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Contextualising the SDGs in North West England

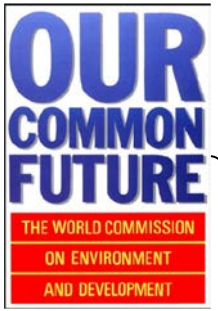
Findings from a multi-method and multi-year approach to relational bottom-up partnering

David F Murphy & Joanna Stanberry
Initiative for Leadership and Sustainability (IFLAS)
University of Cumbria, Ambleside

Contextualising the SDGs in North West England

1. **Brief overview of the study (3 mins: DFM)**
   - Purpose & research context
   - Sustainable development evolution
   - Literature review & conceptual/theoretical framework
2. **What we found out (5 mins: JS)**
   - Overview of Research, Methodologies & Findings
   - 3 key findings for contextualisation
     i. Contextualising the narrative–SDG Action digital platform
     ii. SDG Language & Organisational Aims: Synergies?
     iii. 'Business" framings in SDG implementation
3. **So what? (2 mins: DFM/JS)**
   - Concepts to re-think
   - Limits of the partnership construct
   - Framings of collaboration, leadership, multi-stakeholder partnerships & collaborative governance
     (actors/players and contexts)

1987



2015

2030 (and beyond)

Literature Review

A (revised) history of Sustainable Development

1. Both of us have been working on sustainable development most of our lives
2. **Post-1983:** Sustainable development emerges with connections between poverty, illiteracy, ill health, famine AND environmental problems (particularly in Africa, e.g., IIED: *Africa in Crisis*).
3. **Post-1992:** From business & sustainable development solutions in 1990s to CSR & international development problems in 2000s linked to MDGs & UN Global Compact.
4. **Post-2015:** No one left behind – no place left behind: a local-global agenda for "all people in all countries" (Mogens Lykketoft, President UNGA) – SDGs "a great gift for business…a long-term political framework for business to contribute to sustainable development" (Claus S Pedersen, Novozymes).

What we've done

Context and aims

1. **Integrating the SDGs:** Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17) as focus & holistic vision instead of fragmentation
2. **Conceptualising the SDGs:** 'An inclusive approach to partnerships for the SDGs' (Stott & Murphy, 2020) & 'A conceptual review of SDG 17' (Stanberry & Balda, 2023)
3. **Localising the SDGs in England:** challenges and value propositions for local government. (Perry et al, 2021)

Developing on this literature

frontiers in Sustainable Cities

Localizing the SDGs in England: Challenges and Value Propositions for Local Government

Beth Perry[1], Kristina Diprose[2], Nick Taylor Buck[3] and David Simon[4]*

[1] Urban Institute, The University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom, [2] Formerly of Urban Institute, The University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom, [3] Faculty of Science, The University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom, [4] Department of Geography, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, United Kingdom

sustainability

MDPI

Article

An Inclusive Approach to Partnerships for the SDGs: Using a Relationship Lens to Explore the Potential for Transformational Collaboration

Leda Stott [1,*] and David F. Murphy [2]

Conceptual Paper

A conceptual review of Sustainable Development Goal 17: Picturing politics, proximity and progress

Journal of Tropical Futures
1–30
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Sage

Joanna Stanberry[1] and Janis Bragan Balda[2]

