

INFORMATION ACTION BRIEF

A RESOURCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

UN SDG partnerships 17 for the goals*

*Strengthen the means of implementation and
revitalize the global partnership for sustainable
development*



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STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS WITHIN AN INFORMATION CONTEXT

WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

Enhance international cooperation around technology, innovation, science, and development. The information professions are a vital hub in the network of partnerships among governments, the private sector and civil society, to advance the collective impact.

* <https://sdgs.un.org/>



WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

The SDGs are highly interdependent, and require a coordinated global effort. Working on any of the UN SDGs in isolation hinders the ability to achieve what is possible. Issues like climate change, peace and justice, and sustainable economic growth can only be resolved through cross-sector partnership. Goal 17 recognizes this need for cooperation. The collective impact framework establishes that collaboration reduces duplication, increases trust, mitigates competition, and leverages resources. Bringing data and information together across partnerships is vital to ensure that it is put in front of the decision-makers and drives their decisions. Information professionals create the infrastructure necessary for important players to cooperate.

HOW IS THIS RELATED TO INFORMATION?

Trustworthy and consistent information and data are critical in global partnerships working towards achieving the SDGs. For example, perceptions of COVID-19 related data and information reliability have varied and may be influenced by political considerations. This perceived lack of sharing of knowledge related to COVID-19 among countries hampered international efforts to address the virus in the early stages. The United Nations and the World Health Organisation (WHO) have both called for countries to take measures against the “infodemic”. [i,ii]

[i]<https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/un-tackling-%E2%80%98infodemic%E2%80%99-misinformation-and-cybercrime-covid-19>
[ii]<https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/immunizing-the-public-against-misinformation>



“WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT WE BRING TOGETHER INTO THIS MULTILATERAL SYSTEM THE VOICE AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, THE CIVIL SOCIETY, THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY, AND ALL THOSE OTHERS THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO ADDRESS TOGETHER THE VERY DRAMATIC PROBLEMS WE ARE FACING. ”

António Guterres

<https://etradeforall.org/antonio-guterres-read-the-un-secretary-generals-davos-speech-in-full/>

Information professionals such as librarians, archivists and data scientists can collaborate with or complement the work of the WHO and search and media companies (Ref. A) by creating “Mythbusters” (Ref. C) in the forms of infographics or factsheets that promote facts and prevent the propagation of misinformation. Furthermore, media and information literacy specialists can work with the Global Alliance for Partnerships on MIL (GAPMIL) and MIL University Network to develop strategies to recognize information from trusted sources and potential cybercrime.

It is also important to engage multiple ways of knowing within partnerships, engaging with the full diversity of knowledge paradigms. For example, a recognition of traditional Indigenous knowledges in land management and engagement with multiple ways of knowing in planning could have potentially prevented the catastrophic bushfires of the 2019-2020 season in Australia. [iii] The ecology of the Western Desert has been influenced by the Martu people’s hunting and fire practices who have traditionally conducted burns to encourage the growth of young grass, bush tomatoes and other plants that serve as food for desert animals. Professor Lynette Russell, director of the Monash Indigenous Studies Centre notes that Aboriginal knowledge has been lost. To this end, information specialists can partner with Indigenous people and other stakeholders to develop, sustain and pass on traditional knowledge in accordance with cultural protocols.

[iii] <https://lens.monash.edu/@politics-society/2020/01/08/1379433/bringing-indigenous-knowledge-into-the-bushfires-conversation>



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WHAT CAN I (OR THE PROFESSION) DO?

Actions for social transformation in Practice[P], Service/community engagement[S], Education[E] and Research[R]

1. Develop a holistic, shared understanding of information where we recognize and respect the different sectors to bring professionals with relevant skills together to collaborate towards achieving information related goals. [P, R E]
2. Actively work with external partners (e.g. government, private sector, civil society organizations) to address the SDGs. [P, E]
3. Identify the barriers to or enablers of positive perceptions about the value of information professionals within external partnerships. [R, P]
4. Develop research/practice partnerships to understand how information flows within and across networks in service of the SDGs. [R, E]
5. Clarify the leadership role of the information professions within and across organizations. [P, S]
6. Co-develop targeted media and information literacy training resources for use at all levels of education and contexts. [E, S]
7. Establish experiential learning (e.g., internship, practicum, career placement, service learning) with industries and organisations to advance the SDGs with an information focus. [P, E]
8. Aim to achieve collective social impact of research and practice both locally and globally. [P, S, R]
9. Actively engage with the public to increase awareness of information practice, service, education and research. [S, E]
10. Build a collection of cases as evidence to demonstrate unique contributions of the information professions to achieving the SDGs. [P, S, E, R]

SUMMARY

SDG 17 magnifies the vital role of collaboration in the sharing of knowledge and information to inform decision-making and sustainable practice across the SDG system. As information professionals, we regularly collaborate across diverse sets of stakeholders and foster partnerships to help international cooperation around technology, innovation, science, and development. The information professions can leverage this expertise on an international scale to advance the sustainability agenda.

INFORMATION PARTNERSHIPS FOR SD INFOGRAPHIC



Figure 1: The enabling eco-system required to effectively drive partnerships for the SDGs

SOURCES

Graphics

- https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/2699Platforms_for_Partnership_Report_v0.92.pdf
- https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/2699Platforms_for_Partnership_Report_v0.92.pdf



Figure 1: Sources: TPI partnership typology; Building multi-stakeholder platforms with private sector and philanthropy for the sustainable development goals, IICSD and UNDP (2017); Comparative Studies of Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (Biekart and Fowler, 2016, p.