THE INVISIBLE MOSAIC:
BC AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

OCTOBER 5, 2016

BCCIC

BC COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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WHO WE ARE

The British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC) is a coalition of international development and civil society organizations that has engaged in sustainable development and social justice issues for over a quarter century. BCCIC supports its more than 400 members in becoming more effective agents of change in their global cooperation efforts by disseminating knowledge gained through collaborative projects, building relationships across different sectors and networks, and developing the capacity of international development practitioners. BCCIC represents members' interests and advances policy recommendations on provincial, national and international issues and the enabling role of civil society in these areas. BCCIC's vision is to engage British Columbians in global cooperation for a just, equitable, and sustainable world; its mission is to provide members and others in BC with networking, information sharing, and learning opportunities that facilitate cooperation to achieve global development goals and increase public awareness of, and support for, global development. BCCIC is registered as a charitable organization in Canada and and receives core operating support from the Government of Canada, provided through Global Affairs Canada, and from membership dues. The Council receives project funding from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Kenoli Foundation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REPORT OVERVIEW

In September 2015, the world came together in New York to adopt a new and transformative global agenda – the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These 17 goals address the world's environmental, social, economic, and security challenges and provide concrete targets for realizing a healthy planet and viable future for all. The product of over three years of negotiations involving all United Nations members and the active participation of global civil society, the SDGs are a truly **universal** agenda. The SDGs apply to all countries including Canada. This means that Goal 1's objective of "ending poverty everywhere in all its forms for everyone" applies to those living in the shanty towns of Nigeria as well as those sleeping on the streets of Vancouver, while Goal 15's aim of conserving terrestrial ecosystems applies to the rainforests of Brazil as well as biodiversity on Haida Gwaii. The SDG agenda also presents an **integrated and indivisible** approach to the 17 goals - it recognises that addressing climate change (Goal 13) will require achieving quality education (Goal 4) and sustainable consumption and production patterns (Goal 12) along with many other SDGs. In short, the agenda recognizes that each and all of the goals are interdependent and that no one goal can be fully realized without achieving the others. Finally, the SDGs provide an **aspirational** agenda that challenges humanity to move beyond business-as-usual and to pursue transformative change. Many critics would argue that it is unrealistic to try to end poverty in all its forms in just 15 years but these critics miss the point. The SDGs are a vision statement - not of what we can currently accomplish but what we *must* accomplish.

Following the launch of the SDGs the world's focus turned to implementation – how are we going to achieve these ambitious goals? While the entire agenda can appear overwhelming the work that the goals call for is nothing new and groups throughout Canada have been working on these issues for decades. As a result, the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC) decided to take an appreciative approach by first looking at how civil society organizations (CSOs) in BC were already implementing and advancing the goals. Following the launch of the SDGs, BCCIC began a civil society listening tour that visited 7 regions in BC meeting with 29 communities in 31 roundtable meetings to ask CSOs how the goals relate to their work and whether they could be useful for strengthening their impact? The objective was to hear how the SDG agenda landed with groups and to learn what was already being done and how it could be supported.

The results were surprising. Every roundtable meeting revealed a number of groups and individuals already driving progress on each of the SDGs in their communities. In Victoria, the term "invisible mosaic" was used to describe these groups whose efforts remain largely invisible to the public, politicians and even many of the organizations themselves. This "invisible mosaic" is made up of over 2000 groups who are already demonstrating how each and every one of the SDGs can be implemented and achieved. In order to reveal this mosaic, BCCIC has developed an online searchable map that displays which SDGs groups are working on, where groups are located and the regions and countries they are working in. The idea is that the map will allow groups and the general public to more easily connect with each other and build collaboration around the SDGs.

Another key insight from the roundtables was the amount of support that exists for the SDG framework and the potential that groups see in working with the goals. Participants highlighted the SDGs as an opportunity to

connect and collaborate with each other, visualize their work, engage the general public, and leverage political support. Groups were equally clear that for the SDGs to be useful for civil society in BC, there would need to be significant action around them including political engagement, greater networking and communication amongst civil society groups, public education and awareness raising, tailored funding, a recognition of the inner dimensions of change, intergenerational collaboration, and engagement with key stakeholder groups including First Nations, faith-based groups, and the private sector.

The following report provides more details on the key themes and recommendations that emerged from the SDG roundtables, beginning with an overview of the roundtable process. Subsequent sections provide a description of the invisible mosaic revealed through the meetings and an overview of the value, opportunities and limitations that participants saw in the framework. The report concludes with participants' recommendations for key actions needed to realize the potential of the SDGs and make the goals useful for civil society groups in BC. We believe that the findings and recommendations contained in this report offer a unique opportunity for BC to become a leader in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through supporting the invisible mosaic of BC civil society groups who are already moving us towards a better world.

The following report provides more details on these key themes and recommendations, beginning with an overview of the roundtable process itself. Subsequent sections provide a description of the invisible mosaic revealed through the meetings and an overview of the value, opportunities and limitations that participants saw in the SDG framework. The report concludes with participants' recommendations for key actions needed to realize the potential of the SDGs and make the goals beneficial for civil society groups in BC. We believe that the findings and recommendations contained in this report offer a unique opportunity for BC to become a leader in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through supporting the invisible mosaic of civil society groups who are already moving us towards a better world.

Key Recommendations

CSO participants saw the Sustainable Development Goals as an opportunity to:
- Achieve greater civil society collaboration and collective impact in BC.
- Generate greater public awareness and support for groups working on sustainable development in BC.
- Generate greater political support for sustainable development groups and initiatives in BC.

