Voluntary Local Reviews of Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals:

A handbook for Canadian communities

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July 2022

Truth and Reconciliation

We acknowledge that all who inhabit Turtle Island are treaty people, and we each have a role to play in upholding these treaties. We respect the inherent human rights of Indigenous Peoples, including, but not limited to, rights to self-determination, self-government, culture and ceremony, language, lands and resources, and education.

We acknowledge the sacred value of Indigenous Knowledge and call for Indigenous Peoples to be provided with the space to lead the discussion on sustainable development. Honouring the treaties and the rights of the diverse Indigenous Peoples as the traditional stewards of these lands is imperative to achieving the 2030 Agenda and leaving no one behind.

We acknowledge the harmful role data has had in the oppression and marginalization of Indigenous Peoples and seek to collaborate to advance their data sovereignty and eliminate marginalization.

As we make efforts to advance reconciliation through the actions of our work, it is our goal to reduce barriers through building respectful relationships and eliminating discriminatory practices in data.

Executive Summary

Since the adoption of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, more than 70 cities from around the world have prepared Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) on SDG-related action and progress in their communities. In 2021, the Canadian cities Kelowna and Winnipeg joined this rapidly growing club of communities that use the SDGs as an opportunity to streamline reporting on sustainable development in their cities and share their successes with global peers.

Developing a VLR can have multiple benefits for communities far beyond reporting on progress against the globally shared framework of objectives represented by the SDGs. The VLR process generates local momentum for participatory and holistic decision making toward improved community well-being, reconciliation, inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and resiliency against future shocks. Getting started with a VLR in your community may seem daunting, but it does not have to be. This VLR handbook intends to help Canadian communities of all sizes to launch a VLR by quickly identifying tools, resources, and experiences from other communities available for their support.

Many VLR handbooks and guidelines already exist. Instead of recreating existing content, this initiative focuses on helping communities navigate the rapidly growing pool of VLR support materials available. We have scanned the existing literature and selected those resources that appear most useful in the Canadian context. Local SDG implementation and VLR reporting offer a particular opportunity for Canadian communities to advance reconciliation and support Indigenous leadership. We included tools and resources that can help communities integrate SDG implementation and transformative reconciliation at the local level.

This document is the zero draft of what we hope will become a collaborative effort to collect and share resources, tools, and good practices for local SDG implantation and reporting in Canada. If you would like to be involved in the development of future iterations of this handbook, propose resources for inclusion, or suggest corrections or improvements, please contact IISD's tracking progress team at tracking-progress@iisd.ca.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BCCIC	British Columbia Council for International Cooperation
FNIGC	First Nations Information Governance Centre
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
IGES	Institute for Global Environmental Strategies
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
OCAP	Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
VLR	Voluntary Local Review
VNR	Voluntary National Review
VSR	Voluntary Subnational Review

1.0 Introduction

As we approach the halfway point toward implementing the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, communities across Canada are becoming more aware of their crucial role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2030 Agenda's bottom-up principle puts national governments in charge of identifying priorities among the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets, developing national strategies for implementation, and reporting on their progress through Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). Cities and local communities are encouraged to follow the same process and select local priorities among the SDGs or align existing plans, such as local sustainable development strategies or climate action plans, with the SDG framework. This process, known as SDG localization, enables local communities to take SDG implementation into their own hands and report on local action and progress through Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).

As of the end of 2021, two Canadian cities had published VLRs (Kelowna, British Columbia and Winnipeg, Manitoba), with several more planning to release VLRs in 2022. Many more communities are interested in localizing the SDGs and developing VLRs. The SDG Localization Community of Practice, led by the Tamarack Institute and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), for example, has grown rapidly since its inception and now includes close to 50 members.

The intention of this handbook is to help Canadian communities get started with a VLR project and quickly find existing resources, tools, and guidelines available in Canada and elsewhere. It synthesizes existing VLR literature and resources relevant to the Canadian context regarding recommended strategies and approaches for those looking to join the growing list of communities reporting their progress on the Agenda. This handbook is not prescriptive, as VLRs are as diverse and varied as the communities creating them; it is intended as a general guide to common and good practices found within the existing literature and the ongoing discourse.

Communities across Canada share many similarities with other global communities that have taken on the challenge of reporting their progress regarding the SDGs, allowing opportunities to learn from the examples of others. But Canadian communities also face unique challenges and uncharted territory when it comes to ensuring that VLRs are inclusive and appropriate in the Canadian context, most of all finding appropriate ways to include Indigenous leadership and perspectives in local SDG implementation. We hope this handbook can eventually become a living document, co-created by a vibrant Canadian community of VLR practice that provides local SDG leaders with quick access to the knowledge needed to identify what actions are appropriate and effective in their communities to ensure they can measure their progress and share their successes with local, national, and international peers and ultimately achieve the 17 SDGs.

1.1 A Collaborative VLR Cookbook

Many guidelines and handbooks on VLR development already exist—we do not intend to add another one to the list. Most of the existing VLR literature reflects a mix of recommended approaches and methods and distinct experiences of one or several cities from their own VLR journey. Since VLRs are meant to reflect local approaches, perspectives, and values, it is nonetheless useful to look for resources, shared experiences, or ways to overcome common challenges close to home. Thus, rather than repeating content from existing guides, this handbook focuses on helping Canadian communities identify and access the tools and resources most useful for them.

We like to think of VLRs as something that resembles a traditional local dish: a famous homemade stew or soup that carries a distinct local flavour. Its main ingredients—vegetables, meat, flavourful stock, herbs, and spices—resemble those of other dishes, but it is the local varieties, the traditional methods of preparation, and maybe that special ingredient that no one else has tried, that creates the unmistakable taste of "home."

Imagine you are opening a cookbook containing Canada's most famous local stew recipes. For the VLR novice, we have included sections on essential skills and processes needed to develop a VLR as well as a "basic recipe" describing the main components of successful VLR projects. We have kept these sections brief, with links to recommended resources to learn more. Experienced SDG chefs can jump right ahead to the resources section and look for advanced techniques to perfect their VLR compositions or get inspired by the experience of other communities. To facilitate orientation, we have organized the resources according to what we have found to be the core elements of successful SDG localization and VLR development. The "basic recipe" includes: **⊙ developing local priorities**, **⊙ partnerships**, **⊙ participation and leaving no one behind**, **⊙ data and indicators**, **⊙ community stories**, **⊙ reconciliation and Indigenous leadership**, funding, and **⊙ leadership and organization**. We also included a section with **⊙ examples** of how cities in Canada, Finland, and Sweden addressed some of these elements in their VLRs. We hope this organization will allow all readers to find what they need in the shortest possible time while also allowing casual browsing for inspiration.

We also invite Canadian communities and organizations to add their experience and resources to the collection presented here to co-create a comprehensive resource collection for VLRs in Canada. This is version zero of what we hope will become a collective undertaking that will evolve into a VLR toolbox for and by Canadian communities.

1.2 Basic Elements for Successful SDG Localization and VLR Reporting

Throughout our review of the existing literature, we noted that most VLRs describe a similar set of recommended processes to follow and types of information to include in their VLR. There seems to be a basic set of ingredients that can be found in most VLR projects. This section outlines these components and provides links to resources where these are described in detail.

Overview

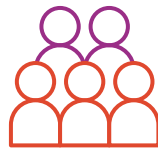Click on the circle to jump to the description.

Getting Started

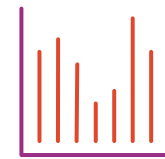**Local Priorities**

Partnerships

Participation and Leaving No One Behind

Data and Indicators

Reconciliation and Indigenous Leadership

Community Stories

Funding

Coordination

Producing Your VLR

Sharing Your VLR

Getting Started

Getting started with a VLR process might seem overwhelming at first. Local organizations or other groups thinking about initiating a VLR might ask themselves questions like: How can I find partners to collaborate with? How can I convince my local government and other partners that a VLR is worth the effort? Where can I find financial support? Many of the resources we reviewed include tips on how to get started and build a coalition of partners to lift a VLR project off the ground. It is also useful to remember that SDG localization and VLR reporting are intended to build on existing local initiatives. Some of the processes listed below may appear daunting and time consuming at first reading; however, partnerships, participation, data collection, and other activities are not unique to VLR development. You will most likely find that your community is already engaged in one or several of the processes described here.

⊙ Jump to Resources on Getting Started

Local Priorities

Localizing the SDGs is the process by which a community can align its local priorities with the globally shared SDGs. There are many ways to do so, but two things are key: localization should be driven by local people and reflect their perspectives: it can also build on previous SDG-related processes and strategies. Taking stock of what is already there allows you to centre local priorities in your efforts and focus on the needs of local community members first. Before you start cooking it makes sense to look in the fridge to see what you have in stock.

⊙ Jump to Resources on Local Priorities and Ownership

Partnerships

Partnerships are key for both implementing the SDGs and tracking progress. They should involve the main community actors from all sectors, including civil society, marginalized groups, health, education, environmental, non-governmental organizations, and governmental institutions. Ideally partnerships should exist before beginning the planning of a VLR to ensure it becomes a whole-of-community effort. Think of partnerships as the equivalent of homemade broth. It takes some extra time to make, but the result is well worth the effort.

⊙ Jump to Resources on Partnerships for the Goals

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Participation and Leaving No One Behind

Together with partnerships, participation is essential to generate ownership and ensure that a VLR is a whole-of-community undertaking. Although participation can come in many forms, such as consultation, direct decision making, steering committees, and others, the role of community participation is to refine the message of your VLR to reflect local priorities throughout. Like finding the right combination of fresh herbs, it is important to combine different mechanisms of participation to allow all groups to provide input to and comment on your VLR.

**⊘ Jump to Resources on Participation and Leaving No One Behind**

Data and Indicators
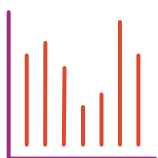
Data from a variety of sources are essential to have a solid evidence base to track progress and identify successes, as well as areas where more work may be needed. There are two general ways to access data. Data from official national or regional sources like Statistics Canada, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Cooperation or regional health authorities can often be disaggregated to local geographies. Local data are often collected by community organizations, researchers, service providers, or through citizen-generated data. Partnerships with local data providers and data experts can be a great help to ensure continuous measurement. Indicators used in VLRs should be selected through participatory processes to ensure they resonate with citizens. This also helps ensure that data are used respectfully and do no harm. You can compare data to spices. They are essential to generate taste, but they should be well balanced and used in appropriate quantities.

⊘ Jump to Resources on Data and Indicators

Reconciliation and Indigenous Leadership
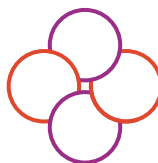
The VLR process is a key opportunity to advance reconciliation at the local level and advance Indigenous leadership. While the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs respect the rights of Indigenous self-determination, local leaders should be aware that Indigenous rights and colonial responsibilities go beyond the principles, goals, and targets included in the 2030 Agenda. VLRs can be a starting point to build relationships and strengthen Indigenous leadership to advance the SDGs alongside reconciliation, and doing so is a particular responsibility of Canadian communities.

⊘ Jump to Resources on Integrating Reconciliation and the SDGs

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Community Stories

Community stories provide context to local priorities and the data used to measure progress. They show who the people behind the data are. Stories reflect the lived experience of community groups and show how initiative, engagement, and hard work have led to progress that the community can be proud of. They can also provide a holistic understanding of challenges and barriers that may be slowing progress and help identify solutions when sharing VLRs with other communities. Stories add a distinctively local flavour to your VLR. Check out the VLRs from Malmö and Winnipeg for some good examples of community stories.

→ **Jump to Examples from Kelowna, Winnipeg, Espoo, and Malmö**

Funding

Funding is, of course, needed to do the work required to produce a VLR. However, many of the steps undertaken should be seen as an investment in community infrastructure that will provide benefits down the road. Partnerships, participation, data literacy, and a culture of storytelling are all part of a vibrant culture that helps communities move forward together.

Coordination

Coordinating the various processes needed to produce a VLR requires an experienced community leader with the ability and the reputation to bring together diverse groups and steer sometimes-controversial discussions on priorities and processes while ensuring the inclusion of all groups. Any community organization can initiate and lead a VLR. What is important is that your "chef" is perceived as neutral and fair by all community groups.

→ **Jump to Resources on Leadership and Organization**

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Producing Your VLR

When you are ready to start writing the actual VLR document, a few more considerations are useful. For example, while there is no set structure for VLRs, it may be helpful to align your VLR sections with the recommended structure for VNRs to facilitate the inclusion of local results in the national report. There are also some recommendations and practices on how to present data. Finally, we have included a few good practice examples from existing VLRs to get your creative juices flowing.

⊙ Jump to Resources on Producing Your VLR

Sharing Your VLR

The VLR process does not end with the publication of a report. It is important to carefully plan outreach and the promotion of the results of your hard work to make it count. A VLR communications plan should target a wide variety of local, national, and international audiences ranging from municipal decision-makers and community organizations to national and international peer communities. The VLR process offers a unique opportunity to share experiences and good practices with communities near and far and learn from them to further advance your work. It is important to be deliberate about communications from the start to ensure this potential is realized.

⊙ Jump to Resources on Sharing Your VLR

Although the above core recipe for localizing the SDGs in each community is not necessarily strictly followed in all cases, existing VLR projects do broadly indicate that these elements are the most common approaches to localizing the SDGs globally.

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2.0 Resources for Preparing a VLR

Preparing for the creation of a VLR can be intimidating, especially if it is the community's first attempt. VLRs are documents with local and global impact intended to be used as both reporting and guiding documents for their respective communities and as a way for outsiders to understand the progress being made with the help of the globally relevant SDG framework.

