



The Council for Health &
Human Service Ministries

United Church of Christ

Organizational Sustainability

Using the U.N. SDGs as a Guide

Wednesday, March 9, 2022, 3:30 p.m.

2022 CHHSM 84th Annual Gathering: Forward Together »

Questions for Later

- What kinds of sustainability practices have you put in place?
- Does your board/management measure your organization's carbon footprint? Have you set net-zero goals?
- Are there government or licensing regulations that require sustainability reporting?
- How important do you think sustainability is to your current and future donors?

What is Sustainability?

“Sustainability refers to doing business without negatively impacting the environment, community or society as a whole.”

(Re)Source: [What Is Sustainability in Business? | HBS Online](#)

Triple Bottom Line for Non-Profit Organizations:

1. Social Profit
2. Building Community
3. Preserving the Planet

(Re)Source: [The Triple Bottom Line: What It Is & Why It's Important \(hbs.edu\)](#)

Sustainability Is Not New



- As Old as the Bible

“Do not defile the land where you live and where I dwell, for I, the Lord, dwell among the Israelites.” – Numbers 35:34



- Indigenous and First People's Wisdom

“The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.” – Chief Seattle, 19th Century Suquamish and Duwamish Leader

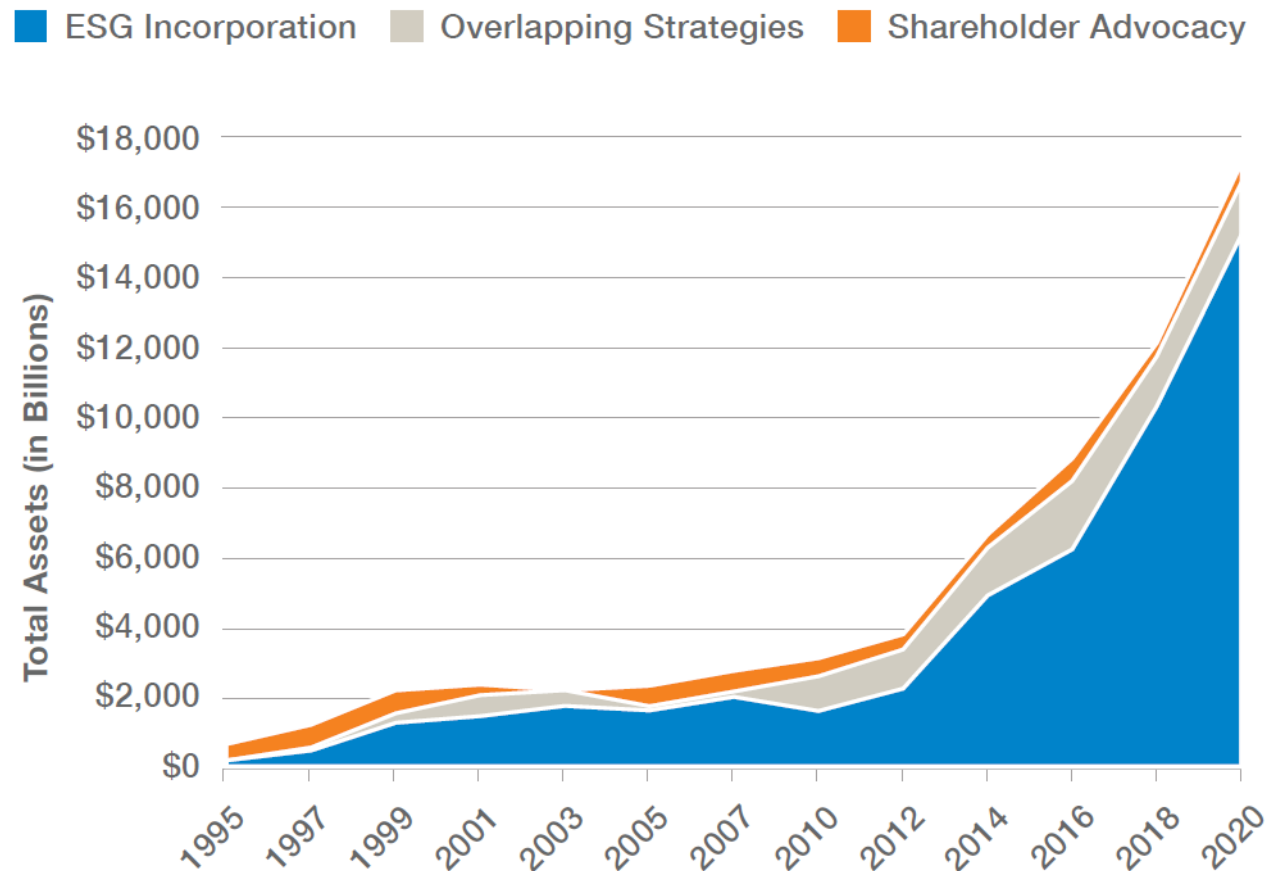


- UCC General Synod Resolutions

Past resolutions include environmental issues, social justice, prudent use of resources and other sustainability concerns.

Sustainability: Fad, or Here to Stay?

Sustainable Investing in the United States 1995–2020



Sustainable Investing:

Over the last 25 years, there has been a 25-fold increase in sustainable investments.

