

Sustainable Development Goals *SDGs by 2030 – are we on track?*



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY
—
Business School



Discover how the Business School academics' research is helping to advance the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals in line with our commitments as a PRME signatory.



We recognise and pay respect to the Elders and communities – past, present, and emerging – of the lands that the University of Sydney's campuses stand on. For thousands of years they have shared and exchanged knowledges across innumerable generations for the benefit of all.

Sustainable Development Goals

SDGs by 2030 – are we on track?

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Our commitment



To the challenge ‘what are you doing for the great sustainability quest’ our academics at the University of Sydney Business School responded with research projects that contribute to achieving the SDGs by 2030.

These articles, resources and teaching aids are part of our School’s commitment to the SDGs. They are available for use under the creative commons licence. We welcome external collaborations towards the SDGs.

Professor Steven Maguire

Deputy Dean (Research)

The University of Sydney Business School



The world community committed in 2015 to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The UN report at the halfway mark in 2023, shows just 15% of the 169 SDG targets are on track to being achieved.

The world needs more projects and ambitious collaborations towards the SDGs. I believe you will be inspired by the ideas here. The SDGs need universities to partner with business, community, governments and society to land the goals by 2030.

Professor Jaime Miranda

Co-Chair, Global Sustainable Development Report 2023

Head of School, Sydney School of Public Health



Goal 1: *No poverty*

End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Global poverty reduction is virtually at a standstill. Around 9 per cent of people worldwide lived in extreme poverty in 2022. Working poverty affected 244 million workers in 2024. While the milestone of half of the world's population having social protection has now been reached, low-income countries have shown almost no improvement since 2015. Inequality within and between countries continues to hinder poverty reduction, and the poorest are often left behind in periods of recovery.



Thriving from below: capitalism's unique ability to end poverty

Noman Shaheer



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day.

1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.

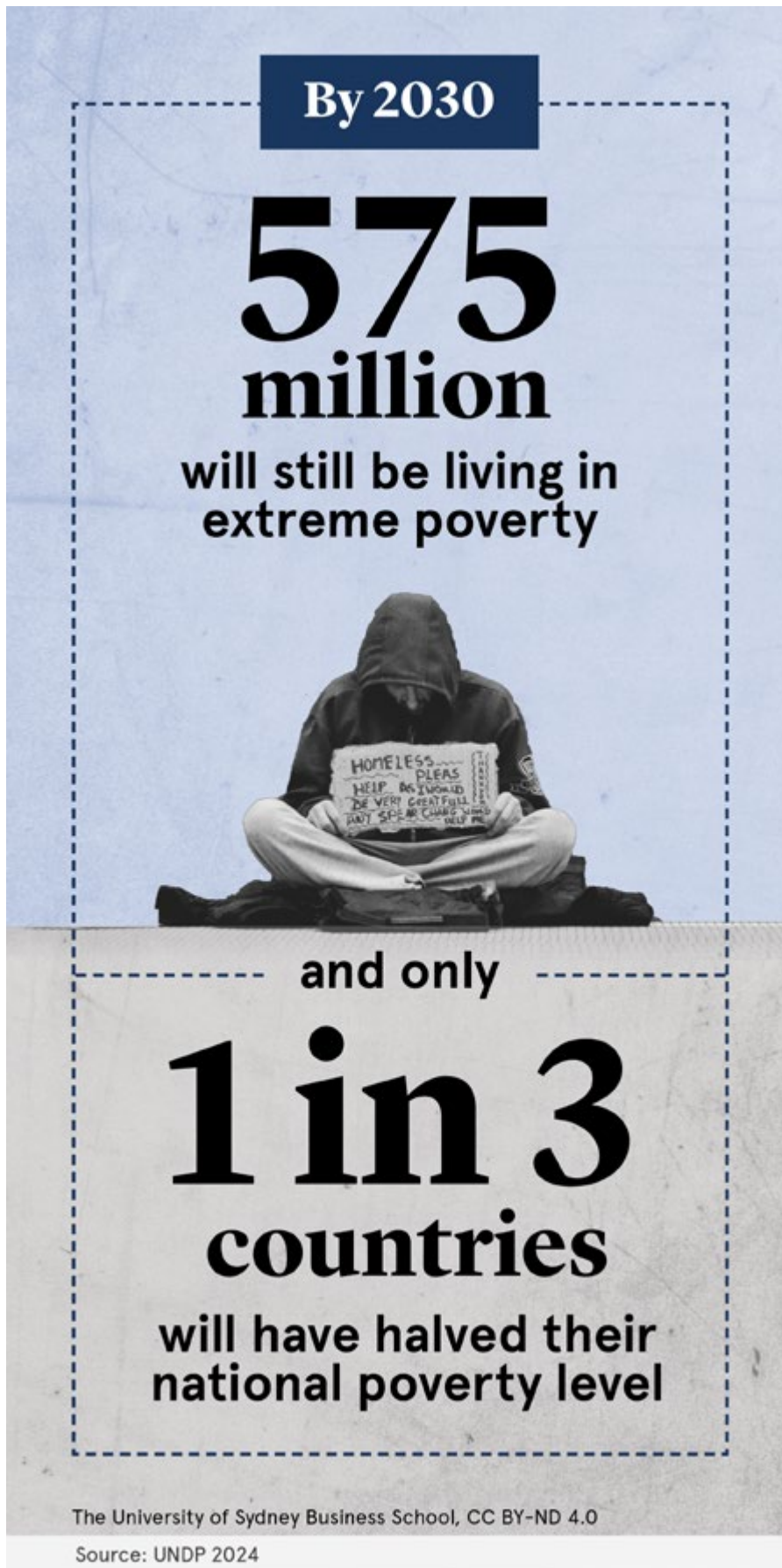
The solution to ending poverty lies with the poor.

Eradicating poverty will not be done with the help of governments. Most government efforts aimed at eradicating poverty have ended up embezzling money or diverting money into large salaries for bureaucrats. While poverty is a complex problem that cannot be resolved by a single actor through a simplistic solution, I maintain that the best tool for achieving this SDG lies with the poor themselves.

Most certainly it is not by giving poor people money. Handing out cash is a sure way to make people unproductive. But helping poor people play an active role in their own economic progress, and supporting their

individual entrepreneurship, can do wonders.

For more than thirty years, factories in the Pakistani border town of Sialkot have been producing high quality hand-stitched footballs that are used in the top European leagues. The balls are valued for their beauty and their integrity. Unfortunately, they have almost no market in Pakistan. Cricket remains the favourite sport in Pakistan, not only as it is historically the most popular game there, but also because local families generally can't afford the bespoke footballs their country produces. And that's the point of the trade: the foreign buyers provide the economic opportunities that do not exist in the local environment. Today Sialkot has its own airport, thanks to the massive foreign exchange earned through the labour of a once impoverished people.



I research how technological advancements can help eradicate poverty by creating novel economic opportunities for people living in extreme poverty.

For people living in poverty, the systemic economic problem is not the lack of money, but the lack of economic opportunities in their immediate surroundings, be it high paying customers or employers with deep pockets. Even highly educated programmers, engineers, and doctors from slums of India fail to find a well-paying job, while most skilled artists, tailors, and stylists in poor areas cannot find high paying customers.

But today the internet is connecting poor people from around the world with buyers interested in their offerings. Poor artisans and crafts people in Africa, Australia, and Asia can now join digital platforms to find buyers around the world who are keen to purchase bespoke art, crafts, textiles, and clothing. However, the rise of shareholder capitalism is crushing these opportunities. The rapacious business practices of the major trading platforms (Amazon, TikTok, Temu) are shocking. There are many examples of these trading platforms gouging excessive fees as goods flow across their networks, and even establishing a rival supply that imitates the original product. These digital shopping platforms possess all of the original seller's data, they know which factories are making their products, and at what price. In short, they have huge market power and are prepared to abuse it. They can even kick the original seller off the platform.

And here there is a role for governments to force companies to behave ethically. Companies need to be compelled to act in the interests of all their stakeholders, not only their shareholders. Ultimately, this is a matter of universal self-interest: capitalism can only survive if everyone contributing to capitalism prospers. If only few people are flourishing, capitalism is set to lose popular support and is destined to fail.

Technology has a huge role to play in eradicating poverty, especially as the world shifts from a manufacturing to a knowledge economy. Companies can move fast but should not be allowed to 'break things.' People are too precious to break.

Fortunately, there are companies that are balancing their profits with social programs. General Electric is installing 3D printers across Africa, capable of printing whatever design is wanted. Instead of the factory owners taking

the lion's share of the profits, the artisans and workers operating 3D printers keep more of the income. And when more workers keep more of the earnings, the entire local community benefits.

Capitalism in the digital era is two-edged sword. It can concentrate resources in too few hands, forcing a backlash against both tech and capitalism. But it can also link the poor with economic opportunities around the world, helping customers and employers seek new products and services, while enabling the poor to work their way out of poverty.

This is where business schools can play a crucial role. Are we **training** a generation for maximising shareholder wealth, or propagating a broader view that considers all stakeholders? This is the question business schools need to ask themselves.

Resources

Student assignment

Suggest a new technology that could solve a current business problem that is limiting trade between a rich country and a developing nation. Explain the business model that will facilitate the implementation of this new tech.

Include in your presentation information showing the social impact of your proposal. Specifically, who will be affected positively and who will be impacted negatively? Please set out what is your plan for the losers. That is, find a way to create a win/win outcome.

Further resources

Books

- Christensen, C. M., Ojomo, E., & Dillon, K. (2019). [The prosperity paradox: How innovation can lift nations out of poverty.](#)

Excerpt: Eradicating poverty will not be done with the help of governments. The solution to ending poverty lies with the poor.



Goal 2: *Zero hunger*

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Global hunger has risen sharply since 2019 and remains persistently high. Nearly 1 in 11 people worldwide faced hunger in 2023, while more than 2 billion experienced moderate to severe food insecurity. Millions of children and women are affected by malnutrition. Getting progress on track with respect to Goal 2 requires urgent action to strengthen food systems, support small-scale producers, improve services and ensure access to affordable, healthy diets.



The good business in ending hunger

Ranjit Voola



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.

Ending hunger is a business opportunity waiting to be embraced by corporations, particularly in the areas of developing sustainable small scale agriculture, improving food systems and reducing food waste.

Business is the only part of society focused on profit and a leader in developing innovative solutions. Ending hunger requires approximately US\$37 billion every year until 2030. If this sector, particularly the food and agricultural industries, are not engaged with this SDG, then it won't be achieved.

Unfortunately this goal is going backwards: the world is at hunger levels not seen since 2005. Climate change, high food prices, food scarcity, and declining food production meant that in 2022 there were about 735 million people in a chronic state of hunger, and 2.4 billion experiencing moderate to severe food security.

Making profits and doing good can be mutually reinforcing goals. Business needs to realise that society's problems such as SDG 2 are also business opportunities.

How is it possible to *ethically* profit from hunger?

The prevailing logic taught in business schools and practiced in Western business is to focus on the market segment with the most money (roughly 3 billion people). But the majority of the world's population – about 5 billion – are poor. Additionally, the effects of hunger are more profound in these poor people. This is a significant business opportunity that is not being realised in the context of hunger and poor people.

Making money from hunger – companies are not trained to do that.

To address hunger, we need to understand the situation and perspectives of those who experience it. When researching food well-being amongst poor families in India, I realised the importance of the non-physical nature of food. For example, a person I interviewed said: "Even if I eat, I don't feel full if my family's not eating with me." The family meal is critical to both their physical and mental well being.

Organisations need to consider not just the provision of food, but the context within which food is consumed. The main thing for the poor is eating with family. Organisations need to broaden their food strategy to engage with that process, to satisfy the physical and mental aspects of food consumption in impoverished communities.

Ending hunger is linked to a number of the other SDGs: SDG 1 on eliminating poverty, and SDG 13 on climate change, in particular. Without for-profit business, the world is not going to deal with any of the SDGs because business promotes innovation, it generates the money, and it's part of society. Historically countering hunger has been the concern of governments and charities. Progress has been slow and we must not look away. Eradicating hunger requires a much bigger collaborative global effort. Of course business should be engaged in this objective.



Resources

Student assignment

How can business make profit and be part of the solution to ending hunger, ethically?

What are the key challenges that businesses (focused on profit) face in engaging in societal issues such as hunger?

How can food well-being be addressed by organisations engaging in reducing hunger in poor consumers?

Further resources

Books

- [Better Business Better World: The report of the Business & Sustainable Development Commission](#)
- [A Roadmap for reducing Australia's food waste by half by 2030](#)

Articles

- [Families and food: exploring food well-being in poverty](#)
- Kumar, M., Choubey, V.K., Raut, R.D. and Jagtap, S., 2023. [Enablers to achieve zero hunger through IoT and blockchain technology and transform the green food supply chain systems. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 405, p.136894.](#)
- Herrmann, B. and Rundshagen, V., 2020. [Paradigm shift to implement SDG 2 \(end hunger\): A humanistic management lens on the education of future leaders. *The international journal of management education*, 18\(1\), p.100368.](#)

- Jamali, D., Barkemeyer, R., Samara, G. and Markovic, S., 2022. [The SDGs: A change agenda shaping the future of business and humanity at large. *Business Ethics, the Environment & Responsibility*, 31\(4\).](#)
- Damiano, R. and Di Maria, C., 2024. [Exploring the role of companies and sustainability disclosure in achieving sustainable development goals: A focus on zero hunger and social inclusion. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*.](#)

Podcasts and videos:

- [Join us for a Zero Hunger future](#)
- [2030- SDG 2- Zero Hunger- Ted talks](#)
- [Here's How Unilever Is Making A Difference in Food Waste – Our Brands in Action](#)
- [#GlobalGoals: Why Unilever supports Goal 2: Zero Hunger](#)
- [What is business for?](#)
- [Eating Trash: The Chefs Turning Food Waste Into Trendy Eats | CBS Reports](#)

Websites

- [Blueprint for business leadership on the SDGs](#)
- [UN News: World is moving backwards on eliminating hunger and malnutrition, UN report reveals](#)
- [Starving for Action: How Corporations Can Solve Global Food Insecurity](#)
- [Join the Zero Hunger Challenge | UN Global Compact](#)
- [Can marketing be a force for good in the world?](#)



Goal 3: *Good health and well-being*

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

While maternal mortality has declined, the pace of improvement falls far short of what is needed to meet the targets for 2030. Under-5 and neonatal mortality rates have improved significantly since 2000, offering the potential to save millions more lives if progress accelerates. HIV-related deaths have halved since 2010, but millions of people still lack treatment, and global positive trends hide data showing that rates of new infections are rising in several regions.



The business case for identifying and eliminating hazardous chemicals

Steven Maguire



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

Target 3.9 By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.

Chemical contamination is an incredibly serious problem impacting human health. At least two million people die every year due to chemical contact. Millions more suffer lifelong injuries such as brain damage, reproductive problems, allergies, and asthma. Chemical pollution also threatens the healthy functioning of the world's ecosystems.

There are more than 40,000 intentionally produced chemical substances in commerce, with many more substances generated as unintentional by-products of industrial systems. Synthetic chemicals pervade the vegetables and meat we eat, the water we drink and swim in, the air we breathe. They are also present in many everyday products in our homes (e.g. cleaning agents, pest control products, carpeting, plastic toys).

Not all synthetic chemicals are toxic, and regulatory systems generally deliver safe outcomes. Nonetheless, the science underpinning conclusions of safety about substances in commerce does shift (e.g. DDT in the 1960s; BPA and PFAS more recently) and regulators are increasingly challenged.

Data about the health and environmental effects of most substances is by and large absent.

Target 3.9 within SDG 3 aims to substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals as well as the chemical contamination in our air, water and soil.

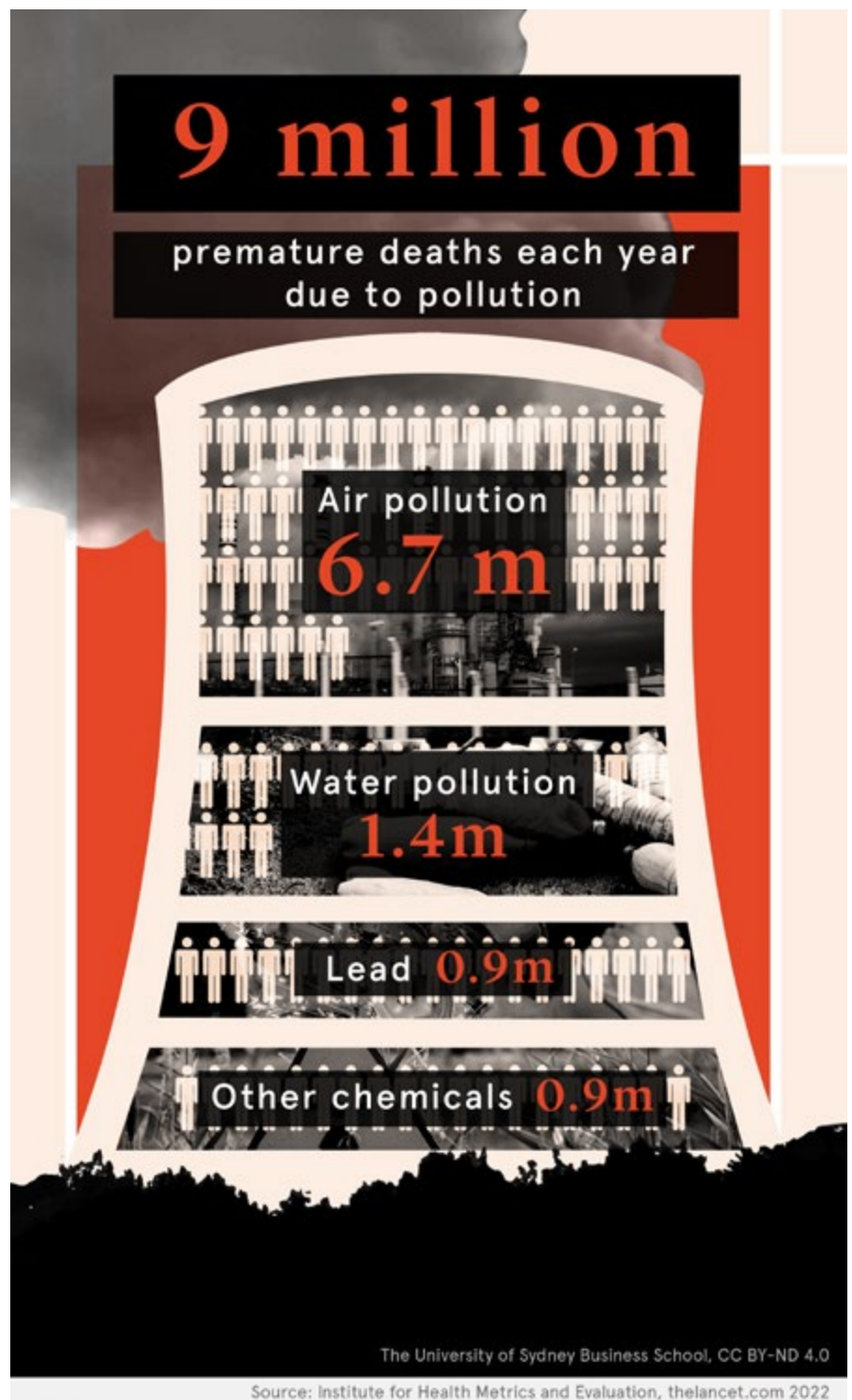
I study innovation and science commercialisation as they happen in real time. My research focuses on new technologies for chemicals management. I undertake engaged innovation research, including with regulators at Health Canada, and Environment and Climate Change Canada. We embed postdoctoral research fellows and PhD students into inventing teams of natural scientists, engineers and biomedical researchers who are developing new technologies for chemical risk assessment.

The scientists I collaborate with in Canada are working on a leading-edge genomics-based technology – EcoToxChips – to quickly test for toxicity and at low cost. Their toxicity testing is conducted more ethically than incumbent methods as it does not involve animal deaths.

