

Women: Education, Empowerment, Equality. A new agenda?

WAVE National Conference 2016

North Sydney Institute, TAFE NSW 20th April 2016

A new global/local agenda: what might this mean for Australian women?

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WAVE has been active for well over 3 decades now in our core work of representing, researching and advocating for women (and girls) in the areas of our core interest- post-compulsory, work-related education, adult education and vocational training (including VET in schools), including links to decent work. Although we remain the only national NGO with a focus specifically on this sector, we also collaborate with other like minded organisations, including **Adult Learning Australia (ALA)**, **Australian Vocational Education & Training research Association (AVETRA)** <http://avetra.org.au>, and **Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc. (AFGW)** <http://afgw.org.au>. What may be less widely known is that WAVE also actively advocates for and contributes to work that links our interests nationally into global & regional arenas through a number of avenues- and yes, we've been very busy in this area prior to and especially since 2010.

Most of our recent work has focused on the development and now the plans for implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>), the extent of their reach across education sectors and how they will play out for women and girls (<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs>), especially relating to SDG 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all); SDG 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; and, to a lesser degree, SDG 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. The key document relating to SDG4 that will frame education and so our work nationally, regionally and globally is *Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action*.¹

WAVE is represented on and/or collaborates with a number of organisations both to ensure our points of view are heard and included at strategic points related to the SDG's '2030 Agenda.' Now this document has been adopted, the immediate challenges and sites of intense high level work and civil society involvement including lobbying include setting the targets & indicators for monitoring and evaluation by all countries (as well as establishing regimes for

¹ For an overview and to download the Education 2030 Report see:

<https://efareport.wordpress.com/2015/11/04/education-2030-framework-for-action-lets-get-started/>

Butler, Elaine 2016, *A new global/local agenda: what might this mean for Australian women?*

Women: Education, Empowerment, Equality. A new agenda? WAVE National Conference 2016
North Sydney Institute, TAFE NSW 20th April 2016

monitoring and evaluation), along with mobilizing ample resources effectively and ethically; getting agreement and so political commitment then implementing the architecture and mechanisms to coordinate such a complex integrated agenda for all the SDGs – all to be linked with action. In addition to this, the 2016 priority theme for CSW 60 (Commission on the Status of Women)² is ‘Women’s empowerment and its links to sustainable development’.

So- where is WAVE in this almost unprecedented but definitely overwhelming flurry of activities designed to shape a better world for all by 2030?

- WAVE is a member of two of Australia’s National Women’s Alliances (NWAs) -**Equality Rights Alliance (ERA)** and **economic Security4Women (eS4W)**.³ As a representative on the NWA International Engagement Project WAVE has attended educative, discussion and planning forums, raised issues relating to SDGs 4, 5 & 8, contributed to the planning process for CSW 60 including submitting a statement from WAVE, commenting on draft statement from the NWAs, and commenting on the CSW 60 zero draft document to ensure the inclusion of education, amongst other activities.
 - WAVE has extended our contributions by the provision of information including former Agreements such as those of CSW55⁴ directly to Office for Women (OfW), DFAT and other delegates and attendees at CSW 60, as well as circulating copies of our relevant reports.
- WAVE is a member of **ACED (Australian Coalition of Education Development)**. Through ACED we are linked to the Global Campaign for Education (GCE)⁵ and again, in turn through GCE, with Global Partnerships in Education (GPE).⁶
- WAVE joined other ACED members (via Skype) a meeting held at RMIT 29th February 2016, in conversation with staff from the Global Partnerships for Education⁷ (GPE) who were visiting Melbourne prior to attending the [World Bank DFAT Conference: Making Education Systems Work](#), 29 Feb - 3 March in Sydney. The delegation included Charles Tapp (Manager, GPE Partnerships and External Relations), April Golden (GPE Donor Relations Officer). As GPE focuses mainly on compulsory (school) education, but is a key global player, WAVE requested that a focus remain on the breadth of Goal 4, on gender, on gender disaggregated data, &

² For information about CSW 60 taking place at the UN in New York 14-24th March see <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw60-2016>

³ ERA: <http://www.equalityrightsalliance.org.au>; eS4W: <http://www.security4women.org.au>

⁴ CSW 55 – 2011 Priority theme was ‘**Access and participation of women and girls in education, training and science and technology, including for the promotion of women’s equal access to full employment and decent work**’ For Information see:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/55sess.htm> Agreed Conclusions are available at:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/55sess.htm#agreed>

⁵ See: <http://www.campaignforeducation.org/en/>

⁶ See: <http://www.globalpartnership.org>

⁷ GPE is based in Washington USA, & chaired by Julia Gillard. <http://www.globalpartnership.org> Butler, Elaine 2016, *A new global/local agenda: what might this mean for Australian women?* 2 Women: Education, Empowerment, Equality. A new agenda? WAVE National Conference 2016 North Sydney Institute, TAFE NSW 20th April 2016

especially on access to so called 'second chance' education and training. Another follow up meeting with DFAT is scheduled in Melbourne for 27th April 2016.

