

## **Mind the Gaps: Unifying Philanthropy to Achieve Sustainable Development**

Host: Ted Hart

Guest: Karolina Mzyk Callias – Edwards Lifesciences

**Announcer:** Welcome to the *CAF America Radio Network*, a production of the Charities Aid Foundation of America. As the leader in global giving, CAF America offers more than 20 years of experience and expertise to corporations, foundations, and individuals who wish to give international aid and with enhanced due diligence in the United States.

Through its industry-leading grants management programs and philanthropic advisory services, CAF America helps donors amplify their impact. This show is dedicated to these donors and the charities they support. CAF America is uniquely positioned to serve as the bridge between these important partners and transforms vision into meaningful action. Guests on the *CAF America Radio Network* are leaders in their field, who share tips for success and stories that inspire.

Our host is Ted Hart, the CEO of the Charities Aid Foundation of America. This is a live call-in show, add your voice by calling 914 338 0855. After the show, you can find all of our podcasts at [cafamerica.org](http://cafamerica.org). Don't forget to dial 914 338 0855. Now, welcome the host of the *CAF America Radio Network*, Ted Hart.

**Ted Hart:** Welcome to this latest edition of the *CAF America Radio Network*, thank you for joining us today. Our topic is "Mind the Gaps: Unifying Philanthropy to Achieve Sustainable Development". My guest on the show today is Karolina Mzyk Callias, who is an advisor on philanthropy at UNDP's Istanbul International Center for Private Sector in Development. Karolina facilitates a global conversation between the UN, foundations, and governments on enhanced collaboration for the SDGs, the Sustainable Development Goals.

She leads a global team working on the SDGs, inspired national development plans in Kenya, Ghana, Indonesia, Columbia, Turkey, and Zambia. Within this role, Karolina develops partnerships with global foundations including the Conrad and Hilton Foundation, Ford, MasterCard, Gates, Coca-Cola, and the DHL Foundations.

Welcome here to the *CAF America Radio Network*, Karolina Mzyk Callias. How are you?

**Karolina Mzyk Callias:** Hi, Ted. I'm very well. Thank you so much for inviting me tonight and good evening from Istanbul.

**Ted:** Well, it's our honor to have you here. I want to jump right into this topic because it is such an important topic in the philanthropic sector right now and that is it served this nexus, if you will, of the Sustainable Development Goals and how you can succeed with sustainable development. Why don't we start for those guests who are joining us today who may not necessarily understand what the Sustainable Development Goals are, why don't we start off with what are the goals? Then, I want to get right into how to achieve sustainable development.

**Karolina:** The Sustainable Development Goals is 17 development goals that span the whole area of social development, economic development, as well as environmental protection. They are embodied in the 17 goals, 169 targets, and 240 indicators. It's a global development framework. That means that all countries are obliged. All those countries that have signed up, and I must say that in September last year, September 2015, all world leaders have signed up to the goals and they will be implemented until 2030.

Sustainable Development Goals follow a similar experience that we, as a global community, have already experienced between 2000 and 2015, which are called the Millennium Development Goal. They have indeed, the MDGs, what we called as an abbreviation, have really delivered outstanding result in terms of helping the global poverty, improving maternal mortality, improving the nutrition among children. These are among some of the biggest achievements. They expired in 2015.

Now, as a global community, we have actually decided and people around the world, it wasn't just the global leaders, the SDGs were consulted with the people around the world in unprecedented manner, more than six million people participated in the consultations around the world in 170 countries. They have decided that it's time for us to really broaden the development that we-- the prospect, the progress and prosperity that we want to see, they aim, and they want to see as individual and also collectively as a group around the world. Right now, the goals, the new areas of the goals within the SDGs are aspects that haven't been there before which is the issues of climate change, the issues of, for example, inequality, peace, and just societies. From our perspective, the UN but I also hope that from the perspective of all of us around the world, these sustained-- the 17 sustainable goals really provide a framework for a positive global vision that we all want to subscribe to and that is able to address some of these laws and challenges.

Ted, I think that we have seen that many people around the world have lost their confidence in the globalization. Even though globalization as such has delivered a lot for people around the world, but we have lost confidence because the globalization actually hasn't benefited many people. It hasn't really produced the right outcomes for too many people. Today, we are really at the crossroads and we really should think about what it is that we need to do to make sure that we address some of the deficiencies. I think that SDGs is such a global vision and that's why it's so exciting because it's universal. It applies to Sub-Saharan Africa and it also applies to the United States.