In order to leverage the SDG framework and realize these opportunities, CSO participants highlighted the need for:
- Advocacy to achieve political buy-in on the SDGs at all levels of government.
- Education and public engagement activities to raise awareness and promote action on the SDGs.
- CSO network building through face to face activities and technology platforms.
- Collaborative and innovative approaches to funding the SDG agenda.
- Engaging key stakeholders including First Nations, the private sector, faith based groups, environmental organizations and academia.
- Intergenerational collaboration between youth and older generations working on the SDGs.
- Recognition of the inner change and inner resources involved in working on the SDGs.

THE SDG ROUNDTABLE PROCESS

Following the launch of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, BCCIC carried out a process of appreciative inquiry that involved a listening tour through 7 regions of BC, meeting with 29 communities to find out how groups in BC were already working on the SDGs and whether the agenda could support or strengthen their work. Over the course of seven months, 31 roundtable meetings were held involving 412 individuals. The roundtables began in October 2015 in the Kootenays region with meetings in Castlegar, Nelson, Cranbrook, Kimberley, and Invermere as well as visiting Revelstoke. In late October the roundtables continued on Vancouver Island with meetings in Victoria, Nanaimo and the Comox Valley. In February and March of 2016 roundtables were held in the Southwest region (North Vancouver, Central Surrey, South Surrey, Richmond, Burnaby, Abbotsford, New Westminster) along with a visit to Kelowna followed by meetings in the Cariboo, Nechako and North Coast regions (Williams Lake, Prince George, Smithers, Hazelton, Terrace, Kitimat, Prince Rupert) in April and May. The final SDG roundtables were held in June 2016 with meetings in the Thompson-Okanagan region (Salmon Arm, Kamloops, Vernon, Penticton, and Merritt).

In line with the universal focus of the goals, the roundtable consultations brought together civil society organisations (CSO) working on the SDGs locally as well as internationally, including local economic, environmental and social service groups, as well as international CSOs whose work spanned the breadth of the SDG framework. Roundtable meetings were kept small to allow for greater discussion and participants ranged from two community members in Hazelton to 50 in Kelowna. Each roundtable meeting lasted around three hours and focused on the following discussion points:

- **What are the Sustainable Development Goals and why do they matter?**

- **How do the Sustainable Development Goals relate to your work?**

• How can the SDGs be an opportunity for greater impact and collaboration?

Discussions took place in plenary and in small groups and notes were taken throughout. Following the initial meetings in the Kootenays, a matrix activity was added where a grid was provided with squares for each of the SDGs. Participants were invited to write the names of their groups on sticky notes and place them in the squares that corresponded to the goals on which they were working. Participants were then asked to include the names of other key community groups who were not present at the meeting but whose work was also contributing to the SDGs. Participants used the matrix to discuss how their community was working on the SDGs and to identify gaps and patterns.

Information gathered from the roundtable matrix activity was combined with a database of BC non-profits collated by the organisation StepUpBC to create a geospatial map of the groups working on the SDG throughout the province. For those groups not identified through the roundtables, BCCIC drew on available information to categorise their work by SDG.[1] A beta version of the map is now available online as a feature embedded on the BCCIC website. The map is searchable by global goal, location of

organization in BC, domestic vs. international focus, and the region or countries worked in.

After each roundtable, summary notes were compiled and analyzed for key themes and recommendations. Some of the most surprising and inspiring outcomes of the roundtable meetings were the common themes and recommendations that continued to emerge from the diversity of participants. These overarching themes and recommendations are outlined in the following sections. In addition, data from mapping research was analyzed to provide more detailed information on the number and type of groups that make up BC's invisible mosaic.

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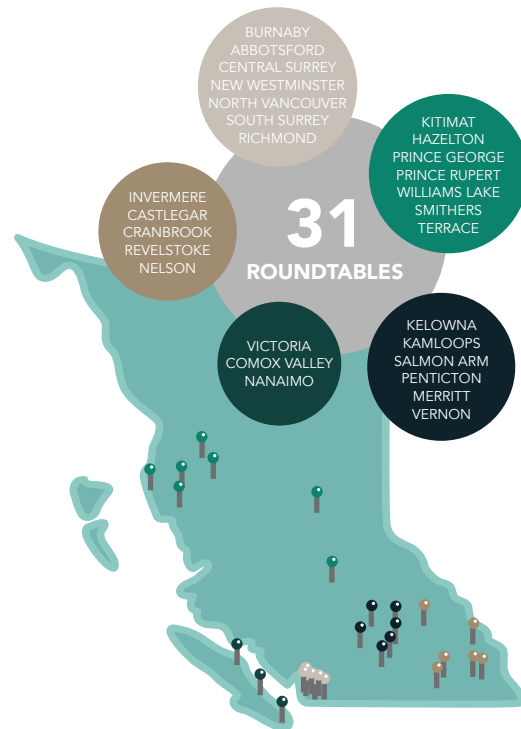
1   1400 out of the 2105 groups identified were categorised by BCCIC staff. If you are member of a BC CSO we encourage you to visit the online map check to see if your organization has been classified correctly and fill out an online form if there are any changes you would like to make a change to your CSO's information.

