

# Education

Education  
World Vision Australia's  
Public Policy Position

# World Vision Australia's position on education

World Vision Australia (WVA) affirms the human right to an education and endorses the vision of Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) 4, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

World Vision Australia advocates for quality education as described in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and affirms that the provision of education must be rights-based, non-discriminatory, inclusive, community-based and child-centred.

World Vision Australia seeks improved learning outcomes, particularly for the most vulnerable children, through high-quality and inclusive education at all stages of the life cycle.

## **From ages 0 to 5 years:**

World Vision Australia affirms that children should have access to early childhood care and development (ECCD) programs. ECCD has been demonstrated to positively influence the formative years and future education and success of children, as well as longer term economic growth.<sup>1</sup> In national education sector plans, policies and budgeting, governments should focus attention and funding on ECCD, particularly focused on ensuring the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children are able to access ECCD.

## **At the primary level:**

In accordance with major international human rights treaties, it is World Vision Australia's position that all children must have access to compulsory, free and high quality primary education in the communities where they live. All children should leave primary school with appropriate levels of reading, writing, numeracy and essential life skills.

## **At the secondary level:**

World Vision Australia believes that secondary education, both technical and vocational, should be made available and accessible to all, in accordance with the CRC and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). World Vision Australia emphasises that youth should be provided with the essential life skills and vocational training to ensure young people have access to employment and livelihood opportunities.

Education systems should be responsive to and inclusive of the needs of children with disabilities, to ensure all children are able to access a quality education. Further, it is critical that children from disadvantaged, marginalised, poor and illiterate populations are given equal opportunity to access educational opportunities.

## **World Vision's mandate to advocate for education**

Beyond the formal education system, World Vision Australia believes education also incorporates the building of community learning and awareness to help parents and other adults take charge of their development future.

As education is a fundamental public good, World Vision Australia affirms that it is the responsibility of national governments to provide education for their citizens, and to that end, that governments must prioritise funding to education and effectively implement education policy.<sup>2</sup>

World Vision Australia works with local communities and partners (including local and national governments) to strengthen the formal education system and support informal education programming where gaps exist.<sup>3</sup>

World Vision internationally promotes and implements programming initiatives that strengthen local capacities rather than providing once off injection of resources (such as building a classroom) to empower local communities for sustainable outcomes. This programming focuses on the most vulnerable families and communities to promote the inclusion of all children.

World Vision uses the ecological approach to child development that demonstrates that the child does not exist in isolation, but rather that there are various spheres of influence that impact upon their development. Thus, to unlock a child's full potential and overall wellbeing, education must sit within a multi-sectoral framework for maximum impact.

In the education sector, World Vision has entered into partnerships with other organisations to improve educational outcomes for children around the world. In 2011, World Vision partnered with Save the Children to improve children's literacy in Africa and South Asia, using Save the Children's Literacy Boost model.<sup>4</sup> World Vision has also partnered with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Australian Government in launching the All Children Reading: Grand Challenge for Development.<sup>5</sup> All Children Reading is an ongoing series of grant and prize competitions that leverages science and technology to source and disseminate scalable solutions to improve literacy skills of early grade learners in developing countries.

# World Vision Australia's policy recommendations for change

## **World Vision Australia calls on national governments to:**

1. Increase expenditure in the education sector to, dependent on context, at least 4 to 6 per cent of Gross Domestic Product(GDP) and/or at least 15 to 20 per cent of total expenditure to education, as recommended under the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action.
2. Ensure national education plans are implemented and deliver high quality and inclusive education that covers:
  - a) ECCD programs, policies to provide the best start for children, particularly those from vulnerable or marginalised communities.
  - b) compulsory, free and high quality primary education, in accordance with applicable international obligations contained in the CRC and ICESCR.
  - c) accessible secondary education that provides young people with the essential life skills and vocational training.
  - d) ensuring schools are safe spaces for children, where children are protected from all forms of violence and the school has sound infrastructure.
3. Through national plans, commit to investing in quality education and learning, through continuous professional development and capacity building for teachers, adequate quality and locally relevant resources to support children's development, and, effective governance of education facilities.
4. Ensure that education is fully accessible for children with disabilities on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live, and to ensure adequate support is provided, via the learning of Braille, sign language or the most appropriate communication modes and mean, to ensure children with disabilities are to maximise their academic and social development, in accordance with commitments under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## **World Vision Australia calls on the Australian Government to:**

