

Turning Social Purpose Dialogue and Vision into Action

A 2020 to 2022 Social Purpose Action
Agenda for Canada

Prepared By
The Social Purpose Institute at United Way



United Way
Social Purpose Institute



GLOBE 2020 ADVANCE

Turning Social Purpose Dialogue and Vision into Action: A 2020 to 2022 Social Purpose Action Agenda for Canada by the Social Purpose Institute

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At [GLOBE 2020](#) in Vancouver, BC, roughly 60 people representing business, civil society, government and academia, gathered for a 2.5-hour workshop on February 13, 2020 to develop a Social Purpose Action Agenda. This booklet is a summary of the Social Purpose Action Agenda designed to accelerate and scale social purpose in business in Canada and beyond.



What is a Social Purpose Business?

The Social Purpose Institute defines a Social Purpose Business as *a company whose enduring reason for being is to create a better world. It is an engine for good, creating societal benefits by the very act of conducting business. Its growth is a positive force in society.*

Check out [our website](#) for more information and to join the Social Purpose Business Movement!

Definition of a Social Purpose Business and the Business Case for Becoming a Social Purpose Business.



Workshop participants chose one of the topics below to work on in groups, and recommend an Action Agenda for the next two years.

| Top Priorities to Accelerate Social Purpose Business in Canada | | |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Priorities | Champions of Change | Page Number |
| 1. Encourage Buyers to Source from Social Purpose Companies | Procurement Managers | Page 5 |
| 2. Increase Investor and Board Oversight of the Company's Social Purpose | Investors, Directors | Page 7 |
| 3. Ensure Post-Secondary Students Graduate with Social Purpose Knowledge and Skills | Business Schools | Page 7 |
| 4. Mobilize Associations to Equip Their Business Members with Social Purpose Know-how | Associations | Page 9 |
| 5. Create the Enabling Ecosystem to Accelerate Social Purpose in Business | Civil Society, Government | Page 10 |

This booklet provides a summary of the 2020 to 2022 Social Purpose Action Agenda for Canada.

See the Next Steps section at the end of this document to read about the Social Purpose Institute's commitments and next steps.

First-Ever Canadian Social Purpose Conference

The Social Purpose Institute is planning a national conference on Social Purpose in 2021.

Contact engage@socialpurpose.ca to be added to the Institute's mailing list to receive information on the conference and other social purpose news and activities.

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Social Purpose Guest Experts

- Stephanie Bertels, Director, Centre for Corporate Governance and Sustainability, Simon Fraser University
- Tessa Jordan, Program Head, Sustainable Business Leadership, British Columbia Institute of Technology
- Tim Reeve, President, Reeve Consulting

Social Purpose Institute Team

- Mary Ellen Schaafsma, Director
- Monika Marcovici, Social Purpose Strategist
- Philip Manzano, Marketing and Communications Strategist
- Carolee Macaulay, Administrative Support



A 2020 to 2022 Social Purpose Action Agenda for Canada

The following are the top action items that resulted from the brainstorming workshop aimed at scaling social purpose in Canada and accelerating the social purpose business movement across the country and beyond.

The action items are organized according to an aspirational vision of 2030; what can be achieved by the time of the next GLOBE Forum in 2022; and what people can do personally and organizationally over the next two years to realize the actions and advance toward the vision.

Cross-cutting actions across the five leverage points included the following. These also suggest where special focus might be beneficial in the coming years:

- Social Purpose Case Studies
- Public Social Purpose Procurement
- Role of Academic Institutions
- Role of Associations
- Role of Accountants
- Social Purpose Metrics
- B Corp Connections

The Social Purpose Institute will review the following ideas to prioritize those it is able to advance over the next two years.

How you can get involved

Please review the following list of activities and see which of these you and / or your organization are able to advance individually or with others. Feel free to contact engage@socialpurpose.ca at the Social Purpose Institute to discuss collaborative opportunities.

Encouraging Buyers to Source from Social Purpose Companies

Aspirational Future State

By 2030 more than 80% of Canadian public, private and not-for-profit organizations are procuring at least 80% of their goods and services from Social Purpose companies, thereby creating a greener and more equitable marketplace that supports a thriving and sustainable economy.

