monkey and Word documents) and in-person (through interviews, in particular in Italy). Finally, there was desk review of community foundation social media and websites.

78 community foundations have been involved in this research, distributed as follows:

- Russia: 4 (all attending the workshop)
- Germany: 44 (20 attending; 24 non-attending)
- United Kingdom: 12 (10 attending, 2 non-attending)
- Italy: 18 organisations – among members and non-members of the association (10 attending, 8 non attending)

No organisations from Ukraine and Romania were interviewed, since, after talking to the national community foundations' representatives, several shared challenges came up that will be outlined later in this report.

From a demographic point of view, the respondents differ a lot in terms of staff members, endowment, and grantmaking capacity. While in the United Kingdom, for instance, the average number of paid employees is around 12, Germany and Italy rely more on volunteer work, having 1, 2 or maximum 3 paid members of staff. At the same time, on the endowment and grantmaking side, the data gathered reflect the heterogeneity of community foundations at both the national and cross-country levels. Indeed, among workshop participants, there were community foundations with an endowment from zero to over €80m.

In addition to the survey, community foundations' websites and social media have been searched and reviewed to gather additional shareable information to integrate and enrich the analysis and to gain a clearer picture of how organisations are moving forward in embracing the SDGs. Furthermore, individual interviews with some organisations' representatives have been carried out to gather further insights on how the five dimensions were advanced within the *whole-of-organisation* approach and how the SDG integration was realised in practice.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS EMBRACING THE SDGS

From the analysis, it emerges that there is a shared understanding among community foundations' representatives that their organisations are in some way working towards and advancing the SDGs at a local level. The vast majority, for instance, Germany 77% and in the UK 83%¹⁰, agree that their community foundation is contributing to the SDGs within their community, connecting the local level to the global one. Participants in Italy also believe that their work is relevant to achieve the SDGs and those who attended the

workshop left with a clearer understanding of that. The Russian cohort included organisations already aware of the issue, having taken part in working groups like the Future Forward programme¹¹, where the topic of the SDGs has been explored.

However, when asked whether they managed to embrace them within the organisation actively, the answers differ; particularly between those who attended the workshops and those who did not. Below is a brief overview of the general response of the organisations that joined the workshop, by country. The following sections will outline a more precise and

Russia	According to the national support organisation, numerous participants requested individual meetings, after the workshop, focused, in particular, on how to connect the SDGs to the Vital Signs. The respondents to the questionnaire all stated that in some way, the workshops prompted actions in embracing the SDGs, especially from a communications point of view.
Germany	Among the respondents, all five that joined the first in-person meeting stated that the workshop stimulated their actions towards embracing the SDGs, covering at least one of the different dimensions. Among those respondents who joined the first of four online meetings held when the survey was issued, approx. 70% believe that they are doing something towards advancement of the SDGs and are taking action in this direction. The remaining 30% state they do not feel their organisation is actively embracing and advancing the SDGs. However, when asked, they also state that their knowledge of the SDGs spans from low to very low.
Italy	Almost all the participants reported what they learned and shared the work done during the workshop to their board. However, a few of them prompted immediate concrete actions, particularly by integrating the SDGs in their grantmaking and communication strategy. There are also examples of community foundations integrating the SDGs in their already well-advanced investment strategy or early-stage one.
UK	Among the 10 respondents, 90% stated that they have taken some concrete actions after attending the workshop according to at least one of the five dimensions of the <i>whole-of-organisation</i> approach.

10 This number refers to those who, after attending the workshop, continued to advance their work at the local level into embracing the SDGs and those who did not attend the workshop but believe they are doing something towards the achievement of the SDGs.

11 The **Future Forward is a trilateral learning exchange programme**, involving Canada, Germany and Russia, geared towards community foundation staff who have been with their foundations for at least a year, and see themselves remaining in the community philanthropy space in the future.

more in-depth analysis of the progress and evidence that emerged in advancing the SDGs, the challenges faced, and the community foundations' main requests for support in this area.

Key challenges faced, particularly in Ukraine and Romania, in embracing the SDGs were ecosystem barriers and the lack of awareness and understanding of the 2030 Agenda outside the Third Sector bubble. Indeed, in these countries, Civil Society Organisations have a greater knowledge of the topic than public and private actors. In Ukraine, for instance, this is mainly related to their participation in international funding programmes, like the UNDP one, that use the SDGs as a fundamental framework and work to advance them. In Romania, as well, at the national level, the overall SDGs framework is not a priority in the public and private sector: one of the main actors on this topic is the Ambasada Sustenabilității în România (the Sustainability Embassy in Romania), which promotes programmes and partnership among Civil Society Organisations' entities, businesses, and institutions to align with the 2030 Agenda. Due to this situation, community foundations have no incentive to advance the SDGs discourse, mainly because it cannot bring them any added value in building partnerships and attracting resources. Furthermore, because of organisational capacity limits, most of the time they do not have the strength to lead this kind of conversation within their community.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS' ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND LEARNING

One of the first elements that resulted from the analysis is that the ECFI guide 'Connecting Community Foundations with

the SDGs' has been one of the primary sources of information for the respondents, even for those who did not attend the workshop. Indeed, in Germany, 46.5% of respondents have read it; half of them did not participate in any of the dedicated events. In Italy, while it was among the reading list to prepare for the workshops, a significant proportion of other community foundations have had the opportunity to read the guide and start informing themselves. At the same time, the workshop, structured in such a concrete way, has been a valuable source to prompt actions and actively put into practice what was stated in the report, providing a fundamental support to community foundations in their first strategic thinking towards embracing the SDGs.

It is interesting to note the vital need for resources, information, and experience on this topic that characterise community foundations across Europe. Indeed, in addition to being one of the main requests for support, it seems from the analysis that, when given the opportunity, community foundations are likely to access and use additional resources to inform their work. For example, in Germany, 65% of the respondents claimed they actively interacted with the ad hoc information section on the SDGs created and updated by the national association.