1. Work with national governments to increase domestic resources targeted at education, and to strengthen the policy environment for improved educational outcomes, with a focus on quality education.
2. Work with other donors to ensure coordinated and harmonised official development assistance (ODA) to the national education sector to support tangible outcomes for children and make best use of available resources.

3. Ensure that Australian aid program-funded initiatives tie women's vocational training to locally identified economic opportunities, through the involvement of women in all stages of the project cycle;<sup>6</sup>
4. Continue to fund the Global Partnership for Education; and
5. Significantly reduce Australia's ODA commitments to Australia Awards scholarships and redirect that funding into initiatives that deliver clearer education outcomes<sup>7</sup>

# Background

## International context

Education is a demonstrated means to achieving a range of human and economic development outcomes. Education helps to reduce poverty<sup>8</sup> and boosts economic growth.<sup>9</sup> Education leads to better health outcomes for both mothers<sup>10</sup> and children<sup>11</sup>, reduces maternal deaths<sup>12</sup> and helps reduce fertility rates.<sup>13</sup> Further, education helps foster peace<sup>14</sup> and promotes gender equality.<sup>15</sup> As such, a quality education is essential for reducing poverty and promoting equality.

Education is both a human right in itself, and an indispensable means of realising other human rights.<sup>16</sup> The right to education is enshrined in the major international human rights treaties: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR),<sup>17</sup> the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)<sup>18</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC),<sup>19</sup> Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)<sup>20</sup> and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).<sup>21</sup>

These treaties recognise, amongst other areas, that primary education shall be compulsory and free, that secondary education shall be made generally available and accessible, higher education shall be made accessible on the basis of capacity and that those who have not completed their primary education shall be encouraged to complete fundamental<sup>22</sup> education.

The CRPD and CEDAW seek inclusive and equal participation of people with disabilities and women respectively, in educational opportunities.

In 2015 the global community recommitted and reaffirmed the importance of education as a standalone goal, and as a precursor to meeting sustainable development and social outcomes through the SDGs and the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action. The SDGs included a standalone goal on quality education (goal four) with more comprehensive supporting targets than under the MDGs.<sup>23</sup> The 2015 World Education Forum adopted the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action.<sup>24</sup> The Incheon Declaration commits the global education community to the achievement of the SDGs and the ongoing commitment to quality education for all.

Adopting SDG Goal 4 as its vision, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is the multi-stakeholder partnership and funding platform that galvanises global and national support for education, focusing on the poorest and most vulnerable children in developing countries.<sup>25</sup>

**Unequal progress:** Over the last 15 years, the progress on improving education has not been equal and millions of children around the world are still not getting the education they are entitled to. Girls,<sup>26</sup> children of minority communities,<sup>27</sup> children engaged in child labour,<sup>28</sup> and children living with a disability,<sup>29</sup> are more often disadvantaged when it comes to education, and need specific policy interventions.<sup>30</sup> While significant progress was made through the life of the MDGs, the number of out of school children globally has increasingly become concentrated in conflict-affected countries, particularly in Northern Africa and Western Asia where the share of out-of-school children has increased from 63 per cent to 91 per cent.<sup>31</sup>

## Australian Government context

The Australian Government is a signatory to the major international treaties related to education<sup>32</sup> and education is a priority sector for the Australian aid program.<sup>33</sup>

In September 2015, The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) launched a strategy to guide Australia's aid investments in education.<sup>34</sup> DFAT will take a systems-based approach and has identified four priority areas of focus for expenditure of ODA in the education sector:

- Investing in early childhood care and development;
- Investing in quality at all levels of the education system;
- Prioritising equity in the education system, with a focus on gender and disability inclusiveness; and
- Aligning education and skills with labour market needs, through investing in relevant and high-quality secondary and post-secondary education.