During the most recent High-Level Political Forum in 2021, 68 speakers from 29 countries discussed their experiences and perspectives on VLRs and VSRs and broader SDG localization. Including links to recordings of the sessions, this report includes panel summaries and key lessons from each presenter and country. The event featured panels on broad discussions related to VLRs and VSRs, but also included focused discussions on indicators and data, as well as on social inclusion and participatory processes. This report can inspire new ways of thinking about VLRs and VSRs and presents several thought-provoking ideas on VLR-VSR best practices.

⊙ **Learn more**

2.1 Getting Started

For cities looking to create their first VLR, it can sometimes be difficult to convince local authorities, stakeholders, and funders that the effort of a VLR is worth the time and resources when there are so many other reporting obligations and variables to consider. This is where *Cities Taking the Lead on the Sustainable Development Goals: A Voluntary Local Review Handbook for Cities,* by Dieninger et al. (2019), provides valuable guidance by arguing for the significant benefits experienced by cities taking on SDG localization through a VLR. Through the VLR process, previously unexplored or hidden connections between departments can be leveraged into action by collaborating under the SDG framework. The handbook answers questions that otherwise stop many cities in their tracks, covering topics such as stakeholder engagement, balancing victories with areas of improvement in reporting, as well as the difference between a VLR and other reporting obligations.

⊙ **Learn more**

Getting Started With SDGs in Cities by SDSN focuses on the relevance of the SDG framework at the local and municipal levels. Covering topics such as how to approach the SDGs from a territorial perspective, recommended practical tools for engaging with the SDG framework, and an exploration of the policy and enabling environment needed for successful SDG localization and implementation, this publication is a great way to ease into the SDG localization landscape and

focus on setting the local SDG agenda, planning SDG implementation strategies, and monitoring the SDGs. These key steps will feed into the creation of a VLR and facilitate the process.

⊘ Learn more

VLRs are a powerful catalyst for integrating the SDGs into local processes and localizing the 2030 Agenda more broadly. The *Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines on Voluntary Local Reviews* by Ahmed et al. (2020), aimed at subnational and local governments, emphasize the need for localizing the global goals through a process like the VLR.

⊘ Learn more

VLRs have inherent potential when it comes to informing national discussion on the SDGs. Produced by the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the Global Guiding Elements (2020) place a strong focus on how VLRs can be used to strengthen SDG reporting at the national level and reinforce the VLR as an ongoing, evolving, and long-term process rather than a one-off report. To maximize the effectiveness of VLRs for national-level reporting and vertical coherence, UN DESA provides a recommended structure that mirrors and complements the VNR. If communities are looking to ground themselves in the VLR as a process to achieve the 2030 Agenda, these guidelines provide the necessary structure and frame to do so as effectively as possible.

⊘ Learn more

This short brief on the VLRs of Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, and Bristol summarizes key aspects of the process and their experiences in the six domains of collaboration, SDG implementation, LNOB, political buy-in, data collection, and accountability and transparency. In each of the three cities, the mayor had a crucial role in driving the momentum on the SDGs and getting as many city departments and community members involved as possible. These snapshots of the VLR process can be helpful to begin understanding what the process looks like in practice.

⊘ Learn more

As was the case in many of the 20 pilot cities from the Association of Flemish Municipalities' 2020 SDG localization project, one of the most significant changes was an advancement of cross-departmental work on sustainability within municipal governments, expanding the mandate beyond the sustainability officer and allowing for coordinated efforts and reduced silos.

⊘ Learn more

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The 2021 edition of the state of the VLRs from the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) shifts the focus to action on SDG localization and includes sections on the role of VLRs in optimizing governance structures, local–national cooperation and integration, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the VLR scene.

⊙ **Learn more**

2.2 Local Priorities and Ownership

The Tamarack 10 guide (Schnurr, 2021) is an excellent place to start learning about SDG localization and understanding your local priorities. It includes 10 questions to assess your readiness to advance the SDGs locally, 10 really good ideas, 10 inspiring stories from Canadian communities, 10 useful resources, and 10 ways to get started. This inspiring guide will surely accompany you along your road to SDG localization and VLR creation.

⊙ **Learn more**

During a forum open space held in Peterborough/Nogojiwanong, five key Local SDG Priority Actions were highlighted, and the summary of these discussions can be found in this resource. These five key priorities include SDGs 1, 4, 6, 13, and 17 and centre on basic income, experiential education, clean water and sanitation, advocacy for climate change, as well as the prioritization of Indigenous Knowledge, practice, and leadership. The forum identified several local actions for each goal and emphasized local organizations already working on these important topics. This resource is a preliminary guiding document that was used to inform a series on how Indigenous Knowledge, if centred within the SDG discussion, can have powerful implications for achievement of the SDGs.

⊙ **Learn more**

This resource evaluates SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation from the perspective of Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews. This is one of four examples that demonstrate the inherent value in centring Indigenous Knowledge and leadership to achieve the SDGs. This resource, while focused on the Peterborough/Nogojiwanong context, is an important demonstration of the inseparable link between Indigenous Knowledge and sustainable development. A helpful example of localizing SDG 6 to the local context from an Indigenous perspective is included.

⊙ **Learn more**

Another resource from the Peterborough/Nogojiwanong context evaluates SDG 1 on no poverty from the perspective of Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews. Indigenous understanding of poverty goes well beyond our society's current norms related to food and financial necessities—

it extends to connection with lands, culture, and community too. This resource includes recommendations for shifting the anti-poverty discussions to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge.

⊙ Learn more

A third resource from the Peterborough/Nogojiwanong context evaluates SDG 4 on quality education from the perspective of Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews. For example, a snapshot of work in the community reveals more than 50 local educational initiatives centring Indigenous Knowledge and leadership to support the work of Agenda 2030 in leaving no one behind. This resource includes a helpful working draft of SDG 4 localization examples from an Indigenous perspective.

⊙ Learn more

One recommended way of beginning the journey of SDG localization is to involve community members in the process from the beginning. To do so, awareness-raising efforts such as those explored by the Association of Flemish Municipalities in their SDG localization project with 20 pilot cities can provide helpful insight for educating and engaging the community.

⊙ Learn more

For those wanting to know more about how to extend ownership of the VLR process to community residents most effectively, the Shimokawa Method for Voluntary Local Review by the IGES's Koike et al. (2020) covers how to engage and collaborate with a community for effective local action on the 2030 Agenda. The 10-step process based on the concept of backcasting to achieve the "future you want" provides VLR creators with a simple guide to maximize local ownership of the process.

⊙ Learn more

The Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews (2020) from United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and UN-Habitat provide a great perspective for cities interested in learning more about ownership and institutional features of the VLR. By comparing strategies of existing VLRs, examining the "who" of VLR creation from an institutional perspective, and providing the building blocks needed to locate the VLR in local, national, and global processes, this guide provides recommendations for cities to maximize the VLR as an effective policy tool.

⊙ Learn more

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2.3 Partnerships for the Goals

Collaborating with Indigenous Peoples does not need to be intimidating. Resources such as Navigating the Road Ahead: Indigenous Collaborative Programming by 4Directions of Conversation Consulting Inc. cover a variety of useful strategies and tips for groups looking to meaningfully collaborate with Indigenous communities. This concise guide introduces important principles for collaboration, as well as examples of how to notify and engage with communities impacted by your work. Indigenous relationships with land include cultural, spiritual, economic, stewardship, kinship, governance, and rights-based aspects. Ensuring that these relationships can continue is critical to the future and well-being of Indigenous Peoples. This guide is a helpful starting point for framing your Indigenous engagement, consultation, and collaboration strategies.

→ Learn more

For a broad global overview of the role Indigenous Peoples have in sustainable land, ecosystem, and biodiversity management this policy brief from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (2019) on partnering with Indigenous Peoples for the SDGs speaks frankly to the challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples and how they are being marginalized and left behind on several goals. It highlights the importance of Indigenous land access and stewardship and the subsequent impacts on food security, climate action, life on land, and our general harmony with the natural world. Attaining several of the SDGs will be impossible without first addressing the complex barriers and oppressive systems impacting Indigenous Peoples globally. This short, policy-focused resource is recommended for communities with significant agricultural ties.

→ Learn more

As part of the project advancing the SDGs in the community of Peterborough/Nogojiwanong, the Indigenous Leadership Action Team's Co-Chairs created a document exploring how some of the SDGs connect to Indigenous ways of knowing and being (Williams & Muskratt, 2019) and how the framework impacts structures harming Indigenous Peoples. The presentation also outlines the Indigenous Leadership Action Team's members, role, and purpose in the project. This resource can be helpful to inspire other SDG localization efforts to pursue partnerships with Indigenous Peoples for the sake of all inhabitants of Turtle Island.

→ Learn more

The Indigenous Ally Toolkit by Swiftwolfe (2019) contains many important lessons for Canadians looking to contribute to transformative reconciliation and support Indigenous Peoples as they overcome a variety of systemic barriers. With its tips for correct terminology, the importance of self-education and learning, and concrete steps for contributing to the successes of Indigenous

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Peoples, this short and meaningful guide can help groups on their journey to understanding and uplifting the stewards of Turtle Island.

⊙ Learn more

For those wanting a thorough resource on building partnerships with Indigenous Peoples, the Civic-Indigenous Placekeeping and Partnership Building Toolkit by Chung-Tiam-Fook (2022) contains many important lessons for successfully pursuing transformative reconciliation across Turtle Island. Informative descriptions of key Indigenous beliefs, knowledges, and worldviews provide a crucial and foundational understanding of how to approach settler-Indigenous partnerships of all kinds. In addition to teachings such as the Seven Fundamental Truths, Two-Eyed Seeing, and the Seventh Generation Principle, best-practice examples for Indigenous engagement and guiding protocols for ceremony are introduced. Finally, the toolkit explores a variety of rights-based discussions on Indigenous sovereignty, inherent and treaty rights, self-determination, and data governance. This valuable toolkit provides a solid foundation of resources for respectful and meaningful civic–Indigenous partnerships.

⊙ Learn more

This brief resource from Pritchard (2021) on meaningful engagement with Indigenous Peoples is one part of a broader project on SDG localization in the Peterborough/Nogojiwanong area through the promotion of Indigenous engagement and leadership in sustainable development. The slides of this resource provide tips for approaching engagement with Indigenous Peoples, including the importance of respect, creating and holding space for Indigenous Knowledge and knowledge sharing, understanding your position in the work, and the why and how of collaboration, cultural training for staff, and the creation of clear terms of reference. The relationship-building process between groups is crucial to successful engagement and cooperation and should not be pushed to the side for any reason. These methods are guidelines for engagement with Indigenous Peoples, but lessons from this short resource can and should be applied to all forms of collaboration and engagement.

⊙ Learn more

2.4 Participation and Leaving No One Behind

The 2020 edition of the state of VLRs from IGES analyzes and reports on the VLR landscape across the globe, focusing on the diversity of strategies being used to track progress on the SDGs at the local level. A detailed analysis of the stakeholder engagement process used in existing major VLRs is included in this resource.

◉ Learn more

In the Shimokawa Method for Voluntary Local Review by Koike et al. (2020), the authors highlight an unfortunate flaw in the strategies of many local governments seeking to get stakeholders involved: limiting their scope for participation within the three major groups of business, civil society, and academia. Within these three major sectors are diverse groups, some receiving more attention and opportunities to be heard than others. As recommended by the authors, following the leave no one behind (LNOB) principle means taking a deeper look at who is involved in local stakeholder engagement and how marginalized groups can be prioritized to ensure inclusivity.

◉ Learn more

As a central promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the LNOB principle is proving to be a challenging aspect of realizing our goals for 2030. This LNOB good practice note (UN Sustainable Development Group, 2022) elaborates on how we can take this principle from theory to practice at all levels of society and government. Included in this resource is a breakdown of key recommended steps for assessment, tools for encouraging marginalized peoples with lived experiences to contribute their voices to help establish an understanding of data gaps, and assessment frameworks for identifying the root causes of why people are being left behind. This resource includes detailed explanations of how to integrate LNOB across planning and programming processes and encourages taking a people-centred approach to data to ensure we do not continue to make the same mistakes regarding data of marginalized peoples.

◉ Learn more

This webpage from the UN Sustainable Development Group website thoroughly summarizes the 2030 Agenda's universal principle of Leave No One Behind (LNOB). This principle is often described as the major point of distinction between the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the previous global effort, the UN Millennium Development Goals. It is a serious cause for concern when anyone faces needs deficits, discrimination, and marginalization. We must act together to ensure we begin our sustainable development journey with a focus on eliminating barriers and discrimination causing certain individuals to fall through the cracks.

◉ Learn more

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In *Leaving No Canadian Behind* by Bizikova et al. (2021), major groups marginalized across the country were found to be recent immigrants, people with disabilities, and Indigenous Peoples. For stakeholder engagement to be inclusive of all groups while prioritizing those furthest behind, it is important to know the "who" of marginalization in the local community and collaborate throughout the VLR process.

⊖ Learn more

A foundational component of the SDGs, the LNOB principle is best followed through a participatory approach to VLR development according to the Draft Guidelines for the Development of Voluntary Local Reviews in the ECE Region by the Economic Commission for Europe (2021). By focusing on participatory practices and the creation of collective value within the community, VLRs can include the voices of all without leaving anyone behind.

⊖ Learn more

This report from the Kawartha World Issues Centre and GreenUP (2021) on Indigenous leadership on the SDGs takes a practical look at what the SDGs mean for Indigenous Peoples, emphasizing the need to improve the collection of reliable, disaggregated data in Canada to effectively track inequalities and monitor progress in the national context. It recommends that Indigenous Peoples collect, analyze, and maintain their own data. The Government of Canada's unwillingness to approach Indigenous Peoples as equals rather than citizen stakeholders and the imposition of top-down organization has led to an inability to form meaningful relationships on sustainable development. Using SDGs 1, 4, 6, and 13, this resource demonstrates how the approach to advancing the SDGs can and should be centred around Indigenous Knowledge and leadership to ensure no one is left behind. This powerful perspective should inform every community's approach to SDG localization.

