Making the SDGs Real in Australia's Adult and Vocational Education, Adult Learning Australia and WAVE Forum: 10 August 201, Melbourne, Australia,

Social inclusion in education and training

Presenter: Sue Webb

Outline of session

- SDG 4 Education – what is the problem?

- Targets and concerns - research evidence

- Implementing SDGs – what consultation?

- What next for research, policy and practice?

Education 2030

Education is at the heart of the 17 sustainable development goals, although articulated explicitly as SDG 4

Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning

MONASH University
Education

Education 2030

Underpinning principles and values

- Education is a human right, an enabling right
  (Capabilities approach from Sen 1999; Robeyns 2006; Shah and Webb et al. 2012)

- Education is a public good – the State with civil society and the private sector sets agendas, contexts and resources
  (Marginson 2007 on public or private good and conditions for developing norms)

- Gender equality is essential to the right of education for all
  (see Unterhalter & Carpentier 2010)

From MDG to SDG, what is the problem?

UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2015 on the MDGs

- Goal 4 – Adult literacy - *Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.*

Evaluation, progress has been made but the Dakar target hasn't been achieved.

Future problem seen as one mainly for low income countries

- Goal 5 – Gender equality

   Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

 Evaluation, progress made at the primary level, 69% of the countries with data are expected to have reached gender parity by 2015. Progress is slower in secondary education, with 48% projected to be at gender parity in 2015.

Future problem seen to be in post-compulsory education and training, and especially in sub-Saharan Africa

From MDG to SDG, what is the problem?

- MDG focused more on primary education participation at expense of education quality, early childhood education and adult literacy;

- MDG focused on low income countries (LIC), high income countries (HIC) focused on aid to LICs;

- HICs gave less attention to internal concerns – gender inequality in VET participation and access to workplace learning; progression from VET to university level; Equity in HE participation; the recognition of qualifications and participation of transnational migrants including refugees.

From MDG to SDG4

Scope

- shift from basic learning needs of children, youth and adults
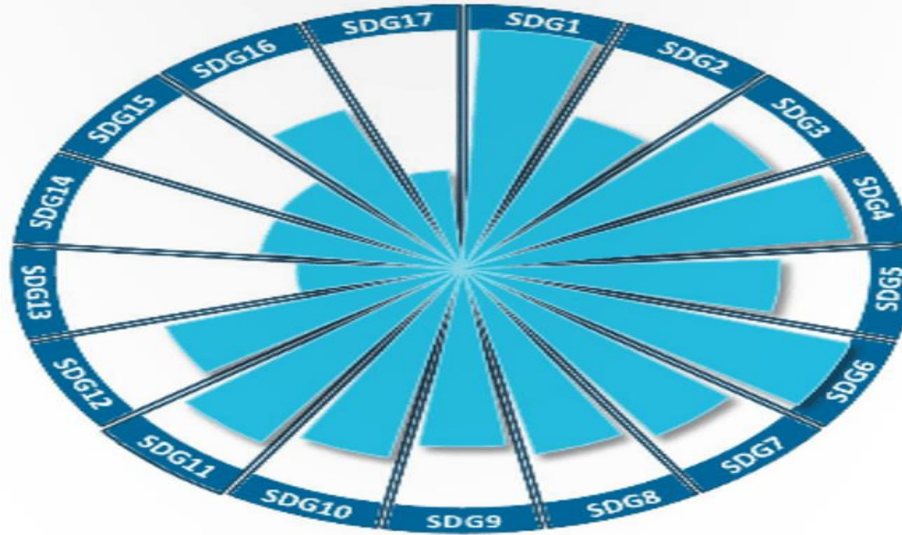
- to equal opportunity in access to quality learning opportunities at all levels of education and lifelong learning perspective

Geographical coverage

- from a focus on low income countries in global South

- to a universal agenda including countries in the global North

Policy target

- shift from basic education and schooling

- to equitable access to post basic, post compulsory education and training for work and citizenship in global context

Is the SDG4 problem sorted in Australia?

