

PHILANTHROPY AND THE SDGs

Getting Started



ROCKEFELLER PHILANTHROPY ADVISORS
PHILANTHROPY ROADMAP

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In 2015, the countries of the world came together at the United Nations and

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Introduction

End hunger. Achieve gender equality. Protect life on land and under water.

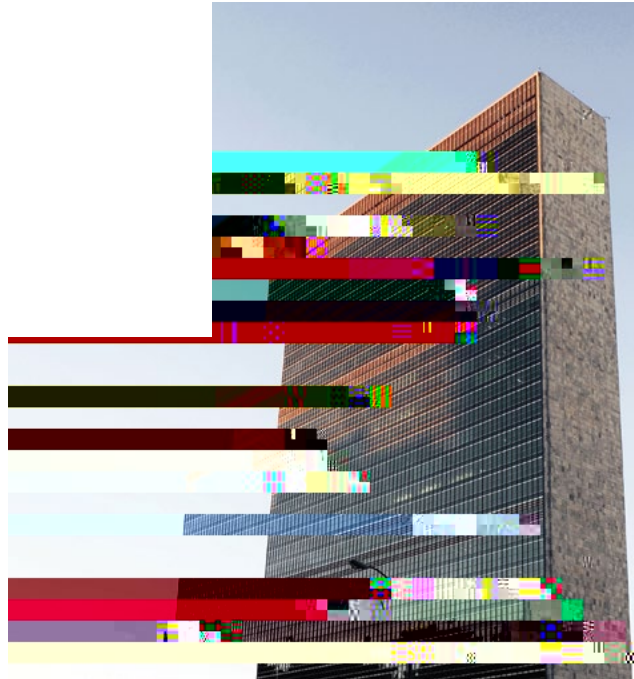
These are just a few of the aims of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are at the heart of a historic agreement signed in 2015 by member states of the United Nations. That agreement, called “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” is a universal call to end poverty, secure justice, and protect the planet for future generations by the year 2030.

The SDGs recognize that *all* nations have poverty and contribute to climate change, and that their people experience injustices. Further, *all* nations and *all* sectors of society can contribute to solutions—not just government, but also business, civil society, academia, the media, and, crucially, philanthropy.

Most philanthropic funders will see that their missions are affirmed by the SDGs, whether they fund domestically or internationally. That is because virtually every cause that philanthropists and foundations support is included in the ambitious scope of the SDGs, which encompass a wide range of issues in the economic, social, and environmental spheres.

Funders may also find that the SDGs can help them frame issues, connect with other change-makers, strengthen partnerships, and communicate about their progress—all for greater impact. Foundations and their grantee partners can take part in this global effort by contributing funds, implementing programs, sharing knowledge, and aligning their objectives with those of the SDGs.

As discussed in the following pages, coordinated action is under way at all levels and in all countries. This includes local sustainability efforts such as the Conrad N. Hilton





About the “2030 Agenda”

“Transforming Our World: The 2030





Figure 1. *Three Pillars of the Sustainable Development Goals*

The SDGs recognize the interdependence of these three pillars. For example, people are less able to maintain good health if their country is at war, peace will not be fully realized so long as women are discriminated against, and poverty cannot be eradicated if it means depleting the world’s natural resources and leaving future generations with nothing.

The Sustainable Development Goals, as described in the document that announced them, “Transforming Our World,”² are as follows:

“We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.”

