



**UKCOMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS**  
GIVING FOR LOCAL GOOD

**Thinking globally, acting locally:** How community foundations are contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**



Sunflower Women's Centre, funded by Devon Community Foundation

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# FOREWORD

As the eyes of the world have been fixed on the G20 and COP26 summits, we are reminded that we are all in this together. As needs grow to new heights, so must our response, whether that's by taking urgent climate action, tackling record levels of inequality or making sure that no child goes hungry.

I became CEO of UK Community Foundations in March 2020, just as the impact of the global pandemic on our communities was becoming clearer. I saw the phenomenal emergency response of community foundations, our donors, and the incredible local organisations we support. Having a shared purpose made this possible. Working together, we were able to support people all over the UK as they dealt with the many issues that the pandemic created, and we continue to do so today.

Every sector has a role to play in overcoming the collective challenges we are now facing. Through partnership, collaboration and shared understanding, we can meet these challenges together. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) give us the framework we need to make lasting change happen.

It doesn't matter whether you are a large multi-national or a hyper-local charity. No actor is too big or too small to play their part in achieving the SDGs. Many of you will be asking yourself the question: how can we achieve a better future for all? Through the lens of the SDGs this report will show you that the answer to this question may be closer to home than you might think. We invite fellow funders, philanthropists, charities, and corporate partners to join us on this vital pursuit to find local solutions to the world's biggest challenges.

**Rosemary Macdonald, CEO,**  
UK Community Foundations



Rosemary Macdonald, CEO,  
UK Community Foundations.

# INTRODUCTION

## A LOCAL RESPONSE TO A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

The coronavirus pandemic has been one of the few events over the last century that has reached every corner of the world. Yet, while the pandemic has struck globally, the experience has been far from universal. From continent to country, from city to town, the impact of the pandemic has been felt differently. The action needed to cope with the crisis has varied depending on the unique needs of the local community. A truly place-based response has been required.

## OUR RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS

When the pandemic took hold of the UK in March 2020, the 47 community foundations in our network were able to offer rapid funding for local organisations working to support the people and places most impacted.

As the main distribution partner for the National Emergencies Trust's Coronavirus Appeal, community foundations were able to support 10,664 local organisations with £76m of funding. Using their local expertise and experience, community foundations were able to ensure that their grant making was targeted at the most pressing needs created by the pandemic.

## WHY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS?

Over the past 18 months, the need for collaborative action has never been clearer. No individual body can meet the myriad of challenges that we are facing locally, nationally, and globally. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the framework needed to sew a golden thread through the work of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector<sup>1</sup>. Focusing on People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership, the Goals provide a 'blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all'.



Essex Community Foundation has funded St Clare Hospice to start a 'compassionate neighbours programme', connecting socially

<sup>1</sup> The term Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise is inclusive of registered charities, social enterprises, constituted community groups, Community Interest Companies (CICs) and the many other types of organisations that make up the UK's civil society. Community foundations support a wide range of organisations at a local level.

The Goals were announced by the United Nations in 2015 to be achieved by the year 2030. This is now widely recognised as the 2030 Agenda. We are now in the 'decade of action' and community foundations will be vital players in achieving the Goals in the UK.

## THE POWER OF PLACE WITHIN THE SDGS

Place has never been more important. Whether it's an intensified emotional attachment to the people and spaces we live and work in, or within the political sphere, there is a growing recognition of the power of place within our national discourse. Localism and devolution are undoubtedly rising political currents. At the same time, it's arguable that local voices are still rarely heard when decisions are made.

Whilst we need to recognise that a place-based response is the best solution to meet local need, we can't ignore the fact that our different communities are facing similar challenges. The mantra of 'think global, act local' highlights that universal challenges and ambitions can only be met through place-based work. Without losing the nuance of place, the SDGs allow for hyper-localised work to become a vital part of the 2030 Agenda and placed within a broader global effort to meet the Goals.

