

Chapter 1

The Sustainable Development Goal – SDG#3 Good Health and Well-Being

Rob Hales and Naomi Birdthistle

Griffith University, Australia

Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all member states of the United Nations in 2015, is a shared blueprint for people and the planet, intending to achieve peace and prosperity for all. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a call to action to develop innovative solutions to some of the world's most complex, societal and environmental challenges. Businesses play a crucial role in forging this path, and since family businesses account for more than two thirds of businesses worldwide and contribute to 70–90% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP), we believe it is important to showcase the role they play in facilitating the achievement of these SDGs.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a call to action for all countries to address the global challenges of poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. These challenges are identified by 17 SDGs as depicted in [Fig. 1](#), and within the SDGs are a total of 169 targets. These 17 SDGs acknowledge that ending poverty and other global challenges need 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 ([United Nations, 2021](#)).

This book makes an important contribution to research on family businesses by highlighting how businesses can make valuable contributions towards sustainable development. There are several streams of research emerging in the literature on family business and sustainability that are relevant to this book.

Attaining the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal of Good Health and Well-Being, 1–12



Copyright © 2024 Rob Hales and Naomi Birdthistle.

Published by Emerald Publishing Limited. These works are published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) licence. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of these works (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this licence may be seen at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>.

doi:[10.1108/978-1-80455-209-420231001](https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80455-209-420231001)



Fig. 1. 17 Sustainable Development Goals. *Source: United Nations (2021).*¹

Ferreira et al. (2021) identify four streams of research in family business and sustainability: family business capital, family business strategy, family business social responsibility and family business succession. The case study approach of this book provides insights into how SDGs can be used to advance the family business's sustainability strategy and social responsibility. How a family's trans-generational sustainability intentions positively influence the strategy of the business and the family's concern for its reputation has been identified as a driver of sustainability in family businesses. Additionally, family businesses routinely combine innovation and tradition to achieve and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many family businesses have shown to be more resilient and operate more sustainably than standard businesses (such as the shareholder approach). The reason for this lies in family businesses generally taking a long-term perspective on stakeholder relationships and the real need for long-term continuity planning to sustain the people within their businesses. The people in their business are most likely to be family members. However, like all businesses, the COVID-19 pandemic has placed financial pressures on family businesses. One needs to ask the question: *How then can family businesses extend their capacity to operate more sustainably and with more social impact during times of business stress?* Well, family businesses can offer unique insights into how sustainability and social impact can be part of the regenerative response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The idea for the book came from two observations. The first observation was that family businesses that had sustainability at their core were performing well despite the impacts of the pandemic. The second observation was that the SDGs were being used as a framework for regeneration after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The global pandemic of COVID-19 has presented challenges to those working

towards achieving the goals. The social and economic impacts of COVID-19 are predicted to increase the divide between people living in rich and poor countries (UNEP, 2020). However, if there can be concerted action using the blueprint of the SDGs, then human development can exceed pre-COVID development trajectories (UNEP, 2021). What is needed is a combination of political commitment from all levels of government, investment in green economy initiatives, socially oriented innovation and a (re)focus on the purpose of business to align with SDGs.

The importance of family businesses in their contribution to SDGs can be envisaged in several ways. Firstly, many family business owners emphasise that the SDGs align with their core values and legacy-building efforts. They use the goals as a chance to align their business activities with a greater purpose and create a positive impact in their communities. Because of the nature of family businesses, they adopt a business purpose that provides a legacy for future generations. This results in a long-term perspective on business development and strategy. Family businesses also recognise that addressing the SDGs can enhance relationships with stakeholders, including customers, employees and local communities. Contributing to the achievement of the SDGs can foster goodwill and strengthen their reputation because of the external focus on global goals as opposed to just their own business goals (Barrett, 2017).