I and other Business School researchers mobilise knowledge about innovation and entrepreneurship in a timely manner, to help the technical experts in the team to stay on track and focused. Sometimes their initial vision can be too ambitious, involving multiple use cases for the technology. We introduce a design thinking mindset and methodology to projects. Taking a customer focus puts the end users at the core of technology development, testing and validation. The EcoToxChip, for example, can be used by business, regulators and academics to identify, prioritise and manage environmental chemicals in species and their environments.

There is a strong business case for improved chemicals management. Air pollution alone costs \$8.1 trillion annually, 6.1 percent of global GDP. For individual companies, managing the health and environmental risks of chemicals in their supply chains, production processes, and end products is good business because these can become legal and reputational risks to companies through a process termed 'risk translation'. Superior chemicals management is therefore a form of insurance. And it is responsible. The ultimate goal is to have human bodies and ecosystems free of toxic substances.

Scientists are working hard on these problems – but there are no environmental or health benefits from their work until these technologies are commercialised and implemented at scale. This is where business school research adds value.



Business schools are an under-mobilised resource that could be better leveraged to help deliver superior commercialization outcomes quicker. And unlike private consultants, academics don't hoard the information – we publish lessons learnt in publicly available journals. We bring an academic mission to innovation and entrepreneurship.

I'd like to see more people doing engaged innovation research, and I'd love to see more government funding to build multidisciplinary teams to get promising inventions out of the lab and into society sooner. Business school research can help universities to deliver more positive impact, sooner.

Resources

Student assignment

Drawing on concepts from strategic management, describe the scope and scale of threats facing contemporary businesses in different sectors implicated in the controversy surrounding per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

In which sectors and for which companies are the legal, operational, reputational and financial risks most heightened and why?

What advice would you offer these businesses about how these risks could have been avoided, retrospectively, as well as how businesses should manage these risks, in real time and prospectively, now that they are materialising?

For which sectors and businesses does the PFAS issue present opportunities for competitive advantage, and why?

Further resources

Books (chapters in books)

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 - Daymond, J., Knight, E., Rumyantseva, M., & Maguire, S. 2023. “Managing ecosystem emergence and evolution: Strategies for ecosystem architects”. *Strategic Management Journal*. 44(4): O1 – O27.
 - Mondou, M., Hickey, G., Rahman, H.M.T., Pain, G., & Maguire, S. 2022. “Policy Forums and Learning in Fields Underpinned by Regulatory Science”. *Environmental Science & Policy*. 137: 349 – 358.
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 - Pokrajac, L., Abbas, A., Chrzanowski, W., Dias, G., Eggleton, B., Maguire, S., Maine, E., Malloy, T., Nathwani, J., Nazar, L., Sips, A., Sone, J., van den Berg, A., Weiss, P., & Mitra, S. 2021. “Nanotechnology for a Sustainable Future: Addressing Global Challenges with the International Network4Sustainable Nanotechnology”. *ACS Nano*. 15(12): 18608–18623.
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- Websites**
- [Silent Spring](#)
 - [Our Stolen Future](#)
- Infographic resources:**
- [The Lancet](#)
 - [Our Worlds in Data](#)
 - [National Library of Medicine](#)
 - Numbers for Malaria
<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/AER-malaria-2019.pdf>
 - Numbers for Tuberculosis
<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/death-rate-from-tuberculosis-ghe?tab=table&country=>
 - Numbers for road accidents
<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/number-of-deaths-by-risk-factor>
 - Numbers for interpersonal violence
[https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC11016221/#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20the%20global%20incidence,799.83%2C919.04\)%2C%20respectively.](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC11016221/#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20the%20global%20incidence,799.83%2C919.04)%2C%20respectively.)



Uncharted waters, protecting the young from online harms

James Donald



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

Target 3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.

Australia has some of the world's strongest pool safety laws, with compulsory pool fencing specifications mandated to millimetre dimensions. Combined with compulsory swimming lessons in primary school, such rigour has seen Australia achieve a 67 percent reduction in drowning deaths in children under four across the last 30 years.

And yet, while we know young people are spending unprecedented amounts of time online, Australia is struggling to deliver a virtual 'safety fence' around online usage by adolescents.

I research young people's engagement with the online world and the ways their behaviour enhances or undermines their wellbeing. It is clear that the amount of time many young people are spending online is detrimental to their wellbeing and is displacing other really important activities they need to undertake to build their confidence and their sense of connection with the community.

The other part of the online risk is what young people are doing while they are there. Rates of adolescent anxiety and depression are tracking in the wrong direction and the big risk is teen suicides. Research conducted and assembled by US social psychologist Jonathan Haidt is starting to show the links between adolescent social media use, particularly among girls, predicting greater anxiety and depression and a deterioration in mental health.

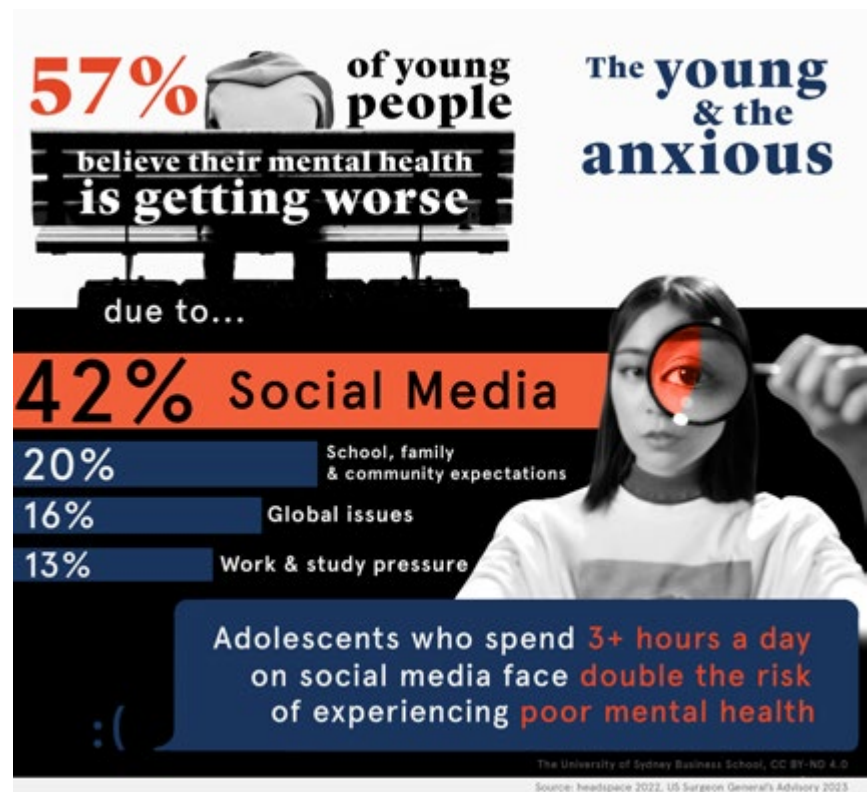
For girls, the general pattern is that their engagement with social platforms such as Instagram and Tik Tok heightens their concerns around body image and this consciousness is harming their mental health. For boys, the issue lies in the gaming space and the amount of time they're spending online which is displacing physical activity – but also progress with their studies.

We know the adolescent brain is highly plastic and the ability to self-regulate and override impulses is not fully developed. For children, popular online spaces such as TikTok, Snapchat, and many games are designed

to deliver massive dopamine hits that their brains have real trouble handling: they struggle to disconnect, and when they do, this delivers a huge hit to how they feel (as with any addiction). Just as we wouldn't let a toddler play around a pool unsupervised, we need to regulate young peoples' online access. And yes, there was vehement opposition to many of the pool regulations we now accept as sensible safety interventions. The data clearly tells us that the benefits of regulation plus education far outweigh the costs.

In the same way that water safety requires action from governments, schools and parents, erecting an effective cyber 'safety fence' will require action – both regulatory and educational – from the same three stakeholders. All-too-often, there is a significant gap between parents' understanding of the risks, and the downstream impacts of the kind of unfettered access granted to many young children. Crucially, our own research shows that nothing psychological or even social, predicts young people's addictive online behaviour. All the indicators point to the issue of *access* as being key. Parents need to be made aware the decisions they make regarding the access their five- year-old has to the online world will, ten years later, impact how the 15-year-old in their family feels and behaves. We need to help parents proactively set the boundaries, to have helpful conversations with their children, and to support them in putting up guard rails in the home.

Schools also need to build firm barriers. Children are not allowed to sit in class with a pet on their lap because it's recognised this would be



a massive distraction. Allowing mobile phones in class raises the same issue: it's the basics of attention regulation. Trying to do two complex tasks at once (e.g., typing a message and listening to someone in a classroom) is very cognitively demanding. Studies show that complex multi-tasking like this generates a big 'tax' on our brain's capacity to sustain attention and retain information. Keeping mobile phones out of the classroom, and even from the school yard, will make a difference to children's learning and also to the development of inter-person social skills. Initial evidence suggests that schools in Australia that have adopted policies removing phone access during the school day are reaping the rewards in greater student social and physical activity with their peers.

In Australia the E-Safety Commissioner is going after companies such as X, Apple

and Google, to hold them more accountable for the kinds of access and content they provide. No one wants to be accused of establishing a "thought police" regime, so it's a balancing act between providing information to parents and also following the data to enact laws both within the school system and beyond in the best interests of our young people.

Australia's E-Safety Commission is doing good work but is confronting significant resistance. And they are getting almost nowhere with the big tech companies. What's required is a combined effort, as was shown with water safety, of government action and, most crucially, educating parents on how to protect the children in their care from the unintended harms of the online world.

Resources

Student assignment

Given the complexities of the online world, how should we best regulate children's access to social media?

What evidence-informed strategies should parents follow in providing guard-rails for their children's online access?

Further resources

- Chang, M. L., & Lee, I. O. (2024). Functional connectivity changes in the brain of adolescents with internet addiction: A systematic literature review of imaging studies. *PLOS Mental Health*, 1(1), e0000022.
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Articles

- Well-supported teens more likely to develop internet addiction

Websites

- Jonathan Haidt: Social Media



Caring for the carers

Anya Johnson and Helena Nguyen



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States.

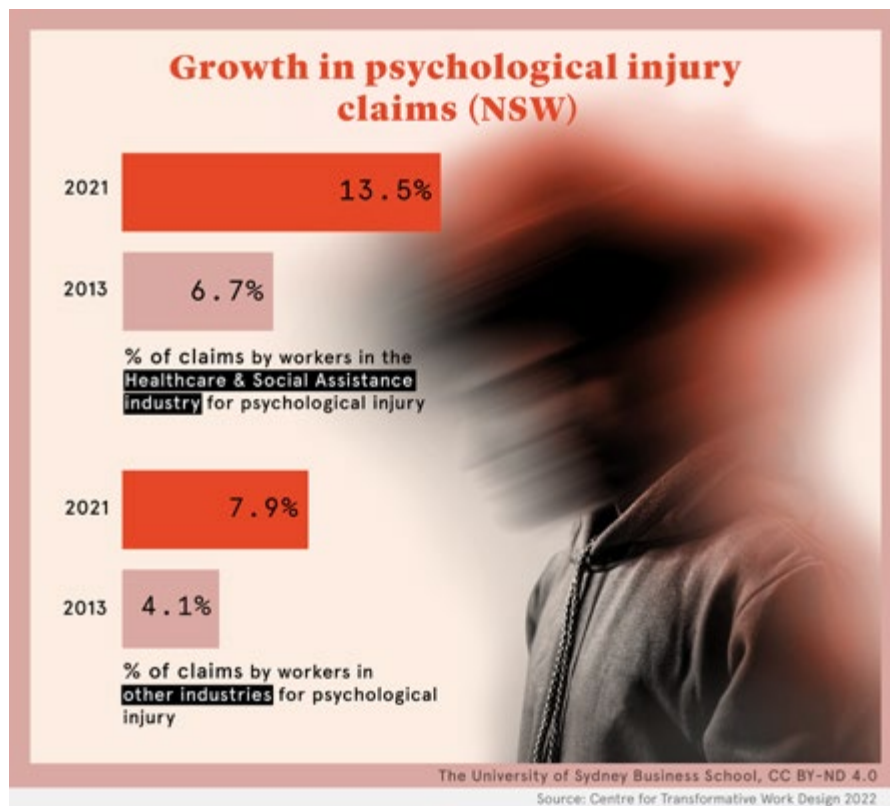
The world's health challenges are enormous. Ancient diseases such as malaria and TB continue to kill and debilitate millions of people every year and a new pathogen could, once more, shut down the world. While a future pandemic is a 'known unknown', COVID-19 demonstrated that a healthy workplace is vital to the smooth running of a nation's healthcare system.

It's not difficult to describe what a good healthcare sector looks like: we often get distracted by the bricks and mortar and the technology, but ultimately what matters is a workforce that provides the quality care you want for yourself and the people you love.

We are interested in how a society can keep its health workforce healthy.

Even a developed country like Australia has areas experiencing staffing crisis: overcrowded emergency departments, bed closures in rural areas, gaps in community care and in general practice.

How can we best create and sustain this vital workforce? A good start is a robust training program for junior healthcare professionals. This is not just a call for better 'formal' training, we also need high-quality social modelling demonstrating effective ways of managing emotions and challenging situations.



Professionals in the care giving sector must grasp the profound impact of emotional norms on their own and others' emotional regulation. It is crucial for them to cultivate a keen awareness of their own emotions and role in fostering compassion within their workplace. A pivotal factor is creating a workplace system and culture where all staff, including junior professionals, feel empowered and safe to advocate confidently for patients and colleagues whenever they witness errors or misconduct among senior colleagues.

Once these valuable professionals are trained, it's imperative to establish a supportive system that retains them in healthcare, preventing them from becoming yet another statistic in the unacceptably

high burnout rates pervasive in the healthcare and social assistance sectors. These rates are not only depleting essential skills but also creating imbalances and risks in terms of patient-to-staff ratios across hospitals and residential aged care facilities.

Yes, it's about improving pay rates. But, while pay is part of the solution, it is not the whole solution.

Our research shows the quality and design of work and the social capital that is created within teams is also important in retaining healthcare professionals and allowing them to flourish whilst undertaking their life saving tasks. We need to redesign work to create better work and support systems for all healthcare

professionals. The system relies on responsible healthcare leaders who are courageous, supportive, build trust and empower team members. High performance teams are those that are psychologically safe, diverse, collaborative and inclusive.

Hospitals with high rates of workforce bullying also have low rates of staff engagement. Stressed health units, for example, record significantly higher rates of hospital-acquired infections. Lack of proper handwashing, poor adherence to infection control procedures are problems that exist where there is poor leadership and bad workplace design. Eventually it's the patients and their families who suffer the consequences.

Governments prefer to spend money on patient care – assuming this offers more bang for their political buck. We need to shift that mindset so that supporting the workforce is seen as a politically and economically smart decision. Healthcare budgets need dollar targets for workforce support.

Increasingly virtual team members are becoming an intrinsic part of the healthcare 'workforce'. AI is increasingly being used to analyse symptoms, read scans, come up with a diagnosis. But devising the best treatment plan and supporting patients to follow it will still be in the control of the humans in the healthcare team. We want a system that better supports our healthcare professionals to be the best advocate for the patients in their care.

Resources

Student assignment

Research the engagement scores for the hospitals in a particular area/country – and explore how they are linked to other hospital data...

How would you train team members to speak up and voice their concerns in a situation where they had observed a mistake on the part of a more senior colleague?

Further Resources

Articles

- Nguyen, H., Groth, M., & Johnson, A. (2023) How display rules influence turnover in healthcare teams and the moderating role of team negative affective tone. *Journal of Service Research*.
- Choi, E., Leroy, H., Johnson, A. & Nguyen, H. (2022) Flaws and All: How Mindfulness Reduces Error Hiding by Enhancing Authentic Functioning. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*. 27(5), 451–469.
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- Wang, K., de Montemas, W., Dey, S. Johnson, A., Nguyen, H. Tuqiri, K. Crawford, B. and Murray, S. (2024) “Not just a “nice to have”: Team compassionate care behaviours and patient safety”. *Australian Journal of Management*.
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- Zettina, N., Yam, C., Kunzelmann, A., Forner, V., Dey, S., Askovic, M., Johnson, A., Nguyen, H., Jolly, A., & Parker, S. K. (2024). Crystal Clear: How Leaders and Coworkers Together Shape Role Clarity and Well-Being for Employees in Social Care. *Human Resource Management*.

Podcasts:

- This working life – Out for blood: Energy vampires at work

Websites

- Centre for Transformative Work Design: Design for Care
- The University of Sydney: Business Research – Body, Heart and Mind in Business Research Group



Goal 4: *Quality education*

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Improvements in upper secondary completion rates have slowed, while learning outcomes in many countries are declining. Troubling regional disparities exist in early childhood development, and sub-Saharan Africa is at a particular disadvantage. Despite modest improvements in literacy, hundreds of millions of people remain illiterate, and women are disproportionately affected.



Co-designing better educational futures

Stephanie Wilson



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.

4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

If I had to select a single word to encapsulate what higher education ought to embody in order to achieve these goals under SDG 4 by 2030, it would be 'connected'.

In practice this means ensuring students are connected to other students, teachers, their discipline, and ultimately, society. Students should see their project work having the potential to feed into solving local and global challenges. The boundaries between university and society need to be much more porous, and students ought to engage in tasks that have value to society. But how do we design for learning that is both inclusive and transformational? Connectivity starts with the educational design process.

Co-design: embracing dissensus and multiple perspectives

Only meeting 15% of SDG targets half way to deadline implies a deficiency in current educational design practices. We need to rethink how we get there. As suggested by Macgilchrist (2023), it is crucial to recognize that designing for education is intertwined with politics, personal relationships, legacies of exclusion and oppression, and the impact on the planet.

Co-design, as defined by Zamenopoulos & Alexiou (2018), is where people connect their knowledge, skills and resources to carry out a design task. In the Business Co-Design team at The University of Sydney we use a co-design approach to developing curricula, drawing on the experience of teachers, students, educational developers,



growth) includes a target on the development of skills for employment, and SDG 1 (no poverty) and SDG 13 (climate action) include targets around improving education and awareness of climate change.

Whose designs and whose futures?

Designers have a responsibility to society and nature. We need to test, document and share co-design processes that build capacity and empower participants in educational design (Vallis et al., 2021). We also need to prioritise relationship building as we embark on a more connected path to socially impactful education, and direct our collective efforts towards “matters of concern” (Latour, 2008). As suggested by Macgilchrist (2023) we must continue to ask questions when designing for education such as “whose designs are we talking about?” and “whose futures are at stake?” By designing connected learning experiences for students that add value to society, we can create a better future together.

learning designers, industry partners and others. We also research what effective co-design looks like in higher education and how it will lead us to preferred educational futures. Realistically this means embracing dissensus and the co-existence of multiple positions for communal knowledge in education (Jandric et al. 2023). We need to encourage a multiplicity of views and engage in a more democratic approach to design that breaks down hierarchies and

decentralises decision-making. It means bringing in different expertise, adopting multiple perspectives and together making something that really couldn’t be done without that shared competency.

Building a bridge between goals

Education is one SDG that explicitly underpins the success of other development goals. For example, SDG 8 (decent work and economic

Resources

Student assignment

- Identify a small-scale educational challenge within your community. Outline the co-design process you will use to collaboratively design a solution to that challenge.
- Reflect on how the co-design process would enhance the project’s effectiveness and outcomes.
- Discuss strategies for scaling up the project to have a broader impact on the community or beyond.

Further resources

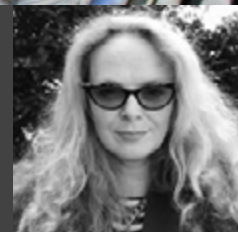
Articles

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Transcendent not transactional: igniting global change one student at a time

Maria Ishkova



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

Target 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

Playful learning, action learning experiments, students as partners, feedback hugs – these are some of teaching techniques I practice in my classroom.