The Global Goals for Sustainable Development
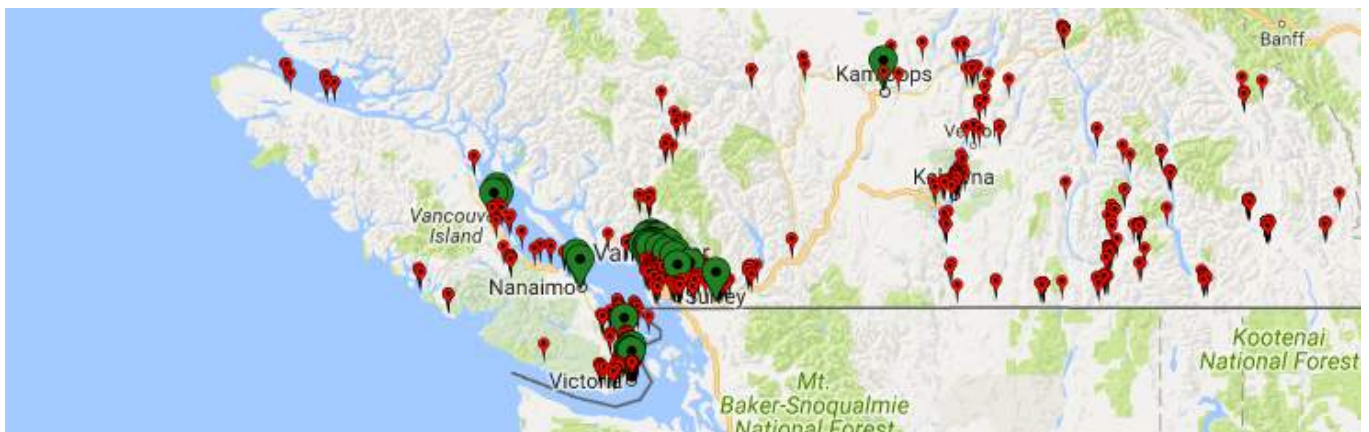
THE INVISIBLE MOSAIC: HOW BC'S CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE SDGS

A key objective of the SDG roundtables was to ask BC civil society groups how the Sustainable Development Goals relate to their work and to the initiatives already happening in their communities. In each community participants identified local groups working on almost all of the SDGs either at home or abroad. As a result, participants indicated that one advantage of the new global SDG framework is that it brings this "invisible mosaic" into focus, showing how the work of civil society organizations makes up the vital tapestry of Canada's sustainable development effort.

So far, 2105 CSOs have been identified that are working on the SDGs in British Columbia, including non-profits, registered charities, faith-based groups, and school groups. This number is almost certainly an underestimate as detailed information on local groups was not collected in the Kootenays roundtables and there are many more communities that BCCIC was unable to visit. Of the groups identified, 1775 had a domestic focus (within BC or Canada), 538

were focused on international issues, and 208 were engaged in both.

Total BC CSOs

Total: 2105

208 · 538 · 1775

International · Domestic · Both
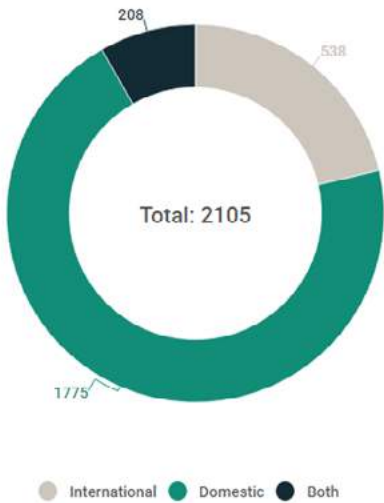
Looking at the pattern of this mosaic, the work of the identified CSOs touched on every one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. However, the goals that received the most attention from CSOs were SDG 1 (Ending poverty), SDG 2 (Ending hunger and achieving sustainable agriculture), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 4 (Quality education), and SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities). This trend was slightly different for internationally oriented CSOs where the focus was SDG 1 (Ending poverty), SDG 2 (Ending hunger and achieving sustainable agriculture), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 4 (Quality education), and SDG 5 (Gender equality).

Total SDGs being worked on
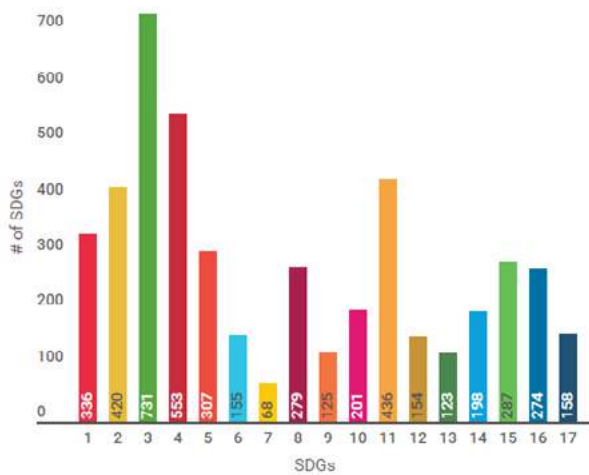
If the SDG focus is broken down by region then the diversity of this mosaic begins to appear more clearly. For example, groups in the Kootenays and in the Thompson-Okanagan region are primarily focused on SDG 15 (Protect, restore and sustainably use terrestrial ecosystems) and SDG 15 also features prominently in the Cariboo region. The Northeast, North Coast, and Nechako regions have a strong focus on SDG 8 (Decent work and sustainable economic growth) while CSOs in the Southwest (Lower Mainland) and Northeast regions of BC have a greater emphasis on SDG 5 (Gender equality). The breakdown by regions also reveals that the Northeast is the only one that does not have groups working on every one of the SDGs but this conclusion is based on

database research as BCCIC did not hold roundtables in this region.