Preamble to “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>



1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable

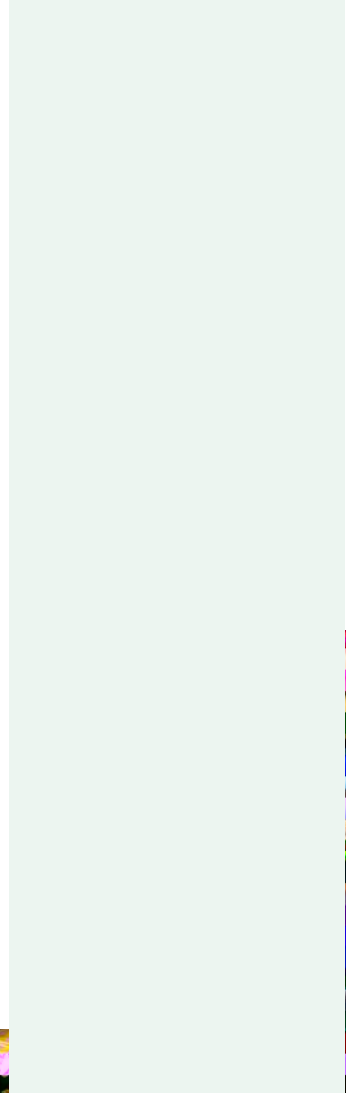
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12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change)
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable 6 (s)-13.5c59 (e)5

Since indicators are often measured at the population level (e.g., the maternal mortality ratio of a whole country), they are tracked mainly by governments and large institutions, such as the UN.

Across the 17 SDGs, there are 169 targets and 230 indicators. Even with these detailed targets and indicators, the 2030 Agenda recognizes that all countries are different and calls on each country to make progress according to its own conditions and priorities.

The United Nations compiles data from governments on their progress toward the SDGs;



GUIDING STAR:

Why a global agenda matters to Humanity United

“Modern slavery and forced labor aren’t recognized as the pressing human rights issues they are, certainly not given the severity of the problem,” says Ed Marcum, managing director of Humanity United (HU), a foundation that brings new approaches to seemingly intractable



and conditions behind how its chips or batteries are produced. “We think they should know and should be held accountable for those working conditions. With SDG 8.7, we can now say, ‘Look, the international community has made

The SDGs provide a common framework for the many social, economic, and environmental challenges that funders work so hard to address. Following are several reasons that funders in search of deeper and more lasting impact have aligned with the SDGs.

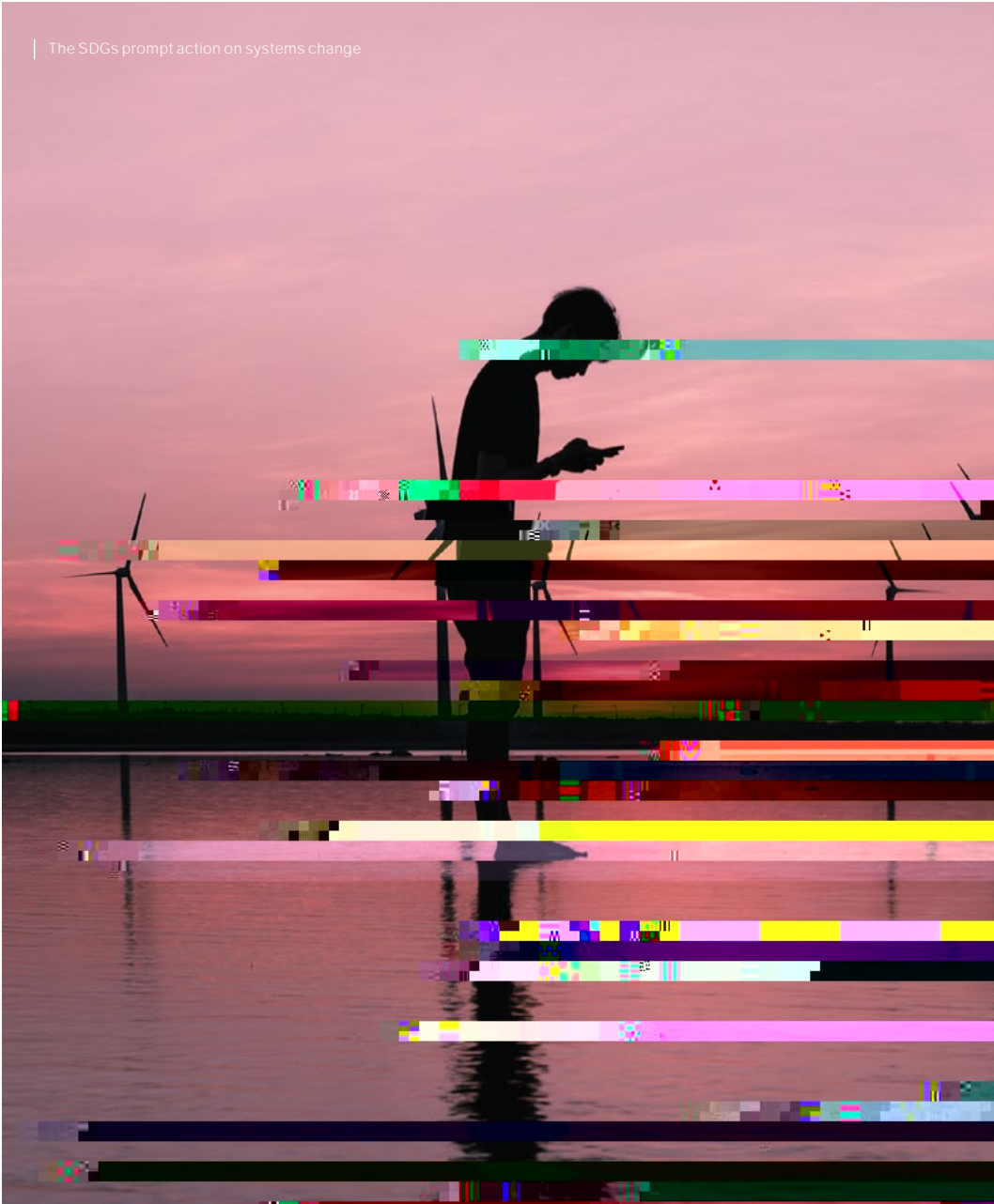
The SDGs, in combination, have been shown to achieve the larger goals philanthropy cares about. The SDGs were created over a period of several years by leading issue experts, practitioners, and activists, with input from more than 10 million⁶ people worldwide. Moreover, ways to measure progress have been continually improved. Given the rigorous global process that gave rise to them, the SDGs provide a common framework for systematically organizing data on the social, environmental, and economic challenges of our time. For this reason, some funders may find inspiration in the SDGs; some may also find useful guidance on how to get from ig (e S.4 (r)3.3 (o)-1