Yes, says Thwaites

Source: Thwaites, J. http://theconversation.com/australia-ranks-20th-on-progress-towards-the-sustainable-development-goals-62820

Targets and concerns research evidence

Target 4.3

Ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

Affordability concerns:

VET participation and affordability undermined by market system (Burke 2015)

Higher education in VET student costs can be greater than university HE (Webb et al.2017)

Refugees and asylum seekers treated as international students to access VET and HE (some support at university and State level - ongoing research Dunwoodie, Webb & Wilkinson)

Targets and concerns research evidence

Target 4.3

Ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

Quality concerns:

Competency-based VET doesn't prepare people for flexible careers and lifelong learning (Wheelahan 2015)

Professional development of teachers for the sector is hollowing out pedagogy and practices for diversity as Cert IV replaces university education (Smith, E., Yasukawa, K. and Hodge, S., 2015; Webb 2017 forthcoming)

Targets and concerns research evidence

Target 4.5:

Ensuring gender parity at all levels of education and vocational training…

Parity Concerns:

VET and gender inequality (Butler, E & Ferrier, F 2006a, 2006b)

VET and social class inequalities (Burke 2015; Webb et al 2017a)

VET, race and inequalities (Onsando, G. & Billet, S. 2017. Webb et al 2017b; Webb 2015; Shore 2010)

VET and participation by indigenous peoples (Cameron, R. Stuart, L., & Bell, T. 2017)

Targets and concerns research evidence

- Target 4.4 Ensuring relevant skills for the world of work

- Target 4.7 Ensuring relevant learning for citizenship in a global world

- Target 4.a Ensuring safe and inclusive learning environments

- Target 4.c Ensuring adequate teacher recruitment, training and professional development, and working condition

Concerns:

Little relationship between VET qualifications and pathways to employment (Wheelahan & Moodie 2017)

Adult and lifelong education and learning increasingly focused solely on the economy rather than citizenship (Milana et al 2017)

Australian Qualifications Framework level descriptors **only** identify lifelong learning as an outcome at secondary certificate of education and at level 7 Bachelor degree.

Implementation of Education 2030

- Heart of implementation is at the country level
- Governments have primary responsibility
- Governments have to translate global targets into achievable national benchmarks and develop and implement appropriate strategies and reports

Strategies for each target to consider

- Policy and planning
- Equity and inclusion
- Lifelong learning
- Review and monitoring

Concerns:

Who is engaged in these processes?

Peak bodies? Learned societies? Practitioners, researchers, learners?

Australian context – involves Federal and States

How well prepared are we for SDG 4?

- Policy making and strategies – who is involved? What about civil society, learned societies, professional bodies at State and Federal levels?

- Regulatory frameworks – how adequate are these for encouraging lifelong learning? Stimulating high quality professional development? Facilitating a tertiary system?

- Monitoring and evaluation – what data is collected – does this enable assessment of inequalities by disaggregating by gender, age, ethnicity, social class, location?

- How can lifelong learning be tracked when there's separated governance and QA of HE and VET; Different funding and resourcing in different jurisdictions; no tertiary identifier to assess and monitor participation and transitions?

Australian Government Annual Report 2015-2016 Dept of Education & Training

Outcome 2:

- Promote growth in economic productivity and social wellbeing through access to quality higher education, international education and international quality research, skills and training

Goals:

Excel through knowledge

Build skills and capacity

Enable business areas

Programs:

2.1 Commonwealth grants scheme

2.2 Higher education Superannuation program

2.3 Higher education support

2.4 Higher education loan program

2.5 Investment in higher education research

2.6 Research capacity

2.7 International education support

2.8.1 Industry competitiveness

2.8.2 Access to training

2.8.3 Support for the national training system

From now to Education 2013

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Are these current programs able to address the concerns about

- Affordability

- Parity

- Quality

- Lifelong learning

Questions for discussion

- Who are the actors influencing SDGs?
- How adequate are current policy goals and programs to achieve SDGs?
- What should be our goals and programs?
- How might be WAVE, ALA and critical researchers engage in policy influence?
- What tensions/disjunctions might emerge?
- Where should we direct our efforts?

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Thank you for listening….

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