In terms of the size and shape of BC's invisible mosaic, it is no surprise that the majority of groups working on the SDGs are located in the Southwest region, which is home to metro Vancouver and 829 of the CSOs identified. Outside of the Southwest, Vancouver Island/Coast is home to 475 of these groups, the Thompson-Okanagan 345, the Kootenays 191, the North Coast and Nechako regions 121, Cariboo 109, and the Northeast 35. However, if we focus on the number of CSOs per capita then the picture becomes very different. In this analysis the Southwest has the lowest ratio, with 3.4 CSOs per 10,000 people, well behind the Northeast (6.2), Vancouver Island/Coast (7.2), and the Thompson-Okanagan (7.9), while Cariboo (8.5), the Kootenays (15.6), and the combined North Coast and Nechako regions (18.1) have the highest ratios. These dimensions of BC's mosaic suggest that while greater numbers of groups exist in larger population centres, regions with smaller populations may be more engaged in working on the SDGs by fielding a greater number of CSOs per capita than the larger regions.
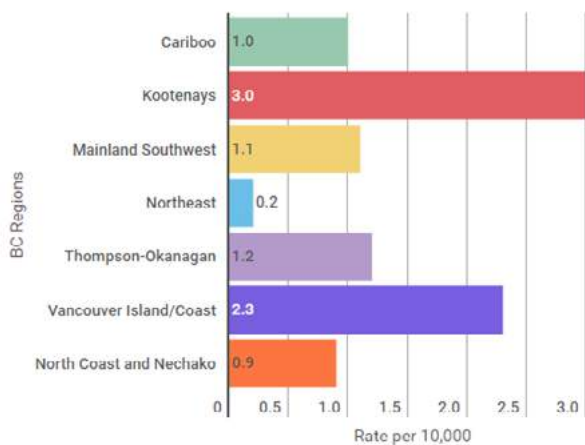
Total organizations by regional population
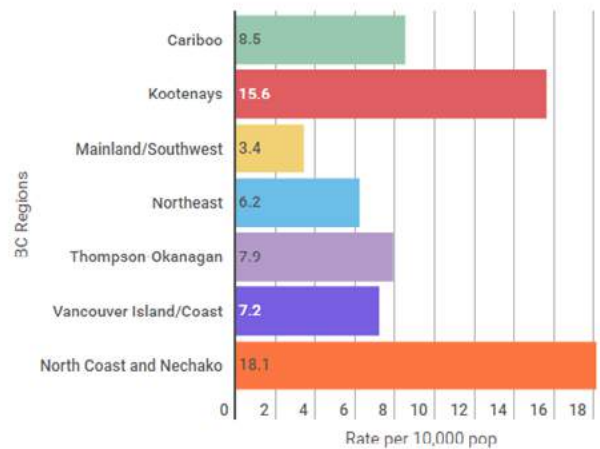
If we look at internationally focused groups, the overall distribution of CSOs remains the same (most in Southwest, least in the Northeast), but the pattern for per capita CSOs within regions is different. The

Kootenays region is home to the highest per capita ratio of groups, with 3 internationally focused groups per 10,000 people. Second highest is Vancouver Island/Coast (2.3), followed by Thompson-Okanagan (1.2), the Southwest (1.1), Cariboo (1.0), the North Coast and Nechako regions (0.9), and then the Northeast (0.2) These numbers suggest that the Kootenays, along with Vancouver Island/Coast region, are the most engaged regions in terms of internationally focused work on the SDGs, with double or nearly double the ratios of the other regions.
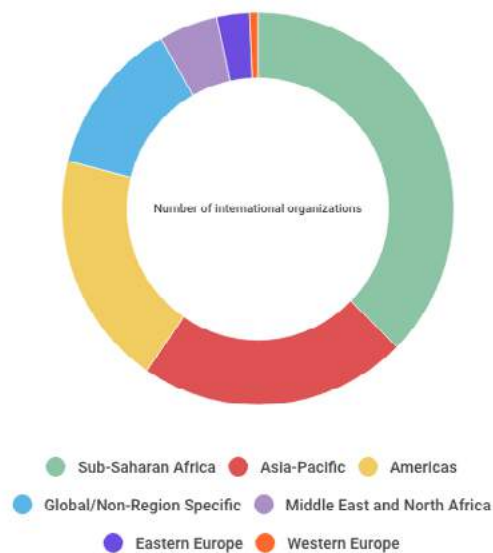
International organizations by regional population

Africa (69), Zambia (70) and Malawi (66). In the Asia-Pacific, the countries that receive the most attention include India (69), the Philippines (40), Nepal (36), Cambodia (26) and China (23).

Distribution of international organizations by global region

In terms of where BC's international CSOs are focused, a significant majority of groups are targeting Sub-Saharan Africa (277) followed by the Asia-Pacific region (164) and the Americas (143), while global or non-country specific international programming (e.g. international policy) is fourth (95), followed by the Middle East and North Africa (36), Eastern Europe (20), and Western Europe (5). It is interesting to note that the mosaic's focus on Sub-Saharan Africa and the Asia Pacific is broadly in line with Global Affairs Canada's countries of focus and the government's new emphasis on working with the poorest and most vulnerable countries. Within Sub-Saharan Africa, most CSOs focus their programming in Eastern and Southern African countries, specifically Kenya (106), Uganda (104), Tanzania (85), Ethiopia (72), South

The information gathered through the roundtable process outlines a diverse and engaged mosaic of BC civil society groups but it remains only an initial sketch. BCCIC will be further analyzing and mapping the mosaic to reveal which SDGs are being addressed in specific counties as well as the number and focus of groups at the city and community level within BC. At the same time, several roundtable meetings emphasized that a higher number of groups working on a goal does not equate to a higher impact. In some communities only one group was working on an SDG but was felt to be doing sufficient work to address these issues, while in other cases there were multiple groups working on a goal but little progress was seen as being made. A deeper understanding of BC's invisible mosaic will require knowledge of how the SDGs are being addressed in each community - a point echoed in the call of many roundtable participants for community based indicators to measure progress on the SDGs (page 11).

THE VALUE OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS FRAMEWORK

The second objective of the SDG roundtables was to ask BC civil society groups if the SDGs could be useful to them and their work. Could the SDGs serve to strengthen their impact or support collaboration or were they an unnecessary distraction? The consistent message that BCCIC received during the roundtable meetings was that groups saw value and opportunities in the SDG agenda. Almost also all of the participants saw their work and agendas reflected in the goals. Much of the positive response stemmed from the value that participants saw in the SDGs as a framework or lens through which to view and approach their work. Many praised the inclusive nature of the framework that brought together goals focused on the social, economic, environmental, peace and justice, and partnership aspects of sustainable development and linked these issues at all scales from the local to the global. The framework was seen as including and affirming the diverse approaches of multiple groups while allowing them to see the linkages between each other's work and to value the validity of each other's approaches. In providing a common frame, the SDGs also link the work of groups who have more of a specific or narrow focus to the larger global context and movement for change. As one participant put it, "the goals can show us our piece in the puzzle and how we connect with each other."