Unfortunately, higher education has become very transactional. Students hand over the money, attend classes when they must and navigate assessment tasks in order to be presented with a degree, whereupon they exit the institution, happy to leave.

To meet target 4.4 within the education-focused SDG by 2030 we must aim for transformational learning, conferring students not just with degrees but with the mindset and skills to enact global change, activating a contagious passion for lifelong learning.

I teach organisational communication, leadership and management. I disagree when communication and leadership are labelled ‘soft’ skills. They are core

skills – tough to master, yet crucial for success. I tell my students that even if you create something Nobel Laureate-worthy, it’s lost for you and humanity if you can’t communicate it effectively.

To be transformative, classrooms need to be unconventional. Students are my teaching partners, and we employ a range of ‘playful learning’ techniques: student-run upskill festivals and mock strategy sessions, TEDx style competitions, celebrations of our fellow champions and responsible use of Generative AI. In learning by playing, doing, and teaching, they also support each other with weekly appreciative and developmental peer feedback –the ‘feedback hugs’ approach that won the Inaugural SRES Award.

A growing body of higher education research shows these pedagogical practices tap into intrinsic motivation, creating psychological safety and ‘magic circles’



(Whitton, 2022). Failure is not dreaded nor condemned, but a ‘friend’ offering vital feedback, encouraging exploration while building self-awareness and resilience.

My students learn to observe their peers with the intention of helping them succeed. Using trial and error, backed by self-reflection on feedback, they learn what to say and how to express it in order to help others flourish. Those students who have received the most appreciation from their peers are celebrated as class ‘influencers’.

When content can be consumed online, it’s the human connection that is most important in the age of AI. Transformational teaching is not just about transferring knowledge. It’s co-creating education while developing core skills in effective communication and uplifting others. The greatest gift we can confer as educators is to motivate these future agents of positive change to maintain their curiosity and extend their reach (hugs?) as far as they can, for as long as they can. This is our legacy.

Resources

Student assignment

An ice-breaker: an action learning experiment for students

Action! One drop at a time: making your world a kinder place with feedback hugs.

Using the power of action learning experiments we will discuss the concept of feedback.

Concept to put in practice: Appreciative feedback.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it: Is there anyone among us who likes to be appreciated and acknowledged for something they have done well? Is there anyone who thinks such appreciation and acknowledgement should happen naturally, without prompting? Is there anyone who thinks they receive such feedback in abundance? For many of us the answers will be “Yeeees, Yes! And No.”

Today, I am inviting you to invest 1-5 minutes to become a positive force of nature yourself and make someone’s day better. Think of someone who helped you and who plays, or played, a significant role in your life. Maybe you have already expressed your gratitude – or maybe not. Consider why we would express words of appreciation to our family members, girlfriends, or boyfriends? Isn’t our commitment to them a representation of us saying that we love them? Not at all! So, right now, I am challenging you to send a brief message of appreciation to someone who deserves it – and I am encouraging you to blame it on me ... 😊 This is in case it’s not your regular behaviour, they won’t think you have messed something up and are trying to “play nice” in order to apologise. Here’s an example of how you can start: “Hi, I am at Uni now and we are talking about how rarely we share true words of appreciation with people who have positive impact on our lives. And I thought how you [mention their kindness]. I hope you know how grateful I am for that. Thank you, it helped me to [mention a specific impact], I appreciate it a lot!”. Feel free to use your own words to frame your appreciative feedback – the only rule is that your words of appreciation must be genuine and sound like the authentic you.

Sent? Now put your phone away. Please do not expect your person to come back to you, especially not immediately. This exercise is not for yourself – it’s your gift to your person.

At the end of the class, we will debrief our experience of this exercise and the impact it had on us.

Resources for the exercise:

- The power of appreciation: Mike Robbins at TEDxBellevue
- Derek Sivers’ TED Talk ‘How to Start a Movement’
- Further Resources on teaching philosophy, methodology and student experience

Articles

- Ishkova, M., Loh, V., White, G., Lawton, O., Tyson, J., Fung, H., & Askovic, M (2021) To Flip or not to Flip? Reflecting on PALPable outcomes of flipping the classroom during the pandemic. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*
- Supiano, B. (2023) This University Found a Way to Make Huge Classes Feel Small. Could It Work for You?. *Chronicles of Higher Education*
- Frawley, J. (2023) Make students part(ners) of your teaching. *Teaching@Sydney*
- Frawley, J. (2023) “I am not a customer”. *Teaching@Sydney*
- Whitton, N. (2022). A Manifesto for Playful Learning. In: Play and Learning in Adulthood. *Palgrave Macmillan, Cham*.

Podcasts and videos

- Quitich: Remote learning with Maria Ishkova and students Michelle, Christopher and Carol
- Beyond engagement: Students as co-creators of learning experience that assures the development of Graduate Qualities
- Student Relationship Engagement System: Fostering stronger student-student relationships (and developing GQ “Influence”) during the pandemic
- Preparing students for the new normal using flipped classrooms, authentic challenges & student voice



Australia is meeting the education targets, but on the cheap

John Buchanan



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

Target 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

To the rest of the world Australia has an enviable education system. Across all four tiers of education Australia could be said to be meeting the SDG 4 target of providing quality education.

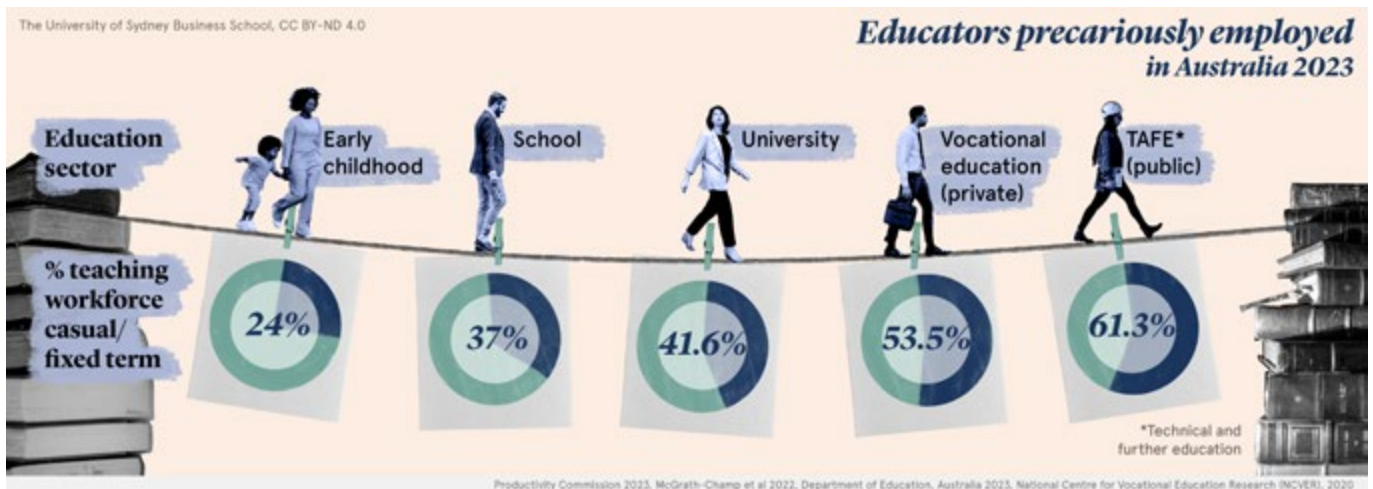
However, we have done so by sweating legacy assets established over decades (especially in our universities and vocational education system) and exhausting the goodwill of the teacher workforce. This cannot hold.

Historically teachers in Australia enjoyed secure work and sustainable salaries. Over the last 30 years there has been an erosion in the quality of teaching work. Fixed and casual employment is widespread, especially for young educators. Successive government policies capping public sector wages has suppressed teacher pay while their work intensity has soared. Ask your teacher friends and relatives how stressed they are daily coping with integrating new technologies into the classroom, pupil behaviour and out-of-hour student (and parental) demands. It won't be a happy conversation.

Australia's educational achievements are in a precarious state and advances are being undermined by a lack of investment in essential infrastructure – especially our educators. The table (P31) provides a summary of key developments since 2015.

On the face of it the early childhood sector is a 'success' story, with a 11.4 percent rise in enrolments since the start of the SDGs. This was supported by a 38 percent increase in government funding (\$2.6 billion) between 2015 to 2022. However, the majority of the public investment in early childhood education has flowed into for-profit operators who now provide 70 percent of centre-based day care places. A [recent review](#) found this sector marred by high costs to parents and significant variations in the geographic availability and quality of services.

At the same time early childhood teachers labour under the lowest pay. Consequently, the entire system is stressed by a [dire shortage of teachers](#). The sector has one of the largest proportions of unfilled vacancies for any Australia



occupation: pre-school educators are the top occupation where vacancies outstrip applicants in the greater Sydney region (Seek 2024).

In high schools the system is failing its most vulnerable students. The proportion of pupils transitioning from year 10 to year 12 fell by more than 4 percent between 2015 and 2023, a period when government policy was supposed to raise the school completion rate. In addition, a decade of wage suppression has contributed to high numbers of teachers leaving the profession. Rising work pressures – teachers have one of the highest levels of workers compensation claims for psychological injury – also contribute this situation. Casual and fixed term employment account for over a third (37 percent) of school teaching positions in NSW, contributing to a dysfunctional labour market in school education. The term ‘burnout’ does not adequately express the daily experience of this cohort struggling to cover lessons for absent colleagues.

The vocational education sector is supposed to fulfil two main tasks: training the ‘on the tools’ workforce and offering ‘second chance’ learning to people who did not like school or who have otherwise not participated in Australia’s high schools – migrants, refugees, school refusers and other disadvantaged groups.

Once a shining example of diligent community service, our technical and further education system has been commercialised. The attempt to turn vocational education into a profit-making enterprise has seen teacher standards undermined. The number of people earning higher level

vocational qualifications (the level of study that prepares people for good jobs as diploma level engineers and care workers) fell by more than 9,000 between 2015 and 2020. And employers are not picking up this responsibility. The proportion of employees reporting employer-provided training fell by more than 3 percent between 2013–2021, to just 23 percent. In the meantime, more than 61 percent of teachers in the public vocation training system are either casual or fixed term employees.

The elite higher education system faces similar challenges. Universities now rely heavily on casual and fixed-term staff, with tenured academics comprising less than 60 percent of the faculty. The funding model is unsustainable, as government funding has dropped to 45.6 percent of total income. This shortfall has led universities to seek substantial funding from overseas students, whose numbers increased by 21.8 percent from 2015 to 2021. However, the reliability of this revenue is uncertain as Australia tightens immigration controls aimed at reducing overseas student numbers.

The most pressing challenge is to move beyond the great intellectual rigidity of our time: namely that quasi-market arrangements and corporate models of managerial accountability are the best way to organise domains like education. Research I have undertaken for the NSW Department of Education, UNESCO, the ILO, teacher unions and the Directors of Welsh Colleges of Further Education has identified more sustainable and effective ways forward for vocational education and the teaching profession in particular.

Goal 4: *Quality education*

It is vital that greater respect and support is given to education as a domain and a profession. We need to recognise that the 40-year experiment with market inspired reform has failed. Preoccupation with ‘flexibility’ has distracted attention from the prerequisite for effective adaptive capacity: strong institutions supported by stable funding over time. Kattel and colleagues (2019) refer to this as ‘agile stability’.

Educational institutions should be nurtured to shape the labour market, not merely serve it. The challenge, along with its exciting opportunities, lies in building partnerships within the education sector and with economic and societal agents. These collaborations should focus on generating and sharing new knowledge for the benefit of all.

Education Indicators and Critical Issues: Australia 2014/2015 and 2022/2023

Education Sector	Participation/ enrolments (Million)			Enabling conditions		Critical sector issues
	2014/ 2015	2022/ 2023	% Change in enrolments	% teaching workforce casual/fixed term	public/private mix	
Early childhood – children getting CCS – % 0–5s getting CCS	1.269m 40.8%	1.413m ¹ 49.9% ²	11.4%	24% ³	% of Centre Based Day Care place run for profit ¹ 2013 – 58.8% 2022 – 70.0%	Effective regulation for quality Fragmentation Low pay ‘Skill shortages’ ³
School education – students K – 12 – Retention Y10 – Y12	3.682m 84.0%	4.081m ⁴ 79.1% ⁴	10%	37% ⁵	Enrolments: – Government: 67% – Non-govt: 33% ⁴	Work intensification, growing workers comp claims, wage suppression, ‘skill shortages’ ⁶
Higher Education – total enrolments/[foreign] – total domestic students (%19 years old population)	1.410m/ [.363] 1.047 39.8%	1.603m/ [.443] ⁷ 1.160 41.7%	13.7% [21.8%] 10.8%	41.6% ⁸	While most sector publicly owned government funding only accounts for 54.4% of expenditure. ⁷	Rise of casuals + fixed term work changing connection between research + teaching. Chronic deficient government funding widespread deficits across the sector. ⁹
Vocational education – students with public subsidy – % pop without post-school qualification – people taking higher order (non-degree) vocational qualification – % employees reporting employer provided training	1.035 40.0% 46,489 26.9%	1.138 ¹⁰ 36.3% ¹¹ 37,107 ¹¹ 23.0% ¹²	10%	53.5% ¹³ (TAFE: 61.3%)	While most of this sector publicly funded, most growth funding gone to private providers. VET teaching workforce proportion (FTE) 2019: – TAFE 37.4%, – For profit 32.4%, – Schools 11.8%, – Other 18.4%. ¹³	Important to recognise diversity of student pop: Apprentices + Trainees (30%), subsidised students due to disadvantage (40%), other classroom based, full qualification students (30%). Marketisation has resulted in ongoing quality issues + financial scandals. While business leaders call for more ‘responsive education’ employer contribution to skill formation is falling. ¹⁴
Australian population	23.816m	26.659m ¹⁵	11.9%			

Notes:

CCS – child care subsidy

ECEC – early childhood education and care

Resources

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- ABS Schools, [*Data on government and non-government students, staff and school*](#)
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- <https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/2023-staff-summary-time-series> and Norton 2023
- Croucher, G (2023) [*Three Decades of Change in Australia's University Workforce*](#)
- NCVER VET stats, data only covers the years 2018 and 2022 as comparable data for earlier year unobtainable. VET Data = rogs-202405-partb-section5-vet-data-tables
- Productivity Commission – monitoring of COAG VET target can be found [here](#). Note that reporting on this KPI series has been suspended. The website states 'The Report on Government Services (RoGS) and the Performance Reporting Dashboard are currently being reviewed by the Council on Federal Financial Relations (CFFR). The review will consider the objectives, scope, use and effectiveness of the RoGS and the Dashboard, and opportunities to streamline and improve these performance reporting arrangements. While this review is underway, updates to this Performance Reporting Dashboard will be paused.'
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- SEEK. (2024). *Labour Market Mismatch Indicator*, April 2024.



Goal 5: *Gender equality*

Achieve gender equality and empower all women

Legal barriers to gender equality persist, restricting women's employment opportunities and perpetuating child marriage and gender-based violence. The unequal burden of unpaid domestic and care work continues to limit the opportunities available to women, although there are significant regional variations. The political representation of women shows alarmingly slow growth, while decision-making autonomy over sexual and reproductive health remains limited in many regions. .



Women at work

Marian Baird



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

Target 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres.

Target 5.4 Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.

Target 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities at all levels of decision making and political economic and public life.

Target 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

Gender inequality in the home and at work are intertwined, impacting women across their entire lives.

Globally, women perform more care work (both unpaid and paid) than men. Women in Australia spend 30.2 hours a week doing unpaid work compared to 21.8 hours on the part of men. Men spend just over an hour more a day in the paid work force than women (8.13 hours compared to 7.12 hours on the part of women).

Care work is essential for the proper functioning of all societies. It is also undervalued in terms of its contribution to the economy. Women's unfair share of unpaid care work

is the major reason they experience unequal outcomes in the labour market.

SDG 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls equally everywhere in all aspects of life.

For women to participate fully in the paid workforce, caring work needs to be more equally shared between women and men, and families will require more support with childcare, elder care and domestic work.

A fundamental issue for SDG 5 is fixing the basis on which judgments are made about the value of work in the labour market.

The inherent qualities of care work need to be re-evaluated: how much do we value the empathy, the attention to detail, the ability to communicate with children, the elderly and people with a disability? The value of that work needs to be properly measured so that the people who do those jobs are paid appropriately and their skills are recognised and rewarded.

Is such a change unrealistic? No. For example the decision by the Fair Work Commission to increase the pay of aged care workers based partly on a re-evaluation of the often invisible care tasks they undertake is a positive step in the right direction.

I also invite you to consider the policy journey undertaken by the campaign for paid parental leave in Australia. Just as paid parental leave has shifted women's economic position, the next frontier is shifting the share of carer's leave more evenly between men and women. Until that gap is closed, full economic equality for women can't happen.

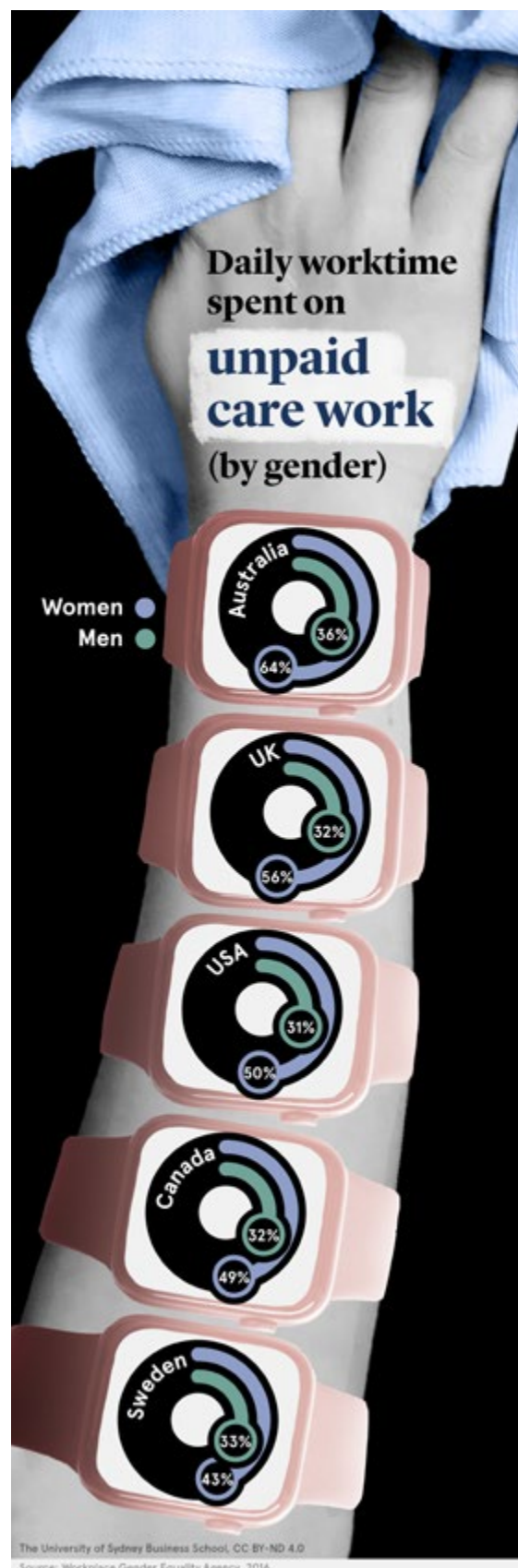
My latest research focuses on the next gender equity frontier: reproductive rights at work.

Achieving equality for women in the workplace means taking women completely as they are, not disembodied from their femaleness. Target 5.2 calls for gender equality for women and girls in all spaces, public and private.

Women at work are not just a mind or a pair of hands. Bringing their whole selves to work requires workplace adjustments around specific female needs: rest times, leave to allow for their menstrual cycle, timeout to undergo IVF treatments. As women age, they may need different workplace environments or flexibility to accommodate menopause.