For family business owners who seek to transform their business models, the SDGs are a source of inspiration for innovation. The integration of sustainability into their business strategies can lead to the development of innovative products, services and business models that contribute to the greater good as well as create business value. Family business owners also use SDGs to identify and mitigate risks associated with environmental, social and governance issues. By addressing these challenges as a future-oriented strategy, they aim to ensure the resilience and long-term success of their businesses (Bauweraerts et al., 2022; Muhmad & Muhamad, 2021). Family businesses that are aligned with the SDGs are more likely to have a positive impact on their financial performance (Muhmad & Muhamad, 2021). Consumers and investors increasingly favour companies that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability. Lastly, many family businesses see themselves as ethical leaders and their commitment to ethical decision-making and responsible business conduct is enacted through business alignment and contribution to SDGs.

Book Series Focus – SDG#3

This book focuses on SDG#3, which focuses on good health and well-being. The main targets for SDG#3 are shown in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Sustainable Development Goal 3. Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being for All at All Ages.

- 3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births
- 3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births
- 3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases
- 3.4 By 2030, reduce by one-third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being
- 3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol
- 3.6 By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents
- 3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including for family planning, information and education and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes
- 3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential healthcare and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
- 3.a Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate
- 3.b Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all
- 3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in

Table 1. (Continued)

	developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing states
3.d	Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks

Source: United Nations (n.d.).

Family Business Contributing to SDG#3

Family businesses can make a significant contribution to SDG#3 through specific actions that align with SDG#3 targets. Family businesses can harness their influence and resources to advance the agenda of SDG#3, contributing not only to their organisational success but also to the broader societal well-being. Some of the ways family business can do this are:

Health and Safety in the Workplace

A pivotal arena of impact lies in the realm of workplace health and safety. Family businesses, driven by their commitment to employee welfare, can proactively cultivate an environment conducive to well-being. Implementing stringent safety measures, offering thorough training programmes and nurturing a culture of health can yield reduced occupational hazards and foster the overall health of the workforce (Bari et al., 2023).

Enhancing Access to Healthcare

Family businesses can serve as catalysts in enhancing access to healthcare by providing comprehensive health insurance coverage and collaborating with healthcare providers to ensure that quality medical services are readily accessible. Such endeavours extend not only to employees but also to their families, thereby improving the foundation of community health.

Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles

Championing healthy lifestyles among employees is another important avenue for family businesses. Leading initiatives that encourage physical activity, better nutrition and mental wellness, these businesses can have a ripple effect of positive behaviours, transcending the workplace and resonating within the broader community (Stier, 1993).

Community Engagement and Local Empowerment

Family businesses possess a unique vantage point to bolster community health initiatives because they are often deeply intertwined with their local communities. By sponsoring health-focused events, supporting local healthcare infrastructure and nurturing collaborations with health organisations, family businesses can have an impact on the health profiles of their local communities (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2022).

Ethical Supply Chain Management and Philanthropy

The pursuit of health and well-being extends beyond the confines of individual enterprises. Family businesses can exercise ethical stewardship by ensuring that their supply chains adhere to sustainable practices, particularly in industries with health implications (Alwadani & Ndubisi, 2022). Concurrently, philanthropic endeavours can channel resources towards advancing healthcare infrastructure, fostering medical research and reducing health disparities (Rivo-López et al., 2021).

Innovation, Education and Awareness

Innovation lies at the heart of health advancement. Family businesses can channel investments into research endeavours, technological innovations and pharmaceutical advancements, leading to improved healthcare delivery. Additionally, family businesses can leverage their networks to provide health education and raise awareness, promoting a health conscious society (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2022).

Long-Term Planning and Legacy

Family businesses are ideally poised to inculcate health and well-being values into their succession planning because they have intergenerational continuity at the heart of their business models. By nurturing a legacy that prioritises employee and community health, these businesses ensure an enduring impact on SDG#3 and its attainment (Gilding et al., 2015).