⊖ Learn more

The *Advancing Gender Equality in Nogojiwanong/Peterborough: Project Report* (Kawartha World Issues Centre, 2022) examines how gender equality is approached from the perspective of Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews. This is the fourth resource from the Peterborough/Nogojiwanong context demonstrating the inherent value in centring Indigenous Knowledge and leadership to achieve the SDGs (see section 2.2 for more resources from the Peterborough/Nogojiwanong context). This resource examines how gender intersects with one's Indigenous identity or any other relevant identity and features the experiences of gender among diverse groups, such as Black and racialized individuals, newcomers to Canada, and people with disabilities. The report also features a section on what gender equality means to people of diverse identities and speaks to some of the gaps hindering advancement on gender equality. The

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report concludes with recommendations for achieving gender equality based on feedback from participants at six gender equality workshops.

⊖ **Learn more**

In a short article on Grassroots Collaboration for the Ottawa Impact Hub, Zohouri (2021) presents an interesting example of the power and importance of grassroots collaboration taking place in Canada's capital city, Ottawa. From discussing how language informs the way we perceive our world to the power of vision-making and imagining a desired future to drive action, this short article provides insight on how to respectfully approach collaboration among diverse groups on the SDGs.

⊖ **Learn more**

2.5 Data and Indicators
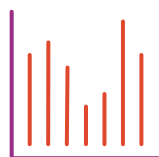
When it comes to working with the data of First Nations, the Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) principles developed by the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) are fundamental. The principles assert how First Nations' data and information will be collected, protected, used, or shared. OCAP is a tool to support strong information governance for First Nations data sovereignty. More information, including videos and training on these principles, is available on the FNIGC's website.

⊖ **Learn more**

Despite the relative richness of Canada's data landscape, there are still many data gaps complicating the inclusion of marginalized groups in reporting across Canada. An enlightening report on Leaving No Canadian Behind written by Bizikova (2021) speaks to the challenges of inclusive SDG monitoring in Canada caused by these gaps where large-scale data collection methods leave certain groups falling through the cracks, are not inclusive, or when data is unavailable at the level of disaggregation required for meaningful analysis. Recommendations for circumventing these data gaps can be found in this report. They can be applied to data collection during the VLR process.

⊖ **Learn more**

The *European Handbook for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews* by Siragusa et al. (2020) covers indicators across all 17 SDGs and the localization process. Local governments in the European context face challenges similar to those of their Canadian counterparts when it comes to applying the SDG framework to the local level of highly developed regions, which is why this handbook

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provides valuable guidance for overcoming some of these issues. In addition to recommendations for appropriate indicator selection, the handbook also features tips for navigating the SDG monitoring system, dealing with data challenges at the local level, and describes the key components of a VLR. The handbook's indicator selection methodology champions the use of official indicators in concert with experimental indicators to complete a well-rounded review of SDG progress in the local context. Indicators are organized by SDG and contain a description, relevant metadata, comments, and limitations to their use.

⊙ Learn more

Although focused on the European context, this report on dataset development for the SDGs in six pilot cities (Siragusa et al., 2021) is an informative and transparent resource for understanding the scope of data and indicators available for use at the subnational level. Each city is featured in a dedicated chapter, including the methodology applied, an analysis of data availability, key findings of the pilot project, and a final list of indicators used by each city. This pilot project focused on the SDG implementation and localization process of six smaller cities providing an overview of the possibilities for reporting on SDG progress in cities with more modest populations and resources.

⊙ Learn more

This French guide on an SDG target matrix created by l'Organisation international de la Francophonie and l'Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable (2021) is based on an elaborate SDG target prioritization tool in the form of an Excel document that aims to help communities of any size understand and tackle the SDGs more effectively. Containing a thorough checklist for prioritizing SDG targets, the guidebook begins with the basics, including an introduction to the SDGs and targets, and a self-assessment to help in the preparation for the journey ahead. With the context well-understood, broad consultation on local priorities can begin. Each step of this resource contains recommended best practices, as well as potential pitfalls to avoid. The document's final sections cover how to interpret the results of the consultation and how to act on the findings.

⊙ Learn more

As a companion to the SDG target matrix, this free course (in French) by the Institut en environnement, développement et société (n.d.) provides interested parties with training on how to make the most of the matrix and apply its findings across the political and strategic landscape at the local, regional, and national levels. For those wanting to better understand how they can leverage the SDG target matrix more effectively, this companion course is a valuable starting point.

⊙ Learn more

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The Draft Guidelines for the Development of Voluntary Local Reviews in the ECE Region from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) (2021) provide readers with an easily digestible yet detailed method for VLR planning and creation, which includes examples from existing VLRs and a checklist for steps within each phase of VLR creation. With phases one and two covering the collection of information and data and the assessment of the data along with a review of participatory approaches to achieving the SDGs, respectively, this strategy places data and action at the forefront of the VLR. This resource emphasizes the benefits of digital tools and open-source data, as well as the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

→ Learn more

For a lightweight guide to VLR creation for cities, *Voluntary Local Reviews: A Handbook for UK Cities – Building on the Bristol Experience* by Fox and Macleod (2019) is a great primer that excels when it comes to addressing an often-overlooked aspect of data: presentation. The Bristol VLR includes over 140 indicators, which led to the team making some creative decisions on how to present the data to readers, choosing to focus on key headlining indicators for each SDG, complemented by case studies featuring city stakeholders whose work contributes to the SDGs, providing valuable contextual knowledge of the data being presented.

→ Learn more

Resources such as the *Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews* from UCLG and UN-Habitat (2020) provide recommendations for overcoming data availability issues, such as localizing the SDG indicators by reinterpreting them to fit the needs of the local context, looking systematically at correlations between official indicators and those that are available locally, and finally emphasizing a qualitative analysis through the review with sporadic data included when available.

→ Learn more

This report from the Kawartha World Issues Centre and GreenUP (2021) on Indigenous leadership on the SDGs takes a practical look at what the SDGs mean for Indigenous People and emphasizes the need to improve the collection of reliable, disaggregated data in Canada to effectively track inequalities and monitor progress in the national context. It recommends that Indigenous Peoples collect, analyze, and maintain their own data.

→ Learn more

When it comes to presenting data, it is paramount to keep equity principles in mind. While *Do No Harm Guide: Applying Equity Awareness in Data Visualization* from Schwabish and Feng (2021) emphasizes racial and ethnic equity, it also offers many intersectional lessons that can be applied to reduce the marginalization of a variety of equity-seeking groups. This guide and the associated checklists and toolkits focus on the often hidden or subtle ways that data

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analysts and communicators fail to incorporate equitable awareness in the data they use and the products they create. Data-focused VLR processes will benefit greatly from learning about methods for equity in data.

⊙ Learn more

Data and data-driven systems have enormous potential to positively shape our society and are already doing so in many ways, informing decision making among a wide variety of influential actors. But harmful pitfalls regarding data lead to further marginalization, such as individuals excluded or rendered invisible by data, or placed in the hot seat as their data is harmfully dissected. A white paper by the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (2022), titled *Reimagining Data and Power: A Roadmap for Putting Values at the Heart of Data*, aims to provide guidance for best practices on data and share recommendations for changing the way we use data. This roadmap is organized by three themes: agency, accountability, and action. Organizations working with data, especially data collection and participatory methods, will find great value in this rich resource.

⊙ Learn more

Created by a partnership between United Way Winnipeg and the International Institute for Sustainable Development, Winnipeg's community indicator system, Peg, allows users to view data on over 50 indicators relevant to community members. Using the theme icons on the left side of the screen, users can navigate to indicator pages which vary from the health of babies born in Winnipeg right through to how many of them graduate 18 years later, how much garbage we send to the landfill, how we move around the city, and how we choose to spend our time. Each indicator features a helpful data visualization and a map, tools to customize data by neighbourhoods or years, and a page providing a description of the indicator along with relevant metadata. All indicators on the platform have been linked to relevant SDG targets and can be found on each indicator's SDG page. This tool demonstrates one of the many ways a community can track their progress on the SDGs using a bottom-up approach to measurement.

⊙ Learn more

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2.6 Leadership and Organization

When it comes to organizing a VLR, it can seem challenging with so many diverse stakeholders. Fortunately, the Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines on Voluntary Local Reviews by Ahmed et al. (2020) cover many major ideas surrounding VLR creation in a thorough yet digestible fashion. Primarily aimed at subnational and local governments, these guidelines begin with an overview of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the need for localizing the global goals through a process like the VLR, the VLR–VNR local–national connection, budgeting for a VLR, as well as important building blocks for VLR production and follow-up, including stakeholder engagement.

⊖ Learn more

This French-language webpage of the Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable introduces a project aimed at supporting and empowering member states of l'Organisation international de la Francophonie to incorporate the SDGs into their planning frameworks and strategies for the benefit of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the advancement of the green economy and our environment. Through broad consultation with planners, businesses, and civil society, this project has worked to produce a variety of communication tools and knowledge on the SDGs in French. It also contains useful connections to other French-language resources covering topics relevant to the achievement of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. These resources play an important role in levelling the playing field for SDG implementation by providing French-speaking communities with the tools they need to succeed.

⊖ Learn more

The Tamarack 10 guide (Schnurr, 2021) is an excellent place to start learning about SDG localization and understanding your local priorities. It includes 10 questions to assess your readiness to advance the SDGs locally, 10 really good ideas, 10 inspiring stories from Canadian communities, 10 useful resources, and 10 ways to get started. This inspiring guide will surely accompany you along your road to SDG localization and VLR creation.

⊖ Learn more

For cities looking to understand how the VLR fits within the institutional processes, the Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews from UCLG and UN-Habitat (2020) provide a great starting point. The VLR is a key tool for streamlining multi-level governance processes by providing an opportunity to align local goals with national and global goals. By using a comparative analysis of existing VLRs until 2020, cities can learn from the examples of others on how to incorporate the VLR process institutionally, how to identify and involve key stakeholders, and how to leverage local expertise for broad implementation of the SDGs. Recommendations include three strategies for overcoming data availability gaps, including a reinterpretation of

official indicators, systematically searching for a correlation between official indicators and those available locally, and using a qualitative assessment with only sporadic hard data. The emphasis on peer learning and the ability to view various strategies at a glance makes this resource valuable to those beginning their VLR journey.

❯ Learn more

The City of Quebec's sustainable development strategy (Ville de Québec, 2021) is a roadmap of the city's goals for achieving the 17 SDGs locally. Beginning with their localization process, the document goes on to highlight local actions on the SDGs in the community and key policy frameworks contributing to the city's actions on the 2030 Agenda. The city has also identified a variety of pressing issues where there is still room for improvement and our most difficult challenges ahead, while emphasizing the need for greater partnerships for the goals. Finally, the City of Quebec included a brief timeline of how this strategy document was created.

❯ Learn more

This short brief on the VLRs of Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, and Bristol (SDSN Canada & Green Beacon, n.d.) summarizes key aspects of the process and their experiences in the six domains of collaboration, SDG implementation, LNOB, political buy-in, data collection, and accountability and transparency. In each of the three cities, the mayor had a crucial role in driving the momentum on the SDGs and getting as many city departments and community members involved as possible. These snapshots of the VLR process can be helpful to begin understanding what the process looks like in practice.

❯ Learn more

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3.0 Integrating Reconciliation and the SDGs
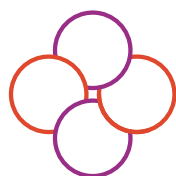
Many Indigenous Peoples initially had reservations about the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs because they do not reflect the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in its entirety, and Indigenous representation during the negotiation of the 2030 Agenda was limited. Indigenous Peoples are also critical of the fact that the SDGs do not clearly state that many global problems that threaten Indigenous livelihoods are caused by western civilization and thus should be the responsibility of western civilization to address. Nonetheless, the SDGs can be a useful framework to advance reconciliation alongside other issues of community well-being and sustainable development. In fact, a human rights-based perspective on the SDGs in Canada (Rosentreter, 2022) shows that advancing reconciliation is likely to be the most effective path of action Canada can take at the national level to achieve the SDGs. Indigenous leadership in SDG localization helps identifying and articulating SDG priorities from an Indigenous perspective and provides a basis for inclusive implementation and tracking of progress (Williams & Muskratt, 2019).

Successful integration of reconciliation and the SDGs requires understanding the origin of both perspectives. We therefore included a section on key frameworks and resources on reconciliation and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and how these frameworks intersect.

3.1 Frameworks for Transformative Reconciliation With Indigenous Peoples

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action (2015) are foundational to Canada's future and the relationship of Canada with Indigenous Peoples. As the Calls to Action cover several domains, including child welfare, education, language and culture, health, justice, and more, all work and projects carried out across Canada must act on this guidance as much as is feasible. Its relevance extends to all inhabitants of Canada and is key to advancing transformative reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

⊙ **Learn more**

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is a landmark document adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007. Although Canada was not initially supportive of this resolution, in 2021 the Government of Canada finally passed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act to recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples laid out in the resolution. A product of many decades of coordination and work, UNDRIP determines the minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous Peoples globally. This framework has enhanced the ability for data collection regarding the problems imposed on Indigenous Peoples, namely colonial practices and systemic oppression,

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by providing the global community with a dedicated process to review the well-being of global Indigenous populations and report on the status of their human rights.

> **Learn more**

This policy backgrounder on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act from the Government of Canada (2021a) provides information on what the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act means for Canada. In 2021, the Declaration gained recognition as an official federal Act, meaning implementation of the Declaration at the federal level will begin. This Act affirms the Declaration's role as an international human rights instrument and its role in interpreting law in Canada. Covering next steps, the importance of the legislation, its impact on natural resource extraction in Canada, as well as a variety of rights of Indigenous Peoples, this backgrounder gives an overview of UNDRIP as legislation within the Canadian context.