EMBRACING THE FIVE DIMENSIONS OF THE WHOLE-OF-ORGANISATION APPROACH

A primary aim of this investigation was to understand whether community foundations have advanced the integration of the SDGs across any or all of the five areas outlined in the *whole-of-organisation* approach: mission, investment, communications and convening, strategies and programmes, and operations. From the analysis, the

situation is mixed, with some organisations very well advanced in this work and others slowly beginning to address this kind of strategic thinking and action.

In general, communications, and strategies and programmes are the two main areas within which community foundations most integrated the SDGs discourse, with fewer examples relating to the other dimensions.

Communications

Concerning communications, the Goals have been used on different levels: as a first immediate action, various organisations embedded within their website and communication materials, the SDGs logo and the 17 Goals as the first step to express their alignment to the 2030 Agenda. But several brought this even further, proactively engaging and addressing the SDGs conversation within their community and relevant stakeholder organisations. For instance, in some cases, community foundations included the SDGs in their annual report. In addition, they actively use them in addressing conversations and communication with the private sector, fundraising activities, and donor relationships e.g. Community Foundation of Saint Petersburg (Russia) and County Durham Community Foundation (UK)¹². Others have been leading communication activities first to raise awareness among their community and beyond on the SDGs: for example, Northamptonshire Community Foundation (UK) launched, in October 2020, an online series called Community Conversations on the SDGs¹³, where every month they gather representatives from the community to deep dive into one SDG. Another interesting case is the community foundation of Hamburg (Germany), which has organised Community Foundation Days, solely

focusing on raising awareness on the SDGs and developing activities around them. Others have laid the foundations to lead this kind of conversation and will soon start a series of SDGs meetings with local actors and citizens.

Strategies and Programmes

Regarding strategies and programmes, a wide variety of community foundations in each country surveyed has started integrating the SDGs in their grantmaking programmes, particularly aligning each line of funding and existing funds with at least one of them. Peculiarly, this could go in two ways: on the one hand, as mentioned above, the community foundation explicitly highlights which SDG is linked to the specific fund. On the other hand, the organisation proactively asks beneficiaries to express the SDGs addressed by the programme and project they wish to be funded to better understand the grantees' focus in their territory. This latter practice is rarely used but still interesting to report. Additionally, community foundations' representatives stated that this kind of integration would be helpful in the long term because it would give them a clearer idea of their community's main interests and needs and issues that have yet to be tackled.

Investments

When focusing on investments, it must be firstly remembered that endowment plays a different role in community foundations across countries, and within the same one. Some of the organisations have, indeed, significant financial resources within their endowment, in terms of millions, while others have fewer or none. That means that among the first group, lots have already started to internally review how they can achieve greater impact by leveraging their endowment and aligning their investments

¹² [How County Durham Community Foundation \(UK\) embraced the SDGs](#) - ECFI

¹³ [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Community Conversations](#)

to the SDGs. One of the most meaningful examples that will be treated and deep-dived in the study case chapter, is Foundation Scotland (UK), the first to shift its portfolio towards the SDG alignment, and to offer this to donors. Another example in this sense would be Freiburg Community Foundation (Germany), which has decided that the foundation's capital shall be invested primarily under ethical, ecological, and socially responsible criteria in accordance with the 17 SDGs¹⁴. On the other hand, within the majority of those community foundations with a more limited availability of financial resources in their endowment, few are initiating some strategic thinking on how to connect and leverage the 2030 Agenda, for instance Val di Noto Community Foundation (Italy), which is also presented in the study case section.

Mission

Integration into Mission is generally at an early stage across community foundations, most likely because of the detected difficulties in reporting to board members and making them understand the precise value of embracing the SDGs within the organisation. Nevertheless, there are some good examples where community foundations have already embedded the SDGs in their mission - Northamptonshire Community Foundation (UK)¹⁵, Bonn Community Foundation (Germany)¹⁶ and Community Foundation Vysota (Russia)¹⁷.

Operations

Finally, regarding the operations dimension; from the survey and website browsing, there is evidence of a commonly shared effort among community foundations to reduce their carbon footprint and the impact of the organisations from an environmental point of view. That translates into organisational practices through, for instance, paperless policy, travel policies, environmentally sustainable events, and other initiatives. In this sense, the Community Foundation for Staffordshire (UK), which has put in place an Ethical policy¹⁸ that provides not only the community foundation ethical and environmental code of conduct but also the guidelines to work with other organisations and external partners, is a useful example.

CONNECTING THE SDGS TO EXISTING REPORTING TOOLS AND FORGING ALLIANCES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Another element that comes up in this investigation is the community foundations' willingness and ability to connect the SDGs to existing reporting and impact evaluation tools used across the countries examined, like Vital Signs¹⁹.

Many community foundations in the United Kingdom implement Vital Signs as an instrument to evaluate community vitality

14 [Guidelines on how to invest the Community Foundation resources](#) (Leitlinie Kapitalange)

15 [Our vision, mission and values – Northamptonshire Community Foundation](#)

16 [Bürgerstiftung Bonn – Über uns - Nachhaltig und global wirken](#)

17 [About us – Vysota Community Foundation](#)

18 [Ethical Policy – Staffordshire Community Foundation](#)

19 Vital Signs is a community-driven data programme, spearheaded by Community Foundations of Canada and now introduced in many other European countries and globally, that aims to gather data at the local level to provide a clearer picture and support evidence-based solutions in order to have a greater impact in addressing resources. Since 2017, Community Foundations of Canada has started to align national data sets they provide to community foundations with the 2030 Agenda and incentivising organisations to use the SDGs framework to measure national and local data against them.

according to established parameters, however, there is yet no resonating evidence that these organisations have aligned with the SDGs language when reporting and sharing insights on their communities. A partial explanation could be that a number of foundations produce Vital Signs reports periodically: most of them date back to 2017-2018, perhaps too early for thinking about integrating the 2030 Agenda. However, it is safe to say that, thanks to the growing sensibility and the work done by UKCF and ECFI to raise awareness on the SDGs, in the future, there might be a more strategic alignment using the SDGs framework within the Vital Sign report practice.