## A NATIONAL VOICE FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Community foundations will always trust local people to find the solutions to local problems. Across the network we see incredible work in communities across the UK to meet a range of needs. The impact of local, grassroots charities and community organisations often goes under the radar. Although they may be small in size, collectively their work plays a significant role in working towards meeting the Goals. This report will place these local stories in a global context. Using the Goals, we can begin to apportion the recognition that is long overdue to local

organisations, we will give a platform to the local actors that are meeting these global challenges head on and making sustainable change within their communities.

## WORKING TOGETHER TO MEET THE GOALS

Companies, local charities, philanthropists, and funders are all doing their part to meet the Goals. However, without a common focus we run the risk of duplicating our efforts and missing crucial opportunities for shared learning and partnership. Using examples from across the community foundation network, we will demonstrate how the Goals are a unique tool to bring together the diverse actors across civil society in pursuit of a common good.

With the Sustainable Development Goals committed to at the highest levels and less than 10 years left to meet the 2030 Agenda, it is time that we live out our commitments and put our resources behind place-based approaches that have been proven to work time and again.

## UKCF AND THE SDGS

Across all areas of our business practice, we are embedding the principles of sustainable development. With the support of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, we will continue to support community foundations to do the same.

Two Ridings Community Foundation funds **Hull Sisters** which provides a range of confidential advice and support services to enable minority and black women to gain knowledge and confidence.



# HOW COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS ACT LOCAL

Community foundations have always championed local causes. They recognise that small, hyper-local organisations, are often in the best position to combat the global challenges outlined in the Goals.

At a local level, community foundations address themes such as food poverty and social wellbeing, as well as providing a sustainable source of financing and infrastructure to grassroots community-led solutions. At a global level, the work of community foundations addresses societal inequalities and progresses social development.

As part of our new strategic plan, at UKCF we have made focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals one of three core themes which run through our organisational objectives. The other two themes are digital transformation and EDI, both of which also make an important contribution to the 2030 agenda. By weaving the SDGs through our operations, external engagement, and programmes we plan to:

- ➔ **Demonstrate how community foundations and the local VCSE organisations they work with are vital players in meeting the 2030 Agenda**
- ➔ **Leverage greater resource and knowledge towards community foundations to equip them to create 'a better and more sustainable future for all' in their local community**
- ➔ **Maximise our organisational impact on the Goals by rallying our networks, communication, data, staff and finances to achieve the 2030 Agenda**

2 <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind>

## CONNECTING THE DOTS

The connection between the 17 Goals emphasises the need for organisations and authorities to no longer target social issues in isolation. Lasting progress requires collaborative action that focuses on building healthy, prosperous and inclusive communities. A place-based approach is ideally suited to this.

Let's take the connection between Goal 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities) as an example. Cheap or unhealthy food is a key contributor to obesity, heart conditions, diabetes, and many of the most prevalent long-term health conditions in the UK. But examining the link between food insecurity and other social factors indicates that inequality is a driving factor here. A **recent survey** found that among households where the main earner is Black, has a lower level of education, or is a single parent, food insecurity increases.

In this context, encouraging better diets and more exercise to achieve Goal 3 is not a sufficient response. To improve community health and wellbeing, we must focus on how to truly 'leave no one behind'<sup>2</sup> looking at the structural inequalities that often cause the poor delivery of public services. A place-based model recognises that to achieve Goal 3, communities require equitable access to education, work and inclusive spaces where they can come together for exercise, arts and peer-support.

Sussex Community Foundation supported 'Savage Beauty' a collaboration in which creative workshops for different age groups developed set and props for a production by renowned theatre company The Actors of Dionysus exploring environmental themes.  
Photo by Darren Cool.



# CONVENING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AROUND THE GOALS

Community foundations forge strong relationships across communities. Their focus on 'place' enables them to unite funders with the local Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations that have the most expertise. These smaller organisations can be overlooked in a world where bigger is often perceived as better. Local VCSE organisations understand the voices and the challenges of the communities they belong to, but time constraints and a lack of sufficient funding mean they are often unable to effectively co-ordinate with others working in their space. Through bringing these organisations together, community foundations can facilitate sustainable social change.