By embracing the diverse strategies involving health and well-being, family businesses can weave their operations into the fabric of SDG#3's targets. The interplay of sustainable business practices and societal welfare serves to position these businesses ideally as leaders of health advancement. Through a commitment to workplace safety, accessible healthcare, healthy lifestyles, community engagement, ethical stewardship, innovation and education, family businesses can create a legacy of health and well-being that advances the SDGs. The chapters in this book highlight the relationship between family business activities and the broader aims of societal health, thus advancing a healthier and more prosperous world.

Challenges Facing Businesses in the Achievement of SDG#3

Family businesses are well-positioned to contribute to SDG#3 by promoting health and well-being, but they face various challenges in their efforts. Overcoming these challenges will ensure a larger contribution to SDG#3. Many of the following challenges are noted by the family businesses showcased in this book.

The first challenge is about resources. Resource constraints pose a significant challenge for many family businesses due to their relatively modest scale compared to larger corporations. These businesses often contend with limited financial means and a smaller workforce, which can hinder their capacity to invest comprehensively in initiatives centred on employee and community health and well-being. Striking a balance between these aspirations and other pressing demands becomes difficult, given the myriad competing priorities that family businesses must navigate. While pursuing profitability, growth and generational succession, achieving health and well-being objectives necessitates careful planning to harmonise the priorities and multiple objectives (Gilding et al., 2015).

Lack of expertise further compounds the challenge, as the implementation of effective health and wellness programmes often requires specialised knowledge that might be beyond the reach of family businesses. Constraints on resources can hinder the hiring of experts or the development of in-house capabilities to adeptly design and manage such initiatives. Furthermore, resistance to change emerges as a notable hurdle, particularly for family businesses with long-term established operational traditions. Introducing new health-related policies, practices or cultural shifts may meet resistance from both employees and family members, impeding the integration of health and well-being measures.

Family businesses, in contrast to larger corporations, often encounter limited access to networks that could otherwise assist with their sustainability activities. The broader collaborations and partnerships that large companies can establish might not be as readily accessible for family businesses, affecting their ability to achieve health and well-being objectives. Despite their long-term perspective, these businesses also face the pressure to demonstrate short-term results. This leads to the reduced prioritisation of health and well-being initiatives that are not going to bring immediate financial returns.

The distinctive dynamics inherent in family-owned enterprises, particularly concerning family members as employees and potential successors, can influence the implementation of health initiatives. Managing relationships, addressing expectations and mitigating potential conflicts among family members can impact the introduction of effective health measures. Additionally, regulations pose a formidable hurdle, especially in industries with stringent health and safety regulations. Family businesses, often constrained by limited legal and compliance resources, are challenged by adhering to complex regulatory frameworks.

Engaging with external stakeholders for health-related initiatives requires concerted effort, time and proficient communication. Despite their strong community ties, family businesses must devote considerable resources to effectively engage with their communities in endeavours to promote health and well-being. Finally, the measurement of impact emerges as a challenging endeavour, one that

family businesses might find particularly difficult due to limitations in tools and expertise.

Despite these challenges, family businesses can overcome them by focusing on their strengths, values and commitment to long-term sustainability. Engaging in partnerships and aligning health initiatives with core business values can help family businesses make meaningful contributions to SDG#3 while addressing the challenges they may encounter.

The Book Chapters

The book series aims to contribute positively to providing evidence of the role of family businesses in effectively contributing to all SDGs. The book is one of 17 vignette book series in which each book is comprised of a set of short, easy-to-read family business cases related to the unique SDG being discussed in the book. The format of the book series allows the works to be accessible to those working in the field beyond academia such as family business practitioners, family business owners, family business advisors, government and business policymakers, members of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), business associations and philanthropic centres as well as to those who have a general interest in entrepreneurship and business.