Common weaknesses were also identified in the SDG framework. Participants pointed to the tension between the overall focus on sustainable development and the objectives of SDG 8 which aims for "sustained and sustainable economic growth," with participants questioning whether current models of economic growth can ever be sustainable. Along similar lines, the framework's focus on poverty and wealth was also called into question with some participants calling for a more holistic objective such as 'well-being.' The need for a 'well-being' focus was often linked to the framework's lack of inclusion of intangible or non-concrete goals such as artistic expression or sense of community and culture. The lack of a specific goal that addresses cultural expression and diversity was a common critique with participants in two roundtable meetings calling for an 18th SDG to focus on this. Some participants also questioned whether the SDGs could actually be useful for practical action. However, while the SDGs were not seen as a framework that should be used to direct the work of local groups participants did provide common recommendations regarding how the SDGs could be used practically to strengthen the work of CSOs.

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN ACTION: OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN IMPACT AND COLLABORATION

Roundtable participants identified several areas where the SDGs could be used to strengthen the work and impact of groups working on sustainable development throughout BC. Some groups pointed to the potential to operationalize the goals by integrating them into the strategic planning and programming of their organizations. However, the majority of participants saw the greatest potential in working with the SDG framework as a whole in order to build relationships and create an enabling environment that would benefit all groups working on sustainable development in BC. In particular, groups pointed to using the SDGs as a framework for collaboration and an opportunity for building greater public awareness

and political support for groups working to achieve the SDGs.

A Framework for Collaboration

A key theme that emerged from the roundtables was the opportunity for greater collaboration that the SDG framework presented. While an 'invisible mosaic' of groups and initiatives was revealed in each community, participants from almost every consultation pointed to the need for greater collaboration between the groups working on the SDGs. Participants pointed to the problem of CSOs working in silos, the need for cross sector collaboration (environmental groups, social services, economic groups), and more collaboration between civil society and the public and private sectors. In smaller and more rural communities, participants often identified strong volunteer networks as a resource and a high level of collaboration within communities but mentioned that collaboration between communities and across regions was difficult.

The SDG framework was seen as a valuable opportunity for fostering collaboration in several ways. First, the SDG framework is useful for visualizing the work taking place within and across communities, allowing CSOs to see who is doing what and to identify groups and initiatives they are not aware of. The SDG framework also allowed groups to identify connections between their work areas using the goals as references point for identifying overlapping initiatives and programming. By acting as shared reference points the SDGs were seen as providing a "common language" that facilitated greater collaboration by enabling communication across sectors and silos. Several groups pointed to the common language of the SDGs as a tool for broadening issues beyond the local focus and as a frame for having difficult conversations when conflicts exist between local civil society groups or with the private sector.

The SDGs were also seen as a valuable framework for collaboration through supporting peer learning. Recommendations centred on using the goals as talking points to share experiences, lessons learned, resources, skills, information and useful connections. The ability to share and learn from each other's successes and challenges was seen as key to building relationships, spreading innovation and improving collective practice toward sustainable development. Groups highlighted the value of having successful examples of progress toward the goals that can be readily adapted and shared with others. Understanding each other's challenges was also seen as important in order to provide support and matching skills. Through using the goals as a peer learning tool groups could diversify their networks and draw on the expertise of other groups to strengthen their impacts. As mentioned earlier, participants pointed to the value of the SDG framework for identifying overlaps among the goals that different groups are working on. These overlaps provide focal points for collaboration and for building relationships and alliances. As a framework for collaboration, participants mentioned that the SDGs could allow groups to better coordinate their work in relation to specific goals by identifying opportunities for synergy and avoiding duplication. By avoiding duplications groups recognized that they could save valuable time and resources and support each other's work by providing complementary services. In this way the SDG framework was seen as an opportunity to move beyond short-term collaboration around specific issues to the long-term collaboration and movement-building needed for achieving sustainable development.

Public Support for Sustainable Development

Another area where participants identified significant opportunity in the SDG framework was the potential to connect with Canadians and generate greater public support. As mentioned earlier, many participants saw value in the SDGs as a tool for raising public awareness of the "invisible mosaic". The universal and integrated nature of the goals means that they call attention to a vast range of Canadian CSOs working on almost every aspect of sustainable development. Using the SDGs as a "common language" when engaging with the public was seen as a way to raise the profile of all groups and issues as well as the overarching goal of sustainable development itself. The fact that this language is backed by the UN and endorsed by the Canadian government was seen as giving weight to the agenda in the public eye.

Many participants valued the positive, goal-focused (as opposed to challenge-focused) approach of the SDG framework, which allowed them to collectively showcase the progress they and others were making. Participants commented that while the SDGs can seem overwhelming , revealing the "invisible mosaic" draws attention to initiatives already achieving the goals and presents the public with a range of opportunities to take action and get involved. By linking the goals to the work of local organisations, the SDGs provide the Canadian public with a coherent framework for understanding global issues and taking action at multiple levels. In particular, many international groups pointed to the potential of the SDGs to generate greater public support for the many small and medium sized organizations working on the SDGs.

Internationally focused participants also noted the challenge of gaining public support for international assistance and global sustainable development. Participants mentioned that in their communities people tend to view these SDG issues as a "global thing" that does not relate to local issues and Canadian priorities. The framework's focus on universality, however, is identified as an opportunity to link local and global issues. If local CSOs engage with the SDGs as a common language this was seen as an opportunity for localising the global agenda and making it relevant to the broader Canadian public, thereby garnering increased public support.