SDGs and has led the local dialogue, and has become the 'centre of knowledge', reinforcing its role as a community leader. By doing so, the organisation managed to introduce the 2030 Agenda as a topic of conversation and reflection at the local level, which, until that point, was perceived as lofty and not relevant by local actors²⁰. A similar role was played Braunschweig Community Foundation (Germany) in producing its ImpulsReport 2020 (a publication very similar in terms of objectives and approach to the Vital Signs). The community foundation led the conversation and the strategic thinking at the local level on the SDGs, a role that no-one else was willing to take²¹.

The Community Foundation of North Milan (Italy) provides a great example of how the community foundation reported the vitality of its community against the

Moving to Russia; integrating the SDGs and connecting them with the Vital Signs report has been the main issue that community foundations which joined the workshop

LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

HOW CAN YOUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION ALIGN WITH THE SDGS IN VITAL SIGNS?²²

- ✓ Use the SDG shared language in your report.
- ✓ Align your Vital Signs themes and indicators to the SDG framework.
- ✓ Include messaging about the SDGs to raise awareness in your community.
- ✓ Talk about the SDGs in your Vital Signs engagement with stakeholders.
- ✓ Host Vital Conversations around the SDGs.

20 For further information, [SDGs and Vital Signs – a powerful combination to shape a leadership role \(North Milan Greater Area Foundation\)](#)

21 For further information, [Filling the SDG void in Braunschweig/Germany](#)

22 Source: [The Sustainable Development Goals and your community foundation – Guidebook and Toolkit](#) (page 25); Community Foundation of Canada

have been concentrating on, requesting ad-hoc focused sessions with the CFSO to think on these aspects strategically.

Another final relevant element that needs to be highlighted is how community foundations are leveraging the SDGs to implement, join, and in some instances lead local broader alliances comprising private and public sector actors. The United Kingdom and Germany appear to have the widest and more intense presence of formal local coalitions aimed at advancing the SDGs. In most cases, community foundations are part of them²³. On the other hand, in Italy, this kind of local alliance appears not to be common. Still, there are examples of organisations that overcome this barrier by joining national or international networks focused on the 2030 Agenda, like Messina Community Foundation (Italy), part of the F20 platform²⁴. Finally, moving towards the Russian perspective, establishing this kind of expanded alliance has proven difficult, particularly regarding the involvement of local institutions. Indeed, SDGs do not appear to be a priority from a broader institutional point of view, and there is a feeling that the 2030 Agenda only belongs and is shared within a Civil Society organisations' "bubble." In this context, community foundations, like Chelyabinsk Region Community Foundation (Russia), are

trying, given their organisational capacity, to introduce and lead the conversation on the SDGs within their community, to promote a shared understanding beyond the Third Sector organisations.

23 For instance, Foundation Scotland is part of **SDG Network Scotland**; Bürgerstiftung Stuttgart is part of **mEin Stuttgart, mEin Welt**; Bürgerstiftung Lebensraum Aachen is leading the **Region Aachen 2050 – Transformationsnetzwerk initiative**, a local wider alliance among private and public actors on the SDGs and how to achieve them at the local level; Community Foundation led and created the **Münchener Initiative Nachhaltigkeit**, in cooperation with 50 local organisations, that first convened in February 2019 questioning how citizens can contribute to the implementation of SDGs at local level.

24 The Foundations Platform F20 is a network of more than 60 foundations and philanthropic organisations from different parts of the world, calling for joint, transnational action towards sustainable development, along with positive transformation examples to provide pathways towards solutions of today's most pressing challenges – climate change and a just transition towards sustainable development, based on renewable energy. It takes a clear stance on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement.

CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

In the past year and a half, responding to the social, health, economic, cultural issues raised by the Covid-19 pandemic has been one of the main focuses for community foundations. There is much evidence on the role that these organisations have played and the pressure they have been put under²⁵. This being the most pressing priority, programmes of working towards embracing the SDGs and reimagining the organisation through the *whole-of-organisation* approach were put on hold for many of those who attended the workshop.

Lack of organisational capacity is another crucial main challenge in embracing the SDGs framework. Indeed, respondents highlighted how the process of reviewing, through the SDGs lens, their mission, operations, investments, programmes and strategies, and communications and convening, while being relevant and valuable, requires strategic thinking, dedicated time, and a set of converging competences across the whole foundation. However, since most organisations are understaffed or rely on volunteers, this work has hardly become a priority, and people have not found the time to dedicate to it. Freiburg Community Foundation dealt with this by allocating responsibility for holding the SDG lens to one volunteer. The greater the number of people in the staff, the more likely is that the community foundation has managed to embrace the SDGs at least in one of the five key areas. Additionally, those who are interested state that they would need more staff to do it.

Another issue that has emerged from the interviews and the data gathered is the difficulty that community foundations' representatives have found in reporting and making a case for embracing the SDGs and, in particular, adopting the *whole-of-organisation* approach to their board members. Indeed, some of them still find that the SDGs are too lofty and distant from the foundation's work and, in many cases, do not perceive the added value and benefit that embracing them would bring, considering them too abstract and global. This has come up, for instance, in different interviews among Italian practitioners, who have expressed their difficulty in filling the knowledge and information gap between what they learned during the workshop or read about the SDGs, and what they managed to actively share with board members. Also, in some cases, the board renewal has put on hold the work of community foundations towards achieving the SDGs.

Finally, a small portion of community foundations still expressed some scepticism in bridging the local and global levels through the SDGs since representatives do not see their added value and immediate return. In particular, some of them believe that there would be no benefit in changing the consolidated community foundation's evaluation metrics and existing methods of reporting.

25 For more information on the role played by community foundations in different countries, read: [Community Foundations and community foundations support organisations response to the pandemic and their look towards the future – A comparative overview between Italy and Romania](#), Arc and Assifero, 2021; [The Community Foundation response to Coronavirus](#), UKCF; [Bürgerstiftungsarbeit im Krisenmodus](#), Bündnis der Bürgerstiftungen Deutschlands

LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

HOW CAN COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS BE SUPPORTED THROUGHOUT THIS JOURNEY?