What can be achieved by 2022 to advance the Procurement vision

1. **Visibility:** Enhance the visibility of social purpose businesses (e.g. how many Canadian companies have a social purpose as the reason they exist?)
2. **Coalition:** Develop a coalition or association of social purpose businesses
3. **Certification:** Agree on a social purpose business definition, and then develop a social purpose certification or standard, so that impact and authenticity can be verified; advance towards international recognition of social purpose business

4. **Accountability:** Enhance accountability of social purpose businesses by more social purpose businesses tracking and reporting their impact
5. **BCorp Relationship:** Clarify the relationship between BCorp business and a Social Purpose business; increase the number of BCorp-certified businesses
6. **Public Procurement:** Encourage the public sector to give value to social purpose business in competitive procurement processes, providing an opportunity for companies to showcase their value in RFP submissions. Ensure requirements are clear.
7. **General Procurement:** Encourage buyers in the public and private sectors to create social purpose procurement programs with the following potential elements:
 - a. Assess current state of social purpose procurement and develop a baseline to benchmark growth
 - b. Develop tools, metrics and an action plan to foster social purpose procurement
 - c. Use procurement tools such as a questionnaire and matrix to assess the activities and impact of prospective social purpose vendors
 - d. Partner with BCorp or CCSR to develop the social purpose procurement approach
8. **Supplier Engagement:** Encourage organizations to build the social purpose capacity of their suppliers with initiatives such as:
 - a. Use the Social Purpose Institute’s “Social Purpose Report Card” that includes Best Practices to help suppliers identify their strengths and gaps
 - b. Develop a list of High Impact Procurement Opportunities where social purpose suppliers can be engaged
 - c. Engage the organization’s strategic suppliers to determine where they are in their social purpose journey; develop mutually beneficial partnerships with strategic suppliers through open social purpose dialogues and relationships

Personal / organizational steps towards the 2022 actions

- Conduct research to understand what social purpose companies are doing to create social impact
- Influence key personnel within the organization:
 - Shift the leadership’s mindset to see value as well as cost
 - Assess the ways social purpose suppliers can save money, add value, reduce risks
- Review the organization’s current procurement policy to see the opportunities for including social purpose objectives



Increasing Investor and Board Oversight of the Company's Social Purpose

Aspirational future state

By 2030, executives and boards have identified and codified their Social Purpose, and are evaluating their performance against it, and investors are holding companies to account, basing their investment decisions on the degree to which companies deliver against their stated purpose.

What can be achieved by 2022 to advance the Corporate Leadership vision

1. **Auditors:** Engage with CPA Canada (professional accountants association) to provide guidance on social purpose for audit and finance committees of the board
2. **Board Guidelines:** Engage with Canadian Coalition of Good Governance (CCGG) to augment their checklist of Best Environment and Social Governance Practices for Boards of Directors to include questions such as:
 - a. What is your company's social purpose?
 - b. How will you fit into society in 2030?
3. **Case Studies:** Document case studies of social purpose and make them available to:
 - a. Post-secondary learning institutions
 - b. Responsible Investment Association, CCGG, CPA, International Corporate Governance Network, law associations
4. **Awareness:** Convene and foster "penny drop" moments to illustrate the social impact / environmental and social costs
 - a. Design experiential learning opportunities for boards and management in nature
 - b. Hold board to board and peer to peer board member discussions
 - c. Conduct conversations between mission-driven organizations and corporate boards
5. **Board Diversity:** Increase diversity on boards

Personal / organizational steps towards the 2022 actions

- Help draft / facilitate drafting case studies of social purpose
- Speak to fellow board members about the imperatives of social purpose
- Build social purpose into overall consulting practice and career trajectory
- Inspire teams with social purpose
- Develop social purpose metrics

Ensuring Post-Secondary Students Graduate with Social Purpose Knowledge and Skills

Aspirational future state

By 2030 all post-secondary students in Canada pursuing a business or related degree learn about Social Purpose business models and participate in experiential learning projects that accelerate Social Purpose adoption. All business-related continuing and executive education programs include Social Purpose in

their curricula. All post-secondary programs with career prep introduce and give examples of Social Purpose businesses to create awareness.

What can be achieved by 2022 to advance the Post-Secondary vision

1. **Courses:**
 - a. Target different streams of education:
 - i. Business-related
 - ii. Continuing and executive education
 - iii. Professional education through associations
 - iv. Career prep
 - v. K-12
 - b. Design and start to implement introductory business courses on social purpose business
 - c. In curricula, start to replace shareholder value maximization and short-termism with stakeholder-based, long term, social purpose models
 - d. Increase awareness of social purpose business models including cooperatives, B Corp, Community Contribution Corporations, and Benefit Corporations (new BC corporate category)
 - e. Provide opportunities for social purpose business to write case studies and visit classrooms to tell their stories
 - f. Develop social purpose courses and content for corporate continuing education and training programs
2. **General Requirements:** Alter general education requirements for all academic programs to add social purpose business to other general education requirements, such as math, arts, science, etc.
3. **Case Studies:**
 - a. Use social purpose case studies both at post-secondary and in association training to target both emerging and mid-career professionals
 - b. Write and share social purpose case studies with post-secondary programs to help imagine the future and normalize social purpose
4. **Research:**
 - a. Champion academic research into social purpose business models through partnerships with the private sector and civil society
 - b. Encourage social purpose companies to coauthor research with educational institutions
 - c. Focus on research that demonstrates a variety of career opportunities in social purpose business
5. **Competencies:** Develop a core competency of social purpose business through cross-institutional collaboration
6. **Students:**
 - a. Create opportunities for students to find their individual purposes and connect those personal purposes to corporate purposes
 - b. Give students (who in some ways are ahead of faculty on these issues) opportunities to research and work with social purpose businesses
 - c. Provide experiential learning opportunities for students by hosting student projects at social purpose businesses