**Ted:** Right. As you mentioned, and I think it's significant about the SDGs is that this was not a top-down imposing of a global vision but that there was a massive gathering of data input from a variety of different sectors to develop these goals. When you look at them, the 17 goals, there's so many subparts, it does seem a bit daunting, but what it provides and I think it's important for our listeners today is that these are guideposts. These are opportunities to frame your philanthropy in a way that then combines your efforts with so many other efforts around

the planet that you're enhancing your efforts by showing that you're supporting any particular SDG goals.

I don't think that anyone is approaching this saying, "We're going to solve all the world's problems between now and 2030," but what it does say is that we can't know that we've made progress if we have no goals. By setting these goals, it starts a dialogue and a discussion around the key target areas. Would you say that's a fair description of where the SDGs fit right now?

**Karolina:** Yes. Within, it's absolutely that. You've kept-- you did very beautifully and this is really why it's so exciting to see that the SDG has really provided that what you called the common taxonomy for all of us. There are many sectors, the philanthropy, business NGOs, us in the UN government, we all work on our development objectives but the SDGs provide the unifying vision. It's much more and now it's much easier for us to really understand. If I, for example, work on let's say early childhood education and then as a grantmaker, I want to work-- I want to give grants in education let's say in Kenya or in Ghana, I know that these both countries actually have signed up to SDGs as well. Their governments are also working to see how to prioritize their targets and it's just so much easier for me as a grantmaker to really find potential partners to connect to the community there who's also working on similar activities, some similar objectives.

**Ted:** Exactly. One of my concerns always is that when people look at goals that are this global, this big, it just appears very daunting and it feels that I can't actually make a difference because it's so big. Part of what I wanted to do today is help connect the SDGs to the philanthropists that are listening today and will be listening to this podcast, to foundations, and corporations, and others who are looking at this to help them understand, it's a matter of finding your place. Where is your philanthropic heart? What is it that you would like to accomplish and that by connecting through this global platform, this format if you will, it assures you that you're moving in a direction that others are also moving in that direction around the planet. These are the goals and the sub-goals that others are also working on. You're not going in it alone and even if you feel that you don't have all that much money to make a difference, a small difference adds up to a big difference when all of us around the world are moving in the same direction.

If that's our framework for today, I know that as an official partner of Giving Tuesday in the SDG Philanthropy Platform, CAF America took the opportunity to highlight the important role of several key SDG Philanthropy Platform partners that you have been involved with, UNDP, MasterCard Foundation, Hilton Foundation, some of the others that we mentioned who are representing and working towards these global goals internationally. In that context, what role do you feel that the SDGs play in helping fashion philanthropy, put it into a better place, and localize those answers that might seem too big for any one foundation or one philanthropist to actually tackle?

**Karolina:** Thank you, Ted. Well, I think the philanthropy platform is a partnership platform that right now connects more than, we actually have more than 30 partners. As you mentioned,

Hilton Foundation, Ford Foundation, the MasterCard were the initial partners, those who actually invested, our angel investors. But now, we have gathered many philanthropists from around the world not just the US but we have foundations from Indonesia, we have foundations from Saudi Arabia, we have foundations from Kenya, and Ghana. It's a huge and growing platform of partners.

Our main objective is really to make sure that philanthropy around the world understands how to engage in the SDGs at the country and at their community level because this is really what's going to make a difference. Well, right now, today, we are at early stages of the SDGs' implementations but many governments have already started what we call localizing the SDGs, meaning, aligning the goal into their local realities in the country. We are working with few of these governments and philanthropy through piloting countries to develop road maps for local and global philanthropy, to really understand how to navigate these complex SDG systems in countries.

We have produced practical tools and processes and we also advice as the SDGBP, we also advise individual philanthropists and foundations on specific aspects. For example, one of these things, one of the tools that it's really wonderful, very easy but very, very practical is to really understand where your individual particular interest, a foundation lies within this whole constellation of 17 goals. There is something which is called the SDG Wizard that you can find on the SDGfunders.org, our website which was developed by our partners, the Foundation Center.

It's called SDG wizard. When you press it, you type in your mission. Let's say, for example, your organization is working to empower women on the labor force, so you, just an example, want to decrease or increase the women at the labor market from 22-30% by 2030. Then you press it, you pave that mission into the box, you press the button and then what would you see is that the wizard will help you to navigate and show you which specific goals and which specific targets within goals are relevant to your work.