✓ **Concrete examples and peer exchanges**

Almost all respondents stated that sharing practical experience and having the opportunity to dialogue with other practitioners on how they embraced the SDGs, (what went right and what wrong), would be a fundamental asset in their development. National support organisations play a crucial role in addressing this issue and facilitating exchanges at national level. However, according to the responses received, practitioners are well aware that learning needs must go beyond national borders: they, indeed, show a genuine interest in exchanging **ideas and practice with community foundations from other nations. In this context, the role of ECFI becomes fundamental in connecting and fostering partnerships across Europe.**

✓ **Training and one to one support**

Given that one of the key obstacles is the lack of staff members who can dedicate their time and energy to learn and strategically think and review the community foundation through the lens of the SDGs; training and strategic one-to-one support may help those with limited capacity develop the capability to become more confident about dedicating limited human resources towards embracing the SDGs.

✓ **Shared communications**

Finally, from a communication point of view, there is a need to find ways and ideas to make the SDGs more understandable and straightforward to the local communities (people, local institutions, Third Sector organisations). Indeed, to properly embrace them and build more extensive and solid alliances, several respondents feel the need to create a common ground of understanding and align every local stakeholder. To this end, among the suggestions, there is a proposal to share the costs, possibly with other actors at the local level and with other community foundations, of involving specialised communication agencies able to professionally draft innovative plans and strategies to build an effective and understandable communication around the SDGs. Another idea was to create a cohesive and engaging shared communication campaign, mainly on a country level, to impact the national scenario significantly and have a wider presence as community foundations on the topic.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (UK)

Northamptonshire Community Foundation believes in the vital relevance of the SDGs as a community foundation but also for the whole community philanthropy: the phrase "Think global, act local" perfectly reflects the approach and strategy of community foundations across the world. Indeed, they can address local challenges and find local solutions while remaining connected and collaborating with other organisations and players at the global level and advancing the international discourse and achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

How did it go about integrating the SDGs?

Firstly, Northamptonshire Community Foundation management and staff worked with trustees to provide a persuasive case about why the organisation should embed the SDGs, the added value, and their relevance. That was a critical first step that, when accomplished, allowed them to set a shared strategy at the organisational level, starting from reviewing their business plan for 2019-2022 and reshape their values and vision through the SDGs lens as follows:

- » *"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."*

MISSION

COMMUNICATIONS

- » *The second step was using the SDGs to drive meaningful conversations within their community and engaging local actors that, during the pandemic, were distant. They launched, for instance, a Community Conversation format, a series of online events that brought together donors, local organisations, and individuals to discuss one of the Sustainable Development Goals championed by individual Northamptonshire Community Foundation staff members.*

OPERATIONS

- » *"Driving these kinds of conversations has helped Northamptonshire Community Foundation reaffirm its role as community leader, providing a space for local actors to exchange experiences and views. It has been a way to get them together and get a clearer shared understanding of the systemic inequalities within the community and their impact on daily life and address local challenges in a collaborative way. It has also been valuable for us to identify gaps in our current system and new needs, giving us new insights to shape our funds. In particular, we have given a more strategic direction to one of our general funds: even though it remains a broad one in terms of objectives, we will address its resources to find solutions for those gaps in services identified during the monthly Community Conversation. We feel it is a great way to set a concrete example on how to make global goals meaningful and concrete at the local level".*

Rachel McGrath, Grant Director and Deputy CEO for Northamptonshire Community Foundation

STRATEGY,
PROGRAMMES
AND ACTIONS

COMMUNICATIONS

- » *Northamptonshire Community Foundation plans to leverage the SDGs as a driver for community conversations and collaborations even further. In Autumn 2021, they are planning to launch a symposium in partnership with the local University where speakers will provide some provocation pieces around three main challenges, identifying the ongoing commitment and activities at the local level. Hopefully, this will represent the beginning of a more formalised partnership among local actors on the SDGs in the wake of existing practices like the [Bristol SDGs Alliance](#).*

“The Sustainable Development Goals are not caged in academic terms, but they are spelt in such a loose and understandable way that we believe at least one of them can appeal to any one local citizen and to local actors. As a community foundation, we have the responsibility to get beyond our bubble and lead the conversation to promote the importance of community philanthropy in achieving the goals among the general public and local changemakers. We can help do this by giving them the means to understand and have discussions around the SDGs, to figure out how we can all work and collaborate together to achieve them at the local level, and understand the part that everyone can play to pool our resources, time and energy to build sustainable communities and a better future for all”. adds Rachel McGrath.

Top tip

🌱 MAKE EVERYBODY WITHIN THE FOUNDATION OWN A PIECE OF WORK:

One of the top tips, according to Northampton Community Foundation, is to embrace from within the organisation the 2030 Agenda actively. When starting this conversation with your staff, do not put the SDGs as an additional burden on their work, instead frame it as a new approach, a change in everybody's mindset. If, for instance, each member of staff champions one Goal, they will feel more engaged and accountable, and meaningful insights about people's particular passions and concerns will arise. It also represents an excellent way for staff to engage with trustees on a more equitable level.

INVESTMENTS

FOUNDATION SCOTLAND (UK)

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- » *Foundation Scotland is firmly committed to the SDGs across all aspects of its organisation. One of the first steps it took was to review its investment strategy. In 2020 it became the first European foundation to establish a Social Impact Investment Portfolio developed within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals.*
-

Its journey was a long and thoughtful one. In 2019, board members asked themselves how the organisation could keep building on its assets, but in a more socially responsible way, aligned with its values. In this first phase, they asked their external Fund Managers to consider the role of Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance across their investment portfolios, without prejudicing future performance.

At this point, Foundation Scotland needed to be assured that they could justify the exclusive focus on impact funds from a performance point of view. To this end, in the first quarter of 2020, they reviewed the past performance of several funds and other financial vehicles that focused both on impact and returns. The data gathered strongly supported the case to begin this shift towards impact investment. In autumn 2020, after a lengthy shortlisting and interview process, they appointed EQ Investors, a London-based B Corp wealth management firm whose investment process is guided by the Sustainable Development Goals.

In December 2020, the Foundation Scotland EQ Impact Portfolio was launched with an initial investment of £15 million. Nine months later, all its default funds are invested in the Portfolio, managed by EQ Investors and the market value of the Fund has grown to £22m.