In 2016-17, DFAT estimates Australian ODA expenditure in the education sector to be AUD692.7million.<sup>35</sup> Since 2008, Australia has provided funding support to the Global Partnership for Education and at the 2014 replenishment conference, Australia committed AUD140million for the period 2015-18.<sup>36</sup>

DFAT also administers the Australia Awards program, as a component of its educational investments. The Australia Awards provides 4000 individuals from developing countries scholarships to complete study, research and professional development in Australia.<sup>37</sup> In previous years, this has been estimated to cost AUD360 million and as such is a significant component of Australia's education budget. The choice of this investment as an allocation within the Australian aid budget has been critiqued by the Australian NGO sector,<sup>38</sup> and World Vision Australia,<sup>39</sup> as there is no clear evidence base for the effectiveness of scholarships in meeting the Government's aid policy objectives. Furthermore there are demonstrated greater impact investments that could support the education sector in developing countries.

## Progress under the Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) committed the international community to achieving universal primary education as one of their eight goals<sup>40</sup> by 2015. Progress towards this goal was impressive. Between 2000 and 2015, primary school net enrolment rates increased globally from 83 per cent to 91 per cent, the literacy rate among youth aged 15 to 24 increased from 83 per cent to 91 percent and the number of out of school children of primary school age fell by almost half to an estimated 57 million.<sup>41</sup> This established a solid foundation for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to build on.

In the same year as the MDGs were launched, participants at the World Education Forum in Dakar agreed on the Dakar Framework for Action. The Framework for Action included six education goals (EFA Goals) to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015.<sup>42</sup> However, due to the narrow MDG focus on universal primary education, and the focus on the MDGs as the dominant development paradigm, many of the other EFA goals were largely overlooked by the international community.<sup>43</sup>



# Key resources & references

## Key resources

UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report*, 2016, available at: <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/>

UNESCO, *Incheon Framework for Action*, available at: <http://en.unesco.org/world-education-forum-2015/incheon-declaration>

World Vision Education Messaging Guide, available at: T:\4 - Public Policy\4 - Projects\WVA Policy Positions\Sources for positions\Education [Internal]

World Vision International, 'World Vision public policy positions: a guide for staff', 2013, available at:

[https://www.wvcentral.org/wvipolicy/Document%20Library/Public%20Policy%20Position%20staff%20guide%20\(2013\)%20.pdf#search=World%20Vision%20public%20policy%20position%3A%20a%20guide%20for%20staff%E2%80%99](https://www.wvcentral.org/wvipolicy/Document%20Library/Public%20Policy%20Position%20staff%20guide%20(2013)%20.pdf#search=World%20Vision%20public%20policy%20position%3A%20a%20guide%20for%20staff%E2%80%99)

## References

<sup>1</sup> Further information is available at: UNICEF, *Evidence for ECD Investment*, July 2013, available at: [https://www.unicef.org/earlychildhood/index\\_69851.html](https://www.unicef.org/earlychildhood/index_69851.html)

<sup>2</sup> The Incheon Declaration calls for an allocation of at least 4-6% of GDP and/or at least 15–20% of total public expenditure to education, noting this may vary according to country context. Paragraph 14.

<sup>3</sup> Informal education is a critical element of programming for children who live and work on the streets. A key aspect for WVA programs is to provide a channel to formal education while also providing psychosocial care for children and their families. World Vision Australia (WVA), 'WVA Education package,' May 2014 [Internal Document].

<sup>4</sup> World Vision International, 'Literacy Boost,' 10 February 2015, available at: <http://www.wvi.org/education-and-life-skills/publication/literacy-boost-0>

<sup>5</sup> All Children Reading, 'About Us,' 2015, available at: <http://allchildrenreading.org/about-us/>

<sup>6</sup> As made in May 2014 WVA Submission to Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Inquiry into the human rights issues confronting women and girls in the Indian Ocean–Asia Pacific region.