> **Learn more**

Pre-dating Canada's official affirmation of UNDRIP by 10 years, Gunn (2011) published *Understanding and Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: An Introductory Handbook*. The handbook outlines UNDRIP's importance, provides guidance for implementation and describes the variety of rights owed to Indigenous Peoples in Canada. This includes inherent human rights, rights to lands and resources, rights to self-determination and self-governance, right to education, as well as linguistic and cultural rights. The Declaration has implications for treaties in Canada, including the government's absolute responsibility to honour and uphold all agreements made with Indigenous Peoples. This resource is valuable for those looking to understand UNDRIP and its application in Canada with the help of a variety of global examples.

> **Learn more**

This factsheet from the Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2022a) on Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals argues that the SDGs are a key tool for Indigenous Peoples given their respect for Indigenous self-determination, human rights, and reflection of sustainability concepts shared by many Indigenous Peoples. It explores how the SDG framework benefits and affects Indigenous Peoples and how it connects with the climate crisis. Endorsed by the Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, Union of BC Indian Chiefs and more, this concise resource summarizes key points on what the SDGs mean for Indigenous Peoples.

> **Learn more**

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A second factsheet from the Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2022b) focuses on the deep connections between the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). It emphasizes that the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' inherent rights and respect for Indigenous knowledge, cultures, and traditional practices is directly connected to sustainable development and the health of our environment. By connecting articles from the UNDRIP to principles of sustainable development, clear obligations for government actors are provided in a succinct and explicit package.

⊙ **Learn more**

This extensive special report titled *UNDRIP Implementation: Braiding International, Domestic and Indigenous Laws* by Gunn et al. (2017) features articles from several Indigenous law and human rights experts. This report explains perspectives that incorporate the "Two-Eyed Seeing" principles of perceiving through Indigenous and Western knowledges and norms. These explorations of UNDRIP's role in the laws and lives of Turtle Island are expertly presented to readers who are looking to understand the policy impact and implications of UNDRIP. This advanced resource is recommended for those looking to collaborate with Indigenous Peoples on policy evaluations and assessments and develop thorough policy recommendations.

⊙ **Learn more**

Written from the perspective of international law, UNDRIP, and the SDG framework, this resource (Joffe, 2017) examines how the TRC's Calls to Action are inextricably linked to these important international frameworks in the Canadian context. The implications for women and girls of these intersecting frameworks are one focus explored by this text, in addition to the need to protect marginalized groups and end poverty by starting with restoring land and access to nature to Indigenous Peoples. This resource is helpful for globally minded communities looking to make meaningful policy recommendations.

⊙ **Learn more**

The *Advancing Gender Equality in Nogojiwanong/Peterborough: Project Report* (Kawartha World Issues Centre, 2022) examines how gender equality is approached from the perspective of Indigenous knowledge and worldviews. This is one of four examples that demonstrate the inherent value in centring Indigenous knowledge and leadership to achieve the SDGs. This resource, while focused on the Peterborough/Nogojiwanong context, is an important demonstration of the inseparable link between Indigenous Knowledge and sustainable development. This resource examines how gender intersects with one's Indigenous identity or any other relevant identity, and features the experience of gender among diverse groups, such as Black and racialized individuals, newcomers to Canada, and people with disabilities. The report also features a section on what gender equality means to people of diverse identities and speaks to some of the gaps hindering advancement on gender

equality. The report concludes with recommendations for achieving gender equality based on feedback from participants at six gender-equality workshops.

> ⊙ **Learn more**

3.2 VLRs and the SDGs as Tools for Transformative Reconciliation

This Agenda 2030 strategy document from the Government of Canada (2021b) features information on the United Nations 2030 Agenda and how the agenda is being approached in the Canadian context. The report explores the role of reconciliation in attaining the goals.

> ⊙ **Learn more**

For Indigenous Peoples, involvement in the VLR process is an opportunity to reclaim leadership and stewardship over how lands and resources are managed. A thorough document on *Civic–Indigenous Placekeeping and Partnership Building Toolkit* by Chung-Tiam-Fook (2022) contains many important lessons for successfully pursuing transformative reconciliation across Turtle Island and seeks to change the way non-Indigenous Peoples interact and engage. Including teachings such as the Seven Fundamental Truths, Two-Eyed Seeing, and the Seventh Generation Principle, best-practice examples for Indigenous engagement and guiding protocols for ceremony are introduced. Finally, the toolkit explores a variety of rights-based discussions on Indigenous sovereignty, inherent and treaty rights, self-determination, as well as data governance. This valuable toolkit provides a solid foundation of resources for respectful and meaningful civic–Indigenous partnerships.

> ⊙ **Learn more**

This report from the Kawartha World Issues Centre and GreenUP (2021) on Indigenous leadership on the SDGs takes a practical look at what the SDGs mean for Indigenous Peoples, emphasizing the need to improve the collection of reliable, disaggregated data in Canada to effectively track inequalities and monitor progress in the national context. It recommends that Indigenous Peoples collect, analyze, and maintain their own data. The Government of Canada's unwillingness to approach Indigenous Peoples as equals rather than citizen stakeholders and the imposition of top-down organization has led to an inability to form meaningful relationships on sustainable development. Using SDGs 1, 4, 6, and 13, this resource demonstrates how the approach to advancing the SDGs can and should be centred around Indigenous Knowledge and leadership to ensure no one is left behind. This powerful perspective should inform every community's approach to SDG localization.

> ⊙ **Learn more**

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As part of the project advancing the SDGs in the community of Peterborough/Nogojiwanong, the Indigenous Leadership Action Team's Co-Chairs created a document that explores how some of the SDGs connect to Indigenous ways of knowing and being (Williams & Muskratt, 2019) and how the framework impacts structures harming Indigenous Peoples. The presentation also outlines the Indigenous Leadership Action Team's members, role, and purpose in the project. This resource can be helpful to inspire other SDG localization efforts to pursue partnerships with Indigenous Peoples for the sake of all inhabitants of Turtle Island. For a deep dive on addressing specific SDGs through Indigenous Leadership, check out the case studies on addressing SDG 1 (no poverty) (Kawartha World Issues Centre & GreenUP, n.d.b), SDG 4 (quality education) (Kawartha World Issues Centre & GreenUP, n.d.c), SDG 5 (gender equality) (Kawartha World Issues Centre, 2022), and SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) (Kawartha World Issues Centre & GreenUP. (n.d.a) from an Indigenous perspective.

⊘ Learn more

A ground-breaking decolonial resource, *Sacred Civics: Building Seven Generation Cities* by Engle et al. (2022), challenges many of the assumptions that dictate our patterns of living, organizing, and governing. This transdisciplinary work examines how cities and human settlements are sites of transformative power, arguing that we must reassess our societies and re-centre spirituality and sacred values. Discussions on sustainable development across Canada and globally will benefit from the book's discussions on inclusivity, participatory design, social justice, healthy communities, and future cities.

⊘ Learn more

For a broad global overview of the role Indigenous Peoples have in sustainable land, ecosystem, and biodiversity management, this policy brief from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (2019) on partnering with Indigenous Peoples for the SDGs speaks frankly to the challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples and how they are being marginalized and left behind on several goals. It highlights the importance of Indigenous land access and stewardship and the subsequent impacts on food security, climate action, life on land, and our general harmony with the natural world. Attaining several of the SDGs will be impossible without first addressing the complex barriers and oppressive systems impacting Indigenous Peoples globally. This short, policy-focused resource is recommended for communities with significant agricultural ties.

⊘ Learn more

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4.0 Examples From Kelowna, Winnipeg, Malmö, and Espoo

To support the development of this handbook, IISD developed a methodology to review existing VLRs to identify good practices and inspiring examples that are worth sharing. We applied the draft methodology to the Canadian VLRs from Kelowna and Winnipeg as well as VLRs from Malmö, Sweden and Espoo, Finland, two countries whose populations also include Indigenous People. Below, we summarize our preliminary findings regarding how these cities included Indigenous People in their VLR processes and other noteworthy examples of good practice.

4.1 Kelowna

Kelowna's VLR was prepared in partnership with the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation and Global Empowerment Coalition of the Central Okanagan, with input from the City of Kelowna and several organizations, including Indigenous bodies.

The VLR frames LNOB as an "Indigenous approach." While the drafting team endeavoured to incorporate Indigenous perspectives and the TRC's Calls to Action throughout the report, the VLR recognizes that "there is still significant work to be done in order to forge a new relationship centred around Indigenous engagement and perspectives, and on honour and respect."

The VLR has a limited focus on other marginalized groups, both in terms of LNOB efforts and multistakeholder implementation, and, beyond referencing initiatives to tackle the overdose crisis and homelessness, limited information on specific approaches and efforts to LNOB. One of the main reporting challenges cited is the limited availability of disaggregated data.

There are gaps in ethnic and racial data collection and among data on Indigenous Peoples, which, the VLR acknowledges, must be collected, accessed, and interpreted in collaboration with Indigenous-led organizations.

Good practice example

The Journey Home Strategy—a 5-year, local-level strategic plan to address homelessness throughout the community (SDG 1)—and Kelowna Community Action Team (a knowledge hub, actively developing strategies for Kelowna and the surrounding region, to take action on the overdose crisis [SDG 3]) are examples of where the City of Kelowna, civil society organizations, and Indigenous groups have worked and continue to work collaboratively to achieve the SDGs.

4.2 Winnipeg

Winnipeg's VLR was developed in a collaboration between the United Way of Winnipeg and IISD, building on their decade-long partnership in managing the city's interactive data dashboard, "Peg." Peg gathers local data from diverse sources on topics that Winnipeggers prioritized and displays them as maps, charts, and graphs.

Winnipeg's VLR includes a chapter on the Human Rights of Indigenous People and Truth and Reconciliation in the context of the SDGs. Noting that Winnipeg is the city with the largest Indigenous population in Canada, the authors observe that the indicators used in the dashboard for Winnipeg have limitations with respect to Indigenous Peoples. The report states that the Peg partners are committed to re-examining the indicators used to better reflect understandings of identity, marginalization, and "the urgent journey of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples." They further note that this work must be done in partnership with Indigenous leaders and experts to collect, interpret, and present data through an Indigenous lens and in line with Indigenous protocols and principles such as the OCAP Principles regarding data describing First Nation communities.

The LNOB section in the report highlights that recent immigrants and people identifying as Indigenous or members of other racialized communities have been hit harder than other groups by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Good practice examples

Civil Society Spotlights

Winnipeg's VLR combines the data on progress for each SDG with real stories from local community groups. Key civil society organizations have been profiled, showcasing their daily contribution to building a more sustainable and inclusive city.

Decolonizing Peg

The Peg Community Indicator System project is committed to re-examining the indicators to reflect better understandings of identity, marginalization, and "the urgent journey of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples." It aims to do this by building partnerships with Indigenous communities and expanding processes for participation and inclusion, as well as by reaching out to Indigenous leaders in Winnipeg to learn about appropriate forms of engagement and meaningful inclusion. It also trains staff on reconciliation and Indigenous data sovereignty, including the OCAP Principles developed by the FNIGC. These Principles "assert that First Nations have control over data collection processes, and that they own and control how this information can be used." Learning from the experiences of other communities in Canada that have successfully prioritized Indigenous leadership—like the work of the Kawartha World Issues Centre on Indigenous leadership in advancing the SDGs in Nogojiwanong/Peterborough—is also one of Peg's central goals.

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4.3 Espoo

As part of the VLR preparation process, each unit in the City of Espoo was asked to select one to three projects or activities that implement the Espoo Story—the city's development strategy, which is aligned with the SDGs. The units' articles describing such projects and indicating what SDGs they are thereby implementing form the basis for the VLR. Espoo aims to be a UN Forerunner City 2025 and actively participates in inter-city collaboration on the SDGs, including through the Covenant of Mayors and numerous regional and project-level activities. Espoo has consistently engaged with a broad range of stakeholders on the identification of local priorities, implementation efforts, and VLR preparation. While the VLR does not list Indigenous groups as targets of LNOB efforts, it appears to be comprehensive in its coverage of and engagement with marginalized groups, including through targeted approaches and efforts to LNOB.

4.4 Malmö

Malmö's VLR builds on the city's annual sustainability report. The general aim of the report is to identify how existing strategies, programs, follow-up, and goal management processes and goals in the City of Malmö are steering toward the SDGs.

The SDGs have been integrated into the city's overall budget and related plan, 2020–2022, into the follow-up system (using the annual sustainability report to follow up on the SDGs), and into long-term and city-wide steering documents such as the environmental program and comprehensive plan. In addition, the VLR's purpose is to examine how the key principle for the 2030 Agenda of leaving no one behind is highlighted in the city's efforts to promote equal rights and opportunities.

Malmö's VLR includes a specific chapter on LNOB. This principle is close to the intentions of the human rights framework, as well as several Swedish laws and political objectives. Most of that chapter summarizes how Malmö's framework for human rights works together with its general features. Finally, proposals are discussed for taking Malmö forward in its efforts to fulfill statutory obligations and political ambitions in this field.

The Malmö is working to protect and promote the rights, cultural heritage, and languages of national minorities in accordance with the legislation and adopted steering documents, partly by ensuring that national minorities are given the opportunity, through consultation, to influence issues and decisions that affect them. Furthermore, Malmö's direction in this regard and the rights of national minorities are clarified based on current legislation and through programs for the national minority in question, which were also produced in consultation with the national minorities.