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- » Foundation Scotland has a web page dedicated to its **Climate Commitment** which states *'Foundation Scotland recognises the growing climate emergency and our responsibility to engage, inform and influence Scotland's communities to take positive climate action at a local level. We also take responsibility for reducing the carbon footprint of our own operations and investments'*.
-

OPERATIONS

Top tip

INVESTMENT AND SDGS

- 🌀 Find a champion within the Board and ensure the full involvement of those who will operationalize it at the outset.
- 🌀 It takes time, resources, and commitment to undertake research so share information and findings with other organisations to save time and costs.
- 🌀 Undertaking research will give you confidence in the long-term potential of social impact investments and reassure you that adopting this approach will not detract from financial returns.
- 🌀 Choose your partner carefully: pay as much attention to their systems and reporting capabilities as to their performance.
- 🌀 Continuous communication with all stakeholders will undoubtedly pay you back!
- 🌀 Prepare a communication strategy around it and be ready: there is increasing focus on impact investment, so leverage this from a communication point of view. New inquiries will likely keep on coming.

INVESTMENTS

VAL DI NOTO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (ITALY)

» For the past 12 months, Val di Noto Community Foundation has been looking for a way to effectively and impactfully leverage its own endowment. Indeed, being really close to achieving the Fondazione Con Il Sud "challenge"²⁶ and having available €5 million in its endowment, the community foundation has been reviewing its investment strategy, learning and studying from other community foundations experiences, such as those from Canada and Foundation Scotland. The SDGs are among the powerful frameworks to address those resources and assess the impact they are considering. As per other community foundations in the country, the board is mainly composed of members with a social interest background rather than a financial and managerial one. Therefore, as soon as the opportunity to increase its endowment became more concrete, the President took the lead on this process and collaborated with external professionals and members of the Advisory Board to set out the investment strategy.

» "Leveraging the endowment, achieving at the same time return on investments and a positive impact, is key for community foundations to address new resources to programmes and organisations, without having to look for funds and being constrained to other grantmakers' vision and priorities. Community foundations listen to the territory and know the local policies better: they should not adapt their focuses based on the grants available. In developing our investment strategy for the future, one of the key questions has been: as a community foundation, do we want to address our resources to ethical funds that invest abroad or in other areas, or do we want to make a difference for our territory? Indeed, even though the first option gives greater reassurance in terms of returns and is safer, I believe we need to take risks into our own territory. And in that sense, we wish to invest 30-40% of our endowment in the local real economy, particularly in social enterprises and other organisations we have supported with grants throughout the years, and we have a strong trust-based relationship, having a positive and generative impact on our territory. In this way, we can achieve our mission as a community foundation and make a real difference, advancing our community's sustainable and inclusive development by working towards advancing the SDGs locally but always in connection with the global context".
Giovanni Grasso, President of Fondazione Val di Noto Community Foundation.

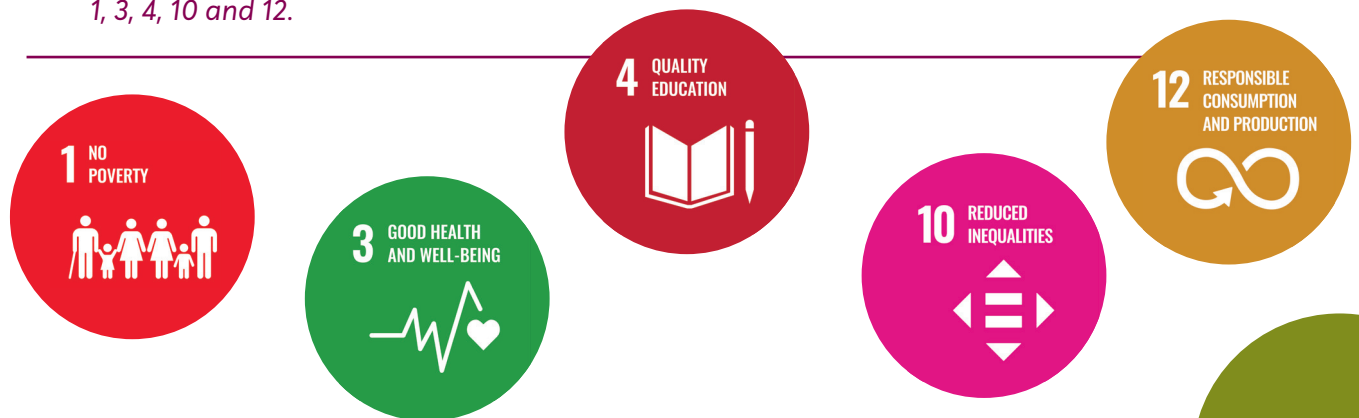
MISSION

²⁶ Fondazione CON IL SUD is an Italian bank of foundation origin that supports the development of community foundations in the South of the country. As kick-off capital, it provides € 500 k in endowment, as well as resources to distribute as grants within the community, and asks community foundations to raise 2.5 million in endowment in 10 years. If that happens, Fondazione CON IL SUD doubles the resources in the endowment, reaching in this way €5 m.


 STRATEGY,
PROGRAMMES
AND ACTIONS

**WIESLOCH COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION (GERMANY)**

» Based on the SDGs workshop input and insights, Wiesloch Community Foundation board members decided to get a clearer understanding of how the activities and projects carried out by the foundation throughout the years concretely align with the SDGs. To do this, they developed an ad hoc matrix ([sample available here](#)) that checked the list of all the initiatives implemented by the community foundation since its establishment, against the 17 SDGs. This was a useful strategic exercise that allowed them to assess and rethink each activity according to one or more Goal and to establish the organisation focus so far. Indeed, board members realised that the organisation's initiatives mostly align with Goals 1, 3, 4, 10 and 12.


What does that mean for the foundation?

