

Oh Canada! Our kids deserve better ^[1]

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Excerpted from the Introduction

In September 2015, 193 nations, including Canada, came together to set universal targets for the world: the Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs. The Global SDGs are an ambitious global agenda. They not only aim to end extreme poverty and hunger by 2030, but are also designed to provide lifelong education for all, protect the planet, and promote peaceful and inclusive societies – and they include goals and targets to protect children from violence, combat climate change and reduce inequality. In achieving the Global Goals by 2030, we have the potential to grant every child a fair chance in life, ensuring them health, safety, education and empowerment.

The most telling sign of a nation's progress is the state of its children and youth – a sensitive indicator of the well-being of people, prosperity and the planet. The universal concept of child well-being is rooted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), but the Agenda for Sustainable Development adds new dimensions, including reducing inequality and stemming climate change. Progress across all these dimensions will be vital to children's well-being around the world and in Canada. On the other side of the coin, a society cannot be inclusive and sustainable without prioritizing the well-being of its children and youth. UNICEF's league tables over the past decade have brought this into sharper focus: the best-performing countries for children also enjoy economic prosperity and pursue environmental sustainability. Canada is, in the minds of many, a big, clean, safe and healthy nation. But the data in this Report Card suggest it is not so very clean, safe or healthy for its children and youth.

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