7. K-12 Education:

- a. Make social purpose curriculum available in high schools; create connections between post-secondary and high school curriculum development to ensure students who are not able to or choose not to attend post-secondary are aware of social purpose business
- b. Provide opportunities through teacher education programs for students as young as elementary school to learn about social purpose business; train elementary school and high school teachers in social purpose business so they can provide relevant examples in their classes

8. Professional Associations:

- a. Create opportunities for both social purpose businesses and professional associations to influence post-secondary content by having members sit on post-secondary program advisory committees
- b. Develop opportunities for professional associations to educate their members on social purpose and personal/career purpose
- c. Advocate for changes in professional requirements
- d. Write articles on social purpose business for profession-specific publications (e.g. for the CPA)
- e. Use neutral third-party non-profit boards and associations to facilitate collaboration across educational institutions and among social purpose businesses

9. Accountant Training: Train accountants to measure beyond financial performance

10. Women in Social Purpose Business:

- a. Increase opportunities for mentoring for women interested in social purpose business
- b. Reframe business as a helping profession (not only a money-making profession) to encourage more women to study business (compare to and learn from strategies to get more women into STEM professions)

11. Public Procurement: Lobby (as post-secondary researchers) for continued modernization of provincial and federal procurement that assigns weight to social purpose

Personal / organizational steps towards the 2022 actions

- Share existing social purpose curriculum with faculty in other related programs
- Strike committees to review introductory business curriculum
- Provide internships for students and ensure that education delivered as part of these internships includes social purpose
- Co-author research paper (industry and faculty) to create a pipeline of knowledge for students as well as a recruitment funnel for social purpose businesses
- Create internal educational initiatives around a recently launched corporate purpose

Mobilizing Associations to Equip their Business Members with Social Purpose Know-how

Aspirational Future State

By 2030 all Canadian industry and professional associations are advancing Social Purpose through their membership, building the mutual capacity of their members to activate a Social Purpose as their reason

for being. This will create a ripple effect into organizations across Canada, driving social impact, transforming industries and fostering resilient employees, communities and businesses.

What can be achieved by 2022 to advance the Association vision

1. **Convention Centre Channel:** Leverage Convention Centres as a focal point for disseminating social purpose information since many associations use these facilities for their conferences. The Social Purpose Institute could conduct a pilot project in collaboration with Tourism Vancouver and the Vancouver Convention Centre with the following elements:
 - a. When associations apply to use the venue ask them to provide their social purpose
 - b. Consider offering organizations that demonstrate they have a social purpose a discounted rate for facility rental. For organizations who have not developed a social purpose or made it explicit, support them to define this in order to be eligible for the discount
 - c. Invite every association that meets in the Vancouver Convention Centre to undergo a scan / state of social purpose assessment. Develop a social purpose association scorecard to assess where the association fits on the spectrum
 - d. Include as part of the rental agreement that the Social Purpose Institute address the gathering for 5 – 10 minutes, e.g. a pre-packaged short talk to open the plenary
2. **Social Purpose Association Program:** Social Purpose Institute could develop an association social purpose program with 3 – 5 pilot associations, for which they would gain recognition. Find the largest associations to partner with, in order to encourage others to join as well. Develop the social purpose business case for associations. Encourage associations, who typically have mission statements, to include a social purpose in their mission to expand their field of view or scope of what they might be able to accomplish. As above, develop a social purpose association scorecard to assess where associations fit on the spectrum

Personal / organizational steps towards the 2022 actions

- Identify which associations organizations are members of and initiate outreach to the association on the opportunity of becoming social purpose
- Engage Tourism Vancouver meetings and conventions team on these opportunities

Creating the Enabling Ecosystem to Accelerate Social Purpose in Business

Aspirational Future State

By 2030 a Social Purpose ecosystem exists, including government incentives, intermediary capacity-building support, impact investors, academic research, education and innovation, and other partners and incentives. This thriving, well-resourced ecosystem has accelerated the adoption of Social Purpose in business.