(Re)Sources:

“Report on US Sustainable and Impact Investing Trends 2020,” US SIF Foundation, 2020

[“Sustainable Investing—Just a “Craze?” Or Here to Stay?,”](#) by Matthew Illian

Sustainability: More Impact than Ever

FIVE TOOLS

in the RESPONSIBLE INVESTOR TOOLBOX



Managers selection
with proven performance and commitment to responsible investing, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).



Invest in impact-first ventures that seek to solve social and environmental problems



Corporate Engagement with the companies in which we invest, holding them accountable for their actions.



Proxy voting on resolutions concerning issues like fairness in executive pay, corporate transparency, and DEI.

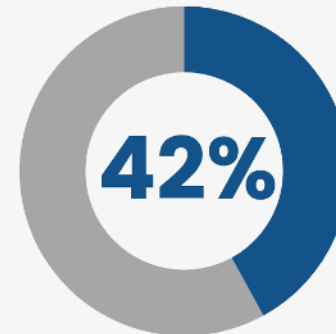


Divest from companies that fail to respond to dialogue and shareholder resolutions

Investors have more tools with which to make an impact and a larger platform for corporate accountability.

As corporations embrace sustainability, they require financing to pay for it. This creates economic opportunity and more sustainable investment options for investors.

FIXED INCOME FUND



or \$83.8 million is generating positive Sustainable Impact

25%

Green Bonds

\$49.8M in bonds financing LEED certified buildings, solar, EV production and more.

10%

Social Bonds

\$20.3M in bonds financing affordable housing, community infrastructure and more.

4%

Pandemic Bonds

\$7.5M in bonds financing COVID vaccines, tests, revitalization and more.

Sustainability: Fad, or Here to Stay?

COP 26: 26th U.N. Climate Change Conference
Glasgow, Scotland, 2021

- Largest gathering since COP 21 (Paris).
- Prominence of non-governmental voices, especially youth (but also fossil fuel lobbyists).
- Set new goals:
 - 1) Limit global warming to 1.5°C (instead of 2.0)
 - 2) Limiting GHG by 2030 (instead of 2050)



(Re)Sources:

[“6 takeaways from the U.N. climate conference,”](#) New York Times, November 13, 2021

[COP26: What are the Main Takeaways,](#) CSR Europe, November 17, 2021

Sustainability: Challenges



- Replacing fossil fuels with clean energy may mean relying temporarily on nuclear energy.
- New EVs initially contribute 2X more to global warming than combustion engine vehicles, due to battery manufacture and minerals mining.
- Clean energy, new technologies and artificial intelligence will disrupt employment.
- What does a “just transition” mean as our economy embraces clean energy technologies?
- Climate change is a highly politicized issue and therefore will continue to spark debate.

(Re)Source: [“Spent Fuel: The risky resurgence of nuclear power,”](#) Harper’s Magazine, 2021

(Re)Source: [“Batteries can be part of the fight against climate change—if we do these five things,”](#) World Economic Forum, November 28, 2017

Sustainability: Where to Start?



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.

At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

SDGs – Implementation Best Practices

- SDGs are meant to be understood as a holistic system, with related and overlapping goals. “Everybody has to own all of the goals.”
- SDGs can be a starting point for employee engagement or board/management conversation.
- Create a “Sustainability Task Force” of employees and Board Members to audit your organizational sustainability.
- Measure where you are now, and set realistic goals and timelines for reaching targets.
- Don’t try to do everything at once – prioritize the things you can change, starting with your strengths.



(Re)Source: [“Make it your business: Engaging with the Sustainable Development Goals,”](#) PWC, 2015

(Re) Source: [“Understanding the SDG Implementation Process,”](#) 17Goals, 2016 [“OneNYC 2050”](#)

SDGs – Implementation Ideas

- Retrofit old equipment with energy saving devices.
- Seek green energy alternatives.
- Employ people from diverse backgrounds, and provide decent working conditions.
- Contract with local companies for supplies to reduce transport costs and contribute to local economy.
- Encourage office lunches from local shops, and support of local businesses and merchants.
- Encourage public transportation, reduce unnecessary business trips, purchase carbon offsets.
- Reduce use of plastics (bottles, utensils, etc.).
- Create green spaces or garden areas.
- Seek sustainable and/or impactful strategies of investment.

Sustainability: Investments

United Church Funds can be a partner in sustainability:

- Performance of sustainable investments is on par (or better) than non-sustainable strategies.
- Donors and stakeholders appreciate knowing that their investments in your organization are making impacts within and outside your operations.
- Your Board and Investment Committee have a fiduciary obligation to use ESG and responsible investment factors.

(Re)Source: [“Sustainable Investing—Just a ‘Craze?’ Or Here to Stay?,”](#) by Matthew Illian

“We believe that investors and other organizations in the investment system must:

Act with due care, skill and diligence, in line with professional norms and standards of behavior.

Act in good faith in the interests of their beneficiaries and clients, including avoiding conflicts of interest, or where such conflicts are unavoidable, to balance and disclose such conflicts.

Take account of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues, in their investment processes and decision-making, encourage high standards of ESG performance in the companies or other entities in which they are invested, and support the stability and resilience of the financial system.”

United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment Fiduciary Duty in the 21st Century: Global Statement on Investor Obligations and Duties

Sustainability: Tips from a CSO

- Align sustainability with the core competencies of your organization.
- Embed sustainability into organizational vision/goals.
- In balancing sustainability and operations, be clear about the vision. Unrealistic or lofty goals are unsustainable.
- All change starts at the individual level.



Thank You!



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Q&A