

# WHAT ARE THE SDGs AND HOW DO THEY RELATE TO THE YOUTH GIVING MOVEMENT?

*Arif Ekram*

*Global Partnerships Liaison, Foundation Center*

## **What are the SDGs?**

United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals—better known as the SDGs—are a set of 17 universal goals for global economic development, prosperity, human dignity, peace, justice, and partnerships. They have been agreed upon by virtually every nation on earth and will remain in effect until 2030. The SDG framework has managed to find common ground between the countless dissimilar and often opposing interests of various nations and has aligned all of these countries under the same agenda to improve the quality of life for people around the globe. It took a great number of very skilled development professionals more than three years, but they have succeeded in putting together a universal framework – one that fits the U.S. as much as it fits Somalia.

## **Are the SDGs Relevant for Youth?**

Yes, very much! Reading the first paragraph may give a first impression that a bunch of not-so-young people in their suits and ties are fiercely negotiating amongst themselves in some windowless room at the United Nations compound and it has almost nothing to do with youth. But a first impression is not always right. Young people are at the heart of the SDG framework. The words “children,” “young” and “youth” have been mentioned 33 times in the SDG framework. At least 10 of the 17 goals relate directly to the youth and their development. The framework pays special attention to youth education, health, nutrition, employment, dignity, empowerment, security, equality, and young people’s participation in conversations that affect them and their surroundings. To measure the impact of these goals in young people’s lives, numerous indicators have been devised. The performance of these indicators will be monitored nationally, regionally, and globally throughout and beyond the tenure of the SDGs.

## **How Does Youth Giving Relate to the SDGs?**

Young people being at the center of the SDGs means any youth development and empowerment initiative becomes a part of the SDGs automatically. Given that an objective of youth philanthropy is to develop youth leadership, engage youth in social dialogue, and empower them to create real change – youth giving syncs naturally with the SDG framework. Many young philanthropists are already giving around the SDGs without even knowing it. When young philanthropists try to solve problems in their communities around the quality of health care, education standards, environmental degradation, inequality, and other issues – they are advancing a development and humanitarian agenda, and helping to achieve the SDGs. For more information on philanthropy and the SDGs visit [SDGfunders.org](http://SDGfunders.org).