In this convening role, community foundations have access to the stories and knowledge behind the statistics that explain how the UK is performing on the Sustainable Development Goals. They supplement statistical evidence with the testimonies of those with first-hand experience, often using a methodology called Vital Signs<sup>3</sup>. This reporting identifies the most relevant issues in different regions and provides local authorities, funders and VCSE networks with the insights needed to meet the 2030 Agenda in their communities. The Community Foundation for Tyne & Wear and Northumberland has made Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion the focus for its most recent **Vital Signs report**. In the report, the Foundation examines the experience of five groups – women; people with physical disabilities; Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities; people with learning disabilities; and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities – whose contribution to the vibrancy of the Northeast region is often hindered by deep-seated inequalities.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Understanding the lived experience of structural inequity is vital in philanthropy. By engaging in consultation and active listening, the Community Foundation's report has been able to draw attention to the need for stronger action on Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), making the case for local funding towards the individuals and user-led organisations that informed their report.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



Quartet Community Foundation, which serves Bath & Northeast Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire is utilising its local expertise to draw attention to the global climate crisis. Quartet's **recent Vital Signs report** unpicks the risks that climate change poses to their communities and highlights how local VCSE organisations are responding to the crisis.

The report highlights examples of community-led initiatives focused on:

- ➔ Reducing energy and water use
- ➔ Tackling fuel poverty
- ➔ Ensuring access to local healthy food
- ➔ Educating on the climate emergency
- ➔ Engaging more diverse communities with climate action
- ➔ Ensuring access to wild spaces

Quartet's report shines a light on the practical steps needed to fight our global crisis – providing adequate funding for locally-led climate education and action.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland actively champions community voices alongside its funding. As part of its strategy to build sustainable communities, **the new housing and homelessness initiative** is addressing the root causes of homelessness and housing issues by explicitly seeking the voice of those with lived experience. The three-year programme, a step towards achieving Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) in Northern Ireland, will provide opportunities for organisations to collaborate around specific challenges and develop new solutions for housing grants.



<sup>3</sup> <https://communityfoundations.ca/initiatives/vital-signs/>

An example of how community foundations use local knowledge to connect multiple Goals can be seen at Cumbria Community Foundation. Its Transforming West Cumbria programme aims to 'put local people in charge of their own futures by empowering neighbourhoods to create transformational change'. The funding is prioritised around solving a range of locally known challenges that fall into Goals 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), and 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure). This programme captures the spirit of the Goals in recognising the importance of tackling intersecting needs which all lie in the path of the 2030 Agenda.

1 NO POVERTY



Thousands of excess winter deaths are caused by exposure to cold weather every year. In addition to this, hundreds of thousands of people experience fuel poverty. VCSE organisations fear that the rise in energy costs and inflation, compounded by gas shortages and the removal of the £20 uplift in Universal Credit, will make the winter of 2021 even worse. Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities) are all impacted in tackling this national issue locally. Every year, community foundations across the UK run local winter campaigns to raise funding to help local organisations provide warm meals, emergency warmer packs, food parcels, grants to pay bills, regular welfare checks, and many more services.

## FUNDING THE GOALS

Community foundations connect local sources of philanthropy with VCSE partners to deliver funding programmes that target local need. There are several examples from across our network that show where these programmes are contributing directly to the Goals:

East End Community Foundation have partnered with social housing provider, Poplar Harca, Tower Hamlets Council, and education provider, the Letta Trust, to establish the **Connecting Communities Fund**. This partnership directly supports Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), by tackling the growing challenge of digital exclusion experienced by low-income families and more acutely by primary aged children living in the East End of London.

Responding to the findings of The Herefordshire Community Wellbeing Survey 2021, Herefordshire Community Foundation have launched two new funds – **The Get Active – Green Spaces Grant** and **The Community and Personal Resilience Grant** which aim to achieve Goal 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) by encouraging people to get active, develop and enjoy the county's green spaces, and help them to overcome challenges they have faced during the pandemic.

Two community foundations in West Yorkshire are advancing both Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and Goal 13 (Climate Action). In Kirklees, One Community Foundation's **Hirst Brierley Fund** supports Goal 13 with activities that will reduce climate change through energy efficiency, renewable energy or creation, and management of green spaces. Calderdale Community Foundation's supports local environmental projects which make energy savings and carbon reductions. **Climate Emergency-Carbon Zero Fund** supports local environmental projects which make energy savings and carbon reductions.