This kind of strategic internal reasoning and review of 15-years of activities has brought some additional questions for the future of the organisation: what does this mean for us? Do we want to expand our focus in the community, or should we dedicate our energy and our financial resources to the area we have concentrated on so far? How can we review our mission in the light of the SDGs? This is an ongoing process that will require the involvement of the overall board and key partners of the community foundation, that has no immediate and easy answer for sure. It is a key opportunity to set the long-term strategy and identity on a community and national level.

» *“We believe that the 2030 Agenda can, and already has, helped us to sharpen our focus, reframe our actions and give a clearer understanding of the community foundations activities and impact both internally and on the outside world. It is a powerful tool to reframe our mission statement: the world is continuously changing, and the SDGs could be a North Star that can guide us to stay relevant and to dialogue with all the actors in the overall ecosystem”.*

Dr. Johann Gradl, Wiesloch Community Foundation board member.


 MISSION

COMMUNICATIONS

AGRIGENTO AND TRAPANI COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (ITALY)

Agrigento and Trapani Community Foundation is one of the youngest community foundations in Italy, being established in January 2019. It took part in the Italian workshop in September 2020, with four representatives (the President, the Secretary General, and two Officers) joining the event, which was the highest number per organisation. During the session, they had the opportunity to start exchanging ideas on how to integrate the SDGs in their strategy and, consequently lay the foundations for future work.

» Their first action was to reframe their programmes and areas of actions against the SDGs, with a specific alignment with six of them, and make these explicit on their website and communication channel.

» Now, each time the community foundation publishes a new line of funding and programme, it makes explicit reference to one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals. One of the first examples is **Ripartenze Inclusive**, aimed at reducing inequalities and favouring the community's sustainable growth and inclusive development. Finally, Agrigento and Trapani Community Foundation is currently working on its annual report, which will include a clear reference to the actions taken to advance SDGs at the local level and their integration in the community foundation's programmes.

STRATEGY, PROGRAMMES AND ACTIONS



Agrigento and Trapani Community Foundation programme alignment with the SDGs. [Here is the link](#) to their website to see how they explicitly communicate it.

COMMUNICATIONS

AACHEN AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (GERMANY)

» After research carried out in 2019-2020 identified 250 local organisations working on sustainability projects and a year of consultation with people and local relevant actors, Aachen Community Foundation decided to launch and lead Region Aachen 2050 - Transformationsnetzwerk für nachhaltiges Leben. This latter is a coalition that aims to gather civil society organisations, universities, local institutions, policymakers, businesses, citizens, and other stakeholders to tackle, by 2050, the most pressing challenges; particularly the climate emergency and its consequences; and to achieve sustainable and inclusive development for everyone in the region. The Sustainable Development Goals represent the powerful framework against which this initiative will be delivered, and ideas and solutions will arise.

» One of the projects implemented within this alliance is the Nachhaltigkeitscafé (the Sustainability Café): a safe space where different groups in the Aachen area can connect among themselves and engage and at the same time raise awareness of the SDGs among local people through ad hoc events, talks, and other projects. Aachen Area Community Foundation leads this initiative in collaboration with Eine Weltforum Aachen eV and Wandelwerk Aachen: it aims to enhance partnerships to find solutions to shared problems and bring the 2030 Agenda out of the Third Sector bubble and to the whole community. The community foundation started to work on this initiative in March, developing digital tools. The doors of the physical space, located in Mefferdatisstrasse, will hopefully open in November.

STRATEGY, PROGRAMMES AND ACTIONS

SAINT PETERSBURG COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (RUSSIA)

» Dobry Gorod Saint Petersburg, the Community Foundation of Saint Petersburg, had already started to talk about how SDGs could be relevant for them and their work in 2019, acknowledging their power as a shared and common language at all levels. Therefore, they held an internal strategic meeting to understand how the organisation's mission and programmes intersect with the 2030 Agenda. The outcome was a 10-page document that summed up the SDGs policy of the whole organisation. Seven goals stood out as the most applicable for the community foundation work:

The development of such a policy was the first step to kick off an even more comprehensive strategic process, further advanced by the participation in the ECFI SDGs workshop, to embrace the 2030 Agenda in several dimensions of the organisation. In particular:

» External communication and stakeholders' engagement

*Dobry Gorod Saint Petersburg has included the SDGs in its latest published **annual report 2019-2020** to provide to the general public and the other stakeholders a clear and outspoken statement of its commitment to advancing their achievement at the local level and its alignment with this framework.*


Furthermore, it has focused explicitly on how to effectively shape and tailor its communication strategy leveraging the SDGs, especially with private business donors, that, according to the latest report, account for 50% of the total income for the foundation. Indeed, for multinational companies that have or have not previously collaborated with the community foundation, the 2030 Agenda is highly relevant, with lots of them implementing Corporate Social Responsibility programmes around it. Understanding that this is important for their business reputation, Dobry Gorod Saint Petersburg has been using the SDGs to strengthen partnerships and attract new resources from existing and new business donors, supporting them to take



their business programmes to the next level. The long-term vision that the 2030 Agenda sets is also a key asset for the community foundation. Indeed, it allows the development of enduring relationships with corporate donors within this framework since the beginning thanks to a shared deep understanding of the time needed to achieve the Goals at the local level and build a sustainable and inclusive future for everyone. One of the examples is the recent endowment fund within the 2030 Agenda setting, established with the support of several business companies that have committed to long-term support for the Dobry Gorod Saint Petersburg.

Top tip

COMMUNICATION:

-  The SDGs can be a powerful tool for communication, but you must first establish your community foundation reputation. Even though the 2030 Agenda is relevant, especially to large corporate businesses, embracing it in your communication strategy cannot compensate for your organisation's lack of community reputation. Indeed, it is an additional and powerful tool to establish new partnerships, but first, the community foundation's role and importance must be made clear and shared.

» Internal operations and contractors' selection

According to its internal policy, the organisation has set several guidelines that lead to reducing the community foundation's carbon footprint and the selection of new contractors, partners, and networks they collaborate with. Indeed, Dobry Gorod Saint Petersburg has decided to work only with responsible companies and join alliances with organisations that openly embrace sustainable development as a core value. Moreover, they are committed to the delivery of green events, decrease the use of resources, implement energy efficiency policy, and work with green suppliers.