The chapters in this book focus on businesses that have prioritised SDG#3. Four businesses have been profiled in the book and the first case profiles a company from Germany. The Inselkammer family owns and operates the *Platzl Hotel* located in Munich's city centre 'Am Platzl'. The family members behind the *Platzl Hotels* see themselves as pioneers in sustainability. Many sustainability initiatives have been implemented by the family business. In addition to general sustainability initiatives, employee healthcare plays a central role. The promotion of health and well-being applies to all employees and thus is an important objective of the family business. The family realises that they have many opportunities to improve the health and well-being of their employees and thus can realise business opportunities. Personal proximity to the employees – unlike in large businesses, for example – is considered a major advantage. The introduction of a business health management system in the family business aims to support the well-being of the business's employees.

The second chapter profiles a family business called Noble Care from Malaysia. Noble Care Malaysia has been a family business since 2005 and provides complete care and quality services to aged and ailing community members. They specialise in providing care to the elderly suffering from severe illnesses related to age and terminal diseases like cancer. The leadership of the family business is shared by Dr Ejaz Ahmed Chaudhry and his wife, and their sons and daughters share the position of manager and director. The 'Ageing for All' mission underpinning Noble Care is directly aligned with the SDG Good Health and Well-being (SDG#3). The family business's core values revolve around basic living, medical facilities and love and attention for the elderly in their golden years. An ageing population is a challenge for Malaysia which has limited

resources. Noble Care's nursing homes and retirement resorts create employment opportunities for the community, especially the catchment area where it is located. Each centre is estimated to require approximately 12–15 staff. In line with its vision to develop 100 centres by 2030, Noble Care is expected to create more than 1,500 job opportunities. This would positively impact the economy, reducing unemployment, especially in the qualified nursing sector. The main challenge for Noble Care now is to seek novel ways to help the country with increasing demand for more centres.

The third chapter profiles the family business from Mexico called DrugMex. This chapter outlines how the family business evolved into a major pharmaceutical organisation and demonstrates how it makes a significant contribution to SDG#3. The DrugMex company is closely identified with at least two generations of a family, and the family ethos of social justice between the partners has had a strong influence on overall company direction. Additionally, the family and their descendants possess 25% of the decision-making as per share capital. The expansion of the business into Mexico started in 2008 and was officially inaugurated in 2016. Alejandro (Alec) Delaney oversees this plant. There was a realisation by the originally named Dromex,² right from the beginning that, unfavourable environmental factors such as lifestyle, geographic factors, poor infrastructure, low health knowledge, lack of education and poverty are some causes of the high incidence of infectious and other communicable diseases in developing countries. From the beginning, Dromex, focused on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all ages, collaborating in fighting communicable diseases and supporting research, development and universal access to affordable vaccines and medicines. For example, it was the first company in Latin America to produce a vaccine for COVID-19. The challenges for the family business lie not in its capacity to impact SDG#3 as its business mission is directly centred on many of the targets of SDG#3, but rather business succession and geographical spread of the leadership will make decision-making challenging for future business development of the family business.

The last chapter is about the family business called Plant Doctor from Australia. Plant Doctor is a leading family-based company on the Gold Coast that promotes plant, animal and human health through an expanding range of products and services. The family business continues to develop and market eco-friendly products and deliver ethical, economical and effective health and well-being solutions. The case outlines how Plant Doctor provides products and services that contribute to SDG#3 Health and Well-being through delivering economical and effective environmental natural products to promote plant, human and animal health. Even though the business does focus on products for human health offering a range of alternative and organic products, the focus on organic and environmentally friendly plant and animal products demonstrates their mission of healthy places and healthy lifestyles that have a direct impact on the health and well-being of their clients. Challenges for Plant Doctor include the

²DrugMex was originally named Dromex in Mexico.

cost of organic and environmental products and how the market demand for such products is not as high as cheaper non-organic products.

The Methodological Approach Adopted for the Book

The book used a case study method to gain insights into the practices of businesses using SDGs. The summary outline of the case study template is shown in Table 2. The editors approached a range of potential authors to develop the case

Table 2. Key Aspects of the Case Study Template Used by Authors in This Book.