Political Support for Sustainable Development

Finally, participants saw the SDGs as an opportunity to generate a concerted political effort across the three tiers of government toward supporting sustainable development and the groups and organizations working toward it. The disconnect between federal, provincial and municipal government was seen as an impediment to the work of many groups. Participants were encouraged by the fact that the federal government had signed onto the SDG agenda and adopted the goals at home and abroad. They were also encouraged that in several meetings, city and community planners recognized overlaps between the objectives of local community development plans and the objectives of the SDGs. Participants, however,

repeatedly pointed out the lack of engagement from the provincial government. In general, may participants saw an opportunity in the SDGs as a 'common language' for harmonizing plans for supporting sustainable development across the three tiers of government and throughout Canada. Many comments centred on the opportunity for a renewed partnership between civil society and government, with collaboration around the SDGs as a vehicle to engage with the new openness observed in the current federal government. Many participants commented that no single group or sector can achieve the SDGs and that the "invisible mosaic" cannot do it on its own. Instead, many participants called for strong political leadership in achieving the SDGs and the need for greater partnership between civil society and all levels of government.

The fact that Canada and the world have signed up to the SDGs was seen as creating significant political leverage for groups working on the SDGs. If Canada has committed to achieving the SDGs at home and abroad, then there is clearly a case for the government to provide greater support and funding for groups working to achieve them. The fact that the SDGs are time-bound and have concrete sub-targets and indicators gives CSOs something to rally around in order to pressure the government for change. Moreover, groups can use SDGs to come together to develop campaigns or petitions using a framework that carries the weight of global legitimacy. Revealing the invisible mosaic as an integrated and interdependent movement for sustainable development also presents a powerful political constituency. The SDG agenda was also seen as useful for seeking more support for the community development plans of municipal governments and for the issues raised by First Nations communities.

REALIZING THE POTENTIAL OF THE SDGS

While most roundtable participants saw potential in the SDGs as an opportunity for strengthening the work and impact of BC's CSOs, there was also the recognition that action was needed in order for the SDGs to be useful. In particular groups pointed to the need for political advocacy around the agenda, education and public awareness raising, CSO network building, targeted funding, engagement of key stakeholders, fostering of inter-generational collaboration and a recognition of the inner-dimensions of achieving the SDGs. Taking action on these areas is as an opportunity to leverage the entire SDG framework to create an enabling environment for groups working on the goals and for BC to take a leadership role in achieving global sustainable development.

Advocacy and Political Engagement on the SDGs

In nearly all meetings participants highlighted the need for all levels of government to endorse and work with SDGs. In order to generate the political will necessary for achieving and leveraging the SDGs, participants pointed to the importance of civil society advocacy. At the most basic level, CSOs could **educate policy makers** on the role and importance of the SDGs and help them make connections between the global framework and local policies and initiatives already in place. Many participants suggested directly contacting Ministers, Members of Parliament (MP), and Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) to discuss how the SDGs link to their portfolios and constituencies. BCCIC's digital map was mentioned as an advocacy tool that could be used to show MPs and MLAs what is happening in their riding, making a powerful political case for supporting the SDGs. Some participants suggested that groups could even lobby politicians collectively under the umbrella of the SDG framework.

Securing political engagement at the municipal level was another key recommendation for generating political support. As mentioned earlier, **existing community development plans and**

community vision documents were identified as key opportunities for engaging local politicians around the SDGs. Many groups called for an exploration of how these documents could be linked to the SDG framework as a way of harmonizing local policy upwards and making the SDG agenda relevant locally. Some participants suggested that the SDGs could be a way to revitalize local plans and push for greater action on them. Building on existing local policies, several participants suggested approaching local politicians to either pass resolutions or sign onto a charter or code of ethics that endorses the SDGs.

Another key area of focus was the development of **indicators linked to the SDGs**. Having a way of measuring and monitoring progress toward the SDGs was seen as an opportunity for holding local and provincial politicians accountable and for generating greater political support. Developing indicators or an 'SDG footprint' at the community and municipal level was recommended and several participants stressed the importance of local communities defining their own indicators. Having a graphic or visual way of displaying progress towards the goals that could be easily shared with local politicians and MLAs was also recommended.

Education and Awareness Raising

In order for the SDGs to be relevant and have an impact, the majority of participants underlined the need for broad-based public awareness of and support for the SDGs. Political engagement at all levels of government - through the emphasis of the goals in policy, public communications, and community indicators and development plans - was seen as an effective mechanism for generating greater public awareness of the SDGs. Many participants further called for the need for an effective traditional, digital, and social **media campaign** to support any policy interventions and to raise the profile of the SDGs.

Education was also identified as a key area for raising public awareness around the goals. Participants

pointed to **educational opportunities** ranging from elementary schooling right through to university in order to prepare a new generation of change leaders. Many participants pointed to opportunities for new curriculum development in BC and called for more dialogue with educational institutions and federations so that the SDGs were woven into the curriculum. Other participants called for the development of support packages for teachers, including lesson plans and materials that educators could use to introduce the SDGs. Academic institutions were seen as key collaborators for action on the SDGs, with CSOs identifying them as a source of information, research, and volunteers and collaboration. In particular, some pointed to the role of alumni networks as a way of tapping into former students engaged with the SDGs. Educating children and youth around the SDGs was also seen as a way of raising the awareness of parents, with academic institutions acting as a key vector for engaging the public at large.