- » Finally, Dobry Gorod Saint Petersburg, as part of the embracement of SDGs, is driving the conversation among Third Sector organisations, and providing training to them on the topic. Indeed, even though the 2030 Agenda is widely shared within the sector, the level of knowledge varies a lot. In partnership with the NGO Development Centre (CRNO), the community foundation has created a distance learning course on the SDGs for free.

HAMBURG COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (GERMANY)

- » For a couple of years, Hamburg Community Foundation has been thinking about the 2030 Agenda and its relevance for the foundation itself and the different areas of integration. One of the first things that struck immediately was the natural and straightforward connection of the community foundations programmes and grantmaking objectives with the Sustainable Development Goals: they could indeed provide an explicit name for the different areas of intervention of the organisations.

STRATEGY,
PROGRAMMES
AND ACTIONS

LASS UNS ÜBER MORGEN REDEN

HAMBURGER
STIFTUNGSTAGE
12.-20. JUNI 2021



COMMUNICATIONS

- » However, they noticed that Third Sector organisations have generally been more inclined to define social challenges and solutions using their terminology, reflecting more on their individual identity, and creating their isolated universe. But the SDGs provide a powerful common language and an opportunity to establish new alliances that cannot be missed. For this reason, Bürgerstiftung Hamburg decided that the theme for the 2021 annual convening event of foundations²⁷ and organisations with the public (called in German Stiftungstage) based in the Hamburg would be the 2030 Agenda. The title chosen was "Let's talk about tomorrow", embracing the broader meaning for sustainability and leveraging the SDGs to promote a clear justice issue: each generation has to provide the means to resolve the systemic challenges and not leave them on the shoulders of the future ones. On the one hand, the idea was to make the public better understand the role of foundations in addressing global systemic challenges at the local level and this extended concept of sustainability. On the other hand, they sought to encourage foundations to rethink and reframe their activities against the SDGs framework, raise awareness, and provide common ground for collaboration. For over a week in June 2021, more than 100 foundations delivered over 80 events, online and in presence, talked about their projects and involved young and adults in their entertaining activities.

²⁷ With 1460 foundations established, Hamburg is considered the German city with the highest number, with a density of 79 foundations for every 100.000 inhabitants.

COMMUNICATIONS

One of the main issues that arose was that most foundations did not know the SDGs. Therefore, to level the playing field on the understanding of the 2030 Agenda among participants and organisers, the Stiftungbüro Hamburg, that is the initiative that gathers together foundations across the city, hosted in the community foundation's offices, invited some local students to create [a website](#) that explains the SDGs in a very clear and straightforward way, through a dialogue between two characters. This website has become a digital platform that gathers projects and initiatives from all the foundations and organisations interested in highlighting their efforts according to one or more goals. It also made available on the Stiftungstage webpage a series of podcasts called [Podcasts zu Nachhaltigkeit](#). Hamburg Community Foundation and Stiftungbüro Hamburg understand that this initiative is just a first seed planted that will need to be watered and nourished in the coming months and years, building on the momentum created.

- » With regards to the other dimensions of the whole-of-organisation approach, the community foundation has started to consider how to integrate the SDGs. From an investment point of view, it wishes to go even beyond the existing ESG reporting and embrace the 2030 Agenda in its policy as well. However, given the lack of shared knowledge among organisations on the SDGs, the first key point would be to continue driving and leading the discourse at the community level on the topic.
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INVESTMENTS

RESOURCES

UNITED NATIONS

COMMUNICATION MATERIALS ON THE SDGS (LOGO, SINGLE SDGS ETC)

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/>

SDG GLOBAL AND NATIONAL REPORTS

<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/goal-01/>

SDGS IN ACTION APP

<https://sdgsinaction.com/>

UIN SDGS KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM

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

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS - PARTNERSHIP PLATFORMS

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

The Partnerships for SDGs online platform is the United Nations' global registry of voluntary commitments and multi-stakeholder partnerships made in support of sustainable development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The Partnerships for SDGs platform also facilitates the sharing of knowledge and expertise among multi-stakeholder SDG-related partnerships and voluntary commitments, and for providing periodic updates on their progress.

LOCAL 2030 – LOCALISING THE SDGS

<https://www.local2030.org/about-us.php>

It is a network and platform that supports the on-the-ground delivery of the SDGs, with a focus on those furthest behind. It is a convergence point between local and regional governments and their associations, national governments, businesses, community-based organisations and other local actors, and the United Nations system. Local2030 supports local leaders in collaboratively incubating and sharing solutions, unlocking bottlenecks and implementing strategies that advance the SDGs at the local level.

GLOBAL SDGS INTEGRATION

<https://sdgintegration.undp.org/about>

UNDP is focusing on SDG integration, an approach to development that targets systems – not just thematic sectors – to address all aspects of a complex challenge, including its root causes and its ripple effects across economies, societies and natural ecosystems. UNDP's integration portfolio is focused on supporting stakeholders with approaches, methods, capabilities and spaces to go from knowing that complex development challenges require integrated approaches to 'doing' integration and leading systems change on a daily basis.

PHILANTHROPY AND THE SDGs

- [Philanthropy and the SDGs: Getting started](#); Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (2019)
- [Philanthropy and the SDGs: practical tools and alignment](#); Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (2019)
- SDGs – Driving Societal Priorities: Leading to a Just Society ([part 1](#); [part 2](#); [part 3](#)), Philanthropy Impact (2021)
- [Together for more sustainability – The potential of giving for the SDGs](#); Bundesverband Deutscher Stiftungen (2020)
- [SDGs Philanthropy platform](#)
- [The role of philanthropy in financing for development](#); OECD (2019)
- [Accelerating the SDGs - The role of Crowdfunding in Investing for Impact](#); EVPA (2021)
- [The SDG Giving Landscape: An Insight into Philanthropic Giving to the SDGs](#); Charity Aid Foundation
- [SDGs funders](#) by Candid (live data)
- [Private Philanthropy for the SDGs - Insights from the latest OECD DAC statistics](#); OECD (January 2020)

COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS AND THE SDGS

- [Connecting Community Foundations with the SDGs](#); ECFI (2020)
- [How the Sustainable Development Goals Can Help Community Foundations Respond to COVID-19 and Advance Racial Equity](#); Dr. Larry McGill for Mott Foundations (2020)
- [The SDGs Guidebook and toolkit: a community foundation resource on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#); Community Foundations of Canada (2020)
- [No little plans Podcast](#); Alliance 2030 (2020)
- [Local Leadership Global Impact: Community Foundations and the Sustainable Development Goals](#); Natalie Ross from Council of Foundations (2018)
- [Canada and the Sustainable Development Goals](#); Andrew Chunilall & Ajmal Sataar; Stanford Social Innovation Review (Winter 2018)
- [Setting up a community foundation for a sustainable local development strategy: insights from the Messina community foundation in Italy](#) - ARCO (Action Research for CO-development)
- [Integrating the SDGs at the Victoria Community Foundation](#) - Michelle Gomez, BCCIC Canada Summer Jobs Student

COMMUNICATING ON AND WITH THE SDGS

- [A freelancer's guide to reporting on Sustainable Development Goals](#), Freelance Journalism Assembly (2020)
- [The lazy person's guide to saving the world](#), UN Sustainable Development
- [Communicating the Sustainable Development Goals: A toolkit for Community Radio](#); Archana Kapoor, Pinky Chandran (2020)
- [Engaging parliaments on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs: representation, accountability and implementation A handbook for civil society](#); Together 2030 (2018)
- [SDG Stories: How Windsor-Essex used the sustainable development goals as a common language](#) - Community Foundations of Canada
- [The Global Goals campaign](#) - an updated list of global campaigns on the SDGs

INVESTMENT AND THE SDGs

- [From billions to millions – How community philanthropy is helping to finance the SDGs](#); Jonathan Glennie; Global Fund for Community Foundations (2019)
- [The impact investing guidebook for foundations](#); Community Foundations of Canada (2019)
- [A just transition: Making climate action inclusive](#); Webinar of Community Foundations of Canada (2019)
- [The SDG Investment Case](#); Principles for Responsible Investment and PWC (2017)

OPERATIONS AND HABITS

- [How to reduce your carbon footprint – 20 top tips](#) - Future Learn (2021)

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FIELD EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE RELATING TO EMBRACING THE SDGs

- [Impact Funds: A foundation for greater social impact](#), Giles Ruck, CEO Foundation Scotland
- [How County Durham Community Foundation \(UK\) embraced the SDG](#), Michelle Cooper, CEO, County Durham Community Foundation
- [Tuzla Community Foundation re-frames the SDGs](#), Jasna Jašarević, Executive director of the Tuzla Community Foundation (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- [Filling the SDG void in Braunschweig / Germany](#), Susanne Hauswaldt from the Community Foundation Braunschweig
- [SDGs and Vital Signs – a powerful combination to shape a leadership role \(North Milan Greater Area Foundation\)](#), Daniele Giudici, Board Member
- [SDGs are embedded in our Values and Vision, Rachel McGrath](#), Grant Director and Deputy CEO Northamptonshire Community Foundation

SDG-BASED ALLIANCES AND NETWORKS

PHILANTHROPIC NETWORK [F20 - Foundations Platform 20](#)

The Foundations Platform F20 is a network of more than 60 foundations and philanthropic organisations from different parts of the world, calling for joint, transnational action towards sustainable development, along positive transformation examples to provide pathways towards solutions of today's most pressing challenges – climate change and a just transition towards sustainable development, based on renewable energy.

[SDG Philanthropy Platform](#)

A global online collaboration platform led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and WINGS that provides access to information on what partners are doing, real-time data on relevant SDGs, and events and solutions that funders and others are supporting.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL ALLIANCES

THE UNITED KINGDOM

[Liverpool 2030 Hub](#)

[SDGs Network Scotland](#)

[Cambridge 2030](#)

[Bristol SDG Alliance](#)

GERMANY

[mEin Stuttgart mEine Welt](#)

[Muncher Initiative Nachhaltigkeit](#)

[Region Aachen 2050 – Transformationsnetzwerk initiative](#)

OTHER COUNTRIES

[Coalition 2030 Ireland](#)

[SDG Watch Austria](#)

[Gothenburg Centre for Sustainable Development \(GMV\)](#) - Sweden

[ASviS - Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development](#) - Italy

[Accélérer 2030 pour le Québec](#) - Quebec, Canada

[Alliance2030](#) - Canada

OTHERS

[Catalyst 2030](#)

A global network of social change actors - NGOs, social entrepreneurs, intermediaries, funders and other social change innovators - collaborating in this urgent moment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

[SDSN Youth](#)

SDSN Youth is one of the world's biggest networks of young leaders working together to accelerate solutions towards the Sustainable Development Goals. It connects young people to pathways of understanding and action - to shape a sustainable world for future generations.

TRAINING AND OTHER MATERIALS

- [SDGs Academy](#) has available online courses free of charge
- [UN SDGs Learn](#) gathers together courses from institutions across the world
- [United Nations Institutes for Trainings and Resources](#) offers a wide range of learning events through workshops, seminars, briefings, conferences, public lectures, side events and online courses.
- [SDG Training Handbook](#) developed by SDG Watch Europe
- [ASviS- Alleanza Italiana per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile](#) offers a 120-minutes e-learning course in English and Italian (for more information, drop an email to e-learning@asvis.net.)
- [Why the SDGs Matter](#) - a global campaign promoted by the UN

ABOUT ECFI – EUROPEAN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION 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 organisations (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 organisational learning and expertise;
- inspire individuals and organisations 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

1. Facilitate interaction and learning, share new knowledge and fostering collaboration among CFSOs in Europe to strengthen the support infrastructure.
2. Inspire and facilitate growth in the CF field in Europe.
3. Stimulate CFs in Europe to exercise their community leadership role and collaborate on pressing issues, including inequality, migration and climate change.
4. Build and share knowledge about the CF field in Europe.
5. Lever financial resources and other support for the development of the CF field in Europe.
6. Increase awareness and understanding of the SDGs and their relevance to the work of community foundations in Europe.

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