

# SDG3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

# CONCISE GUIDES TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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This series comprises 17 short books, each examining one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

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Titles in this series have a particular focus on the means to implement the SDGs, and each one includes a short introduction to the SDG in question along with a synopsis of their implications on the economic, social, environmental and cultural domains.

# SDG3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING: RE-CALIBRATING THE SDG AGENDA

Concise Guides to the  
United Nations Sustainable  
Development Goals

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

This special volume is in the memory of Prof Ngok Lee, a Vice President of UNESCO Hong Kong Association, who for many years strived for justice and peace for all people across Australasia. He passed away on March 1, 2019. We were fortunate to have his support during the early stages of this volume. His influences on sustainable changes are deeply missed. We would also like to dedicate the volume to earth and the entire more-than-human, as essential stakeholders in all sustainability discourse.

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IDEOLOGY TO  
IMPLEMENTATION:  
INTRODUCTION TO FIELD  
STORIES OF SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3

*Tamara Savelyeva, Stephanie W. Lee and  
Hartley Banack*

For us, as editors who have never met in person, living scattered lives across the globe, yet connected by commonalities such as the need for fresh air, clean water, healthy food, opportunities for wellbeing, and nature, a collective aim of this volume has been to gather field stories that tell of global connections with *Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3: Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Wellbeing to All for All Ages*.

In their assessment of the SDGs, scholars (Griggs et al., 2014; Hulme, 2015; Morton, Pencheon & Squires, 2017) have noted a marked difference between SDGs and the prior Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), insofar as SDGs

broaden the concept of sustainable development (SD) to include the more-than-human of this earth. There are ample examples of unsustainable stress being placed on many planetary systems by human activity, and more emerge daily. In describing the concept of planetary boundaries, Sachs (2012) wrote, ‘human activity is pushing crucial global ecosystem functions past a dangerous threshold, beyond which the earth might well encounter abrupt, highly non-linear, and potentially devastating outcomes for human wellbeing and life generally’ (p. 2207).

Yet, this triple bottom line is a recent emergence for SDGs, and perhaps still somewhat underdeveloped. Presently, the only mention of *nature* in the revised SDGs comes in 12.8, which states, ‘By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for SD and lifestyles in harmony with nature’. By and large, the SDGs have changed from the MDGs more in relation to specific measurable targets (as #s) than in the way they invite the full inclusion and integration of more-than-human agents, urging coexistence rather than pitting the human and more-than-human against each other.

The original framework of SD (Brundtland Commission, 1987) was premised on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. As a scholarly field, SD inherently addresses the key questions of relationships (Savelyeva, 2018), between a human and him/herself, a human and other humans and between humans and nature. By inviting human/more-than-human relationships into the SDGs, nature can no longer be understood as passive and/or instrumental. A radical conception of SD does not hinge or pivot on humans and more-than-human, including nature, but rather considers more-than-human agents as equals and acknowledges the unique and incomparable position of the

earth as the source of life-support for current and future generations (Latour, 2014).

In referring to this era as the anthropocene (Gr. ἄνθρωπος – human and καινός – new time) comes recognition of the complex interdependence of human–nature relationships and the significant impacts humans are having on the global environment. Along with this comes the possibility of acknowledging the unimaginable and significant agency of the earth and nature as actors in our collective terrestrial future. Current human practices, taken en masse, are unsustainable and need to shift urgently. There are many approaches as to how such shifts may occur, and sharing diverse approaches matters in the face of the uncertainty of what the future on earth looks like. The World Health Organisation’s Ottawa Health Charter (1986) stipulates that health is created and lived by people within the setting of their everyday life where they learn, work, play and love. The United Nations SDGs aim towards an earth that is not only sustainable for humans, but just, equitable and inclusive, for humans and more-than-humans (United Nations, 2016). In this regard, SDGs become a more useful tool through their emphasis on qualitative examples. The stories shared in this book aspire to address the needs of those interested in in-depth explorations of current SDG 3 developments and offer an authentic glance of agency through the stories shared around addressing SDG 3.

## ORGANISATION

This book has been organised into three sections: Section 1 – problematisations/issues; Section 2 – solutions/proposals and Section 3 – forecasts/future visions, illustrative of the three patterns we noticed. Each section offers a brief preface to help

summarise the section and bring the work together. Aligning with the SDG series goals, this book highlights holistic and integrated implementations and models of SDG 3 from policy, practice and research that illustrate robust collaborative SD networks and are concretely grounded in SD strategies which respond to local needs, with global relevance. Perhaps a thread that unites the tales is consideration to practice and action in local contexts. The book contains practical case studies from implementations of SDG 3 from Australian, Canadian, Ethiopian and Hong Kong contexts. These stories offer pragmatic exemplars of health and wellbeing from distinct global contexts, including consideration of First People's approaches, global health frameworks and computer/digital technology with respect to social and ecological justice through critical lenses. The collection illustrates diverse approaches, raising health and wellbeing concerns, from lived experiences in local contexts around the world that show unique responses and experiences of SDG 3 approaches in action.

The anthropocene refers to an 'unofficial' geological era in which planetary evolution, the earth's evolution, is intensifying and putting instrumental conceptions of a human–nature relationship through a scoped humanistic lens with calls from ecological positions. Simple solutions, even complex solutions, seem daunting within these re-hashed discourses. Recognition that the earth, nature and all of the objects humans have created are also important agents in both how we analyse and proceed at this moment (Latour, 2014). SDGs were developed as aims with the capacity to measure and re-calibrate emerging trends in the age of the anthropocene and environmental degradation, and as a mechanism to give insight into SDG actions being taken towards a more sustainable future.

In assessing relevance for SDGs, the works presented in this volume support the idea that the SDGs present aims and challenges for all countries, and 'not what the rich should do



for the poor, but what all countries together should do for the global wellbeing of this generation and those to come' (Sachs, 2012, p. 2208).

Through this shared collection of SDG 3 approaches and rich stories, we begin to observe how SDGs may inspire and impact both humans and the more-than-human around habits and practices that foster health and wellbeing in sustainable ways. While we feel that this book brings together an interesting collection of stories, we also believe that it may act to urge/invite others, and you dear reader, to share their/your SDG 3 stories that inspire aims of health and wellbeing, and more broadly, sustainable existences for all.

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