



CENTRAL FLORIDA FOUNDATION



Center for Global Economic and Environmental Opportunity

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



We cordially invite you to actively engage in 17 Rooms, a process for stimulating bottom-up awareness and cooperation across the many perspectives and interests that make our region thrive, are pertinent to sustainable development, while also creating a bridge between local activities and traditional stakeholders.

The East Central Florida Regional Resilience Collaborative or R2C’s vision is to ensure a thriving and resilient future through comprehensive regional collaboration. We accomplish this task with these objectives: coordination across shared systems, development of capacity and capability, employing facilitated processes to develop a shared vision and means of collaboration, and focus on areas of substantive strategic concern. With this, the R2C has become a recognized model of action in the state of Florida, embracing resilience through three pillars of people (health + equity), places (built infrastructure + natural environment), and prosperity (economic resilience). Woven throughout each pillar is a focus on reducing risks, vulnerabilities and our carbon footprint and increasing efforts toward long term sustainability. The UN SDGs are reflected in the R2C framework, identified in the Strategic Resilience Action Plan and a part of what many of our partners already work to achieve; reducing hunger, sustainable cities and communities, good health and wellbeing, and climate action, to name a few. The core motivation of the R2C and SDG framework is to break from business-as-usual and leverage the framework as a tool for common conversation across groups that may struggle to connect across professional vocabularies and organizational reference points. As the past year’s COVID-19 pandemic has underscored, a more sustainable, and inclusive region requires new forms of action, technology, and partnership at all levels—spanning business, academia, government, and civil society. The need for innovation extends to the process of problem-solving itself. Every region and local community require efforts to work through multi-stakeholder debates and priorities, from the ground up. Many problems simply need creative environments for people to float ideas and explore cooperation on next steps.

This May, the R2C, Central Florida Foundation, Orange County, City of Orlando, and the UCF GEEO Center are working with the Brookings Institution to create that environment and spur partnership and collaboration across the 8-county region in a new way, titled 17 Rooms. 17 Rooms offers an efficient way of convening natural allies, ideally promoting enough familiarity to enable collaboration and enough diversity to spark new ideas and pathways to action led by organizations around the region. Each Room is a high-level working group and designed 1) where unique priorities are respected within goals while recognizing interdependencies between goals, 2) with a focus on actionable ideas within an SDG that are “big enough to matter and small enough to get done” over a defined horizon, and 3) convenings celebrate informal discussions among peers, with institutional agendas at the door, focusing on what could be best for an issue, not for an organization.

When combined, these design principles empower participants to:

- **Advance concrete actions:** All Rooms are tasked to consider what is needed and what participants can do over the following 12-18 months.
- **Form novel insights:** When participants working on common problems share their perspectives from different backgrounds, organizations, and sectors, unique forms of group learning occur, both within and across Rooms.
- **Foster pragmatic communities:** A collaborative quest for action grounded in recognition of diverse outlooks appears to generate a shared sense of energy, opportunity and responsibility.

All Rooms work to a tight timetable, with a limited number of meeting hours available to share perspectives, identify opportunities, and clarify next steps. Within each Room, the goal is to zero in on problems that are consequential and not already being solved elsewhere, ones where a neutral platform could help bring a critical mass of different people together to make gains.