The Rise of Multi-stakeholder Partnerships

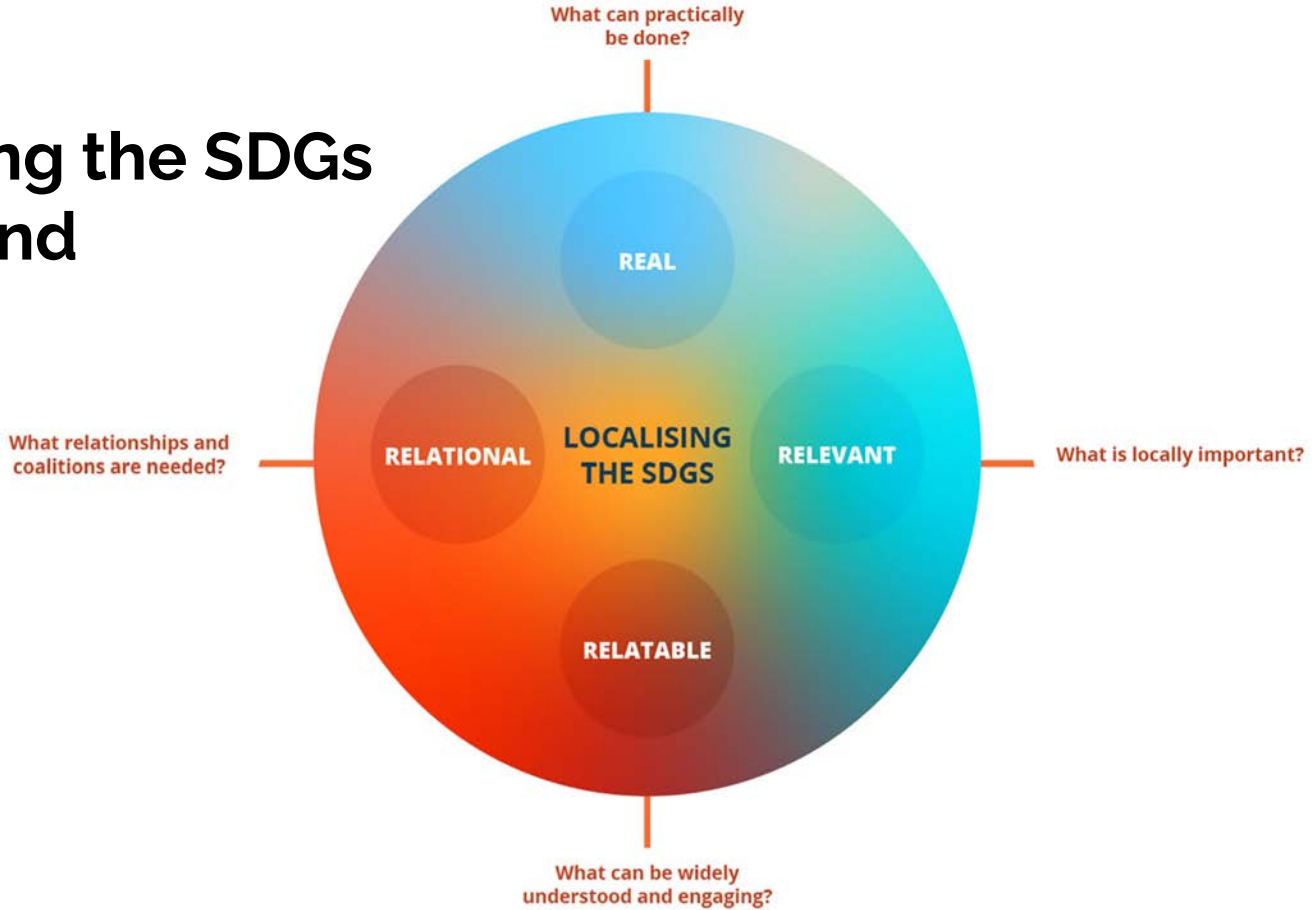
MSPs for the SDGs
(Glass et al, 2023)

"In light of an insufficient response of (inter-)national actors and traditional multilateral agreements to address the urgency and complexity of sustainable development…the international realm has been promoting the establishment of MSPs with increasing impetus."