Will there be pushback? Sure. No significant change has ever been achieved without strident opposition. But let's trust that the facts will win the argument (and let's hope it's by 2030). Because the research shows that women who are appreciated and accommodated at work are more productive. And employers who offer reproductive benefits – and there are a few corporates forging the way – know they are more likely to retain their female employees, thus reducing business turnover costs.

And while we are attending to SDG 5 let's not 'cheat' by lowering our standards so that men's pay and rights at work are reduced. Gender equality means lifting the bar for everyone.





Inserting a gender lens into the public eye

Meraiah Foley



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

Target 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

Target 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

Target 5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

Target 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life

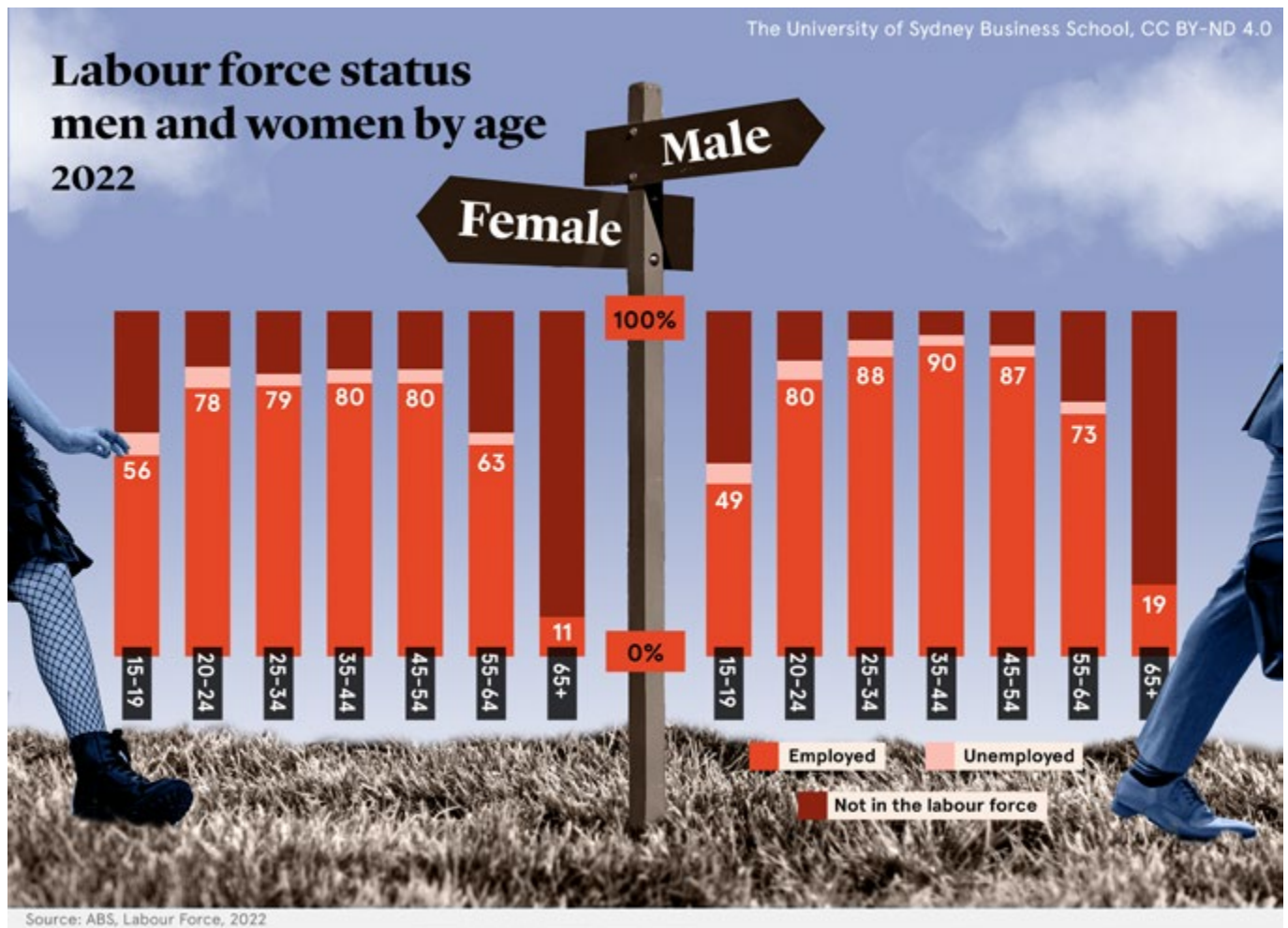
Public transport is a feminist issue. So is parking. So are holidays.

Public transport systems are designed for "a-to-b" commuters, people travelling from home to work and back. That is not how people with unpaid caregiving demands, which are still mostly shouldered by women in most societies, need to travel. They need to ping between work, school, the supermarket, pick up from music practice, drop someone at sport, maybe undertake some elder care and then back home.

In Australia, full-time workers are entitled to 4 weeks of annual leave per year; in most states, school holidays run for 12 weeks. Even in a two-parent household, how is that supposed to work?

The gendered nature of how we live and work is not embedded in the design of our systems, whether that's public transport, the retirement system, or school hours: all are designed without a gender lens.

If you were to get a group of people with caregiving responsibilities together to design an ideal public transport system, or to design the school holidays, it would not look like the current model. Because it's not fit for purpose.



I research how the the design of work and workplaces impacts women's careers. SDG 5's bold ambition to achieve gender equality by 2030 requires a gender lens across all decisions, budgets and policy design at all levels of government and throughout business.

Achieving gender equality for women and girls is not just a fairness issue, it will provide a massive economic boost to a nation's economy. Australia's Women's Economic Task Force showed \$128 billion could be added to the national economy if barriers were removed to women fully participating in the workforce.

Around the world, women are the economic engines propping up society.

Unpaid domestic work is fundamental to national economic productivity but is not counted or valued. This invisible labour is disproportionately undertaken by women, who also incur an economic cost for completing those tasks. Women don't accrue superannuation for their time spent building Australia's next workforce.

Australia has one of the world's highest rates of educational attainment by women. Since 2020, women are more likely than men to attain a post-school qualification. But while proportionally more women than men are employed in the labour force between the ages of 15 and 19, after this more men are active in the paid economy. During the critical childbearing years of 25-44 women's participation lags males by around 10%.

Many of our systems and structures are built on the premise that men go to work and women stay at home.

Schools, workplaces and childcare centres are not operated to accommodate women's full participation in the labour force. Such discordance perpetuates inequality. Our workplaces and public institutions are set up on a model that relies on the free and invisible labour of unpaid caregivers, still mostly women, meaning our community is not realising the important investment made in women's education. At the same time, many men report a strong desire to be more actively involved in their children's daily lives.

We need bold regulatory action to provide accountability around economic outcomes for women; to ensure that gender equity principles are embedded into decision making and budgeting policy design. Investing in universal child care, encouraging and supporting greater uptake of parental leave among fathers, and ensuring access to high quality flexible work for both men and women would be a good start. Achieving these goals will require

regulation at the government level and practical support from organisations.

We need to be more radical in our thinking. We need to reimagine how all of the systems and structures that shape and support our lives could fully enable men and women to participate in work and care equally.

Resources

Student assignment

Pick a piece of public policy, and perform a gender impact analysis on it. Examples might include public transport, superannuation.

Further resources

Articles

- Halais, F. 2020. [Making Public Transit Fairer to Women Demands Way More Data](#)
- Krause, H. 2023. [‘The school holidays are too long and a logistical nightmare – and I’m exhausted’](#)

Podcasts and videos:

- [99% Invisible: Ep 363 Invisible Women](#)
- [Annabel Crabb at The Wheeler Centre: The Wife Drought](#)

Websites

- [Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#)
- [Human Development Reports: Valuing care work](#)
- [Wired](#)

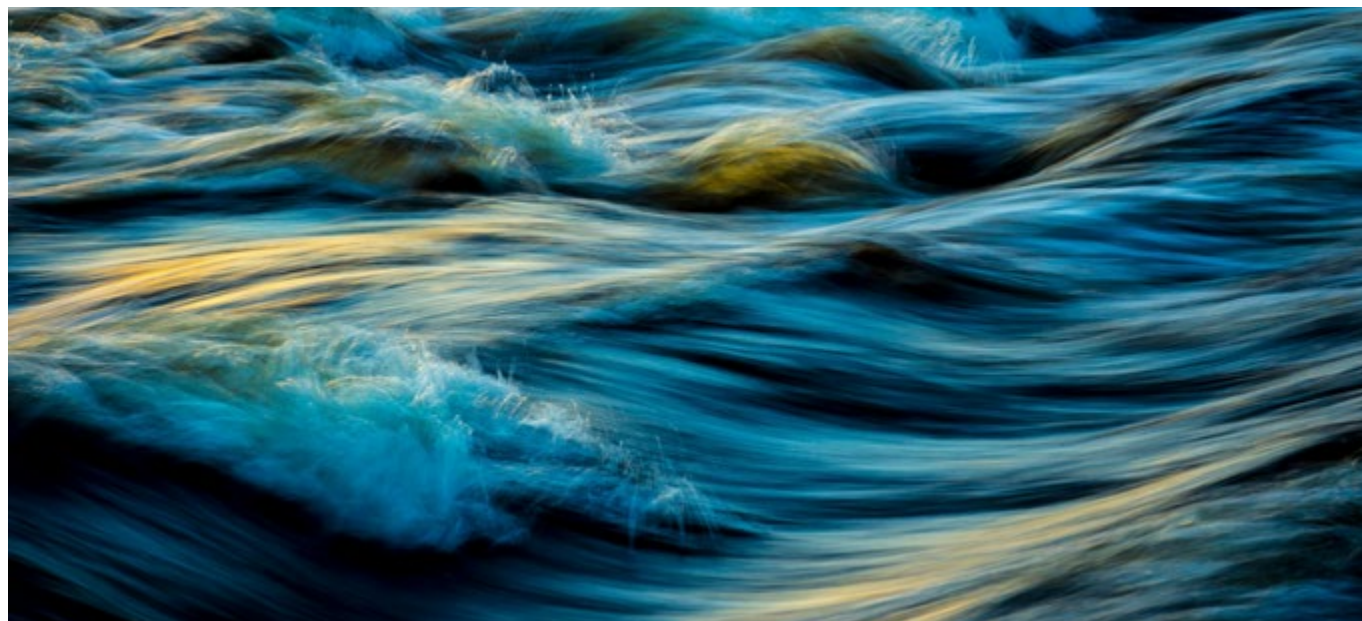
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Goal 6: *Clean water and sanitation*

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene is basic for human health and wellbeing, and billions of people will lack access to these basic services in 2030 unless progress quadruples. The demand for water is rising due to rapid population growth, urbanisation, and increasing water needs from agriculture, industry, and energy sectors. Decades of poor management, over extraction of groundwater, and contamination of freshwater supplies have exacerbated water stress.



Clean and secure water for everyone – an accounting story

Matthew Egan



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.

6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of

freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.

6.5 By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.

India, which has 18 percent of the world's population but only 4 percent of the world's water resources, will become water scarce by 2025. India is highly dependent on limited fresh water sources, including the annual Himalayan melt.

Conversely in Australia, water supplies are dependent on unreliable rainfalls, and for many, on what lies beneath: the Great Artesian Basin, one of the world's largest underground freshwater reservoirs.

Effective water supply management requires attention not only to geography and the weather. To achieve SDG 6, nations need to be able to answer a number of accounting questions:

- How much water is available?
- What volumes of water are used, and for what purposes?
- How is it being replenished?
- Can it be transferred?
- Where are the leakages?
- Where is maintenance required?
- Where are the corruptions in the system?
- Where is the pollution that is spoiling water supply?
- What happens to the outflows?

National water accounting process



Unlike a lot of other ‘sustainability’ related challenges, water lends itself to accounting quite well, because it is relatively easy to conceive of resource flows in and out, and of balances at the end of reporting periods. Accounting principles can therefore contribute to addressing these questions, and by extension, to achieving [SDG 6](#).

India and Australia demonstrate that a nation’s disparate water supply challenges are highly idiosyncratic, depending on geographically bounded considerations. Each nation must adopt a tailored approach to account for its total water supply, as the appropriate responses vary widely. Therefore, every country requires a customised national water accounting method to effectively address these issues.

Infrastructure may be the key challenge for some countries. For example, in India, where [54% of households](#) lack access to safe sanitation facilities, the government is responding with a range of projects, including attempting to improve household water security by [installing taps](#) into every home. Alternatively, differing approaches to water accounting in Libya could have revealed the poor quality of two major dams (national assets) which collapsed in 2023, killing more than 11,000 people.

No one knows how much water Australia’s Great Artesian Basin holds. Nor how it gets replenished on a circular basis. Effective water management demands a better understanding of (and accounting for) such unknowns.

Efficiency and risk are additional important elements of any effective water accounting process.

Efficiency issues require insight into the total quantities of potable water available, and then consideration of the diverse needs of different consumer groups (households, businesses, etc.) along with the nation’s ecological needs.

Risk, particularly in relation to climate change, is a significant further complication. The accounting challenge is no longer simply identifying the supply that’s available every year. We also need to factor in the greater uncertainties about supplies in future years. Accounting for water is becoming increasingly difficult.

In short, every country needs to think about how it can support targets 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6, via improved water accounting information. Despite differing challenges, the most important water management mechanism is clear direction and action from authorities. Strong regulatory underpinnings are needed to support targets. Effective and bespoke accounting solutions then emerge as critical tools to support that journey.

Resources

Student Assignment

How would you develop a water accounting tool kit?

Consider three different countries: what are their respective water challenges? What do you see as the important steps that could be taken to ensure a more secure water supply?

What are the most pressing challenges for the water supply in (Country X)?

What are the key metrics that would need to be included when constructing a national water account for that country?

Further Resources

Books (chapters in books)

Egan M and Agyemang G (2022) An exploration of developing approaches to water accounting. In: *Handbook of Accounting and Sustainability*. Edward Elgar Publishing; 279–299

Websites:

- [Bureau of Meteorology: National Water Account 2022](#)
- [ICMM Water Reporting: Good Practice Guide](#)

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Goal 7: *Affordable and clean energy*

Ensure access to affordable, reliable,
sustainable and modern energy for all.

From 2015 to 2023, global electricity access rose from 87 to 92 per cent, access to clean cooking fuels increased by 16 per cent, and renewable electricity continued to grow. However, progress is slowing, just 4% of transport and 10% of heating are powered by renewables. The rate of energy efficiency needs to double by 2030 to meet the world's climate goals.



Saving the planet requires decarbonising energy

Christopher Wright



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services

7.3 By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency

7.2 By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix

Offshore wind farms towering over remote oceans, solar panels perched across a landscape of suburban roofs or tapping into the geothermal energy in the world's 'hot rocks' - upbeat stories about the rise of renewable energy sources are offering hope of a sustainable future amid endless economic growth.

However, the world still relies upon fossil fuel-based energy for more than 80 per cent of its needs. **This is roughly the same proportion as 50 years ago.**

Despite the uptake of renewable energy, greenhouse gas emissions continue to grow, driven by expanding consumption and the world's demand for compound economic growth.

Also unchanged is the predominant economic system, which relies on fossil fuel consumption.

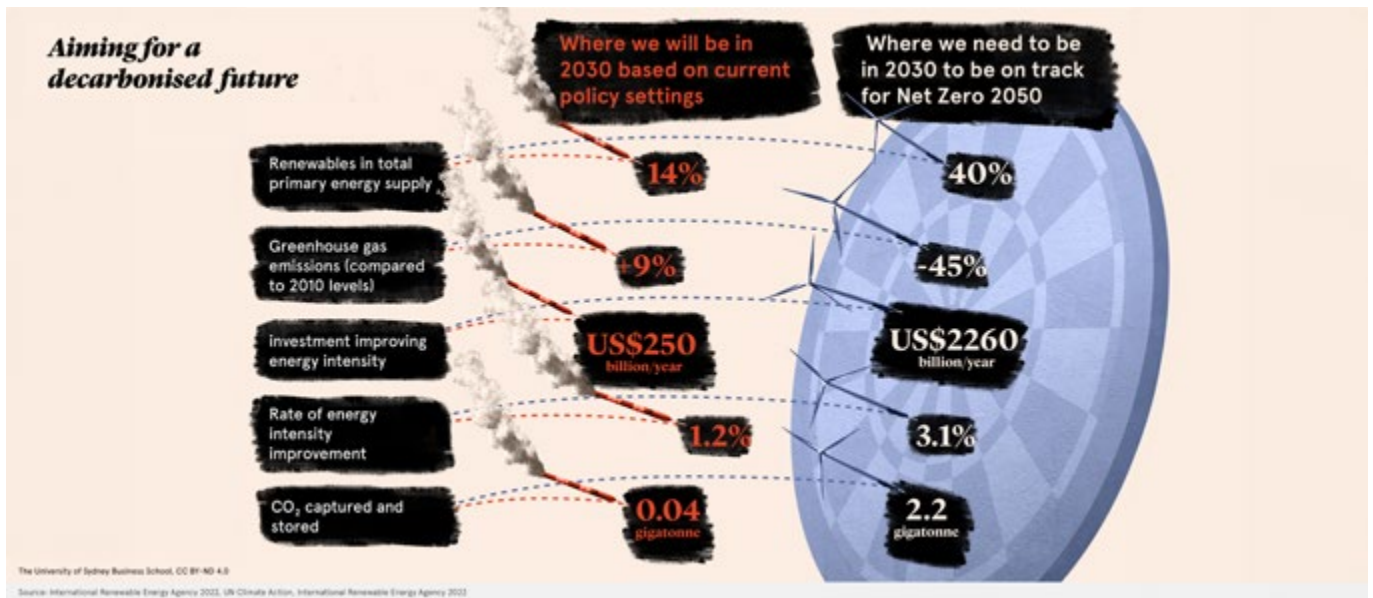
While SDG 7 targets aim to achieve affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all by 2030, the

broader SDGs do not confront the economic and political dominance of fossil fuels. Nor do they tackle the most pressing issue facing humanity: climate change.

The world's leading petro-states, including the United States, China, India, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Australia, continue to expand their production and consumption of fossil fuels. Increasing investment in renewable energy, while significant, has simply supplemented the growing energy demands of the globalised economy.

The world's energy production and consumption need to be radically decarbonised.

Targets to get there include an honest price on carbon pollution, the end of fossil fuel subsidies, major incentives for renewable energy investment, the nationalisation of energy production and distribution and the prohibition of new coal, oil, and gas projects.



Making the shift to more equitable energy consumption between rich and poor nations also requires the selective degrowth of economic sectors. Ensuring people have sufficient energy to live a sustainable existence while radically decarbonising energy production and consumption by the energy profligate requires nothing less than a reinvention of the global economy. However, such a transition has been denied and delayed by the political capture of governments by the fossil fuel sector.

At a time of worsening climate impacts, the innovative capacities of industry have focused, paradoxically, on more efficient ways to extract and use fossil fuels. This

fossil fuel hegemony has been maintained in the face of a growing social movement for climate action.

Corporations have transformed the grand challenge of climate change into a 'no worries' version of business as usual. Managers make sense of the climate crisis in terms of their identities and emotions. To avoid the coming global catastrophe, citizens need to use their identities (youth activist, employee agitator, community organiser), political agency and their informed emotions to confront and upend business as usual.

The survival of our world depends on it.

Resources

Student assignment

Try to imagine a world in which fossil fuels have been replaced by renewable energy. What would such a world look like and how would it differ from our current reality?

Further resources

Books

- Christopher Wright, Daniel Nyberg (2015) Climate Change, Capitalism and Corporations: Processes of Creative Self-Destruction. Cambridge University Press.
- Daniel Nyberg, Christopher Wright, Vanessa Bowden (2023) Organising Responses to Climate Change: The Politics of Mitigation, Adaptation and Suffering. Cambridge University Press.

