

***When we put education first, we can reduce poverty and hunger, end wasted potential – and look forward to stronger and better societies for all.***

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations

### **The Australian Coalition for Educational Development (ACED)**

ACED, Australia's member of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), was formed in 2008, originally consisting of 15 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) with a shared interest in education – national, regional and global. As a national education advocacy coalition, ACED advocacy on the achievement of the Education for All (EFA) Goals now focuses on the shift from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially as the latter relate to education and lifelong learning, and equity and access. ACED acknowledges that global education goals are relevant to all countries; that all countries need to deal with poverty, inequality and disadvantage.

### **ACED & the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The Australian Coalition for Educational Development joins with all civil societies across the world who are committing to 'leaving no one behind' by fully supporting Sustainable Development Goal 4<sup>1</sup> to *“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”* adopted by the World Education Forum Incheon Declaration - Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all<sup>2</sup>.

ACED acknowledges with the World Education Forum the importance of education and its ability to transform lives. ACED believes that education is an essential element that will enable the achievement of full employment, poverty eradication and the proliferation of tolerance, human fulfilment and sustainable development across the world. ACED supports the right to a quality education for all children and young people, recognising that marginalised groups such as girls and children with disabilities require particular focus. However, through this statement we also call attention to the forgotten group of post school age and adult learners, equity of access and inclusion for all, with special measures and associated resource allocation for marginalised and vulnerable at-risk groups.

If the Education Goal affirmed by the World Education Forum is to be achieved it is essential that all agreements relating to the financing of this Goal take full account of and allocate

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<sup>1</sup> UN General Assembly, *The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet. Synthesis report of the Secretary General on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda*. 69th Session 4 December 2014. [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/700&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/700&Lang=E)

<sup>2</sup> World Education Forum 2015. Incheon, Republic of Korea 19-22 May 2015 <https://en.unesco.org/world-education-forum-2015/incheon-declaration>

finances for the breadth of lifelong learning and all that implies. This requires that accessible, relevant & quality post-school education and training for youth and adults be acknowledged and included in the targets and requiring financial support. This is critical for the alleviation of poverty and the hope for decent work leading to full employment that underpins so many of the other Sustainable development Goals (SDGs). Our focus in ACED is to ensure that the whole education agenda, lifelong learning, is not just ratified but also financed and supported by appropriate targets and indicators.

We contend that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development<sup>3</sup> is inadequate to support the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. In particular we believe that the AAAA does not address adequately the needs of adults, gender equity or access to lifelong learning for all. Nor does it address tax justice and tax equity, while also lacking commitment to address the responsibilities of trade regimes and traditional donors.

Furthermore, we challenge the claim that there are insufficient funds to respond to the whole SDG agenda. ACED strongly supports the need for more effective ways to collect taxes and other mechanisms that have the capacity to raise funds through equitable and just approaches as identified by CSOs.

During the July 2015 Addis Ababa meeting Financing for Development<sup>4</sup> the voices of civil society organisations were excluded in the deliberations. ACED denounces the lack of genuine participation and transparency demonstrated in Addis Ababa. ACED advocates for consistency in that the holistic and inclusive Sustainable Development Goals also respect and include holistic and inclusive processes.

ACED joins other CSOs and in particular supports the proposed Areas of Commitment and associated Policy and Financing Actions detailed in UN Women's *Addis Ababa Action Plan on Transformative Financing for Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment*<sup>5</sup> as it does the Press Statement issued by the Women's Major Group<sup>6</sup>. However, ACED also asserts that access to quality relevant and affordable education and training is critical for women and girls if such goals are to be realised.

As argued by the Women's Major Group, while the Action Agenda is being heralded as a strong outcome for women and girls, it fails to address profound inequalities in economic policies and institutions that undermine human rights and gender equality.

Policy choices have important implications for success in promoting gender equality in all areas of the SDGs. For this to become reality, goals, targets and indicators must be underpinned by policies that have proven to be the most effective pathways to achieve these

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<sup>3</sup> *The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development* <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/Addis-Ababa-Action-Agenda-Draft-Outcome-Document-7-July-2015.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> *Financing for Development* 13-16 July 2015, Addis Ababa Ethiopia <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/>

<sup>5</sup> U N Women Addis Ababa Action Plan on Transformative Financing for Gender equity and Women's Empowerment

<http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/news/stories/2015/action%20plan%20on%20transformative%20financing%20for%20gewe.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Women's Major Group Press Statement *Women's Groups Alarmed by Financing for Development Plans, Call on Governments to Adopt Strong Political Declaration Rooted in Human Rights* United Nations, NY 25 July 2015

outcomes (enabling macro-economic and regulatory environments, and the removal of discriminatory laws). Many such policies are outlined in the international human rights framework and in policy commitments such as the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as in General Assembly, ECOSOC and CSW resolutions and agreed conclusions

ACED joins with the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) in its call:

**We call on our government(s) that after the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Agenda they establish legal and policy frameworks that truly ‘leave no one behind’, and to uphold the full exercise of the human right to education for all, children, youth and adults. Without significant investment, by national governments and development partners alike, and backed by appropriate monitoring and accountability, even the modest educational targets for adults will not be achieved, with the result that ‘hundreds of millions will be left behind’<sup>7</sup>.**

**ACED also calls on CSOs in Australia committed to the achievement of the SDGs to support our call for the Australian Government to ratify the full education agenda and ensure funding for this agenda at the UN Summit in New York 25<sup>th</sup>- 27<sup>th</sup> September 2015 at which time the post 2015 Development Agenda<sup>8</sup> entitled Transforming our world The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to be adopted.**

At the conclusion of the UN Summit ACED will join other CSOs in celebrating the new Education Goal, as it will the attention to gender and inclusivity. However, it is essential that we remain vigilant to ensure that the right to education and lifelong learning for all remains at the heart of all future agreements, such as the Framework for Action (FFA), Education 2030 to be adopted and launched at a special high-level meeting in November 2015 alongside the 38<sup>th</sup> UNESCO General Conference and the Thematic Indicators for the new Sustainable Development Goals to be adopted in March 2016.

Australian Coalition for Educational Development

September 21<sup>st</sup> 2015

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<sup>7</sup> ICAE Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development *Response from the International Council for Adult Education* August 14, 2015 <http://www.icae2.org/index.php/en/news-2/400-transforming-our-world>

<sup>8</sup> UN Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/7891TRANSFORMING%20OUR%20WORLD.pdf>

Women in Adult and Vocational Education



RESULTS International (Australia)



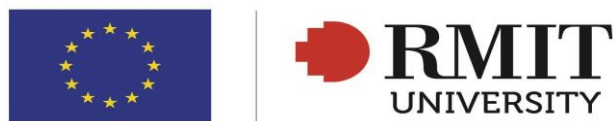
Adult Learning Australia



ASPBAE Australia



RMIT University



Australian Education Union

