

The Art of Sustainable Development

Can you visualize Gender Equality? Muralist and Drexel Professor Barbara Smolen can. “I approach the topic of gender equality from a concept of radiation and illumination.”

Smolen, an experienced muralist, put her thoughts into action, creating a mural celebrating U.N. Sustainable Development Goal #5, Gender Equality. “I used yellow and transparency and the idea that equality is something we should aspire to, and that it will spread out and reach everybody.”

The SDG Mural Project

The UN’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 set targets for global improvements across broad environmental, social, and economic areas.

Global Philadelphia and our partner Mural Arts Philadelphia are collaborating to apply the rich conceptual palette of the SDGs to walls throughout the city. The project will create a series of vibrant public murals in Philadelphia, together with unique learning experiences, bringing each SDG to life. Each mural project includes:

- ✓ Financial sponsor
- ✓ Engagement of local artists
- ✓ Host site
- ✓ Grant to a nonprofit from Philadelphia whose work represents each SDG.

Visuals Do Help

The SDGs are deliberately grouped together, resembling the Periodic Table of Elements. But for any single goal like Quality Education to drive progress, awareness is the first step. By raising consciousness, each new building block for a better future can become more real to the public.



Reinforcing gender equality is an important and timely mission for companies in the STEM fields. We are so pleased to participate with Global Philadelphia in this effort to inspire advocacy through art.

~ Laura LaRosa ~
Executive Director of Client Development, Glenmede



Radiating Gender Equality from Center City

The first mural now relays the message of Gender Equality in Friends Select School Plaza in Center City Philadelphia.

For Michael Gary, Head of Friends Select School, the project resonates with the school's purpose:



Local nonprofit Gender Justice Fund was highlighted at the mural's unveiling. Sustainability-oriented Widener University is the academic partner for SDG #5 and will produce an assessment of the state of gender equality in Philadelphia.

Thought Leadership Promotes Action

Elevating the profile of the SDGs can result in people and organizations taking action, including Martyn Miller, Temple University Assistant Vice President of International Affairs. Miller noted how "Temple's collaboration with Global Philadelphia Association on this important expression of social justice has been a welcome and energizing opportunity, in stark contrast to so much of the injustice and suffering we have witnessed all around us for the past almost year-and-a-half. Participating in this public art project allows us not only to highlight Philadelphia's place among world heritage cities and Temple's place in Philadelphia, but also to explore both how far Temple has come in its mission to provide access to excellence for all who seek on an education and, also, to envision how much further we can go."

More Murals on the Horizon

Global Philadelphia has brokered sponsorships for four more murals to be hosted throughout the city, adding projects in West and North Philadelphia, hosted by St. Joseph's University, Samuel Gompers School, and Temple University. With one mural completed and four more in progress, Global Philadelphia and partners plan to make more broad strokes for sustainability with 12 additional SDG murals. Check the GPA website for updates on the SDG campaign!

The Next Four SDG Murals ...

SDG	Location/Host	Sponsor	Nonprofit Partner
#4 Quality Education	Drexel Library at SJU Samuel Gompers School	St. Joseph's University	Samuel Gompers School
#1 No Poverty	Parkside Shopping Center	John and Susan Smith	Education, Culture, Opportunities Foundation
#10 Reduced Inequities	Gladfelter Hall	Temple University Office of International Affairs	Temple's Institutional Diversity, Equity, Advocacy and Leadership
#16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions		The Harry and Katherine Halloran Family Foundation	Project Home