It's very handy, it's very easy to really find, and it's just for everyone to-- that's stage number one. Stage number two is, okay, if you're a grantmaker and if you want to make grants in Kenya let's say, then you probably would want to use something which we have developed and it's called the SDG Primers for Kenya. It's a public document and it basically describes all the government agencies, all the actors, all the process, policies, and key interventions that relate to SDGs in Kenya as of today. If you want, it's specifically targeting to address philanthropist's questions and the way they work. It's a very handy tool, it really shows you how to with whom to talk, what kind of questions to ask and how could the conversation on the SDG in the country relate to your specific particular problems. Then finally, we have—

**Ted:** Exactly, Karolina, let me just jump in just one second before you go because I just want to make sure that everybody's following along. That's SDGfunders.org, SustainableDevelopmentGoalfunders.org. You can put forth /wizard and it brings you to this very simple page that Karolina is talking about that you just type in text to analyze your

organization's work. It could not be easier, as you said, and it's a great place to start and this is all part of the work of the SDG funders and the SDG Philanthropy Platforms, so I'm going to ask you to continue, but then if you can pivot to help everybody understand what the platform itself is.

**Karolina:** The platform itself is a partnership between UNDP, the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, and the Foundation Center, and it's a hub, it's a vehicle that helps philanthropy to understand how to engage in SDGs at the country and at the global level. At the same time, it is a vehicle that helps the UN and the government understand what is the value and the contribution of philanthropy to Sustainable Development Goals.

These are the two strategic objectives. In terms of how we work, it's an initiative. We are providing specific, we are piloting right now in six countries, you mentioned already in Kenya, Ghana, and Zambia in Africa. We have activities in Indonesia, Colombia, as well as most recently in India. Then I should say very wonderful news that the platform has also been launched by the Council on Foundations in the United States back in September, so now it's actually seven countries. We are working direct in these countries and also globally. We are working directly with local foundations as well as global foundations and providing advisory services, providing guiding hands, facilitating and connecting their work with what's going with the SDGs in their countries and what it means.

Right now, actually, SDGs in most of the countries are actually still led by government as well as in many options by NGOs, by non-governmental organizations civil society. We are looking for-- we're trying to organize and really make sense of what's going on with localizing SDGs in these countries and what does it mean for philanthropy and what other kind of incentives philanthropy might have from engaging in the conversation on the SDGs?

I give you an example, in Indonesia, the government has actually been extremely proactive and they have drafted and approved a provincial decree on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. In that decree, the philanthropy as a sector is mentioned as one of the implementing partners to the government together with academia, businesses, and civil society.

Right now, the government is consulting with the partners on what are the kind of priorities that the country should really look into from the 17 goals. They are discussing a collaboration and public-private partnerships on, for example, improving the quality of education in Indonesia. There are also conversations such as, for example, how to improve the quality of oceans and water governance in Indonesia where we're actually-- it's a country which is very much depending on fishing.

**Ted:** Karolina, that's part of what's different here and one of the things that drew CAF America as one of the first partners of the SDG Philanthropy Platform is the involvement of philanthropy not to say that philanthropy had no role in the MDGs but it really was government-driven, it was established-- The Millennium Development Goals were established by the United Nations and really government-driven. Now, CAF America is a partner with the SDG Philanthropy

Platform provides a context in as you've been pointing out, through that platform and through the wizard and reaching out around the world to philanthropists, now gives a rolling context. Part of that as you're describing is philanthropy's involvement in the SDGs is not the same as government's involvement in the SDGs.

As we reach into our last 10 minutes together, can you help unify that for me? Can you help us understand how to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in this new marriage, if you will, or invitation of philanthropy to be part of something that it wasn't really part of in the prior set of global goals?

**Karolina:** Yes, thank you, Ted. I should say that yes, it's indeed. Philanthropy was really staying aside some from the MDGs. Philanthropy was actually a huge contributor to two areas which were core in the MDGs such as education and health. The fact that philanthropy wasn't really using MDGs to measure its outcomes and impact, doesn't mean that they were not involved in actually the development activities of the goals.

The second point I want to make is MDGs will not be possible to achieve without this engagement of the private sector philanthropy and civil society. This era where governments are solely responsible for development is over a long time. We really need to make sure we have to have a shift in the paradigm to really understand that the only way we can achieve progress and prosperity and that is really harmonious, healthier societies, more just societies, with less inequality, is only if we collaborate between all the stakeholders.

