



Press Release: BCCIC and GECCO Launch SDG Voluntary Local Review for Kelowna BC

April 13, 2021 (10:00am Pacific Time) -- The British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC) and [the Global Empowerment Coalition of the Central Okanagan \(GECCO\)](#) today announced the release of a new report, [Global Goals, Local Action: Kelowna's Voluntary Local Review](#).

This report is a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) for the community of Kelowna, one of the first of its kind in Canada. A VLR is a subnational review of [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\)](#) implementation. Researchers narrowed down the SDGs' 169 targets and 232 indicators to 28 community-level indicators that are outcomes-based, quantifiable, measurable, and localized to the geographical and cultural context of Kelowna, BC.

This review is the first of its kind in Canada, because implementing the SDGs in this country and evaluating their progress can be challenging. Federal, provincial, and municipal governments each have different jurisdiction over the SDGs - from health and education to climate action. Nonetheless, according to Laurel-Wayne Nixon, Operations Manager at BCCIC and contributor to this report, cities play a critical role in advancing the 2030 Agenda.

"Cities often assume core responsibilities for policy areas underlying the SDGs such as water, housing, transportation, infrastructure, land use, and climate change. Further, municipalities and communities play an integral role in making policy decisions that can advance or hinder global agendas for sustainable development."

Each section in this report highlights a different SDG and evaluates the community's performance based on a key indicator. It also highlights challenges and progress being made towards achieving each goal, the interconnectedness and interdependence of the goals, and the multi-jurisdictional nature of the goals.

"If marginalized groups aren't thriving, we can't have successful, sustainable community progress," says Kusum Wijesekera, lead researcher and author of this report. "This is possible but requires a true understanding of the problem, comprehending the barriers faced by different groups, and then measuring solutions accordingly. Setting quantifiable targets alongside quantitative and qualitative results can assist in evaluating the effectiveness of current policies and programs and in developing new solutions."

The authors of this report want to highlight the responsibility of local governments to move this agenda forward; however, consideration should be given to their resource needs and the technical support that they may require. A whole-of-society approach involving collaboration with different stakeholders and partners across sectors is important for local governments to meet these responsibilities.

Another key takeaway from this report is that partnerships for solving challenges are important and can be very effective. In a push for inclusivity, some unique collaborations have arisen in



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Kelowna. These collaborations prioritize listening to a range of voices and practicing trust and relationship-building. Examples include the city's 'Journey Home Strategy,' in which people with lived experiences of homelessness were consulted and included in the design. Another example is the Kelowna Community Action Team (CAT), a knowledge hub that is actively developing strategies for Kelowna and the surrounding region to take action on the overdose crisis. Kelowna CAT is made up of people with lived experiences and representatives from law enforcement, health authorities, local governments, Indigenous organizations, and CSOs.

Finally, reports like this VLR make it clear that, for the SDGs to succeed, organizations like the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC) and its Kelowna chapter (GECCO) must play a pivotal role. Groups that work on the ground with provinces and municipalities to implement and measure progress are essential. Hopefully, this VLR can be used as a catalyst and example for communities across the country that want to evaluate their own progress on the SDGs.

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