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Good practice examples

Lessons Learned From the VLR Process

The report has a specific chapter on lessons learned from the VLR process to share Malmö's experience in conducting its VLR and provide useful guidance for the benefit of colleagues in other cities who are thinking of starting their own VLR processes. The chapter emphasizes the important and rewarding experience related to collaboration, dialogue, and knowledge exchange in conducting such processes.

Community Stories

From March 2020 to March 2021, the city gathered stories from residents to complement statistical data as part of the collaborative "Our Malmö 2020" program. The project aimed to test methods and structures for qualitative data collection to gain a fuller understanding of both the external environment and inner world of Malmö's citizens . The learning from this process highlighted how stories help explain social interaction and aspects of municipal services. Stories can move people and create empathy, with the potential of challenging prevailing norms and structures. Methodological development of this kind may have an important role in helping to change direction toward more sustainable organizational development and innovation in line with Agenda 2030.

Case Studies

The examples of activities, projects, analyses, and steering processes presented via the case studies in the report show that there is an awareness and commitment contributing to the movement toward increased sustainability, at all levels and in all policy areas. They also provide examples of some of the many partnerships and cooperation between Malmö and other stakeholders that are ongoing and that can fill the gap between different fields of responsibility and degrees of power.

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5.0 Considerations on Structure

VLRs come in many different forms and reflect the diversity of each individual community's approach to reviewing their progress on the 17 SDGs. The final form of a VLR is ultimately shaped by the goals and visions of the community and will differ based on who has a part in its creation. Although VLRs are a voluntary process not mandated by the UN, the UN DESA included a recommended structure in its Global Guiding Elements for Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) of SDG Implementation (UN DESA, n.d.). The structure mirrors that recommended for VNRs, which can facilitate importing VLR content into national reports. Furthermore, we observed that a majority of the VLRs presented to date are aligned with the recommended structure. This supports comparisons between VLRs and will make it easier for other cities to navigate your VLR when looking for experiences to learn from. We summarize the recommended structure below as one option to consider for your VLR.

- An **opening statement** that covers the vision for the VLR and will typically feature political commitment from the local government on SDG implementation.
- Review **highlights**, which act to summarize the content and set the tone for the rest of the document.
- An **introduction** to familiarize outsiders with the local context demographically, historically, politically, and in whatever other way is deemed important to the local community.
- The **methodology and preparation process,** including transparency over challenges faced. This section will usually cover the institutional process for creating the VLR, the stakeholder engagement process, and data collection methods.
- The local **policy and enabling environment** for successful SDG implementation. This section will examine local SDG awareness at the policy level and how the governance system can facilitate the SDGs. This section also encourages using the VLR process to reflect on structural and systemic issues preventing broad implementation of the SDGs and examine how they can be overcome. The means of implementation such as financing strategies and partnerships are included in this section.
- Local **progress on goals and targets** is intended to be an important centrepiece of the review where communities can evaluate where they find themselves according to the 17 SDGs. This section typically contains data and indicators along with meaningful analysis and contextual explanation. Strategies for continued monitoring after the completion of the community's first VLR are commonly included in this section.
- A **conclusion and next steps** are included in a way that should keep the momentum going. The VLR process is not intended to end when the report is published, and communities are encouraged to reflect on findings and use the review to orient their continued efforts toward achieving the 17 SDGs locally.
- Finally, **annexes** are commonly included to avoid bogging down the main text of the report while still including meaningful and significant information.

For inspiration on your community's own VLR, visit the UN VLR webpage (UN DESA., n.d.) and IGES VLR Lab (IGES, n.d.) for existing VLR examples.

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6.0 Sharing Your Voluntary Local Review

Our research revealed a gap in communicating the results of your VLR process. None of the resources we scanned included guidelines for developing VLR-specific communication strategies and plans. Only a few resources included general tips on opportunities for communication.

It is important to plan beyond the publication of the VLR and develop a clear vision of the different audiences and stakeholders whose behaviour should be influenced by the VLR. Releasing the VLR is but one step in the process. In many cases the coordinators of a VLR process will have communications teams and resources that can be engaged to disseminate the VLR and promote its recommendations. These teams should be involved at an early stage and made aware that a VLR can target a wide range of audiences at the local, national, and international levels. The following sections describe some of the opportunities and communication channels that are available in Canada and internationally.

IISD has developed a communications toolkit focusing on the Tracking Progress platform. While it centres on using local data for communication, it can provide useful insights into developing broader VLR communication plans. The toolkit is not yet publicly accessible. We are working on a dedicated VLR communications toolkit. In the meantime, we can make the current tracking progress toolkit available upon request. Please contact us at tracking-progress@iisd.ca

SDSN's *Getting Started With the SDGs in Cities* (2016) includes some general tips for communication in the section on stakeholder engagement. These tips can be a starting point to connect with communications teams from the coordinating organizations early on to begin thinking about a communications strategy to support the entire VLR process, including the promotion of the VLR once released.

◉ Learn more

Step 10 of the Shimokawa Method for VLRs focuses on advocating and communicating your city's commitments and actions to develop partnerships and advocate global and national policy changes. The section includes general considerations for targeting different types of decision-makers through advocacy and communication strategies and recommends scanning the website of United Cities and Local Governments and Local Governments for Sustainability for training opportunities and resources on sustainable development communication.

◉ Learn more

6.1 Local Opportunities

At the local level, your VLR has the greatest potential to directly raise awareness and influence decision making. It is therefore important to specifically target different audiences with tailored messages and to choose appropriate channels based on a thorough analysis of each group and their information habits. The primary and secondary audiences will vary depending on local conditions and priorities, but they frequently include:

- Decision-makers and their advisors
- City councillors and other representatives
- Indigenous leaders and members of Indigenous groups
- Religious leaders
- Community leaders of specific groups or for specific purposes (e.g., women, youth, environment, social justice)
- Business managers and executives
- Union leaders
- Academics, teachers, and students
- Funders
- Local influencers
- Representatives of local media

The analysis of these groups will also reveal the most important information channels that can be used next to local or regional media outlets.

6.2 National Opportunities

At the national level, communication strategies can focus on connecting to peers, raising awareness of local progress, and connecting to national-level reporting. Several SDG-focused platforms and channels exist that can help connect with audiences that are already interested in the SDGs.

Alliance 2030 is a network of organizations, institutions, and individuals committed to achieving the SDGs in Canada. The Alliance 2030 website functions as a national hub for sharing news and information about SDG action on the ground.

Canada's SDG Unit is the official coordinating body of SDG implementation in Canada. The SDG Unit organizes the SDG Action Networking Series to share experience on SDG implementation and is responsible for Canada's annual report on national SDG implementation and Canada's Voluntary National Review to the UN. The SDG unit offers opportunities to submit input on SDG implementation for inclusion in these reports through surveys and other means.

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6.3 International Opportunities

At the international level, there are several platforms that facilitate the sharing of VLRs with peer communities around the world. These organizations also regularly organize events bringing together cities that have published VLRs.

The handbook based on the VLR experience in Bristol, UK, *Voluntary Local Reviews: A Handbook for UK Cities – Building on the Bristol Experience* authored by Fox & Macleod from the University of Bristol Cabot Institute for the Environment suggests a number of potential avenues and venues, including increased participation by subnational governments in the VNR process, collaboration with UCLG to be included in their annual report presented at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), submission to the IGES VLR repository, and the challenging option of sharing the report directly at an HLPF side-event.

⊙ **Learn more**

In UN DESA's Global Guiding Elements for Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) of SDG Implementation, the VLR is firmly grounded as an important tool for local governments to aid national SDG reporting efforts by communicating their capacity and commitments in line with the 2030 Agenda.

⊙ **Learn more**

UN DESA also maintains the UN's official landing page and VLR repository, which includes a searchable collection of all VLRs and voluntary subnational reviews submitted to the UN, and pages covering background, resources, and events to inform communities on the state of VLRs across the globe. Communities are invited to submit their VLRs in pdf format to dsdg@un.org.

⊙ **Learn more**

IGES hosts the online VLR lab (Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, n.d.), which includes a repository of VLRs and VSRs from across the globe in an easily navigable format, organized by release date. Each VLR is featured on its own page with insights and relevant metadata such as population, level of government, and a profile of the community. IGES also publishes an annual review of VLRs submitted and organizes occasional online meetings and workshops.

⊙ **Learn more**

Communities that have completed a VLR can also consider presenting their experience directly at global or regional UN Conferences. The UN HLPF is the annual gathering for reviewing SDG progress. Countries present their VNRs in the official programs, while VLRs and VSRs can be presented during side events or other parallel forums run by organizations like UCLG. In recent years, the UN has encouraged cities to also present their work at regional UN conferences. Canada is a member of UNECE, which offers SDG support (UNECE, n.d.) to countries on regional priorities. In 2021, UNECE conducted a regional SDG forum for UNECE member states. Future iterations of this Forum will likely offer space for local communities from UNECE countries to share their activities, including VLRs.

Canada's SDG Unit (Government of Canada, 2022) can also coordinate the participation of Canadian communities in international forums such as the UN's annual HLPF where VLRs can be presented during side events.

7.0 Resource Summaries and Highlights

4 Directions of Conservation Consulting Inc. (n.d.). *Navigating the road ahead: Indigenous collaborative programming.* https://www.kwic.info/sites/default/files/2021-05/KWIC-Report-Consultant-WEB.pdf

> This concise guide covers a variety of useful strategies and tips for groups looking to collaborate meaningfully with Indigenous communities. It includes examples of how to notify and engage with communities impacted by your work. Indigenous relationships with land include cultural, spiritual, economic, stewardship, kinship, governance and rights-based aspects, and Indigenous Peoples have unique and complex relationships with land that extends beyond using land for their personal or community needs or as their life-support system. Ensuring that these relationships can continue is critical to the future and well-being of Indigenous Peoples. This guide is a helpful starting point for framing your Indigenous engagement, consultation, and collaboration strategies and touches on how to foster long-term, meaningful collaborative relationships based on the principles of respect, protocols, and commitment. The guide also covers basic strategies for collaborating effectively during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ahmed, S., Koike, H., Siddique, O., & Ortiz-Moya, F. (2020). *Asia–Pacific regional guidelines on voluntary local reviews.* United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. https://www.unescap.org/resources/asia-pacific-regional-guidelines-voluntary-local-reviews

> This impressively robust resource developed by the Environment and Development Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) in collaboration with the Penang Platform for Sustainable Urbanization covers many major ideas surrounding VLR creation in a thorough yet digestible fashion. Primarily aimed at subnational and local governments, these guidelines begin with an overview of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the need for localizing the global goals through a process like the VLR, the VLR–VNR local–national connection, budgeting for a VLR, as well as important building blocks for VLR production and follow-up, including stakeholder engagement. Although focused on the Asia–Pacific region, the guidelines are based on core concepts of the VLR process and the 2030 Agenda that can be seamlessly applied to most global contexts, including our own. With an easily navigable text, helpful visuals, and templates, this resource is ideal for use as a core reference to guide communities through their VLR processes.

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Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities. (2020). *VVSG SDG pilot project with local governments 2017–2019: Approach and lessons learned.* https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/sdg_pilot_project_vvsg_approach_and_lessons_learned.pdf

This report from the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities covers lessons learned from an experiment with 20 pilot cities on how to translate the 2030 agenda to their local context. Their experiences went on to inform the methodologies and guidelines for SDG localization in all 300 Flemish municipalities. The project's core pillars were awareness raising, policy, and planning. One of the most significant changes resulting from the pilot was an advancement of cross-departmental work on sustainability, expanding the mandate beyond the sustainability officer. The resource links to a variety of useful resources created throughout the pilot related to SDG awareness raising in the community, in policy, or across an organization. The VVSG encourages the use of these resources by anyone, but indicates that new strategies should be evaluated and adjusted based on the needs of the local context. This report covers major logistic efforts and timelines for the project and would be a helpful resource for communities looking to invest the time in getting all residents on the same page regarding their community's sustainability goals.

Bizikova, L., Jungcurt, S., McDougal, K., Temmer, J., & Wiebe, K. (2021). *Leaving no Canadian behind: Measuring the well-being of vulnerable Canadians for effective SDG implementation.* International Institute for Sustainable Development. https://www.iisd.org/publications/leaving-no-canadian-behind-sdg-implementation

Focusing on data gaps complicating the inclusion of marginalized groups in reporting across Canada, this report, centred on the LNOB principle, sheds light on the challenges of inclusive SDG monitoring in Canada. The report speaks to the difficulties of including marginalized groups when large-scale data collection methods allow certain groups to fall through the cracks or are not inclusive or when data are not available at the level of disaggregation required for meaningful analysis. Recommendations for circumventing these data gaps can be found in this report and can be applied to SDG localization and the VLR process.

British Columbia Council for International Cooperation & Global Empowerment Coalition of the Central Okanagan. (2021). *Global goals, local action: Kelowna's voluntary local review.* https://www.bccic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Kelowna-VLR_BCCIC_2021.pdf

> The first VLR produced in Canada, this report, prepared in partnership with the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation and Global Empowerment Coalition of the Central Okanagan, aims to better understand how the Community of Kelowna has aligned local efforts with the global 2030 Agenda.
>
> The goal of this project was to review Kelowna's progress toward achieving the 17 SDGs. In conducting one of Canada's first VLRs, the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation identified targets and indicators that were within the city's priorities and abilities to effect change. Identifying trends, challenges, and opportunities relevant to each of the 17 SDGs, this VLR project supports the advancement of sustainability in the community and highlights the important role that cities play in meeting global agendas.
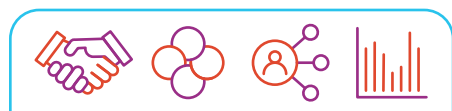
Chung-Tiam-Fook, T. (2022). *Civic-Indigenous placekeeping and partnership building toolkit.* Future Cities Canada. https://futurecitiescanada.ca/portal/resources/civic-indigenous-placekeeping-and-partnership-building-toolkit/

> This thorough toolkit on joint placekeeping and partnership building between settler and Indigenous groups contains many important lessons for successfully pursuing transformative reconciliation across Turtle Island. Informative descriptions of key Indigenous beliefs, knowledges, and worldviews provide a crucial foundational understanding of how to approach settler-Indigenous partnerships of all kinds. In addition to teachings such as the Seven Fundamental Truths, Two-Eyed Seeing, and the Seventh Generation Principle, best practice examples for Indigenous engagement and guiding protocols for ceremony are introduced. Finally, the toolkit explores a variety of rights-based discussions on Indigenous sovereignty, inherent and treaty rights, self-determination, as well as data governance. This valuable toolkit provides a solid foundation of resources for respectful and meaningful civic–Indigenous partnerships.