- WAVE is a voting member of **Asia South Pacific Association for Basic & Adult Education (ASPBAE)**⁸ – a regional association of more than 200 organisations & individuals that operates from grassroots to government and high-level global echelons, thus linking us into our wider region and globally. Information is shared regularly.
 - WAVE participated in a regional workshop held in Delhi in October 2015 and attended by 22 countries, with a focus on *Gender, Education, Work and Skills*. A commitment to the SDGs provided a framing for discussions and around which a shared agenda can be built for advocacy, capacity building and efforts to shape informed policies and practice.
 - WAVE successfully nominated Zulaikha Hussain Shihab as a participant in ASPBAE's 2015 Basic Leadership Development Course that also had a focus on the SDGs, held in Vietnam in November 2015.
 - WAVE successfully nominated Leela Kruger from Waltja⁹, Alice Springs NT to attend ASPBAE's Study Exchange on Adult Education and Lifelong Learning that was held in Manila, Philippines in July 2015.
 - This year WAVE is acting as Country Coordinator (Australia) for ASPBAE's 7th General Assembly that includes selecting new Council members and a new President.
- WAVE hosted, supervised and supported then post graduate student from RMIT, Zulaikha Hussain Shihab (Maldives), in a workplace based project that focused on mapping global/regional/national policy decision making in relation to gender, education and women in the preparation of the SDGs. Zulaikha produced an Info graphic and also a report (*Gender & Education: Mapping Global/Regional/Local Policy Platforms*. WAVE/RMIT Melbourne Victoria November 2015) graded at high distinction. The documents are available on WAVE's website at: <http://wave.org.au/wave/mapping-globalregionallocal-policy-platforms/>
- WAVE is a member of the **Women's Major Group**¹⁰. <http://www.womenmajorgroup.org> along with over 600 other women's civil society organisations (CSOs). It "is the focal point for UN-DESA, ECOSOC and the General Assembly for all UN Sustainable Development policies. The WMG consist of 2 divisions. The WMG for "Sustainable Development" responsibility covers the Rio+20 outcome (SDGs, Financing for Sustainable Development, Small

⁸ <http://www.aspbae.org>

⁹ Waltja Tjutanku Palyapayi Aboriginal Corporation (Waltja) <https://www.waltja.org.au>

¹⁰ For information about the Women's Major Group see:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/women> and

<http://www.womenmajorgroup.org>

Butler, Elaine 2016, *A new global/local agenda: what might this mean for Australian women?* 3
Women: Education, Empowerment, Equality. A new agenda? WAVE National Conference 2016
North Sydney Institute, TAFE NSW 20th April 2016

Island Development States SIDS, Technology) and the Post-2015 development agenda process. It covers the global and regional policy processes of the United Nations". We share their communications, endorse documents and submissions, and contribute information, thus sharing on a global level. The most recent activities was participating in global consultations to contribute to WMG's forthcoming Agenda.

IN conjunction/collaboration with WMG & ASPBAE, & by using contacts in OfW, DFAT, AHRC & the NGO representatives on the Australian delegation WAVE provided ongoing input into the drafting of Agreed Conclusions from a national and also regional perspectives for the recent **CSW60 (Commission of the Status of Women** <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw60-2016>) that had a focus on SDGs (**Priority theme:** Women's empowerment and its link to sustainable development **Review theme:** The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls (agreed conclusions from the fifty-seventh session)- See more at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw60-2016#sthash.o13JveFY.dpuf>). Again, our focus was on SDG Goals 4, 5 & 8, and especially seeing that the lifelong focus of *Education 2030 (Incheon Declaration & Framework for Action* was included in wording (covering post school education & training, and that this document along with Agreed Conclusions from CSW55 (2011: **Priority theme** Access and participation of women and girls in education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/55sess.htm>) were used for agreed language.)

- Most recently we have applied for membership of **Asia Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism** <http://www.asiapacificrcem.org> "APRCM is a civil society platform aimed to enable stronger cross constituency coordination and ensure that voices of all sub-regions of Asia Pacific are heard in intergovernmental processes in regional and global level. The platform is initiated, owned and driven by the CSOs, and has been set up under the auspices of UN-ESCAP and seeks to engage with UN agencies and Member States on the Post-2015 as well as other development related issues/processes. As an open, inclusive, and flexible mechanism, RCEM is designed to reach the broadest number of CSOs in the region, harness the voice of grassroots and peoples' movements to advance development justice that address the inequalities of wealth, power, resources between countries, between rich and poor and between men and women."

Apart from the above, we post and share international news, comments and posts related to education and training, work and of course gender issues on our Facebook page: WAVE-Women & Girls – Education and Training in Australia.

So- why is this important to us, here in Australia?

- Australia has signed International Agreements, & must report on them

- The SDG agenda is for every government, not just less developed countries. This means we need to advocate especially around SDGs 4,5 & 8, in the ACE & VET sectors, through Job Assist, and beyond.
 - *Education 2030 (Incheon Declaration & Framework for Action)* and the targets and indicators that are currently being negotiated for SDG4 provide a blueprint for what E & T sectors should be delivering, here, in our region, & globally.
- Collaborating regionally in a globalised world where inequity is increasing is an ever important part of knowledge sharing and knowledge solutions, as it is for advocacy from grass roots /delivery levels up.

Join us, become a friend?

Our Facebook page

(<https://www.facebook.com/womeninadultandvocationaleducation/>) can also be accessed through our website (<http://wave.org.au/wave/>) where information is regularly updated.