

7 COMMUNICATING ABOUT THE SDGs

Communicating about the SDGs and building awareness is a critical initial and ongoing step in the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have an essential role to play in this regard.

CSOs are close to different sectors of the population, including the most marginalised, and have built experience in communicating with them through the years.

In communicating the SDGs, it is important to present a clear understanding of the benefits of aligning national and sub-national plans with the 2030 Agenda and of linking of the SDGs to local concerns -this is especially important when the target group are policy makers. On the other hand, it is important to raise the public awareness on the universality of the 2030 Agenda and the integrated nature of the SDGs – highlight that no one should be left behind, promote human rights and gender equality, and address economic, social and environmental sustainability.

There have been various efforts to prepare guidelines for communicating the SDGs. The UN Development group has launched different websites, most of them with guidelines, toolkits, free to use material, and links to projects, activities and campaigns. Among these websites you find the [UN Sustainable Development Goals portal](#), providing information about the 2030 agenda and the SDGs in different languages. This site is a platform for campaigns, such as [The Spotlight Initiative](#). This is a project with the EU. It has the aim to fight violence against women and girls. [ActNow.bot](#) is another project, aiming at taking Climate Action. And there is [Be the Change](#) with a link to [The Lazy Person's Guide](#)

[to Saving the World](#). This website contains the downloadable SDG logos, including colour wheel and 17 icons.

Another UN website portal is [The Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform](#) with links to different activities organized by the UN, such as the High Level Political Forum (HLPF). This site has also the download set of official logo and icons.

[The Sustainable Development Goals Action campaign](#) is another UN portal with links to initiatives like [#act4sdgs](#) full of examples from mobilisations worldwide. [My World 2030](#) is an adaptable platform for citizen-generated data and engagement with SDG. [The World We Want](#) is a joint venture between the UN and Civil Society that enables people to engage, visualize and analyse people's voices on sustainable development. Interesting among the initiatives is also the [YouTube channel](#) with a variety of films on illustrating different SDGs.

One more site is the portal to [building-awareness on the 2030 Agenda](#), with projects such as [Project Everyone](#) which provides various media resources adequate to use with different targets.

Apart from websites, the UN also provide online guidelines on communicating. There is the [Change Management Toolkit](#) that has a very clear road map on how to construct and launch a communications strategy. There's also a document on [Mainstreaming the 2030](#)

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[Agenda for SD](#) which is an interim reference guide to UN Country teams with a specific section on building awareness, also available as an online [webinar](#).

Another interesting international initiative is [The Good Life Goals](#) developed through a multi-stakeholder collaboration between a few NGOs, academia and UN bodies. In this project the SDGs and targets were translated to easy language and the SDG icons transformed to emoticons. The website offers various easy to use materials and media toolkit.

In the European context, there are both regional and national initiatives. The SDG Watch Europe, a EU-level cross-sectoral civil society alliance aiming to hold governments to their 2030 Agenda implementation commitments, includes a working area to [engage CSOs and citizens](#), raise awareness and help build the capacity of SDGs implementation at different levels and ensure a bottom up approach. SDG Watch Europe organizes and participates in Civil society activities, such as events, workshops and marches. A couple of examples are [the online #SDG ambassadors campaign](#), featuring Members of the European Parliament who stand for the Sustainable Development Goals in their parliamentary work. This for the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome celebrations; or the [mobilisation](#) on the 25th of September 2018 at 3rd anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Day of Action to #Act4SDGs, where the [Manifesto for a Sustainable Europe for its Citizens](#) was launched with core demands for the new political leadership of the EU and the candidates in the European Parliament Elections 2019.

The European Environmental Bureau (EEB), the largest federation of environmental citizens' organizations in Europe, has been actively engaged in negotiating the 2030 Agenda and it is now engaged in its implantation and communication. The EEB launched an online SDG Toolkit (the document you are reading now being one of its many elements), which provides articles, presentations, speaker biographies, social media accounts, images, policy papers, monitoring and review documents, SDG coalition websites and many other resources that aim at supporting NGOs in engaging with the SDGs and facilitating their work.

The Network [ASviS](#) in Italy represents a very good example of an integrated communicating approach reaching different targets at different

times and through different channels. They use the common tools like newsletter, website, social media. They work in formal settings approaching schools and universities. They have catalogued all existing educational material connected to the SDGs and have set up an e-learning course. They also work in open informal settings, the [Sustainable Development Festival](#) being the most important example. In the 2018 edition of their festival they counted more than 700 events across Italy reaching a huge number of citizens during 17 days.

The OECD featured a discussion note – [10 Learning Areas for SDG Communications](#) - framing peer learning in 3 areas: vision & strategy, people & partnerships and tools & innovation. The note provides questions that could guide peer learning and it gives a short overview of how the OECD Development Communication Network members are communicating. It also highlights international resources and initiatives that can guide further progress.

The European Sustainable Development Network prepared a report in 2017: [Communication and awareness raising in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs: activities and challenges](#). This reports on communication and awareness raising activities at various levels from global to local and reports the challenges faced in this process.

The national Youth Council of Ireland, among others, produced an education & global citizenship education resource pack in 2015 ([The SDGs and YOUTH](#)) and an update in 2018 ([Activism, the SDGs and YOUTH](#)) providing resources for global educators, youth workers, development education practitioners, trainers, activists, changemakers working with the current generation of young people.

The CSOs working with municipalities can look for inspiration at [SDGs in your Municipality, 50 Practical Awareness-Raising Examples](#). This was produced by the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) in order to introduce the SDGs to a wider audience, both within municipal organisation and in external communications or during events.

And finally, The Guardian issued an article with 4 tips on [how to communicate the SDGs to the public](#). The 4 tips being: 1. encourage empathy, not pity; 2. think about the messenger; 3. don't be afraid to talk about corruption and 4. keep it real.

RESOURCES

[UNDG: Building awareness on the 2030 Agenda](#)

[UN SDGs communication materials](#)

[Project everyone](#)

[European Sustainable Development Network](#)

[Communication and Awareness Raising in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs: Activities and Challenges](#)

[National Youth Council of Ireland: Development Education Programme](#)

[WECF: Instagram campaign](#)

[SDG WE ambassadors](#)