Civil society participants saw themselves as also having a key role in raising public awareness and generating public support for the SDGs. Participants mentioned that in order to generate public support for the SDGs, it will be necessary to make the SDGs meaningful to everyday people. Participants suggested developing **local initiatives and grassroots actions that link to the SDGs** while addressing local issues and concerns. Other participants stressed the need for encouraging community level conversations around the SDGs and keeping this dialogue going. Public engagement events, including festivals, local speaking events, conferences and town fairs , were also suggested by many participants as a means of raising awareness of the SDGs and their relationship to local issues and initiatives.

CSO Network Building

Achieving greater collaboration, synergy, and peer learning was seen as one of the main opportunities in leveraging the SDG framework. In order to do so, many participants pointed to the need for greater networking among CSOs as well as networking with public and private sector groups. As mentioned earlier, participants noted the lack of collaboration or even mutual awareness among the multitude of CSOs working on the SDGs. Many participants pointed to

the SDGs as an excellent template for **face-to-face networking activities** where CSOs could come together to learn about each other's work, share successes and struggles, match skills and needs, connect innovators and organizers, and explore how to grow as organizations and overcome common challenges. Participants suggested that select groups working on specific goals could be brought together for targeted peer learning and resource sharing opportunities, while the SDG framework as a whole could be used to bring together a larger representation of organizations for broader network building. During the meetings, participants also highlighted several key sustainability issues - including food security, climate change, and sustainable jobs and economic development - that could be used to convene a much broader range of CSOs and bring in key stakeholders such as the private sector. On several occasions participants suggested that networking events could take the form of celebrations that acknowledge and showcase the efforts of groups working toward achieving the SDGs. In all cases, participants stressed the importance of face-to-face networking for laying the foundations of future collaboration and greater coordination within the civil society sector and with other stakeholders.

In addition to face-to-face networking, another common recommendation was the development of a **technology platform to facilitate networking** among CSOs. Participants frequently suggested the creation of an online portal or website structured around the SDGs that would allow CSOs to identify other groups working on the same goals or in the same regions as a way to connect and collaborate. It was suggested that this website or portal:

- Be structured according to the SDGs
- Provide profiles of the different groups working on each SDG
- Allow groups to share success stories and resources
- Link groups looking for skills and resources with individuals or organisations looking to share their skills and resources
- Allow groups to share events
- Act as an information hub or clearinghouse for information related to the SDGs

- Facilitate communication between groups through a listserv or internal email function

It was suggested that this platform could be used to broadly define the network of CSOs working on the SDGs and provide a continuous snapshot or 'heartbeat' of the network.

Funding the Mosaic

A comprehensive and achievable SDG framework depends on sufficient funding. Many participants mentioned the struggle they had experienced due to previous government cutbacks in funding for CSOs. One community pointed to this cutback as a primary cause of 'donor fatigue' in the general public, as CSOs have had to rely increasingly on private donations resulting in less public support as people get tired of being continuously asked for help. Roundtable participants repeatedly pointed to the need for government and other funders to **develop funding that focuses on the SDGs**. Participants suggested that funders could build the goals into their evaluation criteria and revisit the structure of current funding accordingly. Participants also pointed to the tension between the long-term processes needed to achieve the SDGs with their 15 year time-frame and current emphasis on short-term funding models. It was suggested that long-term operational funding was needed for organisations to work on these goals and that increased flexibility would allow smaller projects and initiatives to compete for funding when their programming does not align perfectly with government policy. For many internationally focused groups, previous funding under the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) - now Global Affairs Canada - was confusing and sporadic, with proposal and reporting guidelines that were onerous for small and medium sized organizations (SMO). SMOs also pointed to the intense strain and challenges they faced during Canada's Revenue Agency (CRA) audits.

Participants called for more **collaborative and innovative approaches to funding** in order to support groups working on the SDGs. Competition for funding was seen as forcing CSOs into silos and causing a lack of collaboration among many groups. More collaborative approaches to funding, such as consortium funding, were suggested as a way to allow small-to-medium sized organizations access to larger pools of funding. Collaborative and consortium funding approaches for the SDGs could bring together groups whose work is complementary and/or who are focused on complementary SDGs. Collaborative projects could also increase efficiency as each CSO could focus on their strengths and balance each other's weaknesses. In addition to government and foundation funding, several participants pointed out that CSOs could carry out their own collaborative fundraising efforts around the SDGs, such as gathering funders working on the goals locally and globally in order to share networks and donors. Other suggestions included the idea of creating a federated model of fundraising around the goals.

Engaging Key Stakeholders

Throughout the consultation process, participants noted key stakeholders that civil society and government would need to engage with in order to build support for the SDGs and the groups working on them. In particular, participants underlined **the importance of working with First Nations, the private sector, faith-based groups, environmental organizations and academic institutions**.

First Nations were seen as key players and decision makers in achieving the goals. Not only do decisions on resource use and economic development by First Nations have a significant impact on achieving the goals, but elements of the SDGS are often included by Treaty Nations during consultation. With the universal focus of the SDGs, First Nations issues were also seen as an area where Canada needs to dedicate more effort and resources in order to achieve the goals at home. As a result, many groups suggested greater dialogue and collaboration with First Nations.

Many participants called for greater dialogue and more collaboration with private sector groups as they are key drivers of global change and local economies. During the roundtable meetings, participants often commented on the lack of private sector participation as well as their own lack of knowledge regarding how local businesses were working on the SDGs.

Participants saw faith-based groups as a key sector

to engage with due to the amount of work they do on the SDGs but are not often not part of mainstream dialogue around these issues. Many internationally-focused CSOs acknowledged their lack of engagement with environmental CSOs and called for greater dialogue and networking with these organisations when working on the SDGs. As mentioned earlier, academic institutions were seen as playing a key role in supporting the work of CSOs and connecting groups working on the SDGs.