Articles

- Wright, C., & Nyberg, D. (2017). An inconvenient truth: How organizations translate climate change into business as usual. *Academy of Management Journal*, 60(5), 1633-1661.
- Podcasts
- COP27 and moving forward with climate change responses
- Paul Samuel Dolman: What Matters Most

Websites

- United Nations SDG Indicators Database: Statistics
- United Nations Renewable energy – powering a safer future
- S&P Global: Commodity Insights



Transitioning to net zero emissions needs a new supply chain partnership

David Hensher



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

7.3 By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency

Some 20 million vehicles use Australian roads each year. Transport is the third highest greenhouse gas emitting sector in Australia, accounting for 19 percent of all national emissions.

Taking to the roads are 77,000 registered buses, more than 600,000 trucks, and 15 million private cars.

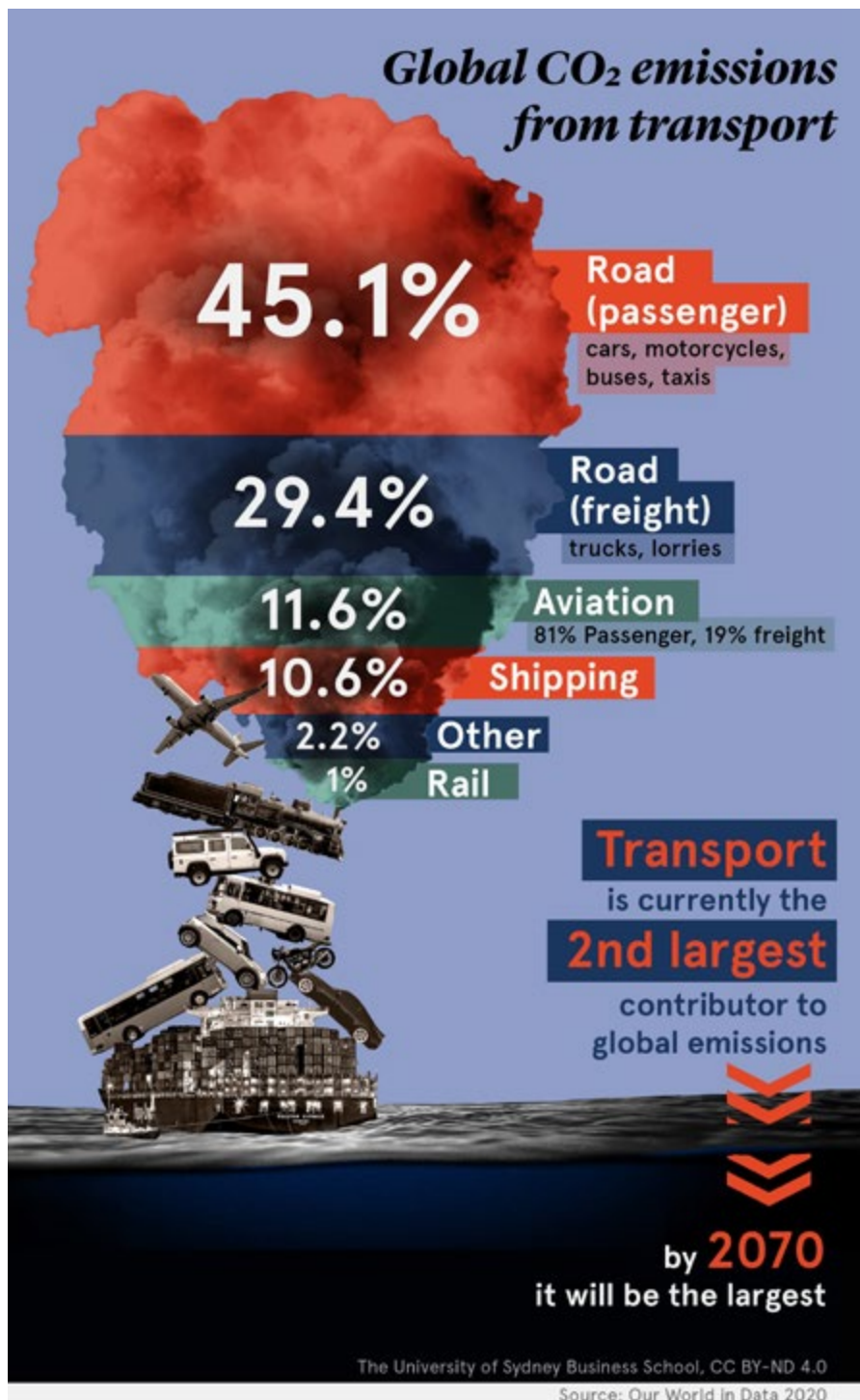
SDG7, target 7.3 calls for a doubling in the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency. Australia has committed to net zero emissions by 2050, so transferring our extensive public and private transport modes to zero emissions is a big part of that journey.

The emphasis is on transition to clean energy for cars, buses, and trucks, and to date the Institute of Transport and Logistics Studies (ITLS) team have contributed to

the development of alternative transition pathways in respect of the full life cycle effects of battery, electric and hydrogen conversion for buses and trucks.

The greatest challenge is having a governance framework that creates unambiguous policy settings developed by government, providing the clarity needed for industry to invest in future clean energy solutions.

There needs to be greater dialogue between procurement agencies in government and the private sector, given that most expertise in energy technology, manufacturing, and implementation is in the private sector. A critical role for government is to build trust in a Supply Chain Partnership Contract (SCPC), by recognising the diverse set of roles, and risk sharing, that can be delivered by private sector partnerships that negotiate or tender with government to deliver outcomes aligned with achieving the net zero goal.



This would involve a paradigm shift from traditional contracting (i.e., contracts between government and bus operator, or between a truck business and truck manufacturer), to management agreements between **government and consortiums**.

This new arrangement would account for the entire supply chain: energy provision generation and distribution, original equipment manufacturer, asset owners, and operators. This would give the government certainty of service continuance in a net zero emission future for all transport modes.

With benefits accruing to energy, infrastructure, and bus/truck providers in particular, there is a case to be made for sharing the risks with all parties who stand to benefit from the transition to clean energy.

This also aligns well with the real reason for contracting – to get the best value for the taxpayer's dollar.

Resources

Student assignment

What is your understanding of appropriate transition strategies in moving to clean and green energy in the transport sector?

Further resources

Books

- Khajepour, A., Fallah, S. & Goodarzi, A. 2014. *Electric and Hybrid Vehicles – Technologies, Modeling and Control: A Mechatronic Approach*, West Sussex, United Kingdom, John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Articles

- Brown, A. L., Sperling, D., Austin, B. & al., e. 2021. *Driving California's Transportation Emissions to Zero*. The University of California Institute of Transportation Studies.
- Hensher, D.A., Wei, E. and Liu, W. 2021. *Battery Electric Vehicles in Cities: Measurement of some impacts on traffic and government revenue recovery*, *Journal of Transport Geography*, 94, 103121.
- Hensher, D. A., Wei, E., & Balbontin, C. 2022. *Comparative assessment of zero emission electric and hydrogen buses in Australia*. *Transportation Research Part D*, 102 (103130), 1-17.

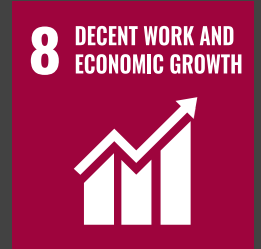
- Hensher, D.A. (2022) *Is it time for a new bus contract procurement model under a zero emissions bus setting?* *Transportation Research Part A*, 163, 80–87.
- Hensher, D.A. and Wei, E. A Comparative Assessment of Zero and Low Emission Strategies for the Australian Truck Fleet, Working Paper ITLS-WP-22-14 <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/handle/2123/29337/ITLS-WP-22-14.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Podcasts and videos:

- [Issues and Challenges in Bus Electrification](#)
- [Hydrogen Will Not Save Us. Here's Why.](#)

Websites

- [EPA: Fast Facts on Transportation Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#)
- [The Verge: EVs 'are not enough': Polestar and Rivian urge more drastic climate action](#)
- [Redwood Materials](#)
- [The Verge: Redwood Materials announces \\$3.5 billion EV battery recycling plant in South Carolina](#)



Goal 8: *Decent work and economic growth*

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

It is important that countries build inclusive growth by focusing on job creation, by investing in and developing sound, effective and efficient economic and social infrastructure as well as the need for workers to have access to education, skills, health care, social security and fundamental rights at work.



Decent work, not there yet for Australian women

Rae Cooper



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment

Women's work – to turn the language of SDG 8 around – is indecent work.

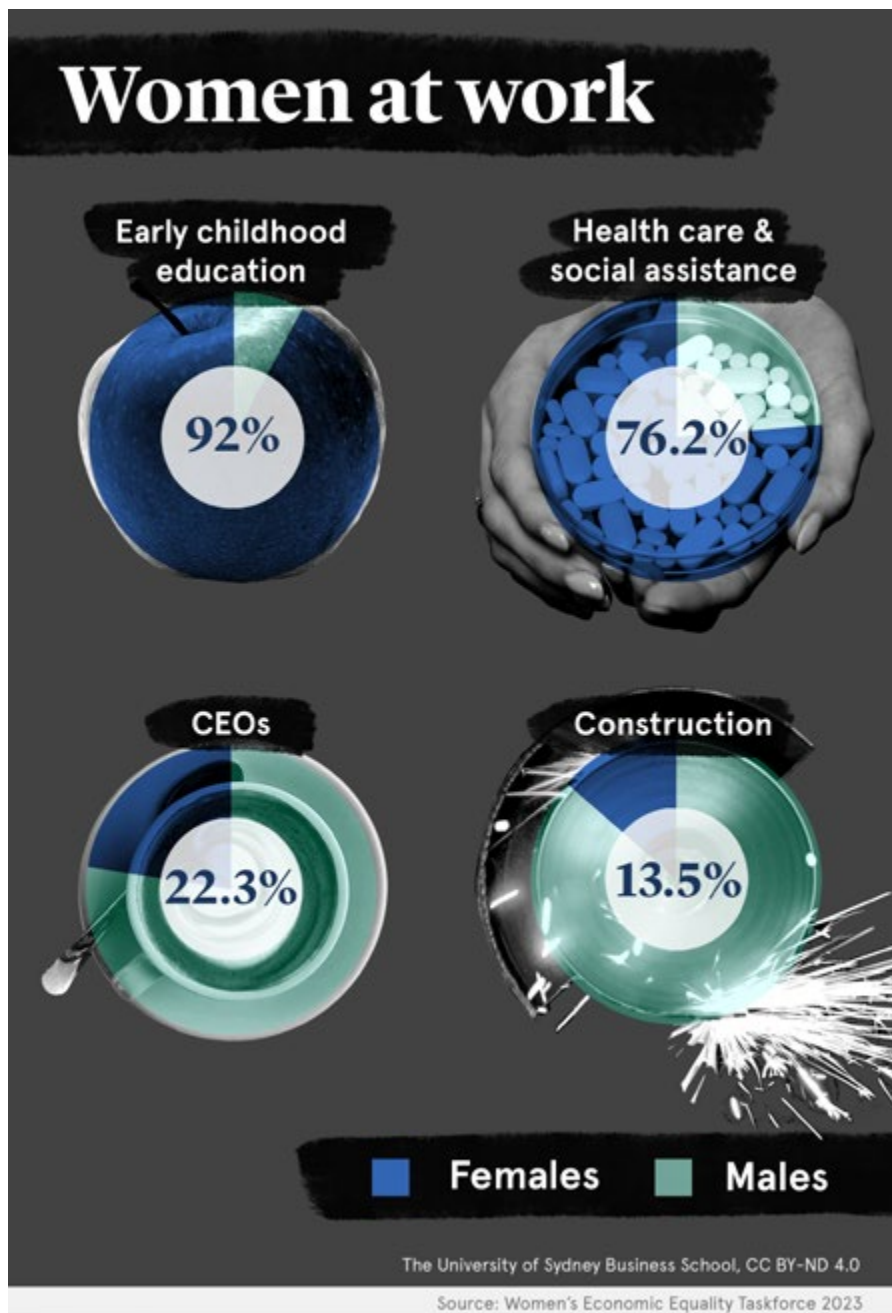
We can't tackle 'decent work for all' without adopting a gender lens because it is women who do the majority of poor-quality work both in Australia and globally. Casual, low paid, dangerous work is 'women's' work'. Some of the most highly feminised sectors are those where job quality is the poorest. Decent work, according to the International Labour Organisation, is about fair rates of pay, a living wage, having a voice at work, equitable treatment and security of employment.

My research focuses on the 'decent work for all' aspect of SDG 8. I am very interested in the intersection of decent work and gender equality (SDG 5). If a gender lens is not applied to the concept of decent work, we won't have a full picture of labour market dynamics nor are we able to identify pathways to better practice. I explore

how the labour market operates as an 'architecture of disadvantage and difference' shaping career progression, wellbeing and economic security. Along with my research colleagues I have identified seven dimensions of gendered inequality at work in Australia. Each of these dimensions drives very different labour market experiences and outcomes for workers on a gender basis.

1. Vertical labour market stratification
2. Horizontal labour market segmentation
3. Undervaluation of feminised work
4. Discrimination and disrespect
5. Insecurity and precarity
6. Working hours disparities
7. Gendered division of unpaid labour

Australia's workforce is highly stratified and segregated by gender. (*Vertical labour market stratification; Horizontal labour market segmentation*).



So-called 'women's work' (in health care and social assistance, education, retail, hospitality and tourism) is valued and paid less than male dominated jobs (construction, mining, manufacturing, transport, tech). In highly feminised areas of work, payrates are lower especially at entry level, job classification structures are much flatter (meaning

fewer chances to ascend to higher pay rates), and employment is more precarious and more dangerous. (*Undervaluation of feminised work; Insecurity and precarity*).

Decent work also offers employees a 'voice' in the workplace. (*Discrimination and disrespect*).

Voice is about having the capacity to influence what happens in your workplace. In highly male dominated sectors, workers report having high levels of voice: they feel listened to and consulted by their managers. Workers (both male and female) in female dominated sectors do not report the same level of workplace voice. There is something troubling going on in feminised sectors that stifles workers' voices.

Australia has a strong institutional industrial relations framework. However, it's also a system that values men's contribution to the formal economy more than women's. For a large part of our industrial relations history it was lawful for employers to pay women significantly less (half to two thirds), the rate paid to men. The 'rationale' for this discrimination was the 'male as breadwinner' trope: men were considered to have greater 'needs' as the family provider. Women were framed as dependant on men. While this situation of lawfully unequal pay was remedied through landmark pay cases in the 1970s and 1980s, gendered bias remains imprinted on pay setting and industrial relations institutions.

'Social welfare', for example, was not covered by an industry award (a document setting out the terms and conditions of employment) until the 1980s, because like many other so-called 'caring' jobs, the constituent tasks were not regarded as part of an 'industry'. Caring was just something women naturally performed. These so-called 'unskilled' jobs were poorly categorised and insufficiently documented. The constituent skills and capabilities were not detailed, unlike, for example, a metalworker and other male dominated occupations.



Recent key cases in the Fair Work Commission show the industrial relations system continues to undervalue 'women's work', viewing feminised work as unskilled. In part this is because historically women were seen to have a 'natural affinity' with caring, educating and serving others, and hence training requirements were seen as low. (*Undervaluation of feminised work*).

Applying a gendered lens across all aspects of employment surfaces big problems in the labour market. Lifting the quality of work in highly feminised sectors will net significant benefits for closing national gender gaps and will build women's economic independence and security.

There is more work to do ensure that highly feminised work is made decent, including building security

of employment, eliminating discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace and listening to employee's voices.

One of the fastest growing and largest employing industries in the Australian labour market is 'Healthcare and Social Assistance'. This powerhouse sector is critical to the social and economic functioning of our country. It will become even more so as our population ages. Yet, as was exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the lowest paid and most precariously employed people work in this sector. This is especially the case in aged care and disability support.

Australia's Fair Work Commission recently reappraised the jobs of Australia's 314,600 aged care workers – 74 percent of whom are female. The Commission considered the value, the nature of the skills involved, and the increasing complexity of the tasks undertaken by workers in this industry.

As a result, aged care workers in Australia will see their pay increase by up to 28.5 percent. In making its decision the Commission acknowledged that "the work of aged care sector employees has historically been undervalued, because of assumptions based on gender."

Resources

Student assignment

How can we increase the value attributed to jobs in highly feminised powerhouse sectors of the economy?

Further resources

Book chapters

- Rae Cooper and Talara Lee, “What’s IR got to do with it? Building gender equality in the post pandemic future of work” in Rönmar M. and Hayter S. (eds), Making and breaking gender inequalities in work (Cheltenham and Geneva: Edward Elgar, ILO and ILERA, forthcoming)

Articles

- Cooper, R., Mosseri, S., Vromen, A., Baird, M., Hill, E., Probyn, E. (2021). Gender Matters: A Multilevel Analysis of Gender and Voice at Work. *British Journal of Management*, 32(3), 725–743.

- Cooper, R., Hill, E., Lee, T., Seetahul, S. (2024) Building a more equitable future of work for women in NSW
- Ariadne Vromen, Briony Lipton, Rae Cooper, Meraiah Foley, and Serrin Rutledge-Prior, Pandemic Pressures: Job Security and Customer Relations for Retail Workers (Canberra: Australian National University and University of Sydney Business School, 2021)
- Cooper, R (2024). Understanding and addressing sexual harassment in the Australian retail sector.
- Rai, S., Brown, B., Ruwanpura, K. (2019) Decent work and economic growth – A gendered analysis. World Development Volume 113, p368 – 380

Websites

- Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet Women’s Economic Equality Taskforce



Decent work is a collective effort

Chris F Wright



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

Target 8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment

The United States has one of the largest income gaps in the developed world. While the bottom 50% earn an average of US\$20,520 per person, the top 10% of earners receive 17 times more, with an average income of US\$350,440. In Europe this ratio between the top 10% and bottom 50% ranges between 6 to 10.

The USA also has the lowest ratio of workers covered by collective bargaining, with barely 12 percent of workers having their employment terms negotiated collectively. In contrast, countries like Italy and France, where almost every worker's employment rights are collectively bargained, have some of the smallest income gaps in the world. This suggests a strong correlation between collective bargaining coverage and income equality.

Ensuring workers receive their fair share of their country's wealth is a key concern of Sustainable Development Goal 8, which aims to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive

employment, and decent work for all. My research investigates the link between the institutions that regulate employment and decent work.

Increased income inequality and insecure employment are tangible examples of the erosion of workers' rights in recent decades. This helps to explain why the income gap between those at either end of the corporate ladder has widened in the past 30 years. The weakening of labour rights, particularly in countries with minimal collective bargaining, has contributed to the growing disparity in income and job security.

Addressing these issues involves strengthening labour rights and ensuring fair employment practices. By enhancing the coverage and effectiveness of collective bargaining, and implementing policies that protect workers' rights, it is possible to reduce income inequality and promote decent work. This, in turn, supports the goals of SDG 8, fostering a more equitable distribution of wealth and improving economic stability for all workers.

According to the [International Labour Organization](#), protecting labour rights, including access to collective bargaining, is vital for achieving the decent work targets envisaged in [SDG 8](#). Collective bargaining allows workers, usually through a trade union, to negotiate wages and conditions jointly with their employer. Workers covered by collective bargaining are more likely to receive higher wages, better working conditions and access good quality jobs, according to OECD research.

Collective bargaining coverage has been declining in Australia and other liberal market economies like the USA, which prioritise employers' interests and provide little institutional backing for workers to negotiate better wages and working conditions. In practice this means the state provides very little support in terms of legal minimum wages and working conditions, leaving workers alone to negotiate with their employer over all aspects of their employment arrangements. In these countries, worker representatives such as trade unions have limited power to support workers in their negotiations with employers. This has contributed to low-wage growth and insecure employment for many workers in these countries.