Collaboration because it is a very expensive, UN estimates they cost between \$4 and \$5 trillion a year. I don't even know how many zeroes it is. Let me say collaboration doesn't mean that we have to all convert and become the same for the organization. This is the beauty of, for example, the government and philanthropy. Now, I see that there are huge differences between how philanthropy works and how government works and what the kind of value add that philanthropy brings and other sectors bring. We want to recognize this diversity. We want to actually them and we work around them because only through having different perspectives and bringing different types of assets we're going to find solutions to development issues. The collaboration here between the government and philanthropy is that we really need to understand the different roles. While the government yes, indeed, they are responsible and accountable for achieving the SDGs, but actually, philanthropy brings, for example, the commitment to innovation that typically bureaucracies such as the UN and governments don't have.

That's a wonderful value that we, for example, within the SDG platform are trying to really bring out in our collaboration. Another is that the whole issue of venture philanthropy and corporate philanthropy. These are dynamically growing sectors around the world, not just in the US but in India, China, Indonesia and in Brazil. These new forms of giving which is the corporate givings where charitable aspects are combined with long market solutions and development results, these are the kind of ways which really needs to be brought to scale if you want to achieve the SDGs.

In each country where we work—

**Ted:** It is a different language, right, Karolina? It's a different language to engage philanthropist in this work than it would be in terms of having a dialogue with a government?

**Karolina:** Of course, because philanthropist, they said their strategy differently. They measure their results very differently. They use very different language absolutely from the government. That's very valuable, but we need to have common understanding of definitions.

If I go back to my case study in Indonesia, one of the things, challenges that the government sees is that the philanthropic contributions, very valuable, have never been really accounted in the National Development Plans. While we all understand and the government does not really want to mobilize more funding from the philanthropy that would go through its own coffers, well, they do want to recognize and they will if philanthropic contributions which really are accounted in this whole national treasures that would actually show impact and move the needle on the SDGs.

There is on the one hand, yes, we need to stay and be true to our own sectoral values and attributes but on the other hand, we really need to understand our partners and we have to have a common language to be able to collaborate meaningfully together that means for greater impact.

**Ted:** That's really what the SDGs provide. Again, going back to how useful this can be for philanthropists who are looking for ways to be impactful and they can do that on a global scale. We have about four minutes left, what I would like to ask you to do is, given how intimate you have become with the Sustainable Development Goals during your time with UNDP and the SDG Philanthropy Platform, what do you think are some of the challenges and opportunities for our listeners today that we face over the next 14 years and how they can best plug in their efforts, the things that they care about into these global goals?

**Karolina:** Well, first of all, I would love to have everybody excited as much as we are here [laughs] about this global vision. Obviously, understand where each foundation is and how do they relate to the SDGs would be the entry point, that's the biggest objective. Second is to find ways within your local community, within your countries, and to find ways how to engage in the SDG conversation and also implementation, just to have the opportunity to see how the-- where the SDGs would bring value added to your own organization.

The biggest challenge of course to meet the SDGs is collaboration. If we don't really crack that huge nut of working together cross-sectorally, and leave our own silos, and us just working philanthropy, or us just working with the government and the UN, we want to be able to achieve the vision. But if we leave that-

**Ted:** That's right, collaboration across sectors. Right?

**Karolina:** Across sectors, absolutely. That's because the solutions are not in our sectors, solutions are always within somewhere else. I just give you an example, today, I was talking and we were looking into our partners in Bangladesh and we found through the SDG lenses' approach that actually the biggest single element that really contribute to people changing behavior in Bangladesh in buying toilets, improving their latrines at home is if their children will get married. Imagine how to offer it. That is a sign in which we were able to really crack only because we had that open mind and we broadened our questions.

There was a lot of lessons learned from the MDGs that we are applying today which is not only cross-sector collaboration but also understanding of the ecosystem thinking, understanding the bottlenecks and gaps which prevent us from reaching this far-fetched goal that we are applying as SDG Philanthropy Platform, and we are advising our partners how to make smarter decisions. I would say reach out to us, reach out to our wonderful partners such as CAF America. We are all connected in this SDG conversation and let's together join this wonderful journey.

**Ted:** Beautifully said and thank you, Karolina Mzyk Callias, advisor on philanthropy at UNDP's Istanbul International Center for Private Sector in Development for joining me this evening from Istanbul as our guest here on the CAF America Radio Network and for all of our listeners to the show today and to the podcast. As Karolina said, reach out to us. We're here to assist and to help you find a way that's meaningful to you to connect to these global goals and join a movement to make a difference around the planet.

Karolina, thank you for being my guest here today on the CAF America Radio Network.

**Karolina:** Thank you very much, Ted, always a pleasure and thank you so much for partnership.

**Ted:** You got it, thank you.

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