<sup>7</sup> For example, increasing access to early childhood education can result in a net benefit to developing countries of between US\$10 billion and \$34 billion. Patrice L. Engle, Lia CH Fernald, Harold Alderman et al, 'Strategies for reducing inequalities and improving developmental outcomes for young children in low-income and middle-income countries,' *The Lancet* (2011) 378: 9799, pp. 1348-9.

<sup>8</sup> The 2013/14 EFA Global Monitoring Report calculated that if all students in low income countries left school with basic reading skills, 171 million people could be lifted out of extreme poverty, equivalent to a 12% reduction in the world total. UNESCO, 'EFA Global Monitoring Report: Teaching and Learning- Achieving quality for all,' 2014, p.144, available at: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/gmr-2013-14-teaching-and-learning-education-for-all-2014-en.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> For individuals, knowledge and skills acquired through education help make workers more productive. For businesses, educated workers help foster productivity gains and technological change. For societies, education expansion helps build social and institutional

capital and assists in developing social trust, developing participatory societies and strengthening the rule of law and supporting good governance. UNESCO, 'Global Education Monitoring Report 2016,' 2016, pp. 47-8, available at: <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/>

<sup>10</sup> Household survey data in 61 low, middle or high income countries between 2004 and 2009 found that, among women aged 15 to 49 within each country educational attainment was significantly correlated with indicators of height, weight, haemoglobin levels, sexually transmitted infections and smoking. As quoted in UNESCO, 'Global Education Monitoring Report 2016,' p.77, available at: <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/>

<sup>11</sup> Children of educated mothers are more likely to be vaccinated and less likely to be stunted because of malnourishment. UNESCO, 'Education for All Global Monitoring Report,' 2011, p. 19, available at: <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report-education-all-efa>

<sup>12</sup> Estimates indicate that if all women globally completed primary education, there would be a 66% reduction in maternal deaths. UNESCO, 'Education for All Global Monitoring Report,' 2013, p.15, available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002256/225660e.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Evidence from Kenya indicates that one additional year of school reduces the probability of becoming a mother each year by 7.3% for women who have completed at least primary education. See, Ferré, C, 'Age at First child: Does Education Delay Fertility Training?' *World Bank Policy Research Working paper 4833*, 2009, p.3, available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/4029/WPS4833.pdf;sequence=1>

<sup>14</sup> While education doesn't lead directly to peace, the right type of education can encourage an enabling environment for peace. As political participation requires knowledge and understanding, educated people are more likely to know facts about the key actors and processes in their political system, and engage accordingly and non-violently. See UNESCO, 'Global Education Monitoring Report 2016,' 2016, pp. 95-111, available at: <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/>

<sup>15</sup> 'Education can be a locus for gender inequality, where stereotypical behaviour and views are reinforced, or a catalyst of transformation, providing individuals with opportunity and capability to challenge and change discriminatory attitudes and practices.' UNESCO, 'Global Education monitoring Report: Gender Review,' 2016, p. 1, available at: <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/>

<sup>16</sup> Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *General Comment No. 13: The right to education*, available at: [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/d\)GeneralCommentNo13Therighttoeducation\(article13\)\(1999\).aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/d)GeneralCommentNo13Therighttoeducation(article13)(1999).aspx)

<sup>17</sup> Article 26, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), available at: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

<sup>18</sup> Article 13, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>

<sup>19</sup> Article 28, Convention on the Rights of the Child, available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

<sup>20</sup> Article 10, Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>

<sup>21</sup> Art. 24, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/ConventionRightsPersonsWithDisabilities.aspx>

<sup>22</sup> In World Vision projects, fundamental education may also be referred to as 'remedial

education' and is understood to include basic competency education in numeracy, literacy and life skills such as inter-personal communication.