By comparison in 'coordinated market economies' (such as those operating in most Western European nations) there are institutions that actively support collective bargaining by balancing employers and workers' interests and power. My research has found these countries' institutions to be more effective in promoting decent work than in liberal market economies. [The World Inequality Report](#) (2022) also shows that the



wage gap is much higher in liberal market economies and in emerging economies (such as Chile) where workers have weak collective bargaining rights than in coordinated market economies with their stronger collective bargaining rights.

The [Global Sustainable Development Report 2023](#) identified major barriers to meeting the targets relating to Decent Work by 2030 (SDG 8), including a lack of institutional support for sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The International Labour Organization highlights the significance of collective bargaining in addressing income inequality, as it empowers workers to negotiate fairer wages and improved working conditions. Countries that guarantee workers' rights to collectively

negotiate better working arrangements have better job quality outcomes, higher employment, lower unemployment and less wage inequality than those without this support, [according to the OECD](#).

Some parts of the world have taken steps to address this. Since 2022, the European Union requires member states to increase their collective bargaining coverage. The Australian Government has passed laws making it easier for workers to collectively bargain. The Chilean government has made a similar commitment.

It is vital for the rest of the world to follow these examples to ensure the Sustainable Development Goals targets relating to Decent Work are met by 2030.

Resources

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT

Identify a country where the government has recently implemented policy reforms to promote decent work. What did these reforms involve? Was business supportive of these reforms? Why / why not? What challenges did the government encounter?

FURTHER RESOURCES

Books

- Bamber, G.J., Cooke, F.L., Doellgast, V. & Wright, C.F. (eds) (2021) [International and Comparative Employment Relations: Global Crises and Institutional Responses](#) (7th edition) SAGE Publications.
- Colfer, B., Harney, B., McLaughlin, C. & Wright, C.F. (eds) (2023) [Protecting the Future of Work: New Institutional Arrangements for Safeguarding Labour Standards](#). Emerald. Publishing.
- Dundon, T., Lucio, M.M., Hughes, E., Howcroft, D., Keizer, A. & Walden, R. (2020) [Power, Politics and Influence at Work](#). Manchester University Press.
- Gautié, J. & Schmitt, J. (eds) (2010). [Low-Wage Work in the Wealthy World](#). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Pennington, A. (2023) [Gen F'd? How Young Australians can Reclaim their Uncertain Futures](#). Hardie Grant Publishing.

Articles

- Andersen, S.K, Wright, C.F. and Lansbury, R.D. (2023) [Defining the problem of low wage growth in Australia and Denmark: From the actors' perspectives](#). *European Journal of Industrial Relations* 29(2): 177-194.
- Benassi, C. and Wright, C.F. (2023) [Improving Pay and Productivity with Sector Collective Bargaining](#). London: King's College London.

Reports

- [European Trade Union Institute: Benchmarking Working Europe 2019](#)
- [ILO: Social Dialogue Report 2022: Collective Bargaining for an Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient Recovery](#).
- [OECD iLibrary: Negotiating Our Way Up: Collective Bargaining in a Changing World of Work](#).

Podcasts

- Planet Money, 'How unions are stopped before they start'. (NPR Update)



Goal 9: *Industry, innovation and infrastructure*

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

To advance Goal 9, countries must boost investment in resilient infrastructure and research and development, expand access to finance for small manufacturers and bridge the digital divide by prioritizing affordable broadband and innovation systems in the world's most underserved regions.



Ending the wild west of data collection

Max Baker



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

Target 9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all

Cybercrime attacks both individual and the national well-being.

Having information stolen in a data hack can mean identity theft, loss of assets and considerable effort reestablishing peoples' online identity and real-life reputation.

Such violations are hugely psychologically distressing and can lead to strong feelings of unease and a lack of trust in institutions. Which is an entirely reasonable response – a data hack is a form of attack and your well-being *is* at stake.

Sturdy infrastructure is the hallmark of a well-managed economy. Cyber breaches – consider just a few of the recent hacks into the banking, electricity, and phone networks – undermine confidence in business systems. Trust is an important element in business. If trust in the integrity of the internet is significantly undermined it could crash not only entire business networks, but shut down critical infrastructure and threaten national security.

SDG 9 recognises that strong resilient infrastructure, both software and hardware, is essential to our personal well-being as well as to economic development and national security. When it comes to the internet, we are still coming to grips with the range of potential new harms (for example, AI cyber crimes) for individuals, nations and global security.

I research how cyber security experts understand the risk surrounding the data they collect on their customers, suppliers and other key stakeholders. This involves understanding what they do if and when they are attacked or when their systems are breached.

Data breaches can range from your online friends' network being sent inappropriate messages from your social media accounts to financially ruinous identity theft or having highly private medical information leaked onto the internet. How would you respond to having your medical history splashed across the web?

People's reactions to being hacked range from feelings of anxiety to self-harm and suicide.

The exchange of data across the internet needs to be safe, transparent, and accountable.

The path to greater online safety is to have less sharing of personal information sprayed across the internet. My proposal to improve online safety includes having a central 'data information hub' with responsibility for holding individuals' data, such as proof of their identity.

When needed, this body could validate identification through a controlled process without the need for data duplication. This body would simply provide individual's ID verification to other organisations. No actual personal data would be transferred.

For example, Services NSW, the state government agency providing centralised access to all government services in my home state, could be allocated this task. Other government, business and NGOs could then request verification from Services NSW. The hub would become the single source of online verification.

Under such a scheme people will only have to provide their details once – and this is important – to a highly secure government-backed site. Other organisations seeking proof of ID can be reliably informed but don't get to hold people's data. This will reduce the burden on individuals, limit the spread of personal information across the internet and remove the persistent need for websites to collect and store information about users.

Right now, it's like a gold rush in data collection: it's free to gather and cheap to hold. And the more data that organisations have, the more powerful each data point becomes because it conglomerates, increasing its value exponentially. The 'mosaic' effect of amassing troves of data – even if it is anonymised – can lead to re-identification if enough data sets containing similar information are hoovered up.

That needs to change. The 'price' of holding data needs to reflect the real costs of potential harm to individuals.



Organisations need to take data collecting and storage responsibilities more seriously and be punished both reputationally and financially if they are hacked and their client's information stolen. A better set of values needs to be put on people's data so it is not seen as just a 'free' good but carries a considerable cost if that data is violated by a bad agent.

Under the Notifiable Data Breaches scheme, organisations that have had a significant data breach need to inform affected customers. They should also face strong penalties, including large fines. And companies should be required to delete our data if they are no longer using it (if we cease to be their customer, for example). Happily this is being considered in the current [Privacy Act Review](#).

Unlike compromises to other forms of infrastructure such as electricity, or roads, or rail, which are sovereign based, data breaches are often international and deeply interconnected through 3rd party and other commercial agreements. This means IT protections and standards need to be standardised and agreed between nations. International protocols are needed.

It's important that individuals also take more responsibility for their online safety. Unfortunately, the whole system is geared at tricking us into giving information, which automatically puts us at risk.

Be more suspicious and more educated when it comes to cyber issues, manage your passwords better and know how to customise settings.

Change will only come when people's outrage is channeled into legal and regulatory change. We also have to overcome data breach fatigue, where people don't want to know anything about it. Information needs to be presented in everyday language. It has to be easy for all of us to do the right thing.



Building trust in digital infrastructure

Jane Andrew



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

Target 9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.

All of us have a digital self, an online persona who engages with the cyber world.

Even those without internet access often have a digital identity created for them by a third party. You could live in a village without electricity, for example, but if you've received assistance from an NGO, that organization has likely created a digital record for you.

Nowhere in the SDG manifesto is the term 'digital' used. Yet in aiming to achieve Target 9.1 – quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure – we must ensure the world's digital infrastructure can also uphold these qualities.

Often our dealings with banks, the tax department, airlines, even something as innocuous as buying a sandwich at our local cafe, requires us to hand over phenomenal amounts of digitised personal information. Increasingly, our data is held by third parties standing between us and the actual service provider: when booking an appointment with a doctor we can be obliged to do so via an organisation that

is not a medical facility, but which demands all manner of deeply personal information, including a summary of our health concerns. How securely is this information held, for how long, and ultimately, by whom?

I research how organisations can strengthen their data related communication to help ensure individuals' information can be rendered more resilient against theft, misuse, and exploitation by bad actors.

Cybersecurity is now a major infrastructure challenge for every organisation. Small business and NGOs are particularly weak portals, often lacking sufficient resources to install resilient systems, whilst at the same time dealing with the most vulnerable members of our community.

As customers, consumers, or unwilling cyber participants, we are all at risk of a data breach. Generally, there is an asymmetry in the power relations between individuals and the organisations demanding our personal information.



Our research is looking at two changes that would improve the security of data infrastructure. These focus on the issue of appropriate disclosure with the aim of facilitating public conversations that elevate people's sense of safety and participation. A well-designed disclosure regime is also likely to encourage improved data practices as organisations work to maintain trust.

The first improvement would be to mandate annual public disclosure of data breaches and digital risks. This annual digital health check would contribute to a historical repository, serving as a central portal of information that all organizations could reference for self-assessment.

The second improvement would require hacked organizations to inform their customers precisely which of their personal information has been breached, enabling individuals to take appropriate remedial actions. Currently individuals are at the mercy of the organisations regarding the information shared with them about the cyber breach. This includes whether or not the breach reaches the legal threshold that requires individuals be informed if the information used to establish their digital identity has been stolen.

We need to move to a situation where once an organisation has verified a person's identity, that information is wiped from the organisation's database. This will limit the amount of information available to criminal networks and hence their ability to identify (and exploit) individuals. A legislated limit on the length of time organisations can hold identification data will also help reduce the amount of personal information that can be stolen by bad actors.

The primary means of improving infrastructure resilience is via legislation. Governments must compel organisations to deal more robustly with our data. That includes requiring organisations practice good digital hygiene and exercise a duty of care in helping their customers, in the event of a data breach.

Our future will be digital. We need agile digital infrastructures backed by robust regulation to participate safely in that future. To achieve that, data related disclosures that encourage informed public discussions about organisational practices will be critical.

Resources

Student assignment

Should data breach related disclosures form part of the routine reporting requirements expected of reporting entities?

Are there other modes of disclosure beyond the annual report that would assist organisations communicate their data related practices to various stakeholders? To answer this question, it is worth thinking about the impact the organisational form (for example: private, public, NGOs), the jurisdictional boundaries (for example: transnational, domestic), and the stakeholders (for example: capital markets, individuals, regulators) might have on the design of an appropriate disclosure regime.

Further resources

Articles

- Andrew, J., Baker, M., Huang, C. (2023). [Data breaches in the age of surveillance capitalism: Do disclosures have a new role to play?](#) *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 90, 102396–1–102396–16.
- Thomas, L., Gondal, I., Oseni, T., & (Sally) Firmin, S. (2022). [A framework for data privacy and security accountability in data breach communications.](#) *Computers & Security*, 116, 102657–.
- Andrew, J. Baker, M. Sheehan, M. (2022) [After the Optus data breach, Australia needs mandatory disclosure laws.](#) The Conversation.

Podcasts and videos:

- [ABC Listen: You're being hacked more than you think](#)

Websites

- [Australian Government: Notifiable data breaches](#)
- [Have I been pwned?](#)
- [IBM Security: Cost of a Data Breach Report 2023](#)

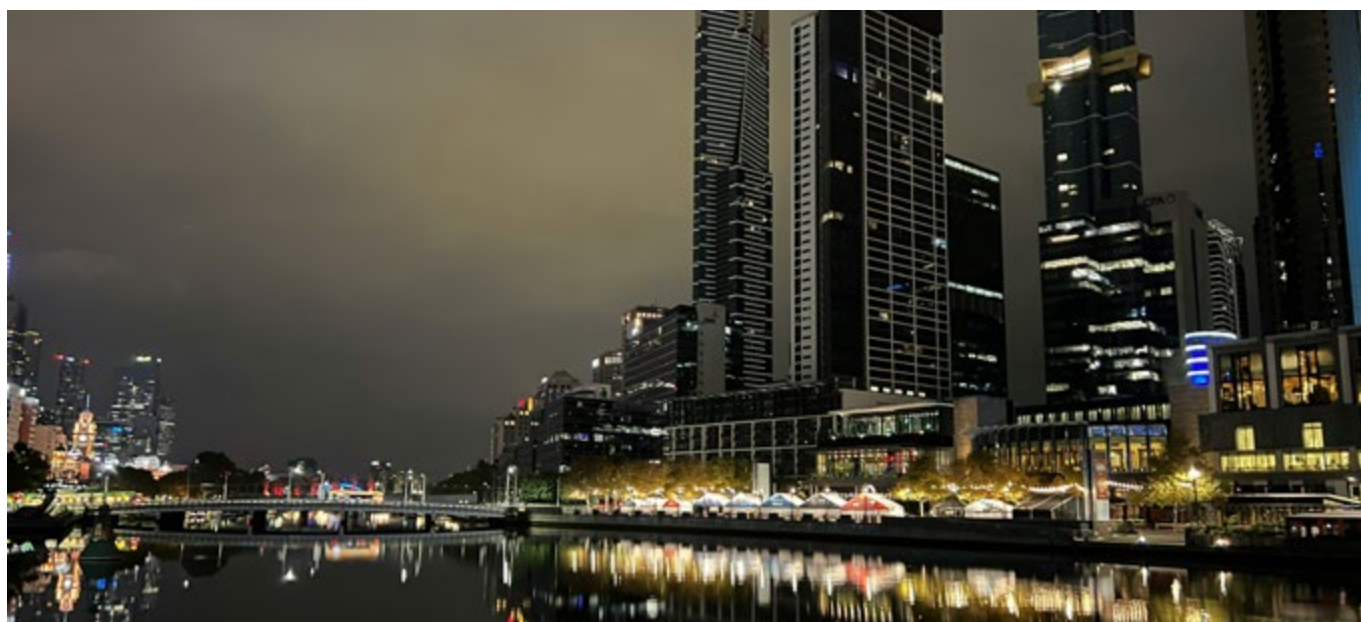
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Goal 10: *Reduced inequalities*

Reduce inequality within and among countries.

The global economy shows contrasting dynamics, with a resilient banking sector and declining labour income worsening inequality. While most countries have seen pro-poor growth, 12 per cent still live below 50 per cent of median income, with Latin America and the Caribbean most affected.



Purpose not profit is the key to successful Indigenous business ventures

Leanne Cutcher



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

Target 10.1 By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average

Target 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

Australia is still a settler-colonial society.

At best the prevailing national mentality is paternalistic. We are locked into a deficit discourse, meaning many Australians don't actually believe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are capable of devising solutions for their issues. In fact, the evidence shows that when they do, things go well.

SDG 10 calls for the reduction in inequality within and among countries with targets aimed at lifting the income and empowering disadvantaged groups within nations.

My research relates to inequality within Australia. First Nations peoples experience unequal outcomes in relation to life-expectancy, incarceration, infant mortality, and a range of other social and economic outcomes.

I research the co-operative business model that Indigenous communities have used to deliver services and facilities such as banking, childcare, suicide prevention,

and housing. The operating model is one where the business is owned by the community which then reaps the benefits of more culturally appropriate and innovative services. Traditional Credit Union, for example, operates 14 branches in the Northern Territory, employing local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to provide secure financial services to their local communities.

Where profits are not the key focus and dividends don't need to be paid to shareholders, surplus funds can be reinvested back into the business which means cooperative organisations can develop other services – such as the TCU becoming a registered training organisation, allowing it to train community members as bank tellers and other jobs. TCU has won many training awards.

Community based organisations can focus on needs that are unlikely to be of concern to outsiders – such as offering services in local languages. It's also true they need professional allies who can offer expertise and share knowledge. Indigenous medical services and housing



cooperatives offer culturally appropriate services and have also benefited from expert training from people outside of the community on legal issues that apply to all businesses in those sectors.

Globally there has been no progress on this goal. Inequality increases. We have a new category of Australians: ‘the working poor’. Home affordability and homelessness is a national crisis. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people progress has been glacial, and targets for some measures, including mental health and incarceration for example, are worse. However, we do know that when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

people can determine, design, and implement the solutions to their community challenges, progress is made and culture is honoured.

My call to action around these SDG targets is to non-Indigenous people – how can we become effective allies in assisting First Nations’ organisations tackle their challenges? Can our business schools do more research and teaching on cooperative business models, and train more students in alternative forms of enterprises? What role can we play to support Indigenous organisations to **“deliver services to their people, in their own places, on their own country”**?

Resources

Student Assignment

What role can non-Indigenous Australians play in helping to reduce inequality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

Further resources

Articles

- Cutcher L, Dale K. ‘We’re Not a White Fella Organisation’: Hybridity and friction in the contact zone between local kinship relations and audit culture in an Indigenous organisation. Organization Studies.

- Langton, M. The facts about redneck economic theory. The Saturday Paper, January 27, 2024

Websites

- Indigenous Business Australia
- Dilin Duwa, Indigenous Economic Power Project
- The Uluru Statement
- National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

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Goal 11: *Sustainable cities and communities*

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Urbanization continues to accelerate, with more than half the global population now living in cities, projected to be nearly 70 per cent by 2050. However, cities face mounting challenges, including rising urban poverty, growing slum populations, inadequate public transport and threats to infrastructure from disasters.



SDGs and the city

Bo Nielsen



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.

11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management.

11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning.

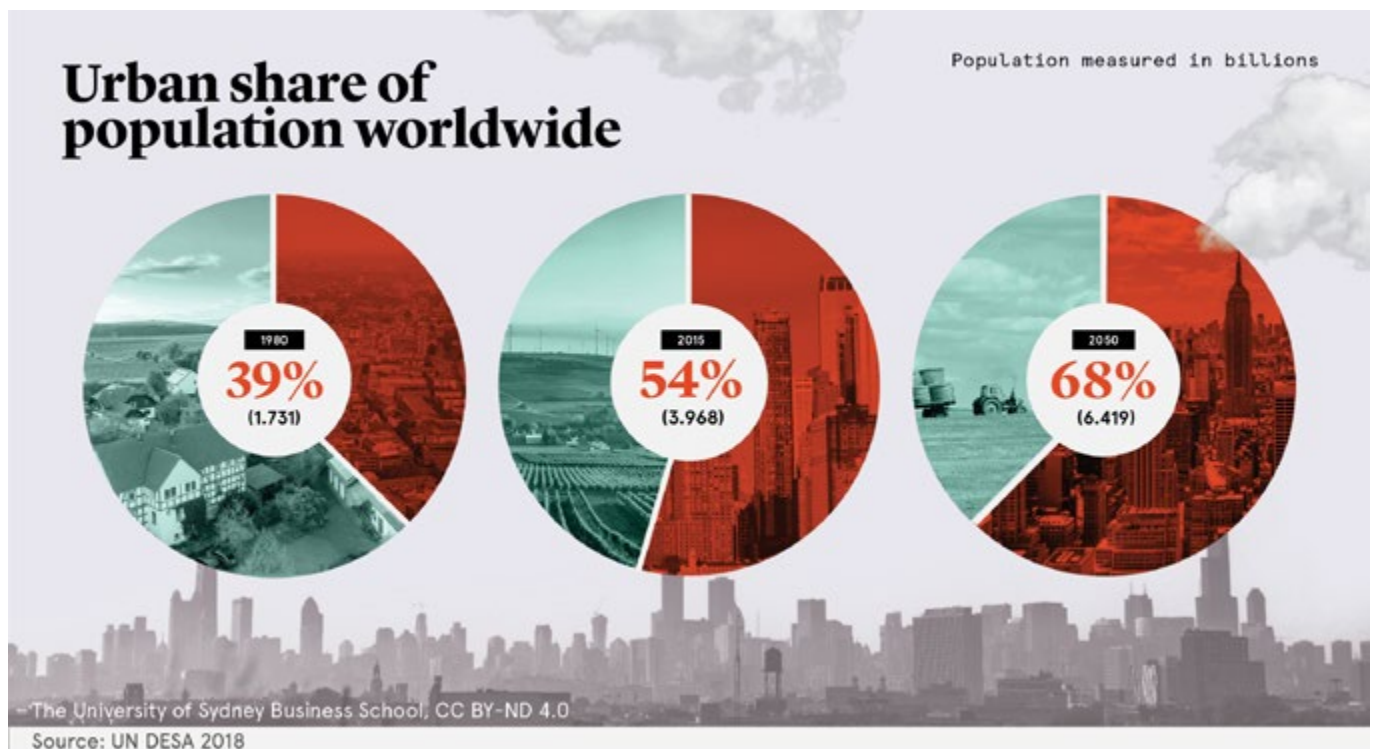
11.c Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials.