## BUILDING VCSE SUSTAINABILITY TO MEET THE GOALS

Community foundations also promote the financial sustainability of VCSE organisations by offering long-term strategic support, building capacity and resilience, and investing in infrastructure. This plays a vital role in enabling local organisations to plan for the future while enhancing their existing delivery models. Examples of this work include:

- ➔ **South Yorkshire Community Foundation hosts **SYFAB** (South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau) which provides information, advice and training on funding and fundraising, to community and voluntary organisations.**
- ➔ **The Community Foundation for Surrey runs the **Funder Plus** scheme which provides highly skilled and experienced volunteers to support charities and voluntary organisations with advice and guidance, in a range of critical business areas.**
- ➔ **Wiltshire Community Foundation provides a range of events, training workshops and advice sessions for the local VCSE sector helping to build skills, capacity, knowledge and networks. Topics include funding, governance, business planning, HR and marketing.**



# WHY COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS 'THINK GLOBAL'

UKCF's adoption of the SDGs has been driven by the innovative work of community foundations across our membership. In the previous section we have demonstrated how community foundations are already impacting on the SDGs via their convening, research, grant-making and infrastructure support. This section will highlight the achievements of community foundations who have gone a step further to actively champion the 2030 Agenda in their local community.

## ADVOCACY OF THE GOALS

For those community foundations that have integrated the Goals into their missions, linking their work to the global movement has been a powerful tool in drawing attention to the need for community-based social change.

Focusing on the SDGs has enabled community foundations to forge partnerships across the voluntary sector and collaborate to find local solutions. Northamptonshire Community Foundation's online Community Conversations which are each themed around a specific Goal, demonstrate this in action. The Community Conversations, provide a space for community organisations, public funders, philanthropists, and other local practitioners to come together.

Through hearing about the challenges and successes that those working to achieve Goal 1 (No Poverty) experience within their communities, private and public donors can have a better understanding of where funding is needed and how it should be distributed. The events allow VCSE organisations to hear from each other, encouraging collaboration and the co-design of approaches to tackling local priorities. With every Community Conversation, Northamptonshire Community Foundation make a series of commitments based on the stories that have come out of the discussions.

After the session on Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities)<sup>4</sup> the Foundation committed to:

- ➔ **Challenge and educate themselves (VCSE sector) and then go out and challenge and educate others**
- ➔ **Support infrastructure organisations, particularly for marginalised communities and promote collaboration and partnerships**
- ➔ **Investment in user-led projects which provide specific and appropriate services**
- ➔ **Support projects which are accessible and inclusive (including geographically) and learn from the pandemic by having a hybrid of virtual and face-to-face work**

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

Rachel McGrath, Northamptonshire Community Foundation

Reading Refugee Support Group (RRSG) received £5,000 from Berkshire Community Foundation to help it deliver services remotely for refugees through lockdown.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ncf.uk.com/about-us/latest-news/unsdg-10-reduced-inequalities-next-steps>



For County Durham Community Foundation, alignment with the SDGs has enabled them to champion the work of VCSE organisations in contributing to the global agenda. By embedding the SDGs into how they analyse and communicate the impact of their grant-making, they have drawn attention to the need for greater funding towards the Goals in their local area. Demonstrating expertise in tackling the SDGs at a grassroots level has brought in new partnerships and donors for the community foundation. In 2020/21, out of their grant-making that reached almost £5 million, the foundation awarded:

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p><b>3</b> GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>            | <p><b>1.</b> £2,857,269 to Goal 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing)</p>         | <p><b>2</b> ZERO HUNGER</p>             | <p><b>2.</b> £502,886 to Goal 2 (Zero Hunger)</p>                        |
| <p><b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p>  | <p><b>3.</b> £457,239 to Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)</p> | <p><b>10</b> REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>  | <p><b>4.</b> £402,820 to Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities.)<sup>5</sup></p> |

The Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations are a clear way for us to show how our grants make a difference. They help charities, communities and institutions find common ground, work together, and use resources wisely. When you support our work, you're investing in something bigger – a global vision that starts with local, grassroots change.

