

Northamptonshire tackles SDGs locally and comprehensively (focus on Goal 16)



Rachel McGrath, CEO
Northamptonshire Community Foundation

Northamptonshire Community Foundation has truly embraced the SDGs. It not only includes reference to the SDGs in its mission statement but puts this into practice with each member of staff partnering with a Trustee to champion a goal of their choosing, and every month the organisation focuses on a specific Goal, stimulating conversations around it and taking action. Goal 16 is about Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions - what's that to do with community foundations. Below, Rachel McGrath, Chief Executive, Northamptonshire Community Foundation, describes some of the actions relating to building safe communities where there is access to justice, accountable institutions and healthy democratic processes.

'Across the last year we have worked with donors, partners, funded charities and community groups to help achieve this global goal on our doorstep whether it be the launch of our Welcome Fund Appeal to help the safe resettlement of refugees from Afghanistan and the Ukraine or working alongside the High Sheriff's Initiative Fund to provide grants to projects reducing serious youth violence across our communities.

UN SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions is about safe and peaceful communities, where all residents feel included and have a deep sense of belonging; living in towns, villages and neighbourhoods where they can go about their daily lives without fear of becoming a victim of violence and crime. It is fundamentally also about access to justice, accountable institutions and healthy democratic processes.

The goal's mission statement is as follows: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

At Northamptonshire Community Foundation we have funded several projects and activities on behalf of our donors to support this mission locally; this includes projects supporting migrants and refugees, projects tackling violence and supporting victims of crime, community law services, rights and equality councils, community safety initiatives, citizens advice and advocacy and residents groups representing local

people's interests and concerns. Our community conversations that we have held on how to best go about achieving this goal locally includes a commitment to encourage projects that address the following:

- Promote education on and understanding of the rule of law and democracy
- Community assets - promoting, funding and supporting physical spaces where under-represented communities can meet
- Celebrate diversity, promote inclusion and recognise the different needs within communities
- Champion the key role the VCSE sector plays as a strategic partner to the public sector

Our recent impact report has recorded across the last year highlights how we have supported local residents across this goal including 11,409 people feeling an increased sense of belonging in their community and 761 local residents reporting feeling safer in their communities as a result of a funded project.

This year we saw the Knife Angel visit Northamptonshire and I, like many residents, went along to visit outside All Saints Church in Northampton and reflect on the tragic loss of lives in local communities through violence and thoughtless actions. The Knife Angel was created in order to highlight knife crime in the United Kingdom and educate young people of the harmful effect violent behaviour can have on their communities.

Our High Sheriff's Initiative Fund is dedicated to tackling serious youth violence and last year it awarded grants to local projects helping prevent young people from engaging with the criminal justice system. This included:

Spring Family Centre working with young people in Spring Boroughs, Northampton at risk of offending or re-offending through a programme of activities.

Northampton Town of Sanctuary funding a Summer and Autumn programme of diversionary activities aiming to upskill and empower vulnerable young people at risk of getting involved in county lines.

Kingswood Neighbourhood Centre based in Corby funding a project working with at risk and excluded children and young people.

Growing Together Northampton funding a Summer Holiday Play scheme for vulnerable children and help improve life chances.

Our Welcome Fund Appeal and Funding Programme has raised essential funds to help the safe resettlement of refugees in Northamptonshire. Foundation trustee and Refugee resettlement worker, Syrah Nazir highlights the importance of resettlement programme activity in achieving peaceful and safe communities via local charities:

'The local work has included putting welcome packs together and wrap around support. Lots of agencies have got together to do that including the British Red Cross, Re:store Northampton, Northampton Hope Centre, alongside offers of clothing. Charities such as Ability Northants and DACT (Daventry Area Community Transport) have offered community transport support.'



‘Firstly and foremostly the work is about empowering people that have come here to lead better and safer lives especially those from war torn regions where this may be the first time in a long time that they’ve had an opportunity to experience a peaceful existence. We want to help refugees to navigate new cultural experiences and lead a normal life as much as possible.’

Northamptonshire Community Foundation with many of its UK-based colleagues has also worked alongside Ukrainian Community Foundations via a Whatsapp group to help connect with and support the journey of people fleeing the invasion and to ensure we work alongside public bodies to provide the best safety net for resettlement here in our county.

Northamptonshire Community Foundation thanks all our donors, community groups and charities that are committed to working with Northamptonshire Community Foundation to help build safer communities and protect lives. You can follow us on social media to find out more about our work to achieve the Global Goals and find out more about the local projects we fund to help build peaceful and safe communities.’

Rachel McGrath, September 2022.

More information about NCF and its SDG reports can be found here <https://www.ncf.uk.com/>