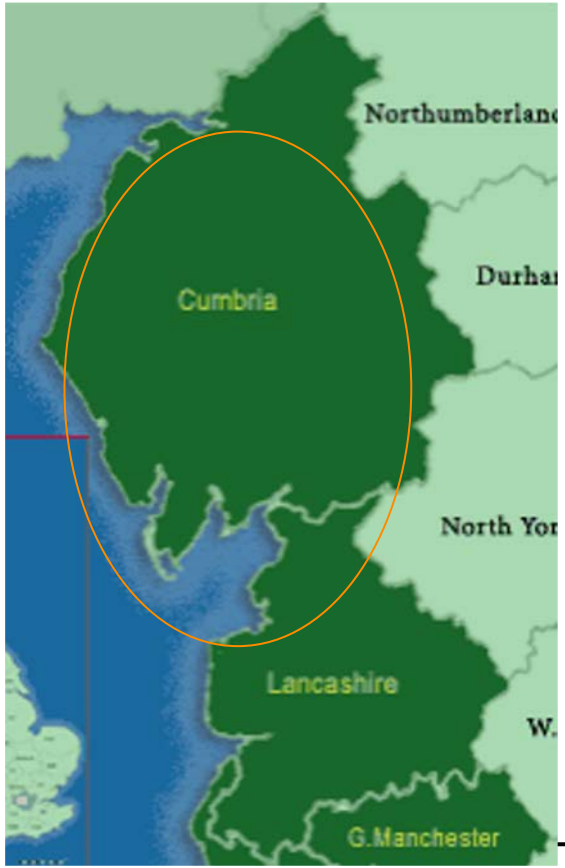
Overview of Research, Methodologies & Findings

Localizing the SDGs in England

Perry et al



Perry, B., Diprose, K., Taylor Buck, N., & Simon, D. (2021). Localizing the SDGs in England: challenges and value propositions for local government. *Frontiers in Sustainable Cities*, *3*. https://doi.org/10.3389/frsc.2021.746337

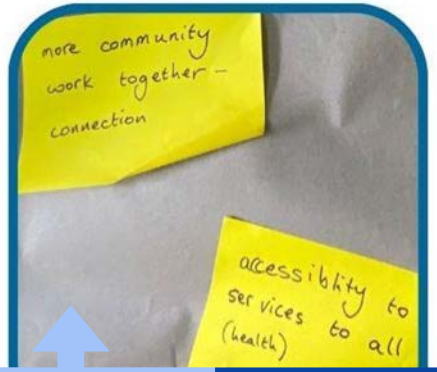


How we've done it

Methods and collaborations

1. Action Research (overarching framework)
2. Community Conversations (Council method)
3. Surveys and interviews (2021)
4. Digital Project: SDG Action (2022)
5. Q Methodology (2022-2023)
    - Digital Sorting: Capabilities for partnering bridged to CPD short course on collaboration
    - In person sorting: 30+ statements with SDG language (organisational aims)
    - Digital sorting: 80+ statements World We Want statements (organisational aims)

Overview of Research, Methodologies & Findings

	What we did	What we found
Q Methodology	3 Studies: Partnering (1) SDG Language & Org Aims (2)	Reframe competencies Reframe 'synergies & tradeoffs'
Interviews, Surveys & World Cafe	 2022-2023: 4 in-person events - SDG intro, MSME & VCSFE targeted	Attention to funding sources vs 'business' categorisation
Action Research	Policy Support with City Council & Convening Orgs	Need for VCFSE capacity building, Wheel: Spokes not reinvention, SME learning