By using the shared language of the SDGs, funders can communicate with other stakeholders across sectors, borders, and issue areas.

SDG 17 explicitly calls for partnership from all sectors of society to achieve

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| The SDGs prompt action on systems change



STARTING AT HOME:

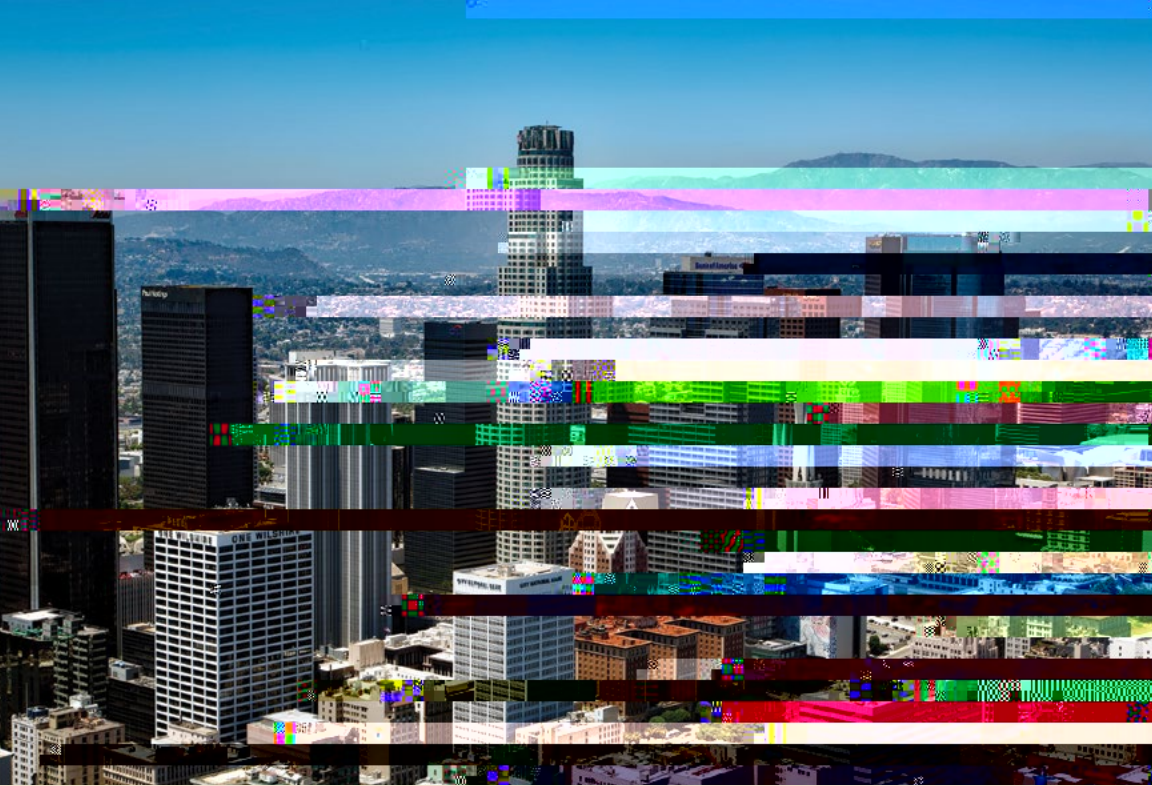
The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation supports sustainable development in Los Angeles