<sup>23</sup> There are ten targets under goal four that include: free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education; access to quality early childhood development; equal access to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education; eliminating gender disparities in education; substantially expanding the number of scholarships available to developing countries and increasing the supply of qualified teachers. The full list of Goal 4 targets are available at: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>

<sup>24</sup> The Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action, available at: <http://en.unesco.org/world-education-forum-2015/incheon-declaration>

<sup>25</sup> Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) core function is to support governments to develop good quality education sector plans, and then support the implementation of these plans through incentivising funding and encouraging donor priority alignment. Former Australian Prime Minister Hon. Julia Gillard is the current Chair of the Global Partnership for Education. More information is available at: <http://www.globalpartnership.org/about-us>.

<sup>26</sup> Globally, 9.7% of girls are out of school, as opposed to 8.1% of boys. UNESCO, 'Global Education Monitoring Report 2016,' 2016, pp. 182, available at: <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/>

<sup>27</sup> The 2016 Global Education Monitoring Report (p.75) notes that in many countries, including higher income countries, ethnic groups often face more significant education disadvantage relative to the population as a whole.

<sup>28</sup> Child labour affects educational attainment and achievement, and even when work and school is combined, average grade-for-age data show that children who work and attend school lag behind their non-working peers, in terms of grade progression in almost all countries. UNESCO, 'Global Monitoring Report 2015,' 2015 pp. 97-8, available at: <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/>

<sup>29</sup> "Children with disabilities are less likely to start school and have lower rates of staying and being promoted in school. The correlation for both children and adults between low educational outcomes and having a disability is often stronger than the correlations between low educational outcome and other characteristics." World Health Organisation, 'World Report on Disability,' 2011 p. 206, available at: [http://www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/en/](http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/)

<sup>30</sup> United Nations, 'The Millennium Development Goals Report: 2015,' 2015, p.27, available at: [http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015\\_MDG\\_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20\(July%2015\).pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20rev%20(July%2015).pdf)

<sup>31</sup> UNESCO, 'Global Education Monitoring Report 2016,' 2016, pp. 104, available at: <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/>

<sup>32</sup> ICESCR in 1975, CRC in 1990, CEDAW in 1983 and the CRPD in 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), 'Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability,' 18 June 2014, available at: <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/australian-aid-promoting-prosperity-reducing-poverty-enhancing-stability.aspx>

<sup>34</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), 'Strategy for Australia's aid investments in education 2015-2020,' 8 September 2015, available at: <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/strategy-for-australias-aid-investments-in-education-2015-2020.aspx>

<sup>35</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), 'Education: Aid fact sheet,' October 2016, available at: <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/aid-fact-sheet-education.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> Australian total contribution to GPE is \$460million. Hon Julie Bishop MP, 'Providing education for developing nations,' Media Release: 27 June 2014, available at: [http://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2014/jb\\_mr\\_140627.aspx?w=tbICaGpkPX%2FIS0K%2Bg9ZKEg%3D%3D](http://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2014/jb_mr_140627.aspx?w=tbICaGpkPX%2FIS0K%2Bg9ZKEg%3D%3D)

<sup>37</sup> In 2015, 4,107 Australia Awards were offered to 87 developing countries. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), '*Information Brief: Australia Awards*,' January 2016, available at: <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/australia-awards-statistical-profile.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), '*Federal Budget Analysis 2015-16*,' 14 May 2015, available at: [https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource\\_document/ACFID%20Budget%20Analysis%202015-16.pdf](https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/ACFID%20Budget%20Analysis%202015-16.pdf), p.21.

<sup>39</sup> World Vision Australia, '2015-16 Budget Submission,' p.9.

<sup>40</sup> The associated target under goal two was to ensure that that children everywhere, boys and girls alike, are able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

<sup>41</sup> United Nations, 'The Millennium Development Goals Report: 2015,' 2015, available at: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/news.shtml>

<sup>42</sup> The six EFA goals were focused on: expanding and improving early childhood care and education, ensuring universal access to primary education, ensuring that young people have access to appropriate learning and life-skill programmes, improving adult literacy, eliminating gender disparities, and, improving the quality of education. UNESCO, '*Final Report: World Education Forum*,' 2000, available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001211/121117e.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> UNESCO, '*EFA Global Monitoring Report: Education for All 2000-2015*,' 2015, p.27.