Over the next 50 years people living in low-income nations will undertake one of this century's defining megatrends: rapid urbanisation. To accommodate this influx the number of cities in low-income countries will increase by almost 80 percent.

Cities are our future. In the next 10 to 15 years, the emergence of global cities in developing economies will fundamentally alter the balance of economic power, affecting everyone on the planet.

SDG 11 sets 4 goals for cities and 'human settlements': to be inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Business is the connective tissue pumping life into the urban ecosystem. Cities are where the day-to-day economic and political decisions take place. The interaction between firms and cities is a critical relationship driving local, regional, and even global welfare. My research investigates global cities and their locational attributes vis-à-vis multinational enterprises.



Lagos, Nigeria, is set to become the world's most populous city by 2100, home to 88 million people. Altogether by next century African cities will make up 13 of the 20 largest cities in the world. Historically, rapid urbanisation has produced economic growth. But where urbanisation is achieved chaotically (read slums), the benefits of urbanisation are not experienced equitably. In Asia, where the share of urbanisation is projected to increase by 64 percent by 2050, the 130 million South Asians currently living in slums could be expected to balloon.

By 2050 nearly 7 out of 10 people will live in cities. Cities are the major engine driving economic and social life which is why achieving SDG 11 is critical to the success of many of the other goals. Urbanisation brings issues around policy, environmental safety, and resilience. If we don't get cities right then we are not going to manage the challenges of global poverty, climate change, and decent work environments.

Implementing the targets across all the SDGs will happen at city-level not at the national layer. For example, a global network of 100 mayors from the world's leading cities have committed to cutting their CO2 emissions in half by 2030. This policy will either attract or repel businesses to these places, which in turn will impact each city's character along with its emission levels.

Through their decisions about what infrastructure (physical and digital) to provide, city administrators also have the power to determine what sort of business will

want to locate there and exclude those who do not suit the local conditions. In turn, the businesses' behaviour will impact the city's employment, its health ratings (community and individual), and other social measures such as wage levels and rates of poverty.

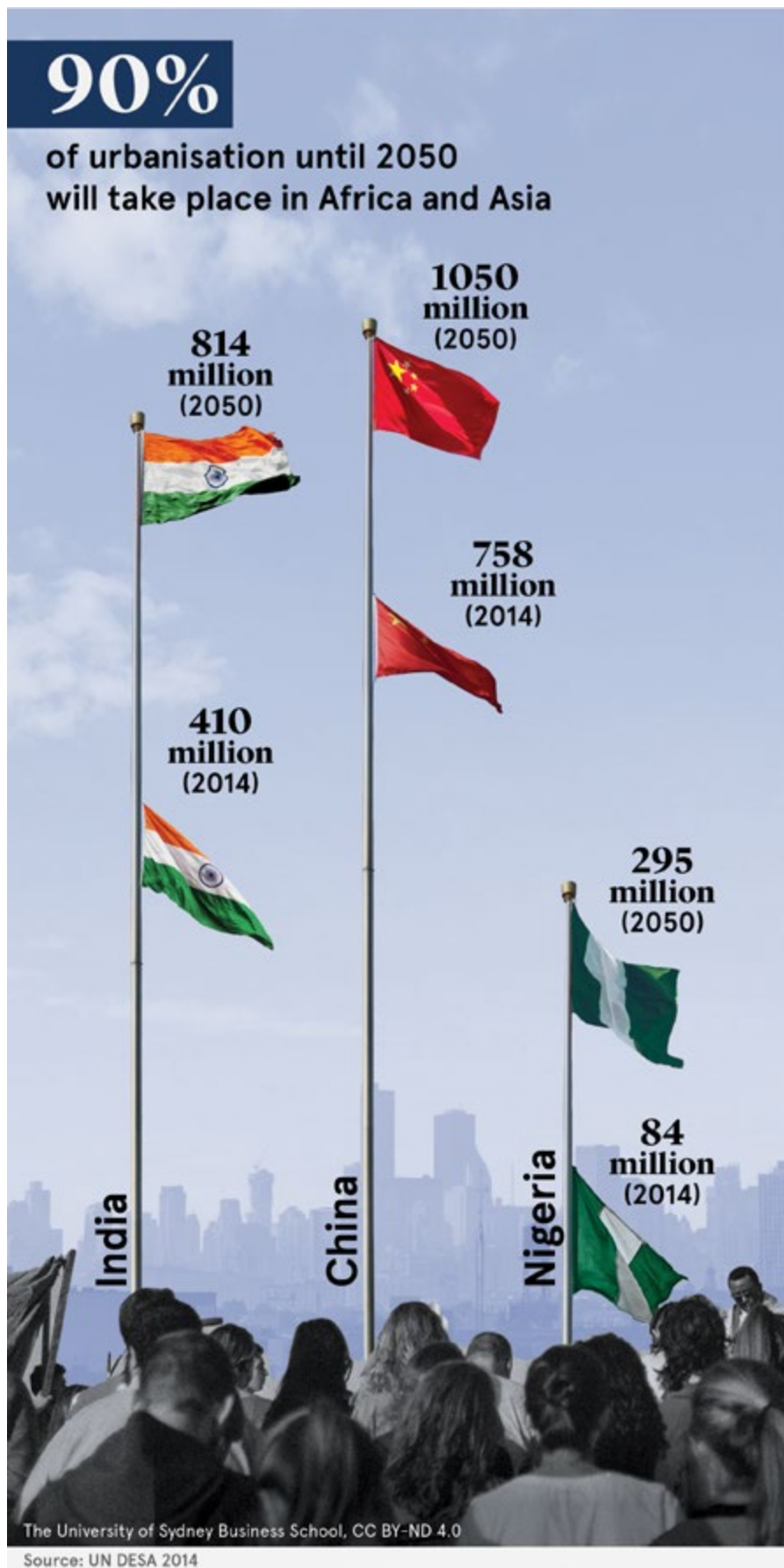
Businesses and cities evolve symbiotically. There are many examples where urbanisation has grown out of big businesses. Some cities have become synonymous with a particular company (Billund and Lego, Hershey and chocolate) or with particular industries (San Francisco and hi-tech, London and finance, Milan and fashion).

Size is not what matters for global city status. Mega cities (10+ million people) are not always global cities and global cities are not necessarily mega cities.

Under one million people live in Copenhagen and Zurich. By international standards these are not big cities, but both are recognised as global cities. Both places are attractive to multinational businesses and expatriates due to their cosmopolitan environment, global connectivity, and access to advanced producer services such as international companies of law, marketing, and consulting.

On the other hand, many mega cities – Mumbai, Karachi, Chongqing, and Lagos for example – lack the features necessary to operate as a dynamic international hub.

In the competition for scarce resources (business being a specific resource), city managers need to develop the



skills to undertake scenario planning, imagining where they want to see their city in 10, 20 even 50 years' time. They will also need to imagine what multinational businesses will look like across those same timelines and implement the social, financial, digital, and physical infrastructure to attract the type of businesses that will co-create the place they envision. Not all cities can afford to be 'smart', high tech, or designated 'green' locations. Heavy manufacturing will continue to be an essential industry and some cities will need to pitch their policy settings to appeal to this sector.

Cities, I believe, are the relevant level of analysis to have 'SDG' conversations about issues like improving water quality and education or reducing pollution, because this is where people, organisations, and businesses conduct their day-to-day activities. As the saying goes: you can think globally but we act locally.

SDG 11 will impact everything in human experience. It will affect our living conditions, individual and communal health, who gets to live in poverty and who will enjoy affluence. Ultimately our happiness, and its opposite, will rest on the achievement of this goal.

Resources

Student assignment

Q1a. Using material from below, choose a global city and argue for why particular types of businesses or sectors may be particularly attracted (or repelled) in terms of location in or around this city. Justify your answers by discussing what specific characteristics at city-level that may attract or repel certain types of businesses.

Q1b. Using material from below (in particular city rankings), what other cities may your choice of global city in Q1 be in direct or in-direct competition with and why?

Q2. Discuss the importance of cities and urbanization in relation to one or more of the other UN-17 SDGs. Comment on the importance of cities and their interactions with business in reaching sustainability development goals.

Q3. How do cities and businesses co-develop to co-create urban eco-systems for future economic and social development at local and regional levels?

Further resources

Articles

- Asmussen, C. G., Nielsen, B. B., Weatherall, C. D., & Lyngemark, D. H. (2019). Foreign ownership and global city characteristics: Unpacking the connectivity of micro-locations. *Regional Studies*.
- Goerzen, A., Asmussen, C. G., & Nielsen, B. B. (2013). Global cities and multinational enterprise location strategy. *Journal of international business studies*, 44, 427-450.
- Goerzen, A., Asmussen, C. G., & Nielsen, B. B. (2024). Global cities, the liability of foreignness, and theory on place and space in international business. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 55(1), 10-27.
- The hunt for the world's most sustainable cities
- How global cities compete

Podcasts and videos:

- Thinking Global Podcast – Simon Curtis
- 30 Best Urban Planning Podcasts You Must Follow in 2024
- Global city videos

Websites

- World's 100 Best Cities | World's Best Cities
- Global Power City Index (GPCI) – Institute for Urban Strategies
- The 2023 Global Cities Report: The distributed geography of opportunity
- Share of the population living in urban areas, 10,000 BCE to 2050
- The distributed geography of opportunity: the 2023 Global Cities Report



Goal 12: *Responsible consumption and production*

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Corporate sustainability reporting has expanded dramatically, with most large companies now disclosing environmental performance through standardized mechanisms. These trends highlight progress while underscoring the need for continued focus on waste management, energy conservation and emissions reduction.



It's in the books: accounting for sustainability

Anna Young-Ferris



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle

In the business of sustainability a central axiom is 'what is measured will be managed'.

That's also the intent behind SDG Target 12.6, in which companies are encouraged to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.

If a company is not properly tracking its social and ecological impact then it does not understand all of its business liabilities and responsibilities. It also means the organisation may not be aware of emerging risks and potential opportunities.

Around the world companies are updating their reporting practices. More than 95% of the world's largest companies report on their sustainability, or ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance), matters.

Today's investors want more than just financial information. They want to compare various companies across different sectors, considering a broader spectrum of risks and opportunities.

So what exactly is being measured and reported in sustainability/ESG reports? Data on greenhouse gas emissions, including Scope 3 emissions; energy use, biodiversity and nature protection, human rights, diversity, equity and inclusion, occupational health, safety and wellbeing, supply chain, data security and privacy matters and a whole lot more.

What to include is further complicated by the plethora of sustainable reporting frameworks – more than 600 at last count. And, unlike financial accounting requirements, sustainability reporting has until recent times been mostly voluntary in nature.

Financial accounting standards are the backbone of the financial capital markets and of Western capitalism. ESG reporting maybe flourishing but ‘standardised’ it has not been.

Enter the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB). Established in 2021 this new standard setting body has released the first two baseline reporting standards for general sustainability and climate-related financial matters intended to bring the rigour applied to financial reporting to sustainability reporting.

The first, [IFRS S1](#), sets out general requirements for disclosure of sustainability related financial information – that’s your broad ESG reporting. [IFRS S2](#) is for climate related financial disclosures. These standards will become the vehicles for companies to incorporate this information into their financial reporting cycle.

The next step is to make these reporting protocols compulsory. Currently the Australian Accounting Standards Board has sought to merge the two IFRS’ compulsory reporting standards into an [AASB Sustainability Reporting Exposure Draft ED SR1](#) with an emphasis on disclosure of climate-related financial information. The first tranche of reporting entities are required to report in FY25.

But wait, there’s more. Target 12.6 goes further, calling on companies to ‘adopt sustainable practices’. ‘Materiality’ is a crucial concept in finance, referring to the information companies must provide to investors. Recently a new concept has been gaining traction: **double materiality** which requires companies to not only report on how ESG issues financially impact the company (i.e. outside-in or financial materiality) but also how the company will have a material impact on society/people and/or nature/planet (i.e. inside-out or impact materiality). Double materiality has been mandated as part of the [European Sustainability Reporting Standards and for three major stock exchanges in China](#).

A double materiality approach offers investors a more complete picture of potential risks. Mining companies (for example) may be required to report on both the material financial impacts and the material societal impacts of a potential tailing dam collapse.

Double materiality also encompasses positive impacts. It can also include emerging opportunities, such as new technology that could reduce a company’s emissions profile with flow on societal benefit as well.

Making double materiality reporting mandatory is welcome and sensible. Business need a standard set of guidelines to help navigate the complexity of sustainability and to better understand the ways their sustainability actions can have a positive impact, taking all of us closer to achieving the SDGs.

Resources

Student assignment

Is the purpose of business to make a profit? Can a business make a profit and have a positive societal impact?



Goal 13: *Climate action*

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

With bold action, limiting long-term global warming to 1.5°C is still possible. Every fraction of a degree matters in reducing risks, lowering costs and preventing catastrophic and irreversible damage to people and the planet.



Securing energy and reducing carbon – making the hard decisions

Eddie Anderson



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

Target 13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning

How much electricity will we need in the future?

Where will it be generated?

How much are we willing to pay to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

We don't know the answer to any of these questions and yet governments must make decisions, set policies and plan for the absolute certainty that is climate change.

I research how to make decisions in the face of significant uncertainty with a particular interest in the energy market. This aligns with the hard choices that need to be made to achieve SDG target 13.2: integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning (with an emphasis on subtarget 13.2.2, reducing total greenhouse gas emissions every year).

There is a policy tension right at the heart of this target: how can nations reduce greenhouse gas emissions while at the same time ensuring energy security?

The uncertainty inherent in this dilemma is the space in which I build my models.

We use scenarios to envisage what the world could look like in 10 or 20 years. Scenarios are a way of delivering uncertain information. In the energy space there are many things we are not sure about. What sort of electric vehicles will be available? What will be the market take-up for these vehicles? Will the temperatures be higher and if so what will this do to demand for air conditioning? What will happen to the cost of renewable energy and battery storage?

Building these scenarios is hard and it is not possible to capture all eventualities. In a planning context the uncertainty may relate to decisions yet to be taken by governments (*subsidies for hydrogen vs solar*) and will have a political flavour. We also need to allow for technology developments (*what future does carbon capture and storage hold?*) and changing societal attitudes.

The aim is that by interrogating these scenarios, we can better cover the range of possibilities. The intention is to tell not just one story, but a number of stories.

Using mathematical models I am able to frame various policy choices in terms of the risks that they incur. The challenge is to do this when there is deep uncertainty so that we cannot put probabilities on different outcomes.

The need to plan ahead is critical in the energy story because of the time it takes to develop energy sources as well as their supply chains.

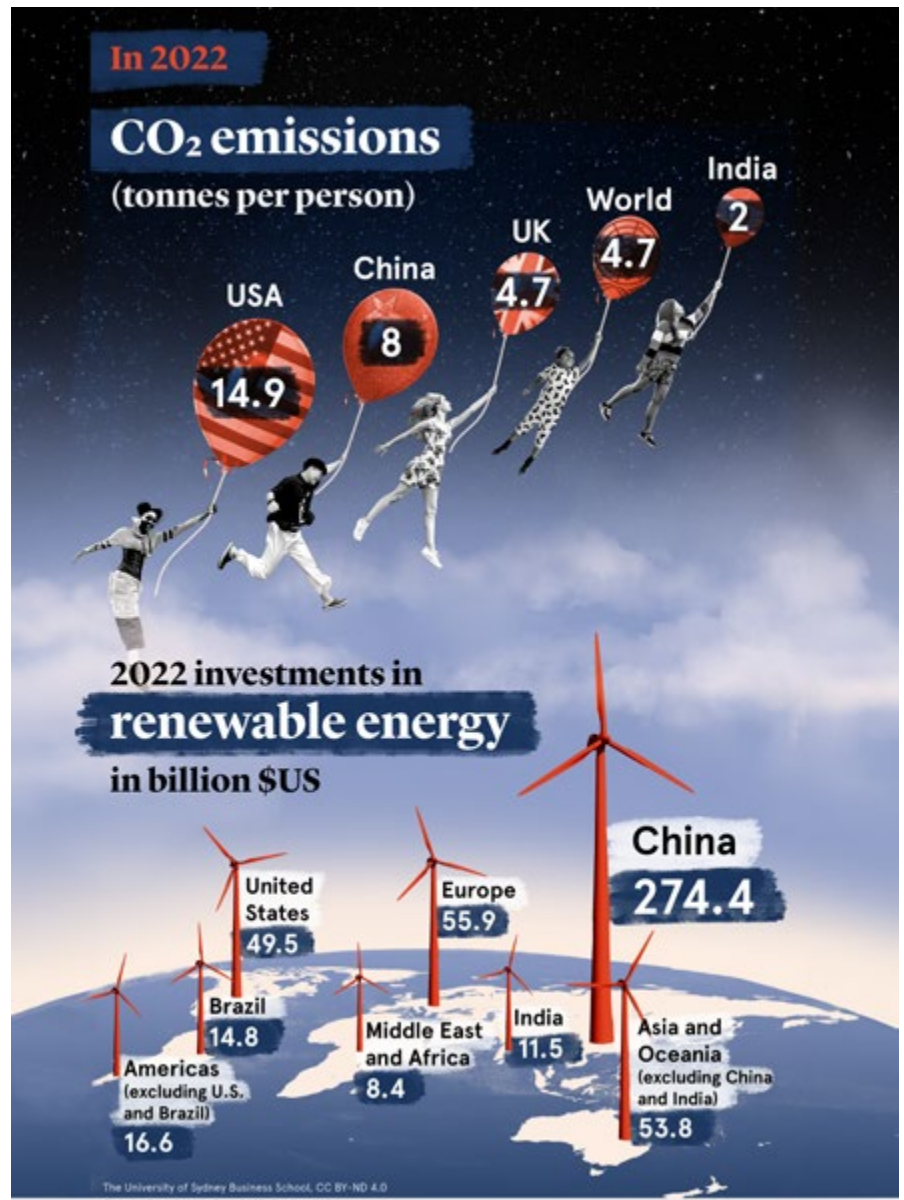
Once you have determined how much energy is needed at a national level the next question is who is going to provide it? This is normally dealt with by running some kind of auction. Another strand of my research investigates the impact of different ways of running these auctions.

For most countries, a critical question is where will the cost of the energy transition fall? Do people end up paying more taxes to have the government generate large amounts of energy infrastructure? Or do householders have to find the money to pay for energy improvements like insulation, solar panels, and the replacement of gas boilers?

Ultimately we need to find the best way to build capacity in the systems to meet energy security considerations while dramatically reducing carbon emissions. Renewables, solar and wind

in particular will be the main means of meeting large scale energy needs. But these forms of generation can only work alongside large amounts of energy storage. Long term energy storage is expensive and we do not yet

know whether technological advances will bring significant cost reductions. Uncertainty is uncomfortable but there are techniques to manage decision making under such circumstances.



Resources

Further resources

Articles

- E.J. Anderson and S. Zachary. Minimax decision rules for planning under uncertainty: Drawbacks and remedies. *European Journal of Operational Research*, Vol 311 (2023) pp. 789–800.

Websites

- Climate Change Authority: Media Release Targets, Pathways and Progress issues paper released for consultation



Net zero now – it's the economy AND the planet

Jo Orsatti



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

Target 13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

Target 13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning

Since 2015 when 193 countries signed onto the Paris Agreement, 327.20 billion metric tonnes of CO₂ emissions have been added to the world's atmosphere. That's a 6 percent increase across that time.