Michelle Cooper, CEO, County Durham Community Foundation

## AMPLIFYING OUR IMPACT

The European Community Foundation Initiative's **'whole-of-organisation approach' to the SDGs** has inspired our members to view their impact through the lens of the Goals.

By adopting a 'whole-of-organisation approach', which takes into consideration mission, investment, strategies and programmes, communications and operations, there is scope to use the framework to enhance their role, credibility and effectiveness as catalysts for change.

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

In designing their Theory of Change, Leeds Community Foundation found that their vision to 'create a city of opportunity for all' was closely aligned with the SDGs. Having now mapped the Goals to their objectives, they will use this framework to ensure that all activities are impacting on the realisation of this vision. Leeds Community Foundation are leveraging the universality of the Goals to deliver programmes that aim at long-term, sustainable change in their community.

We plan to articulate the alignment of our work with the Goals clearly, so that any supporter or partner working with us is able to see how they too are helping to achieve those SDGs that best fit with our activity and impact.

Kate Hainsworth, CEO of Leeds Community Foundation



<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cdcf.org.uk/useful-resources/> as data is pulled from the annual report

At Foundation Scotland, the SDGs provided a lens for the Foundation's focus on long-term, community-led impact, with the Goals now integrated into its **10-year strategic plan**. In practice, this has led the Foundation to develop an SDG-aligned impact framework to analyse its grant-making and to move most of its endowment into an Impact Investment fund which targets the Goals. This enables donors to make a social impact both via contributing to Foundation Scotland's grant-making to VCSE organisations, and via investments in companies actively contributing towards the Goals. This work has sparked the interest of community foundations across the UK and Europe, demonstrating the potential for the SDGs to bring about innovative approaches to organisational impact.

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Our new Impact Fund will enable us to continue building our assets in a more socially responsible way. Moving away from short-term profit objectives to longer-term social impact objectives that align with the SDGs is in keeping with our purpose and roots as a community foundation.

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Liz Sams, Chief Finance Officer for Foundation Scotland

The SDGs have already begun to drive the sharing of good practices, challenges and new ideas across the UKCF membership. We are committed to supporting our members to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, by providing a space for collaborative learning and critical reflection of the role that place-based philanthropy has within the VCSE sector.

London Community Foundation is managing the 'Thamesmead Community Fund', which promotes cultural, educational and healthy activities for residents to engage more with local outdoor spaces.



# BECOMING PART OF THE 2030 AGENDA



In the previous sections we've looked at how the community foundation model aligns with meeting the SDGs, we will now outline how they provide a blueprint for corporates, donors, and other funders alike, to help meet the Goals.

There is no doubt that companies are looking closely at their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategies to measure their impact within a wider ethical and sustainable framework.

The SDGs are fast becoming the most effective way for companies to do this. A 2019 survey by World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) found that among the 250 world's largest global companies surveyed, 82% have reported on the SDGs<sup>6</sup>.

Companies are looking at their sustainability footprint across different business areas, including their supply chains, investments, products and services, and charitable giving – these are the areas we will be focusing on in this section of the report.



Conversations with corporate partners show the increasing priority they are placing on aligning their charitable giving with both their Environmental, Social and Governance strategies and with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. They are also keen to give back to the communities they serve. As a network we are uniquely placed to help organisations target resources to the causes and communities that will benefit most from this approach.



Jon Everett, Director of Business Growth and External Affairs, UKCF

<sup>6</sup> **Sustainable Development Goals: A Misunderstood Market Opportunity?**  
Emerging Trends and Analysis of the SDG Impact of Companies in the S&P 500®



The Wesleyan Foundation works with community foundations across the UK to support organisations that promote health and well-being, education, innovation, and social development.

Photo courtesy of the Leeds Community Foundation.

## SPEAKING IN A COMMON LANGUAGE

In order to be able to advocate for more funding and influence, it is key that funders articulate need and impact in terms that are universally understood. With the global use of the SDGs in the corporate world, governments and other public institutions, it is imperative that funders communicate the huge social impact that the VCSE sector makes within the SDG framework. Doing so will open opportunities for new partnerships and an increased understanding of why certain funding programmes are necessary.