Participant

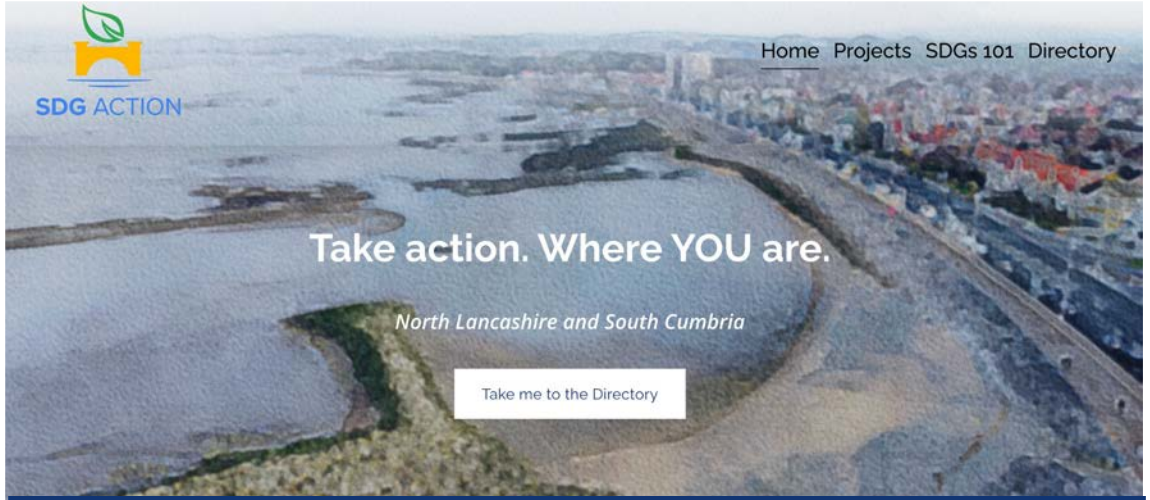
Quotes

"Working in a partnership opens areas of knowledge in a complex world in which no one has the knowledge of everything, therefore the strength is the integration of different visions, different knowledge."

The main capability [I would add] would be empowerment of people beyond the 'usual suspects' to meaningfully engage. This needs the creation of open access spaces, resources to support people (admin, printing, digital), and a chance to learn and develop skills for collaboration.

Highlighting 3 Key Findings:

1. Contextualising the SDGs requires collaborative social learning
2. High-level approaches to ‘tradeoffs and synergies’ may not translate top-down to local areas
3. A broader view of enterprise activities in implementation (instead of rigid ‘business’ categories)which also reduces fragmentation



1. Connect your work

Whatever you are up to, we think your work matters to transform our community and our world. Together we can, combat climate change, and improve the well-being of all people.

Connect your work to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and add what you do to the SDGAction Directory.

2. Connect to others

In North Lancashire and South Cumbria thousands of residents just like you are working in their businesses, schools, streets and homes to advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—even if they don't know it!

Connect and be even better together.

3. Connect to ideas

Want to learn more about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? The 17 SDGs are an agenda for transforming our world and they are for EVERYONE. EVERWHERE.

Learn more about how the goals can connect to the unique corner of the world we call home.

SDG 14: Life below Water

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

“The World We Want is one with oceans of opportunity. We want our marine life to be safe and our seas to remain our best resource. How can we get to the depths of the problem? How can we preserve our coastal bio-diversity?”

Digital Project: SDG Action Example, SDG 14: Life Below Water

Protecting and Restoring Ecosystems (Target 14.2)

As well as being home to 155 recorded bird species and 1,373 plant species, three rare and endangered fish species can be found within the Lake District: the Vendace, which is only found in the Lake District, the Schelly, and the Arctic Char.

Find out more about Lake District wildlife

Reducing Marine Pollution (Target 14.1)

Water quality within the main bay of Morecambe Bay is currently classified as Poor as a result of pollution coming from a wide range of sources such as plastic, sewage outflows and agricultural runoff. The Morecambe Bay Partnership, alongside the Lune, South Cumbria, and Wyre Rivers Trusts, recognise the importance of working together to tackle plastics and pollution throughout the Morecambe Bay area.

Find out more about the Morecambe Bay Partnership

Supporting small scale fisheries (Target 14.9)

Intensive trawling methods have damaged the seabed off Cumbria's coast, which is home to a rich diversity of marine life. With recent management measures now prohibiting bottom-towed trawling, the Cumbria Creel Project is supporting local fisheries to diversify towards more sustainable methods, reducing the socio-economic impact of conservation efforts on fishing communities and allowing the seabed to recover.

Find out more about fishing initiatives off the Cumbrian coast

https://sdgactioncumbria.com/

2022 Q Study 1 (in-person)

SDGs +Themes (36 Statements)

Study Results: SDG Clusters

Viewpoint 1

- Provide assistance to vulnerable populations, especially children, women, girls, and the elderly
- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Achive food security
- End hunger
-

Viewpoint 2

- Build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development
- Support local collaboration to build capacity for a more joined-up approach
- Foster innovation
- Build resilient infrastructure
-

Viewpoint 3

- Promote full and productive employment
- Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education
- Enhance cooperation across regional and/or national borders to share data, technology, knowledge, best practices or personnel
- Promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Distinguishing Statements for Factor 1