Youth and Intergenerational Collaboration

The role of youth in relation to the SDG framework was a common topic throughout the consultations. Many participants stressed the importance of getting the word out to Canadian youth about the SDGs and further involving them in SDG-related activities. Suggestions for creating an "SDG generation" included building the SDGs into educational curriculum, developing education-in-action opportunities, and providing leadership training courses. Youth were also seen as having an advantage over adults in communicating with their peers and spreading the word about global issues and opportunities to become change makers. Since many developing countries have young populations, communication and collaboration between youth living in different countries was seen as important for achieving the SDGs. Many communities further stressed the importance of youth volunteers as a key resource in supporting action on the SDGs.

In contrast, several participants also spoke to the burden that the SDGs can place on youth where the onus is on youth to achieve the goals without any corresponding support. It was mentioned that the older generation should not be "shoving" the world's problems onto the younger generation, but instead be inviting collaboration across all age groups, with a focus on leadership opportunities for Canadian youth. One participant pointed to the common view that "youth are the answer" and that "youth will solve the problem" arguing that Canada has an aging population and that there are a lot of older people who also need to be engaged and part of the solution. In fact, several communities pointed to the key role that skilled and engaged retirees play in CSO activities and community volunteer networks. The

problem of youth apathy and reluctance to engage in change work was also mentioned by both younger and older participants. Within several communities these discussions led a call for **intergenerational collaboration around the SDGs**. In order to support intergenerational collaboration, many youth participants called for more and better mentorship within CSOs mentioning that CSOs led by older generations need to be more inclusive of youth ideas and initiatives.

While youth leadership was commonly highlighted, some youth participants expressed their concerns that, while their involvement was encouraged, their opinions or leadership on issues were not. Participants in one community spoke to the fact that there are already many active youth leaders and that civil society should focus on engaging with them rather than trying to create new ones. Many participants called for greater intergenerational dialogue and community building. Finally one participant highlighted that inter-generational collaboration should come from synergies based on mutual respect, which can take collaboration to the next level.

Inner Change

In order to support more collaboration and strengthen the impact of groups working on the SDGs, many participants pointed to the importance of considering the inner aspects of change work. As a transformational framework, participants noted that achieving the SDGs would require **individual and collective inner change**. Participants called for a major shift in values including how we value our communities and environment and the adoption of a more community-centred rather than market-centred perspective. The same group mentioned that the government and public institutions could play a role in shaping this culture by moving away from the "you're on your own" mentality of the previous government. Others called for a shift in consciousness and a more inclusive sense of identity that allows us to see each other as the same community or family and to move beyond a "not in my backyard" mentality. In two roundtables the goals were critiqued as being too focused on human issues and that a truly world-centric consciousness was needed to bring about sustainable development. At the individual level, the

importance of working with psychological trauma was mentioned as was the need to get clear on what really matters to each of us, what each of us really wants to bring forth and what each is willing to let go off in order to bring about a better world.

Collective and individual inner resources were also of importance to participants. The existence of a sense of community and community belonging was seen as vital for working on the SDGs. A deeper sense of connection to one's neighbours and the environment was seen as a powerful driver for collective action and change. Other participants called for civil society and those pursuing sustainable development to work with their own inner experiences and develop their inner resources in order to achieve the SDGs. Discussions included working with hope as a resource and the challenge of hopelessness, ensuring self-care, celebrating accomplishments, and cultivating mindsets and cultures needed to foster greater collaboration within civil society.

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR LEADERSHIP IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

In British Columbia we often feel like we are living in one of the greatest places on Earth, surrounded by incredible natural beauty, vibrant cultures and the world's most liveable cities and communities. However, with such great privilege and opportunity comes the responsibility for great leadership. If we are the best, then let's lead! The launch of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 presents a challenge for BC to step into this leadership role, both at home and abroad. The concrete goals and their universal nature point to work still to be done at home, from ending child poverty to ensuring safe drinking water, as well as beyond our borders, from taking action on climate change to halting biodiversity loss. Indeed, many of the SDGs require provincial leadership, including the sustainable use of our forest ecosystems, management of our watersheds, and the delivery of

quality education for all. BCCIC's Invisible Mosaic report suggests that British Columbians themselves are calling for action on sustainable development and recognize that the SDGs are an opportunity for our province to showcase leadership.

This report demonstrates that BC's civil society groups are already showing leadership in advancing the goals through initiatives impacting each and all of them. The SDG framework allows us to visualize the incredible work that BC's civil society groups are doing and provides an opportunity to strengthen their impact. The SDG framework can support greater collaboration between CSOs and generate increased political and public support for sustainable development initiatives. However, BC's civil society groups cannot lead on their own. Leadership is needed from BC's provincial

and local governments and from British Columbians at large. The SDGs present an opportunity to focus BC's leadership in sustainable development around an agenda that connects our efforts across sectors, scales and tiers of government while providing a common language for collective action and impact.

This report suggests that taking a leadership role will require seizing the opportunities that the SDG framework presents. Political engagement is key. Politicians throughout BC need to understand the importance of the SDGs and their connection to the province and build them into policy, performance indicators, and public communications. Greater partnership between government and civil society is necessary to educate the public and coordinate action on the SDGs. Achieving the goals will require targeted and innovative funding for CSOs and increased support for CSO networking both in-person and through technology platforms. Collaboration lies at the heart of SDG leadership and funding mechanisms should reflect this. Achieving collaboration will require engaging with key BC stakeholders, including First Nations, the private sector, faith-based groups, academia and environmental organizations. Fostering collaboration among youth and between youth and older generations will be vital. Finally, effective collaboration and action on the SDGs involves a recognition of the individual and collective "inner change" that British Columbians will need to make in order to show leadership on the SDGs.

The insights contained in this report and summarised above present a unique opportunity for British Columbia take the lead in pursuing sustainable development. By taking these insights into account we believe that British Columbia can play a key role in in making the SDG agenda a reality and in bringing forth a better province and a better world for all.