Without effective partnerships between the social and private sectors, the SDGs will not be met... Failure to establish successful partnerships may result in commercial organisations determining that they can meet their SDG obligations alone...

This misses an opportunity to address these challenges comprehensively.



Russell Reynolds Associates

The Sustainable Development Goals provide a ready-made framework for companies to involve their staff, in addition to ESG strategies. The 17 Goals are broad, which means that there is ample scope to align those Goals which best fit a company's ESG strategy and organisational ethos. The accessibility of the Goals also makes it easy for staff to understand the impact of organisational giving, get behind corporate fundraising efforts, and review their own processes around procurement.



We really wanted our giving to retain focus, and for our team to have a simple way to assess which causes they want to support.

The SDGs have enabled us to identify themes that are broad enough to allow diversity of choice, and yet keep us aligned with our long-term vision.



EMG Solicitors, County Durham Community Foundation donor

## SUPPORTING LOCAL SOLUTIONS FOR GLOBAL PROBLEMS

Many donors and companies are examining their social impact on the communities that they operate in. The SDGs provide a framework for them to help support place-based solutions to local problems and through our national network we can connect donors with hyper-local organisations that are making a big impact. Here are some recent examples:

In efforts to address digital exclusion in communities, UKCF received a donation of £320,000 from infrastructure operator for wireless telecommunication, Cellnex UK. Through nine of our member community foundations, the funding has supported a range of local organisations doing innovative work in selected rural and urban areas helping to address Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and Goal 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing).

Oxfordshire's Community Resilience Fund combats isolation and loneliness in the region's recovery from the pandemic and resulting lockdowns.



With UKCF, Cellnex UK is involved directly with communities to bring together digital skills and inclusion with practical help and is striving to reduce digital inequalities throughout the UK.



Claire Cranton, Head of Corporate Affairs for Cellnex UK

In July 2020, Barclays donated £1million of unrestricted funding to the community foundation network as part of its Covid-19 Community Aid Package. This donation meant that community foundations were able to support the local VCSE organisations addressing the most urgent place-based needs presented by the global pandemic.

We have recently partnered with Primary Healthcare Properties plc (PHP) to launch their Community Impact Fund which will support social prescribing projects in the communities served by their premises. Working with the GP practice tenants and their social prescribing coordinators, the project is initially targeting communities in Scotland and Lincolnshire, to support this holistic approach to people's health and wellbeing with a view to widening participation in the future.



The UKCF national coverage, their established community relationships and presence in the regions our portfolio covers will ensure that our fund is successfully promoted and delivered to those in most need.

Harry Hyman, CEO of Primary Health Properties

## GREATER SCOPE FOR LOCAL SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS

The community foundation model is designed to provide a sustainable source of income to local charities and community organisations. Funding sustainability, combined with expert local knowledge, are inherent parts of what makes the community foundation network unique. The success of the model is contingent upon relationships with a range of donors. The attainment of the SDGs and the realisation of 2030 Agenda is dependent on different actors coming together to take collaborative long-term action.

This means that companies that want to ensure their charitable giving has a truly sustainable impact on the communities they serve find themselves strongly aligned with both the 2030 Agenda and our local place-based model. Many companies have set up community benefit funds in partnership with their local community foundations to build on this synergy of purpose. Across the network there are several examples of how community benefit funds work:



Assura PLC is a British-based property business headquartered in Warrington. It specialises in General Practitioners and primary care buildings. In July 2020 it partnered with the Cheshire Community Foundation to launch the **Assura Community Fund**. Since then, it has gone on to support over 140 projects. By March 2026 it is predicted that the Fund will have made a difference to the health of one million people, working towards Goal 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing).





Cornwall benefits from a range of significant renewable energy resources. These play a vital part in Goal 13 (Climate Action) and moving to net zero emissions. Cornwall Community Foundation **manages twelve Renewable Energy Community Funds**, working with multiple partners. The funding supports local Cornish organisations working to address specific community needs across the county.