Statement Number	Statement
2	End hunger
3	Achieve food security
1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
32	Ensure all efforts include help for the poorest people so that no one is left behind
35	Assist with the mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including public or private finance, towards those with the most need
19	Reduce income inequality within and among countries
7	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education
8	Promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
21	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
18	Foster innovation
5	Promote more sustainable forms of agriculture
24	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Ethical Small Traders Association (ESTA)

Ethical
Small Traders
Association

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

ESTA supports local collaboration through informal learning that produces innovations in services. That generates circular systems that are resilient to shocks.

To Achieve...

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

We do...

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

In the short-term it changes...

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

In the long-term it changes...

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

We know that because...

1. What did the meeting produce that didn't exist before?
2. Where is that captured?

2022 Q Study 2 (Online)

World We Want (90 Statements)

THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development

THE WORLD WE WANT

A GUIDE TO THE GOALS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Movimiento Mundial por la Infancia de Latinoamérica y El Caribe

THE STORY OF PAULA AND LUISA

Paula was always worried because Luisa, her two-year-old daughter, was smaller and thinner than girls her age. They lived in the mountains where it was cold, so Paula fed Luisa with hot soups and broths. Until one day, when Paula saw a government message on TV in which a mother advised giving children a plate of vegetables, eggs and meat instead of soups and broths. From then on, Paula started to improve the nutrition and health of her baby.

GOAL 2

No Hunger

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

To achieve Goal 2, the States have agreed to:

- End malnutrition by improving social programs for children, mothers and the elderly, and ensuring safe, nutritious and sufficient food year-round.
- Increase agricultural production and income of small farmers, especially women and indigenous peoples, respecting the environment, the biodiversity of each region and their own resources.
- Prevent problems such as drought, floods, and other disasters.
- Protect the variety of species of seeds, crops and farm animals (domestic and wild), and fairly distribute the benefits of these resources.

Pre-Sort Your Responses

For each statement, click the icon that aligns most with your view.

BEGIN Q-SORT

Improve school facilities to provide a safe and positive environment for everyone.

Halve the amount of global food waste per person, by individuals and companies.

Increase resilience to disasters.

Monitor water quality to reduce contamination. Prevent chemicals or contaminants from being thrown into the water.

Offer opportunities for safe, creative work that motivates people's development.

Provide more opportunities for technical and vocational training to youth and adults so they can get better jobs.

Provide financial support to the poorest countries and small islands to protect and have better management of marine resources, thinking about the future.

Ensure States improve their data and statistics management to be able to assess their progress and toward achievement of the Global Goals.

0 / 87

Good Things Collective

East meets West
WOMEN TOGETHER IN LANCASTER

Green Rose
Community Interest Company

Ethical
Small Traders
Association

Ethel & Em

Social Enterprise

Maker space enables local entrepreneurship and learning

Voluntary Org

Welcomes and connects refugee women with employment, often NHS

CIC

Enables households to adopt new green technology and reduce energy costs– critical link to green tech businesses

CIC

Network of knowledge sharing for micro and small businesses to generate circular economy solutions

Sole Prop.

Knitting and wool shop–possible ‘parties’ to sell adult intimate toys for women’s mental health and empowerment

Are these ‘business’ approaches to implementing the SDGs?

So What?

"Technology, skills, sustainability, and public and private investment will be at the core of our partnerships…We will seek to advance concrete actions that deliver on the promise of the SDGs, for our prosperity, people, and planet."

The Problem with Partnership?

-Professor David Runciman
Trinity College, Cambridge,
September 2004

"Though the concept may be very attractive … in practice the language of partnership may conceal far more than it facilitates…"

___

What Next?

Building a more inclusive participatory action research agenda for sustainable development collaboration

How might we enable and enhance more bottom-up, local multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnership towards sustainable development so that no one is left behind?

When we talk about ‘business’ partnerships for sustainable development are we imagining and including smaller enterprises as well as larger national & global businesses?

What knowledge is needed for collaboration towards transformations?

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