<p><i>Vision and mission, services offered by the organisation</i></p> <p><i>Background to the company</i></p> <p><i>Historical development:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founding date • Founder details • Human interest angle of the founder • Quotes from the founder or key people • Size of organisation 	<p><i>How do the vision, mission and background of the organisation relate to the particular SDG?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When did the SDG become important to the organisation? • Was there a person who championed the SDG? • Are the SDGs explicitly talked about by staff?
<p><i>How do key stakeholders relate to the SDG championed by the organisation?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What stakeholders influence the organisation? • Has the adoption of the SDG in the organisation had an impact on stakeholders? • Have stakeholders influenced the actions of the organisation related to the SDG? 	<p><i>Outline the business model of the organisation and add how the SDG is important.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline key elements • An outline structure of the organisation is needed. • Provide a diagram of the business model • Identify key activities and return on investment • How does the SDG relate to return on investment? • How do businesses monitor impacts?
<p><i>What are the challenges facing the organisation in implementing the SDGs?</i></p> <p><i>How does the business measure and report on sustainability and SDG activities?</i></p>	<p><i>How does the organisation see itself concerning providing benefits outside the organisation? What's next for the organisation?</i></p>

studies. They approached early career researchers, PhD students, family business academics, family business consultants, managers of family business centres and family business practitioners to consider submitting a case for the book. Interested authors were asked to choose the SDGs that best matched the family business of their choice and use a case study template provided by the editors of the book series to craft a case study on how the family business advanced the particular SDG. A truly global response was received for the book series with participants from all over the globe.

References

- Alwadani, R., & Ndubisi, N. O. (2022). Family business goal, sustainable supply chain management, and platform economy: A theory-based review & propositions for future research. *International Journal of Logistics Research and Applications*, 25(4-5), 878–901.
- Bari, M. W., Ramayah, T., Di Virgilio, F., & Alaverdov, E. (2023). Health and safety issues of employees in family firms. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11, 1102736.
- Barrett, R. (2017). *The values-driven organization: Cultural health and employee well-being as a pathway to sustainable performance*. Taylor & Francis.
- Bauweraerts, J., Arzubigaga, U., & Diaz-Moriana, V. (2022). Going greener, performing better? The case of private family firms. *Research in International Business and Finance*, 63, 101784.
- Ferreira, J. J., Fernandes, C. I., Schiavone, F., & Mahto, R. V. (2021). Sustainability in family business—A bibliometric study and a research agenda. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 173, 121077.
- Gilding, M., Gregory, S., & Cosson, B. (2015). Motives and outcomes in family business succession planning. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 39(2), 299–312.
- Lumpkin, G., & Bacq, S. (2022). Family business, community embeddedness, and civic wealth creation. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 13(2), 100469.
- Muhmad, S. N., & Muhamad, R. (2021). Sustainable business practices and financial performance during pre-and post-SDG adoption periods: A systematic review. *Journal of Sustainable Finance & Investment*, 11(4), 291–309.
- Rivo-López, E., Villanueva-Villar, M., Michinel-Álvarez, M., & Reyes-Santías, F. (2021). Corporate social responsibility and family business in the time of COVID-19: Changing strategy? *Sustainability*, 13(4), 2041.
- Stier, S. (1993). Wellness in the family business. *Family Business Review*, 6(2), 149–159.
- UNEP. (2020). A UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19. <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/UNFramework-for-the-immediate-socio-economic-response-to-COVID-19.pdf>. Accessed on July 20, 2023.
- UNEP. (2021). Leaving no one behind: Impact of COVID-19 on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). <https://www.undp.org/publications/leaving-no-one-behind-impact-covid-19-sustainable-development-goals-sdgs>. Accessed on July 20, 2023.

United Nations. (2021). The 17 goals. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>. Accessed on July 20, 2023.

United Nations. (n.d.). SDG indicators, global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>. Accessed on July 20, 2023.