City of Espoo. (2020). *Voluntary local review: Implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 2030 in the City of Espoo.* https://www.espoo.fi/en/city-espoo/sustainable-development/sustainable-development-goals/espoo-voluntary-local-review-vlr

> Based on a study carried out by the European Union, Espoo has been awarded the title of the most sustainable city in Europe, and its goals include remaining at the forefront of sustainable development. The city formulated its sustainable development strategy after having listened to the voices of its residents, companies, and communities. It is comprehensive in its coverage of and engagement with marginalized groups, including through targeted approaches and efforts to LNOB. Espoo's VLR is an opportunity not only to measure the city's sustainability but also a way to join the global conversation on how to better localize the 2030 Agenda. The VLR maps concrete actions and projects encompassing the city's local strategy with the SDGs. The VLR reviews the 17 SDGs with a particular focus on SDGs 4, 9, and 13.

City of Malmö. (2021). *Voluntary local review City of Malmö 2021: A review of the city's steering toward the Sustainable Development Goals.* https://Malmö.se/download/18.18ed938317a0fec4a62390d/1624452611465/VLR_City_of_Malmö_2021.pdf

> The city of Malmö has committed itself to advancing sustainable development and has been working on advancing the SDGs since 2018. Malmö's first VLR focused on reviewing the city's steering mechanisms to accelerate the localization of the 2030 Agenda. The VLR also pays special attention to how the city is upholding the LNOB principle by working to protect and promote the rights, cultural heritage, and languages of national minorities in accordance with the legislation; partly by ensuring that national minorities are given and have the opportunity, through consultation, to influence issues and decisions that affect them. Throughout the VLR, the city chose to focus on the SDGs prioritized by the 2021 HLPF, namely SDGs 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16, and 17.

Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples. (2022a). *Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Factsheet one.* https://www.declarationcoalition.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Factsheet_1.pdf

> This factsheet speaks about the connections between Canada's commitments to sustainability and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, arguing that the UN SDGs

are a key tool for Indigenous Peoples given their respect for Indigenous self-determination, human rights, and reflection of sustainability concepts shared by many Indigenous Peoples. This factsheet explores how the SDG framework benefits and impacts Indigenous Peoples and how the framework connects with the climate crisis. Endorsed by the Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, Union of BC Indian Chiefs and more, this concise resource summarizes key points on what the SDGs mean for Indigenous Peoples.


Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples. (2022b). *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Sustainable Development Goals: Factsheet two.* https://www.declarationcoalition.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Factsheet_2.pdf

This factsheet focuses on the deep connections between the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). It emphasizes that the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' inherent rights and respect for Indigenous knowledge, cultures, and traditional practices are directly connected to sustainable development and the health of our environment. By connecting articles from the UNDRIP to principles of sustainable development, clear obligations for government actors are provided in a succinct and explicit package.

Dieninger, N., Lu, Y., Griess, J., & Santamaria, R. (2019). *Cities taking the lead on the Sustainable Development Goals: A voluntary local review handbook for cities.* Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/VLR_Handbook_7.7.19.pdf

This handbook argues that the strength of a VLR comes from its ability to shine a light on hidden connections between otherwise unrelated departments and teams, providing a unified framework under which these connections can be leveraged into local action. It is focused on the benefits experienced by local governments across the United States in using the VLR as a storytelling vehicle to increase accountability and leadership close to home while engaging on the global level to elevate subnational priorities. Common questions and answers on stakeholder engagement, balancing victories with areas of improvement, as well as the difference between a VLR and a city's other reporting obligations are asked and answered with practical examples. The benefits are threefold, implicating the internal city government, the local community, as well as the global community. The inclusion of city case studies, key guidance, and templates for VLR production make this a valuable resource for cities looking to identify what components of a VLR matter most to their local realities and how to gather support.

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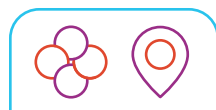
Engle, J., Agyeman, J., & Chung-Tiam-Fook, T. (2022). *Sacred Civics: Building seven generation cities.* Taylor & Francis. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003199816/sacred-civics-jayne-engle-julian-agyeman-tanya-chung-tiam-fook

> This ground-breaking decolonial resource challenges assumptions which dictate our patterns of living, organizing, and governing. This transdisciplinary work examines how cities and human settlements are sites of transformative power, arguing that we must reassess our societies and re-centre spirituality and sacred values. Discussions on sustainable development across Canada and globally will see great benefit from the book's review of inclusivity, participatory design, social justice, healthy communities, and future cities.

First Nations Information Governance Centre. (n.d.). *The First Nations Principles of OCAP.* https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/

> French: https://fnigc.ca/fr/les-principes-de-pcap-des-premieres-nations/

> The First Nations principles of OCAP developed by the FNIGC are fundamental to any project incorporating data of First Nations. The principles assert how First Nations' data and information will be collected, protected, used, or shared. OCAP is a tool to support strong information governance for First Nations data sovereignty. More information, including videos and training on these principles, is available on the FNIGC's website.

Fox, S., & Macleod, A. (2019). *Voluntary local reviews: A handbook for UK cities – Building on the Bristol experience.* University of Bristol Cabot Institute for the Environment. https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/en/publications/voluntary-local-reviews-a-handbook-for-uk-cities

> Although rooted in the experiences of creating a VLR in Bristol and focused on guiding local governments in the United Kingdom, this handbook reflects on many key aspects of the VLR process, namely data-related topics such as presentation, collection, and challenges, and surveys for preliminary stakeholder identification and engagement. The Bristol VLR includes over 140 indicators, which led to the team making some creative decisions on how to present the data to readers. This was complemented by case studies featuring city stakeholders whose work contributes to the SDGs, providing valuable contextual knowledge of the data being presented. The handbook also covers methods for sharing the VLR beyond the local

community, alluding to greater participation in the VNR, collaboration with UCLG on their annual report presented at the HLPF featuring VLRs, and other global opportunities.

Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data. (2022). *Reimagining data and power: A roadmap for putting values at the heart of data.* Data Values Project. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wGWzdMxClZgwhkSdh24XPLXm7Z1P_Yh7H9PSqnym2Dg/edit?usp=sharing

Data and data-driven systems have enormous potential to positively shape our society and are already doing so in many ways, informing decision making among a wide variety of influential actors. But harmful pitfalls regarding data lead to further marginalization, such as individuals excluded or rendered invisible by data or placed in the hot seat as their data is harmfully dissected. The contents of this white paper are based on a year-long consultation with 240 individuals from 145 organizations across 55 countries. It aims to provide guidance for best practices on data and share recommendations for changes to the way we do data. This resource is organized by the three themes of agency, accountability, and action. Organizations working with data, especially data collection and participatory methods, will find great value in this rich resource.

Government of Canada. (2021a). *Backgrounder: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.* https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/about-apropos.html

This resource provides information on what the UNDRIP Act means for Canada. In 2021, the Declaration gained recognition as an official federal Act, meaning implementation of the Declaration at the federal level will begin. This Act affirms the Declaration's role as an international human rights instrument and its role in interpreting law in Canada. Covering next steps, the importance of the legislation, its impact on natural resource extraction in Canada, as well as a variety of rights of Indigenous Peoples, this backgrounder gives an overview of UNDRIP as legislation within the Canadian context.

Government of Canada. (2021b). *Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy: Moving forward together.* https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/esdc-edsc/documents/programs/agenda-2030/ESDC-PUB-050-2030Agenda-EN-v9.pdf

French: https://www.justice.gc.ca/fra/declaration/apropos-about.html

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This document from the Government of Canada features information on the United Nations 2030 Agenda and how the agenda is being approached in the Canadian context. The resource highlights some important work taking place across Canada on SDG localization, Indigenous Peoples' work on sustainable development, partnerships across the non-profit and private sectors, research and education on the SDGs and Canada's international role in the achievement of Agenda 2030. Objectives, such as enhancing governance and policy coherence, raising awareness and encouraging partnerships, as well as the role of reconciliation in attaining the goals, are explored in this report.

Government of Canada. (2022). *Canada takes action on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals*. https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/agenda-2030.html

Gunn, B. (2011). *Understanding and implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: An introductory handbook.* Indigenous Bar Association: https://www.indigenousbar.ca/pdf/undrip_handbook.pdf

Written 10 years before the UNDRIP's adoption into federal legislation by the Canadian government in 2021, this handbook on UNDRIP's importance and guidance for implementation covers the variety of rights owed to Indigenous Peoples in Canada. This includes inherent human rights, rights to lands and resources, rights to self-determination and self-governance, right to education, as well as linguistic and cultural rights. The Declaration has implications for treaties in Canada, including the government's absolute responsibility to honour and uphold all agreements made with Indigenous Peoples. This resource is valuable for those looking to understand UNDRIP and its application in Canada with the help of a variety of global examples.

Gunn, B., Knockwood, C., Christie, G., Henderson, J. Y., Hewitt, J., Borrows, J., Nichols, J., Fontaine, L. S., Fitzgerald, O. S., Schwartz, R., & Morales, S. (2017). *UNDRIP implementation: Braiding international, domestic and Indigenous laws.* Centre for International Governance Innovation. https://www.cigionline.org/publications/undrip-implementation-braiding-international-domestic-and-indigenous-laws/

Available in French

This extensive special report on UNDRIP implementation and the interwoven, or braided, nature of international, domestic, and Indigenous law features articles from a number of Indigenous law and human rights experts. This report features perspectives incorporating the

Two-Eyed Seeing principles of perceiving through Indigenous and Western knowledges and norms. These explorations of UNDRIP's role in the laws and lives of inhabitants of Turtle Island are helpful for readers looking to understand the policy impact and implications of the UNDRIP. This advanced resource is recommended for those looking to collaborate with Indigenous Peoples on policy evaluations and assessments and develop thorough policy recommendations.

Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable. (n.d.). *Réalisation des ODD.* https://www.ifdd.francophonie.org/projets/realisation-des-odd/

This French-language resource introduces a project aimed at supporting and empowering member states of l'Organisation international de la Francophonie to incorporate the SDGs into their planning frameworks and strategies for the benefit of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the advancement of the green economy and our environment. Through broad consultation with planners, businesses, and civil society, this project has worked to produce a variety of communication tools and knowledge on the SDGs in French. It also contains useful connections to other French-language resources covering topics relevant to the achievement of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. These resources play an important role in levelling the playing field for SDG implementation by providing French-speaking communities with the tools they need to succeed.

Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable. (2022). *Formation à l'utilisation de la grille de priorisation des cibles des ODD.* https://formation.ifdd.francophonie.org/courses/grille-de-priorisation-des-cibles-des-odd-gpc-odd/

As a companion to the SDG target matrix created by l'Organisation international de la Francophonie and l'Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable, this free course provides interested parties with training on how to make the most of the matrix and apply its findings across the political and strategic landscape at the local, regional, and national levels. For those wanting to better understand how they can leverage the SDG target matrix more effectively, this companion course is a valuable starting point.

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Institut en environnement, développement et société (Institut EDS). (n.d.). *Les ODD dans les collectivités locales.* https://ieds.ulaval.ca/linstitut/demarche-eds/odd/

> This French resource features a description of an ongoing project from the Institut en environment, développement et société of the University of Laval, intended to promote the importance of local community and municipal involvement in the achievement of the SDGs. Given the power to affect change in the daily lives of residents at the local level, this project will aid municipalities and municipal residents in tackling SDG localization with the needs of all community members in mind.

Institute for Global Environmental Strategies. (n.d.). *Online voluntary local review (VLR) Lab.* https://www.iges.or.jp/en/projects/vlr

> This VLR repository features a host of VLRs and VSRs from across the globe in an easily navigable format, organized by release date. Each VLR is featured on its own page with insights and relevant metadata such as population, level of government, and a profile of the community.

International Fund for Agricultural Development. (2019). *Partnering with Indigenous Peoples for the SDGs: Advancing solutions by working together.* https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/41390728/policybrief_indigenous_sdg.pdf/e294b690-b26c-994c-550c-076d15190100

> This policy brief from the International Fund for Agricultural Development on partnering with Indigenous Peoples for the SDGs provides a broad global overview of the role Indigenous Peoples have in sustainable land, ecosystem, and biodiversity management. It speaks frankly to the challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples and how they are being marginalized and left behind on a number of goals. This policy brief highlights the importance of Indigenous land access and stewardship and the subsequent impacts on food security, climate action, life on land, and our general harmony with the natural world. Attaining a number of the SDGs will be impossible without first addressing the complex barriers and oppressive systems impacting Indigenous Peoples globally. This short, policy-focused resource is recommended for communities with significant agricultural ties.

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Joffe, P. (2017). *Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights, UN Declaration and sustainable development in international law.* Friends Service Committee (Quakers). https://quakerservice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Indigenous-Peoples%E2%80%99-Human-Rights-UN-Declaration-and-Sustainable-Development-in-International-Law-Joffe-2017.pdf

> Written from the perspective of international law, UNDRIP, and the SDG framework, this resource examines how the TRC Calls to Action are inextricably linked to these important international frameworks in the Canadian context. The implications of these intersecting frameworks for women and girls are one focus explored by this text, in addition to the need to protect marginalized groups and end poverty by starting with restoring land and access to nature to Indigenous Peoples. This resource is helpful for globally minded communities looking to make meaningful policy recommendations.