The SDGs may be a global agenda, but often they are enacted locally.

“The city is where the rubber hits the road on a lot of the benefits of the SDGs,” says Peter Laugharn, president and CEO of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, as quoted in Devex.

That sentiment is shared by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, who has worked to adopt the SDGs in his city. Also quoted in Devex, he says, “We won’t achieve these goals abroad if we don’t start here at home.”

With these shared objectives, the foundation gave initial funding for the projects



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Engage with the public. The more that individuals worldwide know about the SDGs, the more likely they are to volunteer, to donate, to advocate for change. When foundations communicate with their audiences about the SDGs—whether in social media posts, reports, videos, live events, or media interviews—they help build a broader base of popular support. Modern communications is interactive and is

Use blended finance and impact investment for the SDGs. Achieving the SDGs will require trillions of dollars a year, much more than the billions now contributed by governments and philanthropic entities. An even greater sum must come from private finance and business working differently. But not all investible projects are ready for fully commercial capital. That's where blended finance comes in. Public or philanthropic institutions make an investment in a given project, to catalyze or complement public- or private-sector investments. This may mean impact investments, in which social or environmental goals are the main driver, or blending private with public funding for infrastructure and other projects. Either way, such investments



ALL TOGETHER NOW:

Across sectors in Kenya, leaders seek multiplier effects



Such efforts could be made with or without the SDGs, but Neky says the SDGs serve as a “common language that helps unify diverse stakeholder efforts under a shared set of goals.” The 2030 deadline also adds some needed urgency, adds Neky.

“The SDGs are a call to action,” says Sanda Ojiambo, head of the foundation and of corporate responsibility at Safaricom, a major telecom company based in Kenya. “Our mission is to transform lives. That goes beyond telecommunications and into health care, education, and so on.” Ojiambo says Safaricom intends to become “an SDG-driven company” and that its grant-making will reflect that.

The more stakeholders such as Safaricom that become involved, says Neky, the greater the

