

Media release

Sustainable Development Goal for Education lacks a strategic approach

Adult Learning Australia supports the Australian Coalition for Education Development's (ACED) call for a national plan on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Australia is one of 193 countries that have signed onto the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which identifies 17 goals to achieve a better and more sustainable future.

The SDGs are a call to action for partners across the globe to unite to end poverty, improve health and education, reduce inequality and tackle climate change. SDG 4 addresses inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all, both in Australia and across the region through Australia's aid investments.

The *Spotlight on Australia's Progress on the Education Sustainable Development Goal - SDG 4* report highlights ACED's concerns that Australia does not have a national SDG implementation plan, nor does it have any funding committed to implementation or ongoing progress reviews.

"There are a number of critical gaps and challenges for Australia in reaching the SDG 4 targets," says ACED Convenor, Carolyn Johnstone. "The targets are ambitious, and they will not be achieved without specific and significant funding commitments."

Educational opportunities that are inclusive and equitable are at the heart of SDG 4. Yet, in Australia, many of the most marginalised and vulnerable learners are finding themselves at an extreme disadvantage.

For example, Australia has a significant problem with adult literacy and numeracy. Results from the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) indicate that many Australians have literacy skills that are at a level that makes them vulnerable to unemployment and social exclusion.

"We need a national lifelong learning policy that includes an adult literacy strategy, in order to create a fairer and more equitable Australia and in support of achieving our SDG 4 targets," says Jenny Macaffer, CEO Adult Learning Australia and ACED partner organisation.

"We are calling on the next Federal Government to establish a cross-sectoral reference group to take advice on SDG implementation and to invest in education aligned to SDG 4."

ENDS

Facts and figures

60% of young people from low socio economic backgrounds don't complete high school (Mitchell Institute).

1 in 3 Australians struggles to find and keep work because of low literacy (PIAAC).

More than 40% of Aboriginal adults have low literacy (Literacy for Life Foundation).

23% of low skilled Australians are engaged in adult education, compared to 48% of all adults (OECD).

Unemployed adults are 19% less likely to participate in adult education than employed adults (OECD).

The High-level political forum on sustainable development convenes under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, Tuesday, 9 July, to Thursday, 18 July 2019. For details, go to: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019/>

Read the report: <https://ala.asn.au/spotlight-on-australias-progress-on-sdg4-education-and-lifelong-learning/>

About ACED

ACED is a coalition of CSOs in Australia committed to achievement of SDG4. ACED members: Adult Learning Australia, ACFID, AEU, ASPBAE Australia, Australian Volunteers for International Development, CARE, Child Fund Australia, IWDA, Oaktree, Plan International, Results, Edmund Rice Foundation, RMIT, Save the Children, So they can, Uniting World, WAVE, World Vision, UTS.

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