



**THE SENATE
SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE
REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

**Inquiry into the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)
Public Hearing –Friday, 2 November 2018
Questions Taken on Notice
Ms Dent, Oxfam Australia**

1 HANSARD, p. 39

CHAIR: Oxfam is a global institution. It has been around for a long time. So what is the most important lesson that we can learn from implementation of SDGs from other countries? You might need to take that on notice. But are there any examples that you can point to of where other countries do it better?

Ms Dent: I'd like to respond and take it on notice, if I may—to give some information now and then respond further. I think it's a great question, and I think that we're seeing a lot of our Pacific island countries really making huge inroads into tackling climate change and building risk resilience within their communities. We have seen tiny countries—which have virtually no emissions but are affected by the emissions of countries like Australia—not only look at developing the resilience of their communities and their populations but also commit to looking at developing a low carbon pathway by making commitments to zero carbon emissions et cetera. People may say that's easy when the emissions aren't so high, but these countries have a right to development and they're choosing to do that in a sustainable way. I think that that is to be really highly commended.

We see all the time in our work across the Pacific just how much leadership the Pacific countries are taking, particularly on their SDG on climate change but also on some others, around food security and things like that. We can look at the table and see where developing countries have got green lights, where they've made significant inroads, not only on climate change but also on water issues. We also see many countries, not only developing countries, that are leading the way around inclusion of civil society as partners in development, and that's something you heard me refer to, and that is also in Oxfam's submission. I think we can't emphasise enough the importance of the role of civil society and the importance of the role that human rights and environmental defenders play not only in trying to address some of the imbalances that exist but also in terms of making sure that our aid programs are delivered effectively—that we're held accountable and that governments are held accountable. I think those developments are to be commended as well. I'd like to provide a fuller response to that question on notice.

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Oxfam does not have any specific additional information. The committee is no doubt aware of the information that currently exists publicly, such as: <http://sdgindex.org/>

This is comprehensive and gives an indication of where countries are on each of the goals.

Senator MOORE: It's one of those things: you have a special ability to talk to that, that not many of our other witnesses have. Ms Dent, I will ask you the same question and it may be something you need to take on notice as well. In the international Oxfam network, are people using the language of SDGs and using the framework? Secondly, in your submission, one of the case studies sees it partnering with UNICEF to raise awareness of the global goals. Consistently one of the issues raised in submissions is the perception there are SDG people who are deeply involved and knowledgeable and who quote all the time but in the wider community there is not this awareness. You talk about a program of getting into schools and having a kit using postcards and things. Information about that would be very useful, to see where funding for that came from and whether that is going to be ongoing. We have found that some school networks, as a result of teachers taking it on, have become quite engaged in the program. It is not in curriculum, but I would just like to get some more information about that program, which seems, reading about it, very positive.

Ms Dent: I can definitely get you some information on that. I completely agree. The NDGs were in the curriculum—we can debate how effective that was—and the SDGs are not so it is up to individual teachers. We've also seen some cuts to education funding that could fund resources such as the SDGs, even though it wasn't specifically targeted at that. In terms of broader communication, that awareness-raising is of vital importance but so is taking action and enabling students to actually take action once their awareness is raised around the implementation of the SDGs. That is another important point to make. We'll definitely get you that information.

To your first point, Senator Moore, around universal language, absolutely. That was what I was trying to get to in the opening statement. I talked about the horizontal themes. Perhaps I could have expressed it differently, but, if you take those themes, they run across all the goals and are critical to reaching the goals. There are others too. We've talked to some others here. In terms of the strategic approach to our work, those crosscutting themes that are necessary to achieve the SDGs certainly form part of our strategic programming and the strategic direction of our work and are also vital in terms of meeting the SDGs and the stated goals of the SDGs—the end point at which this set of SDGs is trying to get to. I agree that it does give universality of language. It also breaks it down. It isn't just about Australia and Australia are doing what it can here and in its region. It's also about interactions between Australia and other countries, but also between private sector across countries—civil society and the private sector. It is a much more holistic way. Gender isn't just an issue in Australia or in the Solomon Islands or in Indonesia. Gender equality is an issue everywhere. It does give us the universality approach.

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Here is the resource https://www.oxfam.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/UNICEF-and-Oxfam-school-engagement-kit-Global-Goals-FINAL-v3OAU_sml.pdf. This is for historic reference as we no longer promote this resource as it is outdated. In regards to funding, we believe it was jointly funded between Oxfam and UNICEF.