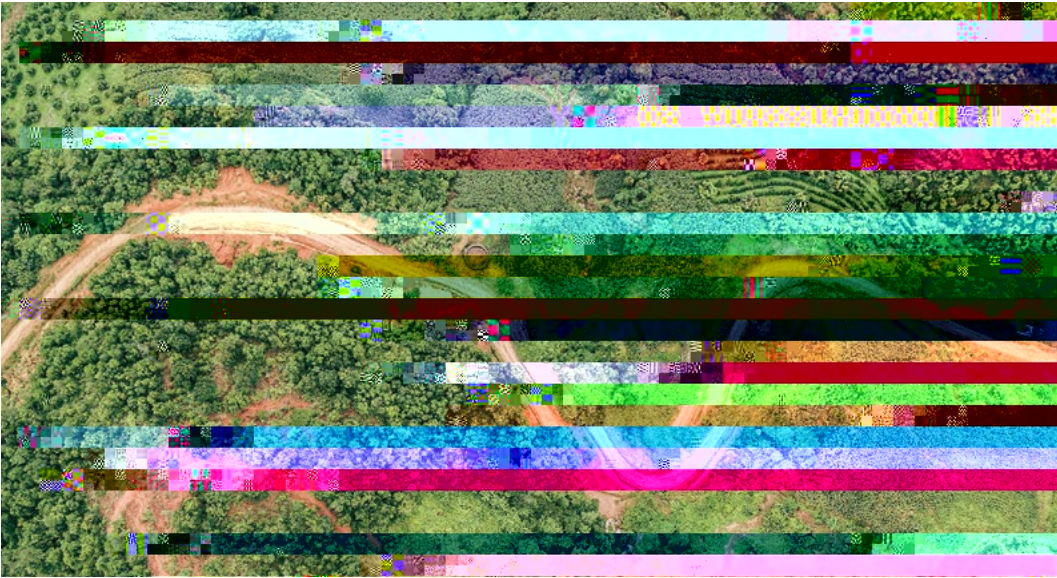
What Are the Challenges and Solutions in Working with the SDGs?

The SDGs can yield great benefits to philanthropy, but they al (k)-6 3ph anapp6l(h)6kn

Board Support

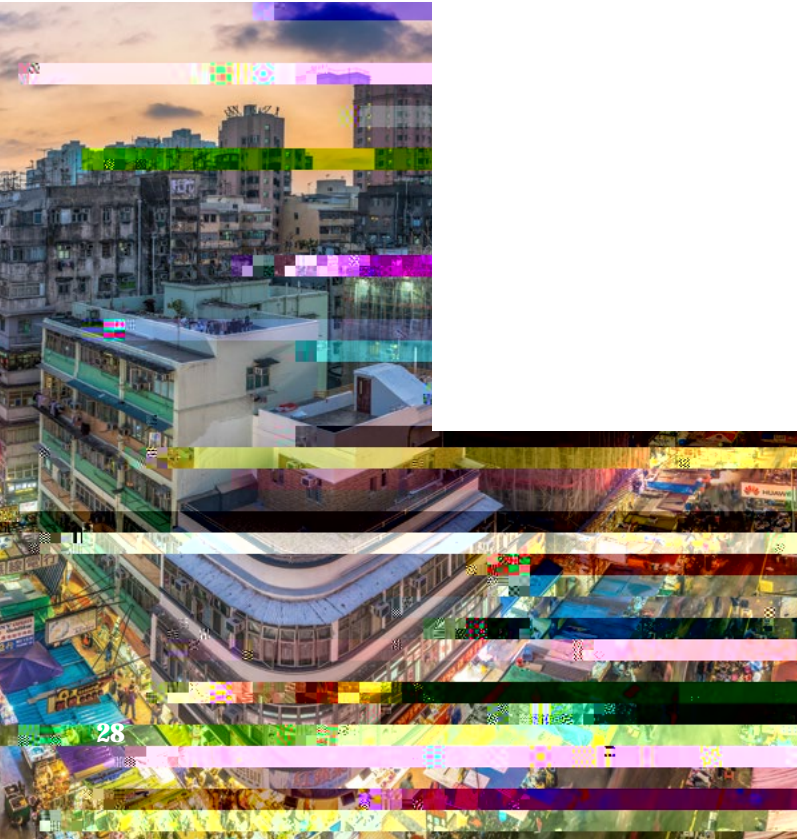
Challenge: In many cases, boards of directors provide stability and ballast for their foundation. They may resist alignment with the SDGs unless they see clear benefits for their own institution.