The grant making of the **Liverpool One Foundation** is managed by the Community Foundation for Merseyside. Since 2017 it has distributed over £1million to local VCSE organisations that promote positive mental health and wellbeing amongst the city’s young people. Since it launched, over 128,000 children and young people have been supported through the programme.

Somerset Community Foundation has opened a special round of the Hinckley Point C Small Grants programme to support the day-to-day running costs of local VCSE organisations who were significantly affected during the coronavirus outbreak. This is part of a wider £20million commitment to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of communities that are affected by the construction of EDF’s nuclear power station at Hinckley Point.

As well as collaborating with partners, community benefit funds often have input mechanisms for local residents to have an active say in how money is distributed. Allocation panels made up of community representatives ensure that a range of voices are heard in the decision-making process. The community benefit fund model demonstrates how community foundations utilise a focus on place to ensure sustainable funding is directed and adapted to local needs.

“

To date, the role of community foundations in global development has been largely overlooked. However, the ability of community foundations to be hands-on within their local communities can provide local governments and donors with the insights needed to achieve the ambitious goals within the SDGs.

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Vikki Spruill, Former President and CEO, Council on Foundations



Foundation Derbyshire’s Derbyshire Volunteer Fund has been instrumental in engaging with and recruiting local volunteers, as well as increasing communications and networking opportunities within the local VCSE sector.

# MEETING THE GOALS TOGETHER

Community foundations and their donors play a vital role in supporting local organisations to meet the Goals; however, they form part of a broader funding ecology. As we have mentioned in previous sections, taking a long-term approach that recognises local expertise is key to achieving the Goals. This needs to be reflected in how we deliver funding to the sector.

In early 2021 we asked our network of community foundations to complete a survey to help us understand the challenges that local charities were facing and the practical steps that funders can take to ensure that their grant-making is in tune with the needs of the sector. One of the most common responses was multi-year funding.

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Respondents frequently cited the need for multi-year funding that would give organisations the financial stability to improve their organisational capacity to deliver services and take stock of the lessons learnt during the pandemic.

”

Investing, Inspiring, and Including: How community foundations are responding to the pandemic (July 2021)

The Sustainable Development Goals were not set to be achieved overnight, rather; they represent a long-term commitment to tackling global issues. Local charities and community organisations in the UK have a vital role to play in helping to achieve the Goals. However, as the quote above illustrates, this will only be possible with multi-year funding that allows them to look ahead. Short-term project-based funding restricts these organisations to a hand-to-mouth existence that prevents them from being able to build the sustainable delivery models that will deliver the 2030 Agenda.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ivar.org.uk/flexible-funders/>

Another key component is flexibility. If we respect the expertise of VCSE organisations it is essential that we allow them to determine how they should best spend the finances granted to them. By providing unrestricted funding and ensuring that the application processes and reporting requirements are tailored to the needs and capacities of groups rather than donors, we can make greater impact with our funding. The call for increased flexibility<sup>7</sup> that has come out of the Covid-19 crisis cannot be forgotten and must become standard practice.

“

The sector in Wales have given us very clear messages about the support they need. It's not another innovation fund or a short-term funding blitz. They need long term funding programmes that show we believe in their core purpose, and which enable them to work most effectively with their communities.

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Richard Williams, Chief Executive of Community Foundation Wales, Loud and Clear: Our big funding conversation with the third sector in Wales

**2030 is not long away now. Inspired by the work of our members, at UKCF we believe we have a responsibility to advocate for the 2030 Agenda. We must ensure that the organisations best placed to drive sustainable community development are equipped to do this. By recognising community foundations and the VCSE organisations they fund as vital actors in achieving the SDGs in the UK, we can ensure that our voluntary sector is better resourced to drive forward community-based solutions to global problems.**



Funding from our network's recent partnership with Made By Sport has enabled vital sports programmes for our diverse communities to continue being provided by local groups, such as Move Momentum, funded by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation.





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GIVING FOR LOCAL GOOD

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#### Acknowledgements

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**The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation** for supporting our work with the SDGs

The 47 community foundations in the network as well as to all our partners. These include corporates, trusts, foundations and charities, as well as individual and family philanthropists; all of whom provide valuable funding to help support our local communities.