Kawartha World Issues Centre. (2019). *Understanding the UN Sustainable Development Goals: Canada's commitment and the local connection.* https://kwic.info/sites/default/files/2021-05/SDGForumPrioritySummary-Ptbo%202019.pdf

> During a forum open space held in Peterborough/Nogojiwanong, five key local SDG priority actions were highlighted: the summary of these discussions can be found in this resource. These five key priorities include SDGs 1, 4, 6, 13, and 17 and centre on basic income, experiential education, clean water and sanitation, advocacy for climate change, as well as the prioritization of Indigenous Knowledge, practice, and leadership. The forum identified a number of local actions for each goal and emphasized local organizations already working on these important topics. This resource is a preliminary guiding document that was used to inform a series on how Indigenous Knowledge, if centred within the SDG discussion, can have powerful implications for achievement of the SDGs.
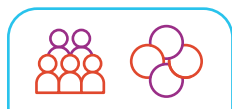
Kawartha World Issues Centre. (2022). *Advancing Gender Equality in Nogojiwanong/Peterborough: Project Report.* https://www.kwic.info/sites/default/files/2022-04/KWIC%20Gender%20Euqality%20Project%20Final%20Report_0.pdf

> This resource explores the advancement of gender equality from the perspective of Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews. This is one of four examples that demonstrate the inherent value in centring Indigenous Knowledge and leadership to achieve the SDGs. This resource,

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while focused on the Peterborough/Nogojiwanong context, is an important demonstration of the inseparable link between Indigenous Knowledge and sustainable development. This resource examines how gender intersects with one's Indigenous identity or any other relevant identity, and features the experiences of gender among diverse groups, such as Black and racialized individuals, newcomers to Canada, and people with disabilities. The report also features a section on what gender equality means to people of diverse identities and speaks to some of the gaps hindering advancement on gender equality. The report concludes with recommendations for achieving gender equality based on feedback from participants at six gender-equality workshops.

Kawartha World Issues Centre & GreenUP. (n.d.a). *Toward Clean Water and Sanitation in Nogojiwanong/Peterborough*. https://www.kwic.info/sites/default/files/2021-05/KWIC-Report-SDG6-WEB.pdf

This resource evaluates SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation from the perspective of Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews. This is one of four examples that demonstrate the inherent value in centring Indigenous knowledge and leadership to achieve the SDGs. This resource, while focused on the Peterborough/Nogojiwanong context, is an important demonstration of the inextricable link between Indigenous knowledge and sustainable development. A helpful example of localizing SDG 6 to the local context from an Indigenous perspective is included.

Kawartha World Issues Centre & GreenUP. (n.d.b). *Toward Ending Poverty in Nogojiwanong/Peterborough*. https://www.kwic.info/sites/default/files/2021-05/KWIC-Report-SDG1-WEB.pdf

This resource evaluates SDG 1 on no poverty from the perspective of Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews. This is one of four examples that demonstrate the inherent value in centring Indigenous Knowledge and leadership to achieve the SDGs. This resource, while focused on the Peterborough/Nogojiwanong context, is an important demonstration of the inextricable link between Indigenous Knowledge and sustainable development. Indigenous understandings of poverty go well beyond our society's current norms related to food and financial necessities. It extends to connection with lands, culture, and community too. This resource includes recommendations for shifting the anti-poverty discussions to incorporate Indigenous Knowledges.

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Kawartha World Issues Centre & GreenUP. (n.d.c). *Toward Quality Education in Nogojiwanong/ Peterborough.* https://www.kwic.info/sites/default/files/2021-05/KWIC-Report-SDG4-WEB.pdf

> This resource evaluates SDG 4 on quality education from the perspective of Indigenous knowledge and worldviews. This is one of four examples that demonstrate the inherent value in centring Indigenous knowledge and leadership to achieve the SDGs. This resource, while focused on the Peterborough/Nogojiwanong context, is an important demonstration of the inseparable link between Indigenous knowledge and sustainable development. For example, a snapshot of work in the community reveals more than 50 local educational initiatives centring Indigenous knowledge and leadership to support the work of Agenda 2030 in leaving no one behind. This resource includes a helpful working draft of SDG 4 localization examples from an Indigenous perspective.

Kawartha World Issues Centre & GreenUP. (2021). *Prioritizing Indigenous leadership to advance the SDGs in Nogojiwanong/Peterborough.* Peterborough GreenUP Association. https://www.greenup. on.ca/download/prioritizing-indigenous-leadership-to-advance-the-sustainable-development-goals-in-nogojiwanong-peterborough/

> This resource takes a practical look at what the SDGs mean for Indigenous Peoples and emphasizes the need to improve collection of reliable, disaggregated data in Canada to effectively track inequalities and monitor progress in the national context. It recommends that Indigenous Peoples collect, analyze, and maintain their own data. The Government of Canada's unwillingness to approach Indigenous Peoples as equals rather than citizen stakeholders and the imposition of top-down organization has led to an inability to form meaningful relationships on sustainable development. Using SDGs 1, 4, 6, and 13, this resource demonstrates how the approach to advancing the SDGs can and should be centred around Indigenous Knowledge and leadership to ensure no one is left behind. This powerful perspective should inform every community's approach to SDG localization.

Koike, H., Ortiz-Moya, F., Kataoka, Y., & Fujino, J. (2020). *The Shimokawa method for voluntary local review (VLR).* https://www.iges.or.jp/en/pub/shimokawa-method-vlr/en

> The handbook is structured as a 10-step guide for VLR creation and breaks down the VLR process into two major activities: planning and creation and post-review follow-up work.

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The Shimokawa Method is focused on how best to carry out and structure your VLR to maximize the potential for local action throughout and following the VLR. By using their recommendation of a backcasting approach to identify the "future you want" and walking your way back to understand what needs to be done to get there, this method is all about results at the community and policy levels for the purpose of achieving the 2030 Agenda locally. The handbook features the small, remote town of Shimokawa, Japan and its VLR process, highlighting collaboration and stakeholder engagement with the town's 3,400 residents and can provide useful insight on how to effectively communicate the SDG framework to the local community while giving them ownership of the VLR process.

Organisation internationale de la francophonie & Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable. (2021). *Manuel GPC-ODD: Grille de priorisation des cibles des ODD.* https://www.ifdd.francophonie.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FINAL_IFDD_Manuel_GPC-ODD_09-12-2021.pdf

This French guide is based on an elaborate SDG target prioritization tool in the form of an Excel document that aims to help communities of any size understand and tackle the SDGs more effectively. Although the SDGs are considered a universal framework, that does not mean they will fit into each individual context in the same way. The reality is that variations in approaching SDG implementation are as numerous as the communities working to address them, and localization of this framework can be a significant bottleneck for communities not knowing where to begin. The evaluation grid takes the form of an elaborate Excel document, but alongside this manual and the dedicated course, potential users are provided with all the competencies needed to leverage the tool. Containing a thorough checklist for prioritizing SDG targets, the guidebook begins with the basics, including an introduction to the SDGs and targets and a self-assessment to help in the preparation for the journey ahead. With the context well-understood, broad consultation on local priorities can begin. Each step of this resource contains recommended best practices, as well as potential pitfalls to avoid. The document's final sections cover how to interpret the results of the consultation and how to act on the findings. An English version of this resource is currently being created, with an expected release date at the end of July 2022.

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Ortiz-Moya, F., Koike, H., Ota, J., Kataoka, Y., & Fujino, J. (2020). *State of the voluntary local reviews 2020: Local action for global impact in achieving the SDGs.* Institute for Global Environmental Strategies. https://www.iges.or.jp/en/pub/vlrs-2020/en

> This 2020 edition of the state of VLRs IGES analyzes and reports on the VLR landscape across the globe, focusing on the diversity of strategies being used to track progress on the SDGs at the local level. As VLRs begin to gain in popularity in many communities, this document compiles the main messages of the VLRs, including stakeholder engagement processes relevant to the LNOB principle and the relation of VLRs to their national counterparts, VNRs. Spanning the history of VLRs and a detailed analysis of major VLRs on the aforementioned topics of stakeholder engagement and local–national integration, this comparative analysis of existing VLRs tracks the trajectory of the VLR movement.

Ortiz-Moya, F., Marcos, E. S., & Yatsuka Kataoka, J. F. (2021). *State of the voluntary local review 2021: From reporting to action.* Institute for Global Environmental Strategies. https://www.iges.or.jp/en/pub/vlrs-2021/en

> The 2021 edition of the state of the VLRs from IGES shifts the focus to action on SDG localization. Sections on the role of VLRs in optimizing governance structures, local–national cooperation and integration, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the VLR scene make up a significant chunk of the report's first half. As in the 2020 edition, an analysis of VLRs produced in the year preceding the report's publication makes up the latter half of the report. Similar to the previous report, IGES is paying attention to the global VLR landscape.

Pritchard Jr., G. (2021). *Indigenous Engagement.* Kawartha World Issues Centre. https://kwic.info/sites/default/files/2021-05/GaryP_Presentation.pdf

> This brief resource from 4 Directions of Conservation Services on meaningful engagement with Indigenous Peoples is a part of a broader project on SDG localization in the Peterborough/Nogojiwanong area through the promotion of Indigenous engagement and Indigenous leadership on sustainable development. The slides of this resource cover tips for approaching engagement with Indigenous Peoples, including the importance of respect, creating and holding space for Indigenous Knowledge and knowledge sharing, understanding your position in the work, and the why and how of collaboration, cultural

training for staff, and the creation of clear terms of reference. The relationship-building process between groups is crucial to successful engagement and cooperation and should not be pushed to the side for any reason. These methods are guidelines for engagement with Indigenous Peoples, but lessons from this short resource can and should be applied to all forms of collaboration and engagement.

Rosentreter, H. (2022). *Leveraging the linkages: How human rights data can advance SDG monitoring.* International Institute for Sustainable Development. https://www.iisd.org/articles/insight/leveraging-linkages-how-human-rights-data-can-advance-sdg-monitoring

Schnurr, L. (2021). *10 - A guide for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals in your community.* Tamarack Institute. https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/ten-guide-sdgs-2021

> French: https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/fr-ca/library/ten-guide-sdgs-2021?hsCtaTracking=56328364-8e8f-4858-a2e3-b464be57b3e9%7C45586317-74a1-4bd5-971e-f75a30d6b70a

> The Tamarack 10-Guide is an excellent place to start learning about SDG localization. It includes 10 questions to assess your readiness to advance the SDGs locally, 10 really good ideas, 10 inspiring stories from Canadian communities, 10 useful resources, and 10 ways to get started. This inspiring guide will surely accompany you along your road to SDG localization and VLR creation.

Schwabish, J., & Feng, A. (2021). *Do no harm guide: Applying equity awareness in data visualization.* Urban Institute. https://www.urban.org/research/publication/do-no-harm-guide-applying-equity-awareness-data-visualization

> When it comes to presenting data, there are many ways one can influence how a reader perceives the information. Systemic discrimination can be amplified by the way we use or misuse data, and this guide focuses on how to avoid common pitfalls that perpetuate inequality and harm. By keeping equity principles in mind, equitable data visualization can contribute to harm reduction, especially among historically marginalized groups. This resource is useful for crafting inclusive strategies for data presentation. While this guide emphasizes racial and ethnic equity, it also offers many intersectional lessons that can be applied to reduce the marginalization of a variety of equity-seeking groups. This guide and the associated checklists and toolkits focus on the often hidden or subtle ways that data analysts and communicators fail to incorporate equitable awareness in the data they use and the products they create. From the order or formulation of survey questions

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to the subtle hierarchy of colours used in the final visualization product, lessons such as humanizing the numbers and avoiding biased imagery can have a powerful impact on the way data is understood. Good practices, such as using a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach to provide a human narrative and the creation of engagement platforms can allow people to contribute directly to data processes. But going beyond just humanizing the data, participatory approaches to data collection and analysis are encouraged by the authors so groups can have control over the ways their stories are told. For those who have previous experience working with data, many of the lessons on seemingly simple principles like colour and order in data visualization are likely to broaden your viewpoint in ways you had not previously considered. Data-focused VLR processes will benefit greatly from learning about methods for equity in data.

SDSN Canada & Green Beacon. (n.d.). *Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Bristol voluntary local review (VLR) briefs.* Sustainable Development Solutions Network Canada. https://uwaterloo.ca/sustainable-development-solutions-network-canada/sites/ca.sustainable-development-solutions-network-canada/files/uploads/files/la_pittsburgh_bristol_vlr_briefs.pdf

This brief summarizes key aspects of the VLR process in three cities and their experiences in the six domains of collaboration, SDG implementation, LNOB, political buy-in, data collection, and accountability and transparency. Highlights from each city include the impressive feat of reporting on all 17 SDGs in Bristol, United Kingdom, with the help of their One City Plan; a four-phase process for local SDG implementation in the case of Los Angeles, United States; and people-focused policies aligned with the SDGs in Pittsburgh, United States. In each of the three cities, the mayor had a crucial role in driving momentum on the SDGs and getting as many city departments and community members involved as possible. These snapshots of the VLR process can be helpful to begin understanding what the process looks like in practice.