Solution: Considering that any given foundation board spans different sectors, it may readily grasp the value of global collaborative efforts such as the SDGs; the board may even act as a conduit to cross-sector engagement. Another approach is to connect the SDGs to the board



Scale

Challenge: Relatively few funders make grants



Measurement

Challenge: The UN has devised a set of indicators to go with the goals and targets. Funders may face barriers to using the SDGs

Data

Challenge: Each of the 169 targets in the SDGs is a major undertaking; it requires a mountain of data to measure progress on any one of the targets, not to mention on all of the broader SDGs combined. Funders may question whether their data is worth anything, given that it is only partial.

Solution: Data need not be perfectly comprehensive in order to be useful; even partial data or anecdotal information can yield insight and give funders a basis to discuss their priorities or make program decisions. Funders might even collaborate with others to create a shared set of data to help them answer questions (“How are we doing in our state on sustainable development, and what can we do better?”), test hypotheses (“Taking a regional approach to infrastructure will help countries better withstand disasters”), or inform decision-making (“How to address the unanticipated environmental effects of an infrastructure project”). Funders may find that some data—no matter if it is incomplete—helps make their programs more effective. Foundations may choose to share their data with peer networks and on websites such as sdgfunders.org²¹ and [sdgphilanthropy.org](https://www.sdgphilanthropy.org/);²² the latter may also be able to build relationships with national governments. Many private funders lack effective processes to measure how they contribute to social or environmental goals—both what and how to measure. Aligning with the SDGs can help funders do this more strategically, as the targets and indicators were developed with the help of world-class experts and community-level actors.