What can be achieved by 2022 to advance the Ecosystem vision

1. **Scaling Local Ecosystems:**
 - a. Map existing social purpose organizations and work being done at the local level that already supports the social purpose ecosystem
 - b. Develop and replicate local ecosystem models. Determine an approach to scaling localized clusters with connected stakeholders of social purpose organizations and initiatives to foster broader systemic change
 - c. Create a crowdsourced resource that identifies intermediaries and hubs of social purpose business as a starting point
2. **Government Incentives:**
 - a. Interview government officials regarding current and future potential roles to provide incentives, innovation hubs and incentives for social purpose business
 - b. Recommend governments adopt social purpose incentives (e.g. social purpose public procurement)
 - c. Create social purpose innovation hubs in sectors such as food, technology, bioprocesses
 - d. Government to support efforts that enhance knowledge transfer and capacity building in social purpose
 - e. Government to de-risk small scale organizations working on high breakthrough social innovations (e.g. IP patent protections)
3. **Municipal Governments:**
 - a. Provide space for social purpose organizations to convene; this transforms empty buildings into opportunities for industrial businesses
 - b. Support incubators (Cities like Montreal and Toronto have city-wide hubs focused on social purpose initiatives that provide space and mentorship for burgeoning social purpose endeavours e.g. Centre for Social Innovation or Esplanade)
4. **Associations:** Encourage associations to become part of the social purpose ecosystem
5. **Metrics:**
 - a. Having metrics to assess the impact of social purpose organizations is of primary importance to increase the adoption of Social Purpose in Business
 - b. Leverage pre-existing frameworks for measurement and self-assessment such as B Corp and SDGs
6. **Academic Institutions:** Harness research and actionable insights from academic institutions (e.g. Recode in SFU); universities can play a role in sharing best practices

Personal / organizational steps towards the 2022 actions

- Talk to one or more social purpose businesses to understand their best practices
- Prepare to contribute to a future ecosystem map by researching organizations that are helping create an enabling environment for social purpose business

Social Purpose Institute's Next Steps and Commitments

The Social Purpose Institute commits to the following next steps by February 2022:

- Ecosystem:
 - Distribute this Booklet to key stakeholders

- Convene the first national conference on Social Purpose Business in 2021; use conference to further advance the ideas in this Booklet, including mapping the social purpose ecosystem
- Report out progress on the actions in this Booklet at GLOBE 2022
- Develop a coalition of social purpose business
- Collaborate with B Corp to increase the number of social purpose businesses certified to the B Corp standard
- Pilot the creation of a local social purpose ecosystem model with the Burnaby Board of Trade to replicate in other regions
- Case Studies:
 - Publish Social Purpose Business Case Studies and make them available to post-secondary learning institutions and other intermediaries such as the Responsible Investment Association (RIA)
- Industry Associations:
 - Partner with business and industry associations to introduce social purpose to their members (see textbox); create a social purpose industry association program
 - Follow up with Tourism Vancouver on the opportunity of leveraging Convention Centres as focal points for disseminating social purpose information to associations as a pilot project
- Metrics:
 - Contribute to efforts to develop social purpose business impact metrics
- Post-secondary Education:
 - Collaborate with BCIT to offer social purpose curriculum to students and other business schools on request
- Board of Directors Engagement:
 - Educate boards of directors and governance professionals on social purpose
 - Engage with CCGG to augment their checklist of best practices for corporate boards to include social purpose
- Procurement
 - Support social purpose businesses to engage their suppliers to become social purpose businesses
 - Use social purpose as a lens in United Way of the Lower Mainland buying decisions
 - Encourage United Way of the Lower Mainland suppliers to become social purpose businesses

News Flash: First Association Partnership on Social Purpose Business

In March 2020 the Social Purpose Institute and the Burnaby Board of Trade formed a partnership to educate Burnaby business on social purpose business, to increase the number of Burnaby businesses who have a social purpose as their reason for being, and to create an enabling environment in Burnaby to foster social purpose best practices in Burnaby. The vision is for Burnaby to be a centre of excellence in accelerating the social purpose business movement in Canada.

A Social Purpose business, whose enduring engine for good, creating social benefits by the very act

Question: What will it take to accelerate and

Changing the structure of institutional investing to encourage the purpose economy & purpose businesses to thrive & grow

* Involve the public
* Motivate companies for the cause

Profit:
A social purpose business that can live & profit, with or without returns will naturally grow by way of market forces

Public Awareness and demanding transparency

STOP
Challenging Profit
Profit - long term value creation

A Just Transition

Equity is a 20% value premium

... to address the ...

-Defining "Purpose" and being cognizant of balancing the understanding needs/gods/intentions of all parties involved

Put answers here → Use Post-it into permanent notes

Please write y



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