Siragusa, A., Proietti, P., Bertozzi, C., Coll Aliaga, E., Foracchia, S., Irving, A., Pacheco, Oliveira, M., & Sisto, R. (2021). *Building urban datasets for the SDGs: Six European cities monitoring the 2030 Agenda.* Publications Office of the European Union. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/510439

Although focused on the European context, this report on dataset development for the SDGs in six pilot cities is an informative and transparent resource for understanding the scope of data and indicators available for use at the subnational level. Each city is featured in a dedicated chapter, including the methodology applied, an analysis of data availability, key findings of the pilot project, and a final list of indicators used by each city. This pilot

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project focused on the SDG implementation and localization process of six smaller cities, and although they received support for their participation in the pilot, this report provides an overview of the possibilities for reporting on SDG progress in cities with more modest populations and resources.

Siragusa, A., Vizcaino, M. P., Proietti, P., & Lavalle, C. (2020). *The European handbook for SDG voluntary local reviews.* Publications Office of the European Union. https://publications.jrc. ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC118682

This handbook extensively covers indicators across all 17 SDGs and the localization process. Local governments in Europe face challenges similar to their Canadian counterparts when it comes to applying the SDG framework to the local level of highly developed regions, which is why this handbook provides valuable guidance for overcoming some of these issues. In addition to recommendations for appropriate indicator selection, the handbook also features tips for navigating the SDG monitoring system and dealing with data challenges at the local level. It also describes the key components of a VLR. The handbook's indicator selection methodology champions the use of official indicators in concert with experimental indicators to complete a well-rounded review of SDG progress in the local context. Indicators are organized by SDG and contain a description, relevant metadata, comments, and limitations to their use. With a total of 71 proposed indicators, 45 official and 26 experimental, the breadth of information included for each one can be a source of indicator inspiration for those in need of further guidance.

Sustainable Development Solutions Network. (2016). *Getting started with SDGs in cities.* https:// irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/6f2c9f57/files/uploaded/Cities-SDG-Guide.pdf

This early resource from SDSN focuses on the relevance of the SDG framework at the local or municipal level. Covering topics such as how to approach the SDGs from a territorial perspective, recommended practical tools for engaging with the SDG framework, and an exploration of the policy and enabling environment needed for successful SDG localization and implementation, this is a great way to ease into the SDG localization landscape and focus on setting the local SDG agenda, planning SDG implementation strategies, and monitoring the SDGs. These key steps will feed into the creation of a VLR and facilitate the process.

Swiftwolfe, D. (2019). *Indigenous ally toolkit.* Réseau pour la stratégie urbaine de la communauté autochtone à Montréal. http://reseaumtlnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Ally_March.pdf

French: http://reseaumtlnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Trousse.pdf

The Indigenous Ally Toolkit contains many important lessons for Canadians looking to contribute to transformative reconciliation and support Indigenous Peoples as they overcome a variety of systemic barriers. Containing tips for correct terminology, the importance of self-education and learning, and concrete steps for contributing to the successes of Indigenous Peoples, this short and meaningful guide can help groups on their journey to understanding and uplifting the stewards of Turtle Island.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to action.* https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf

French: https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/4-Appels_a_l-Action_French.pdf

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action are foundational to Canada's future and the relationship of Canada with Indigenous Peoples. The Calls to Action cover a number of domains, including child welfare, education, language and culture, health, justice, and more, and all work and projects carried out across Canada must act on this guidance as feasible. Its relevance extends to all inhabitants of Canada and is key to advancing transformative reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

United Cities and Local Governments and the UN Human Settlements Programme. (2020). *Guidelines for voluntary local reviews.* https://learning.uclg.org/resources/guidelines-for-voluntary-local-reviews/

French: https://learning.uclg.org/fr/resources/lignes-directrices-pour-les-examens-locaux-volontaires/

For cities looking to understand how the VLR fits within the institutional processes, the Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews from UCLG and UN-Habitat provide a great starting point. The VLR is a key tool for streamlining multi-level governance processes by providing

an opportunity to align local goals with national and global goals. By using a comparative analysis of existing VLRs until 2020, cities can learn from the examples of others on how to incorporate the VLR process institutionally, how to identify and involve key stakeholders, and how to leverage local expertise for broad implementation of the SDGs. Recommendations include three strategies for overcoming data availability gaps, including a reinterpretation of official indicators, systematically searching for a correlation between official indicators and those available locally, and using a qualitative assessment with only sporadic hard data. The emphasis on peer learning and the ability to view various strategies at a glance make this resource valuable to those beginning their VLR journey.

United Nations. (2007). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295)*. United Nations: https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf

French: https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_F_web.pdf

The UNDRIP is a landmark document adopted by the General Assembly in 2007. Although Canada was not initially supportive of this resolution, in 2021 the Government of Canada finally passed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act to recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples laid out in the resolution. A product of many decades of coordination and work, UNDRIP contains 46 articles which constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous Peoples globally. This framework has enhanced the ability for data collection on the problems faced by Indigenous Peoples, namely colonial practices and systemic oppression, by providing the global community with a dedicated process to review the well-being of global Indigenous populations and report on the status of their human rights.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). *Voluntary local reviews.* https://sdgs.un.org/topics/voluntary-local-reviews

French: https://sdgs.un.org/fr/topics/voluntary-local-reviews

This official United Nations landing page and repository for VLRs includes a collection of all VLRs and VSRs submitted to the United Nations, along with pages covering background, resources, and events to inform communities on the state of VLRs across the globe.
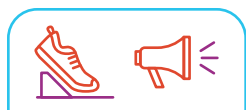
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2020). *Global guiding elements for voluntary local reviews (VLRs) of SDG implementation.* https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/GlobalGuidingElementsforVLRs_FINAL.pdf

French: https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/2016125F_0.pdf

Produced by the UN DESA, the Global Guiding Elements place a strong focus on how VLRs can be used to strengthen SDG reporting at the national level and reinforce the VLR as an ongoing, evolving, and long-term process rather than a one-off report. To maximize the effectiveness of VLRs for national-level reporting and vertical coherence, UN DESA provides a recommended structure that mirrors and complements the VNR. If communities are looking to ground themselves in the VLR as a process to achieve the 2030 Agenda, these guidelines provide the necessary structure and frame to do so as effectively as possible.

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. (n.d.a). *Regional forum on sustainable development for the UNECE region.* https://unece.org/unece-and-sdgs

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. (n.d.b). *UNECE and the SDGs.* https://unece.org/unece-and-sdgs

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. (2021). *Draft guidelines for the development of voluntary local reviews in the ECE Region.* https://unece.org/hlm/documents/2021/08/session-documents/draft-guidelines-development-voluntary-local-reviews-ece

French: https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/ECE_HBP_2021_4-2109985F.pdf

Containing an easily digestible, yet detailed method for VLR planning and creation, this resource helps policy- and data-focused cities plan their own VLR journey using examples from existing VLRs and a checklist for steps to be taken during each phase of VLR creation. With phases one and two covering the collection of information and data and the assessment of the data along with a review of participatory approaches to achieving the SDGs, respectively, this strategy places data and action at the forefront of the VLR. It discusses the use of the VLR as a policy tool to guide local short- and long-term strategies as well as coordination with national and global plans, providing detailed examples from the European context throughout. The four recommended phases of VLR development are provided with detailed descriptions of what they entail, including a checklist and practical examples for each phase. This resource emphasizes the benefits of digital tools and open-source data, and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

United Nations Habitat & United Cities and Local Governments. (2021). *VLR-VSR days: Advancing the local implementation of the SDGs.* https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/07/report_vlr-vsr_days_hlpf_2021_1.pdf

> During the HLPF in 2021, 68 speakers from 29 countries discussed their experiences and perspectives on VLRs–VSRs and broader SDG localization. Including links to recordings of the sessions, this report includes panel summaries and key lessons from each presenter and country. The event featured panels on broad discussions related to VLRs and VSRs but also included focused discussions on indicators and data, and social inclusion and participatory processes. This report can inspire new ways of thinking about VLRs and VSRs and presents a number of thought-provoking ideas on VLR-VSR best practices.

United Nations Sustainable Development Group. (2022). *Operationalizing leaving no one behind: Good practice note for UN country teams.* https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/Operationalizing%20LNOB%20-%20final%20with%20Annexes%20090422.pdf

> As a central promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the LNOB principle is proving to be a challenging aspect of realizing our goals for 2030. This good practice note elaborates on how we can take this principle from theory to practice at all levels of society and government. Included in this resource is a breakdown of key recommended steps for assessment, tools for encouraging marginalized peoples with lived experiences to contribute their voices to help establish an understanding of data gaps, and assessment frameworks for identifying the root causes of why people are being left behind. Detailed explanations of how to integrate LNOB across planning and programming processes. This resource encourages taking a people-centred approach to data to ensure we do not continue to make the same mistakes regarding data of marginalized peoples.

United Nations Sustainable Development Group. (n.d.). *Leave no one behind.* https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind

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

> This webpage from the UN Sustainable Development Group website thoroughly summarizes the 2030 Agenda's universal LNOB principle. This principle is often described as the major point of distinction between the UN SDGs and the previous global effort, the UN

Millennium Development Goals. It is a serious cause for concern when anyone faces needs deficits, discrimination, and marginalization. We must act together to ensure we begin our sustainable development journey with a focus on eliminating barriers and discrimination that cause certain individuals to fall through the cracks.

United Way Winnipeg & International Institute for Sustainable Development. (n.d.). *Peg community data dashboard.* https://www.mypeg.ca/

This useful community-focused data dashboard created by a partnership between United Way Winnipeg and the International Institute for Sustainable Development allows users to view data on over 50 indicators relevant to community members. Using the theme icons on the left side of the screen, users can navigate to indicator pages that vary from the health of babies born in Winnipeg right through to how many of them graduate 18 years later, how much garbage we send to the landfill, how we move around the city, and how we choose to spend our time. Each indicator features a helpful data visualization and a map, tools to customize data by neighbourhoods or years, and a page providing a description of the indicator along with relevant metadata. All indicators on the platform have been linked to relevant SDG targets and can be found on each indicator's SDG page. This tool demonstrates one of the many ways a community can track their progress on the SDGs using a bottom-up approach to measurement.

United Way Winnipeg & International Institute for Sustainable Development. (2021). *Winnipeg and the SDGs: A voluntary local review of progress 2021.* https://www.mypeg.ca/winnipeg-sdgs-voluntary-local-review-2021/

Building on data from Winnipeg's community indicator system, Peg, Winnipeg's first VLR reports on the SDGs that reflect the issues chosen by Winnipeggers. Beginning with an acknowledgement that Peg is committed to moving forward in a spirit of truth, reconciliation, and collaboration and to address crucial gaps that currently exist in terms of reflecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation perspectives, priorities, and experiences, especially in relation to sustainable development. Ten SDGs are profiled within the report, using Peg indicators to reflect Winnipeg's progress for each. Each SDG also highlights community organizations that are working to localize the SDGs with innovative and important frontline work. Reflections and recommendations include a summary of Winnipeg's progress toward localizing the SDGs, a review of data gaps and opportunities, and a discussion of the importance of the future work of setting targets together as a community.

Ville de Québec. (2021). *Stratégie de développement durable: Pour une ville plus juste, écologique et prospère.* https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/apropos/planification-orientations/developpement-durable/docs/strategie-dev-durable.pdf

> The City of Quebec sustainable development strategy is a roadmap of the city's goals for achieving the 17 SDGs locally. Beginning with their localization process, the document goes on to highlight local actions on the SDGs in the community and key policy frameworks contributing to the city's actions on the 2030 Agenda. The city has also identified a variety of pressing issues where there is still room for improvement and our most difficult challenges ahead, while emphasizing the need for greater partnerships for the goals. Finally, the City of Quebec included a brief timeline of how this strategy document was created.

Williams, Elder Phyllis; Muskratt, Kristin. (2019). *Indigenous Leadership for the SDG's 2030 Agenda.* Kawartha World Issues Centre. https://kwic.info/sites/default/files/2021-05/ILAT-Presentation%20%281%29.pdf

> As part of an important project on advancing the SDGs in the community of Peterborough/Nogojiwanong, the Indigenous Leadership Action Team's co-chairs created a document exploring how some of the SDGs connect to Indigenous ways of knowing and being, and how the framework impacts structures harming Indigenous Peoples. The presentation also outlines the Indigenous Leadership Action Team's members, role, and purpose in the project. This resource can be helpful to inspire other SDG localization efforts to pursue partnerships with Indigenous Peoples for the sake of all inhabitants of Turtle Island.

Zohouri, M. (2021). *To face historic challenges, we need grassroots collaboration. Here's how.* Ottawa Impact Hub. https://ottawa.impacthub.net/story/to-face-historic-challenges-we-need-grassroots-collaboration/

> This resource provides an interesting case study of the power and importance of grassroots collaboration taking place in Canada's capital city, Ottawa. From discussing how language informs the way we perceive our world, to the power of vision-making and imagining a desired future to drive action, this short article provides insight on how to approach collaboration among diverse groups on the SDGs.

Appendix A. Handbook Methodology

This VLR handbook has been created to guide Canadian communities interested in localizing the SDGs to specific resources containing strong examples and lessons of the VLR process. By synthesizing existing literature and identifying the key contributions from each guide, the handbook's goal is to help more communities in Canada take on the rewarding process of creating a VLR. This handbook began with a literature review of existing global and regional handbooks and guides on VLR creation, primarily by collecting relevant major documents, including those with significant clout in the VLR community as evidenced by references to the source in VLRs and other documents on SDG localization. Key themes were identified through a preliminary read-through of the resources, and those containing strong examples of these themes are highlighted and featured according to their compatibility and relevance. A significant gap in the global literature was identified as being Indigenous collaboration and reconciliation, although a modest collection of local resources is featured throughout this handbook. These resources have been included based on discussions with a diverse but limited number of community members, researchers, and SDG localization experts and practitioners. They are subject to change and evolve with broader community input and ongoing discussions regarding SDG localization across Canada.

To view the full methodology visit https://www.iisd.org/publications/guide/vlr-handbook-canada/

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