²¹ <http://sdgfunders.org/home/lang/en/>

²² <https://www.sdgphilanthropy.org/>

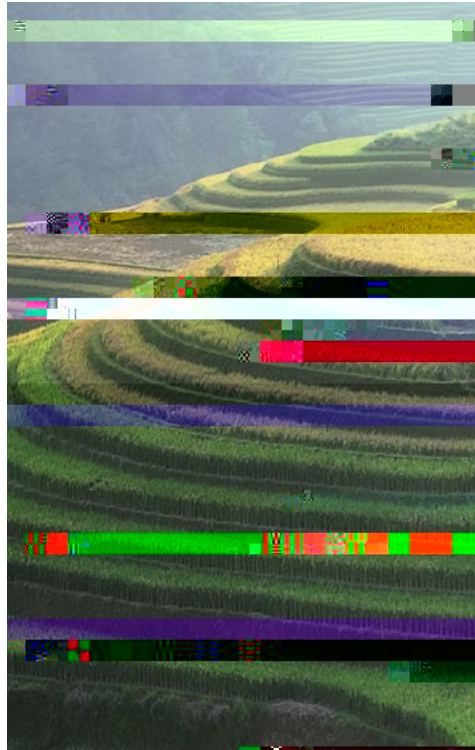
Conclusion

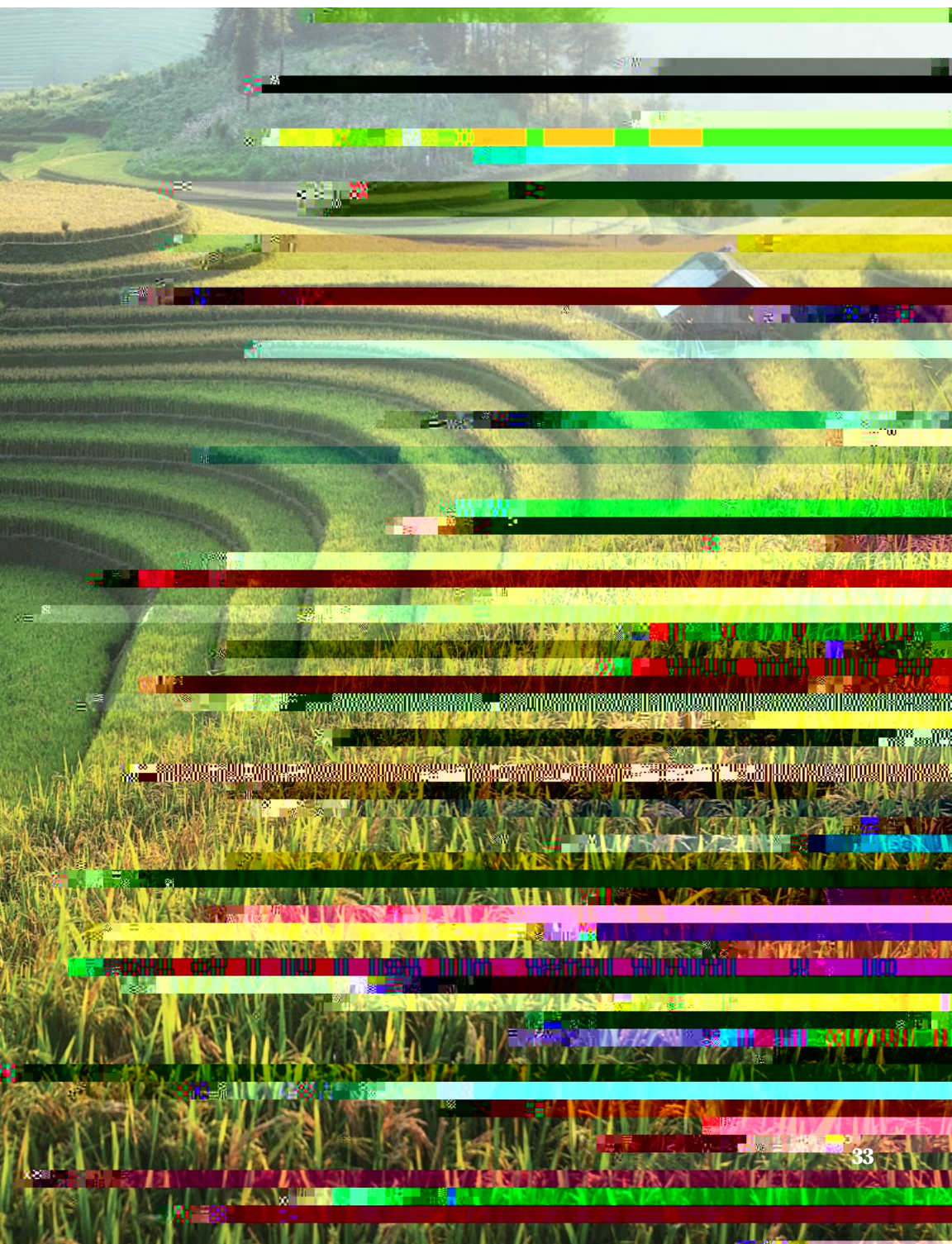
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The SDGs provide an unprecedented opportunity—even an imperative—for the philanthropy sector to make a greater and more lasting impact on the causes they have prioritized. Ultimately, they encourage a mindset of collaboration that goes well beyond individual institutions or sectors of society. The SDGs aren't for everyone in philanthropy, but if even a fraction of the sector gets involved, the world will have a far greater chance of success in reaching the goals.

As with all other coordinated action, it takes extra effort to get started, but the rewards become apparent in both the process—as a more collective approach enriches partnerships—and the results.

The SDGs are calling. Will you answer?





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non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all

3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States

3.d Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks

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

4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, 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

4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through the recruitment and training of teachers, and improve their working conditions and status in society

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

7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services

7.2 By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix

7.3 By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency

7.a By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and

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Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution

14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans

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16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at

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- **Center for Economic and Social Rights** (<http://cesr.org/>): CESR works to promote social justice through human rights. In a world where poverty and inequality deprive entire communities of dignity, justice, and sometimes life, CESR seeks to uphold the universal human rights of every human being. The organization has resources on human rights in sustainable development. (<http://cesr.org/human-rights-sustainable-development>)
- **Council on Foundations** (<https://www.cof.org/program-initiative/sustainable-development-goals-philanthropy>): The council offers numerous resources on the SDGs for foundations, including "From Global Goals to Local Impact" (2016) (<https://www.cof.org/content/global-goals-local-impact>), which examines how US funders can view their work in the global development framework and contribute to the success of the goals in the United States, and "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>)
- **IMPACT2030** (<https://www.impact2030.com/>):

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