At the current rate of fossil fuel burning there is only a 50:50 chance the world's average global temperature will remain under the 1.5C rise committed to in Paris. That's the agreed 'tipping point' beyond which the planet cannot avoid permanent environmental damage.

In Australia, as elsewhere, the climate wars have focused on the climate v jobs dichotomy. Yet while Australia remains highly dependent on fossil fuel extraction for its national economic prosperity it has also become increasingly unequal in its distribution of that wealth.

This environment versus the economy trade-off has paralysed policy reform for *both* climate and wealth distribution and, by extension, highly constrained the impetus for the structural change needed to reduce emissions while ensuring distributive justice.

To achieve SDG 13, we need to stop extracting and burning oil, coal and gas.

Leaving valuable commodities untouched runs against every economic instinct we have acquired over the last 200 years. Under target 13.2, Australia needs to decarbonise our industries and energy production. Achieving net zero will require one of the largest and fastest economic transformations in history.

Australia has world leading uptake of rooftop solar however large-scale net zero infrastructure, including solar PV, onshore and offshore wind generation, needs to be rolled out at a faster pace. Though wind and solar has seen its strongest growth in 2021, adding 2955 MW of new capacity across 27 projects, almost 1 GW more than the previous year, this growth needs to be accelerated to achieve decarbonisation by 2030.

I research the implications of these evolving transition policies on the restructuring of our economies and societies in the hope of avoiding the catastrophic

scenarios foreseen if global warming is not kept below 1.5C–2C. Globally climate and weather-related disasters have surged fivefold in frequency and severity over the last 50 years due to climate change. Specifically, I examine how workers and communities can benefit during decarbonisation transitions with a focus on the potential for exacerbation of existing social and economic inequalities.

I examine how employment policies can be improved to accommodate gendered differences in responses to natural disasters so we can strengthen resilience in a climate-changing world. This includes improved disaster pay and leave policies and also valuing the efforts of volunteers and care workers.

My research draws attention to livelihoods and their role in producing, exacerbating, entrenching or, hopefully, remedying socio-economic inequalities.

I recently undertook a study mapping climate policy with employment relations policy from 1992 to 2022. In 1992 one of Australia's most influential unions allied with the Australian Conservation Foundation to advocate action on climate by linking this to the possibility of good green jobs. Climate was not seen as a mainstream issue at the time, but jobs certainly were. In 2022 climate policy is still under the influence of vested interests from extractive industries and the implications of stable employment that provides individuals and communities with living wages. Employment regulation is central to ensuring inclusive and equitable energy transitions.



The Australian federal government has accelerated its climate objectives, committing to a 43 percent reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 (compared with 2005 levels) and net zero by 2050. Setting clear emissions reductions goals helps shift the national conversation from 'should' to 'how' Australia can reduce emissions. The how is still playing out as a key question in moving to low-carbon societies and economies, bifurcating into two areas: how we can secure decarbonised energy security AND access for business and all Australians.

Secondly, the Australian economy remains heavily reliant on exporting fossil fuels: Australia's top three exports are coal briquettes, iron ore and petroleum gas, accounting for 62 percent of all export value in 2022. While there is abundant potential for Australia to become a green superpower through renewable energy, an industrial policy that aligns with this objective remains to be realised.

Australia will need to re-orientate its industry strategies and policies toward comparative advantages in decarbonisation, devise a plan for clean energy and minerals export and grow sectoral employment with related educational infrastructure. Key roadblocks remain with resistance to and differential benefit from introduction of large-scale renewable energy projects.

These roadblocks sit against the background of a decade of wage stagnation. While the nominal minimum wage grew by 22.7 percent over the last five years the real minimum wage increased by only 2.3 percent, well below most OECD peers.

Around the world most people want to see more action on combating global warming. Just over 70 percent of Australians are concerned about climate change and two thirds think the Government should phase out coal mining and transition the nation to other industries, even at significant economic cost.

Interestingly most people also significantly underestimate the level of support for climate policies. This 'perception gap' is so wide that in the USA, for example, up to 90 percent of people think only one-third of their peers favour climate policies whereas more than two-thirds of the country do.

Governments need to harness this strong public support into effective environmental and economic policies. We need to activate the 'common good', the ways individuals and collectives come together as socio-political movements finding ways to create inclusive energy and adaptation pathways. It could be the only way to alter our current trajectory into environmental disaster.

Resources

Student assignment

What are you most worried about when you think about climate change? What do you think influences your perspective?

Further Resources

Reports:

- The Australian Institute: Climate of the Nation 2023: Tracking Australia's attitudes towards climate change and energy (Elizabeth Morison)

- Lowy Institute Poll 2023 Report: Australian attitudes to the world (Ryan Neelam)
- Senate Select Committee on Australia's Disaster Resilience: Chapter 1, November 2022
- OECD Employment Outlook 2024: The net-zero transition and the labour market
- International Energy Agency: The World Energy Employment 2022



Goal 15: *Life on land*

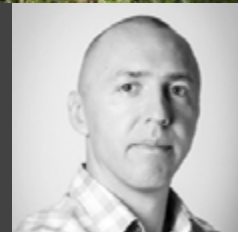
Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Global forest cover is shrinking, conservation of key biodiversity areas has stalled, and species extinction is accelerating. Desertification, land and soil degradation, drought and deforestation are further threatening ecosystems and development prospects. While more countries are adopting legal frameworks for biodiversity and environmental protection, overall progress on Goal 15 remains slow, with significant gaps in safeguarding healthy land and ecosystems vital to humanity.



Optimisation model as a guide to burning forests to save forests

Dmytro Matsypura



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

15.b Mobilise significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation.

Setting fire to parts of a forest to save it might seem counterintuitive to urban communities. There is no equivalent of torching a few streets to protect a suburb. However, amongst First Nations people in Australia, hazard reduction burning is a well-established practice.

‘Cool burning’ is the modern name for this ancient skill and it has been proven to reduce the intensity of bushfires over time. Burns are conducted according to various local indicators (when particular trees flower, certain grasses cure, or seasonal differences occur). The key feature is that the fires burn slowly in a contained manner. The intention is to clear the landscape whilst not obliterating it. Animals have time to seek shelter, the soil is not scorched, and trees are not harmed beyond their ability to rejuvenate.

SDG 15, ‘Life on Land’, calls on nations to develop programs to sustainably manage forests and to halt the loss of biodiversity.

I am a mathematician living in Australia, which is experiencing increasingly intense bushfires capable of annihilating entire ecosystems, killing thousands, sometimes millions, of animals and where, not infrequently, people also lose their homes and their lives.

We can’t replicate Indigenous hazard reduction techniques—it takes a lifetime to acquire that knowledge, and much has changed over the last 200 years, including the climate. But we can borrow the concepts to achieve a similar outcome.

The main idea centres around land management with limited resources. The goal is to create a patchwork of burned areas at different stages of recovery. In effect, the landscape is broken into places that are treated and places that are not, allowing animals to retreat into one zone while other parts burn. When the treatment is finished, the forest is easy to move through, with space for new growth, attracting birds and other animals to return.

The tricky bit is to determine which patches to burn and when to achieve the desired impact.

This is where operations research techniques can help.

This question is modelled as a mathematical optimisation problem. Certain assumptions are made to simplify the model and ensure it remains tractable. By quantifying certain data, such as the current fuel load and land size, the model becomes solvable.

The model also needs to accommodate uncertainty. This involves factors such as the rate at which leaves and branches (the fuel load) fall, and the effectiveness of cool burns.

Ultimately, the model generates a treatment plan that serves as a decision-support tool for determining where and when hazard reduction should occur. Practitioners can then utilise this plan to implement the cool burns on the ground.



Australia, the world's driest inhabited continent, has long dealt with hazard reduction burning. Now, global warming is changing the environment all over the world. In recent years, the USA, Canada, Spain, Greece, and Chile have all experienced

out-of-control bushfires. Many countries will need to prepare their land for hazard reduction burning. This modelling will help make those decisions easier.

Resources

Resources for graphics:

Websites

- [United Nations: Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [Statista: Wildfires – statistics & facts](#)
- [Statista: Economic damages caused by wildfires worldwide from 1991 to 2023](#)
- [WWF: Why forests are so important](#)
- [WWF: Fires, Forests and the Future](#)
- [WWF: 3 billion animals harmed by Australia's fires](#)
- [World Resources Institute: Forest Fires are getting worse](#)

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Goal 16: *Peace, justice and strong institutions*

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Building strong, transparent and inclusive institutions can reduce crime, corruption, and expand social freedoms. Making progress on global peace and human rights can help reduce the prevalence of exploitation, including human trafficking, incarceration rates, and violence against children.



Reducing political corruption raises business investments

Eliza Wu



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.

How much does political corruption cost the community? We set out to quantify the negativities of corruption in terms of lost investment, jobs not created, and hampered economic growth.

A far-reaching corruption busting program in China that saw public officials arrested openly in front of their colleagues, family and the general public proved to be a valuable case study.

SDG 16 aims to bring justice to every corner of the globe by fostering effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions. These institutions will drive transparency and elevate living standards for all. A key target in this goal is the fight against corruption, which specifically addresses the abuse of public positions, ranks, or statuses by government officials to secure personal gains.

Our research team wanted to find out if it is possible to show the effect of a concerted reduction in corruption on corporate investment strategy.

The problem with studying corruption is it's normally hidden, making it very hard to assess. In 2012 the Chinese Government launched an expansive anti-corruption program targeting bureaucrats across different regions. This included some very high-profile public arrests of government officials carried out across China. Specifically, we use the public arrests as an exogenous shock to test whether a visible reduction in corruption changes corporate acquisitions. We measured changes in these major corporate investments that came from outside the region that was being 'cleaned up'.

We observed a surge in corporate mergers and acquisitions (M&As) following the public arrests of high-ranking officials, such as the first deputy bureau chief or above, in the city during the anti-corruption campaign. This increased activity was driven by companies feeling more confident about making substantial investments in regions where they saw local governments actively addressing corruption. Not only did the number of M&As grow but the dollar value of these corporate investments



Resources

Student assignment

Background:

Corruption can significantly influence various economic activities, including corporate investments and takeovers. In this assignment, students will explore how corruption, particularly in their local or national context, impacts economic and business outcomes. They will also consider ways to uncover and measure the effects of corruption on these outcomes, drawing on techniques such as regression analysis used in a recent study on China's anti-corruption campaign (Huang, et al., 2023).

Assignment Prompt:

1. Understanding the Context:
 - Provide a brief overview of how corruption can impact corporate activities, including takeovers and investments.
 - Describe how anti-corruption measures might alter this dynamic, including the potential for increased cross-region takeover activities and deal volume.

also rose (a 40% increase in the number of deals and a 268.7% increase in the dollar amount). Overall, more M&As took place and the size of the deals also became larger.

The overall message is that political corruption is value destroying. It erodes public trust and stifles business confidence, investment activity and economic growth. Eliminating or mitigating corruption improves the business investment environment. Without strong institutions there is the potential for considerable misallocation of resources and under-investment.

Perceptions matter a lot. It's not sufficient to just have the right laws in place – the rules have to be seen to be enforced.

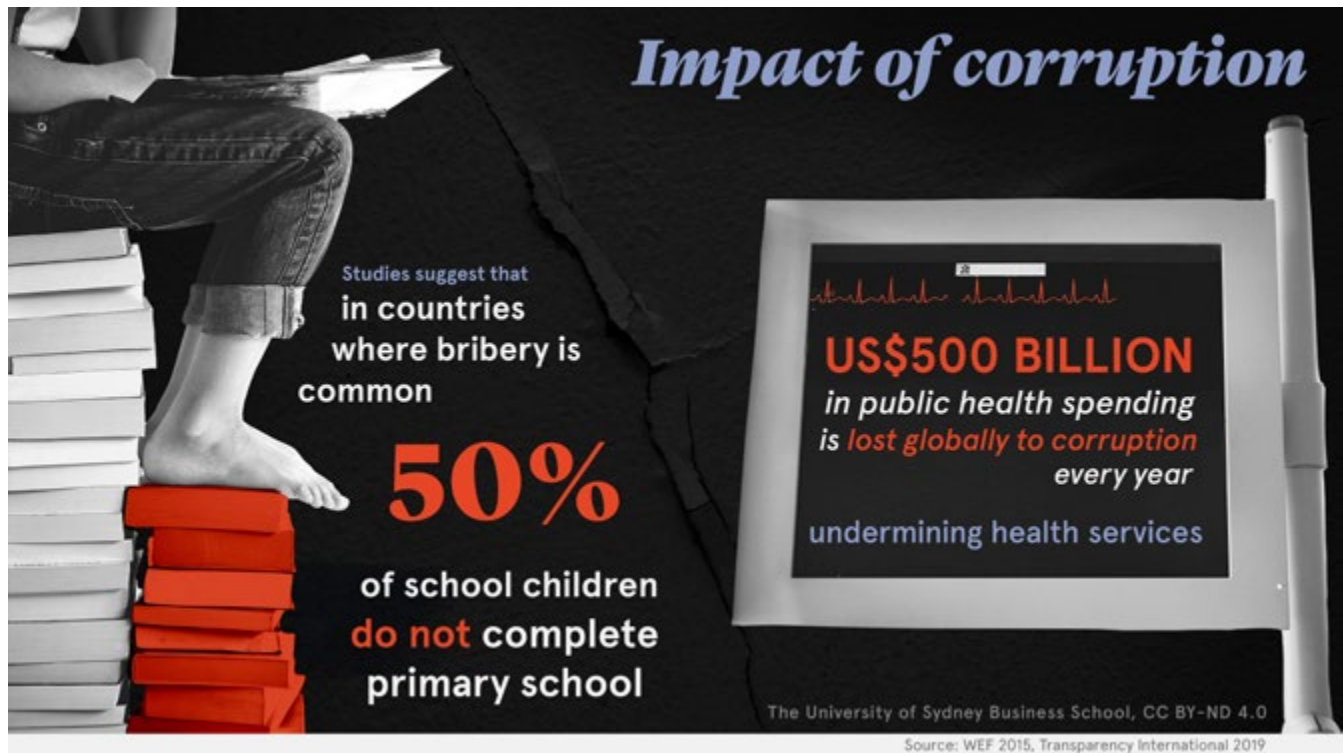
Addressing corruption is crucial for fostering economic prosperity. Our study highlights that people are hesitant to invest in environments where they perceive they won't receive fair returns. Over time, investment dries up and communities will suffer worse economic outcomes.

2. Conceptualizing Corruption's Impact:

- Choose a specific geographic region or year of interest to focus on (e.g., looking at time-series data of Australia or different countries in 2017).
- Identify possible sources of publicly available information that can help uncover instances of corruption in your chosen context (e.g., government reports, news articles, public arrest records).
- The political corruption index can be collected at: <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/political-corruption-index>
- The economic outcomes can be collected at: <https://stats.oecd.org/>

3. Linking Corruption to Economic Outcomes:

- Develop a framework for tracking and measuring how corruption or anti-corruption efforts in your chosen context relate to corporate investments or other economic activities.
- Put together the corruption index and the economic outcome of interest for the selected county or year.
- Consider how techniques such as panel or cross-sectional regression analysis could be applied in this context to draw meaningful conclusions.
- Students may choose your preferred programming platforms to perform the regression analysis (e.g., Excel, Stata, and Python)



Resources continued

4. Provocative Discussion:

- Reflect on the broader implications of your findings. How might the reduction or persistence of corruption in your chosen context affect the region's overall economic development?
- Propose policy recommendations or practical steps that could be taken to further mitigate corruption and stimulate economic growth.

Expected Outcomes: Students should deliver a well-structured written report or presentation that:

- Shows an understanding of how corruption impacts investments and economic development.
- Demonstrates the ability to conceptualize a research approach using publicly available information.
- Provides meaningful analysis and discussion on how to uncover and measure corruption's impact, potentially applying methods such as DID.
- Suggests recommendations for policymakers or stakeholders in the chosen context.

References

- Huang, C., Jin, Z., Tian, S., & Wu, E. (2023). The real effects of corruption on M&A flows: Evidence from China's anti-corruption campaign. *Journal of Banking & Finance*, 150, 106815.

- [International Corruption Index, \(2023\)](#)
- [OECD International Economic Statistics, \(2024\)](#)

Further resources

Books

- Ray Fisman, Miriam A. Golden. (2017). Corruption: what everyone needs to know. Oxford University Press, New York, United States.

Articles

- Huang, C., Jin, Z., Tian, S., Wu, E. (2023). The real effects of corruption on M&A flows: Evidence from China's anti-corruption campaign. *Journal of Banking and Finance*, 150.

Podcasts and videos:

- [How Corruption Works in China](#)
- [Corruption: New Insights for Fighting an Age-Old Business Problem](#)

Websites

- [International Monetary Fund: Tackling Corruption in Government](#)
- [Transparency International: What is corruption](#)



Business is global and so are human rights

Chris F Wright



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

Target 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

Target 16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance

Target 16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

It took the deaths of 1,133 workers in the collapse of a factory in Bangladesh to force international action to improve workplace safety and labour conditions in the globalised garment industry.

The Rana Plaza catastrophe starkly highlights the relevance of SDG 16 in the context of corporate accountability and justice. The building housed five garment factories supplying fashion brands around the world when it collapsed in April 2013. Some of the dead included workers' children in an onsite nursery. More than 2,000 workers were injured, most of them women. The tragedy exposed shocking deficiencies in local building standards and regulatory oversight.

The collapse marked an awakening to the conditions within the global fashion industry with production facilities and supply chains in diverse businesses networked across many countries.

People who shopped at retailers like Zara, Walmart, Primark, Mango, Benetton, whose labels were found in the rubble, were forced to recognise the conditions that enabled the production of low-cost clothing.

The human induced disaster provoked international action: global union federations and Bangladeshi trade unions established the Bangladeshi Accord which had oversight from the International Labour Organization and several NGOs. This established a system of international regulations requiring global companies sourcing within Bangladesh to comply with fundamental health and safety standards.

SDG 16 calls for effective, accountable, and transparent and inclusive institutions at all levels, providing access to justice for all.

My research focuses on how to build effective institutions to address the "governance gaps" that present barriers to decent work.



These governance gaps are widest in global supply chains. Advanced technologies and reduced transportation costs have made it easier for large commercially powerful firms, such as global fashion brands and retailers, to outsource and offshore activities to firms located in countries where labour costs are much lower and worker protections are weaker. The Rana Plaza disaster is one example of the tragic consequences when global firms exploit governance gaps.

Addressing this problem is challenging because the institutions tasked with governing working conditions are primarily national in scope. Governments have very limited ability to make accountable firms whose activities erode labour standards in other countries. The United Kingdom, France, Australia and California have recently adopted laws requiring firms disclose efforts to address modern slavery within their global supply chains, but these laws lack robust enforcement mechanisms and only apply to very large firms.

Various voluntary initiatives ask global firms use their power responsibly to improve, rather than degrade, working conditions within their supply chains. For example, the UN Global Compact, the UN Guiding Principles

on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises call upon global firms to use their position to encourage entities in their global supply chains adopt international labour standards.

These initiatives are designed to promote more responsible and sustainable business practices and are therefore welcome. However, because they are voluntary compacts with 'soft law' mechanisms, they do not police or enforce business behaviour. While signature firms are encouraged to support internationally recognised human rights, these agreements rarely cover more substantive issues such as fair wages,

decent working conditions, job security and worker representation, which are necessary to achieve decent work.

Robust institutions are essential to address labour standards and governance gaps in global supply chains. The legally binding Bangladesh Accord is a vital example of this. It ensures signatory firms are accountable for the conditions of workers in their suppliers' factories. Although the Bangladesh Accord's coverage was initially limited to the garment sector of Bangladesh, a renewed version, known as the International Accord for Health and Safety in the Textile and Garment Industry, came into effect in 2021 and was expanded to the Pakistan garment sector in 2023.

By providing accountability mechanisms to firms across supply chains and involving worker organisations, industry, governments and international organisations in this process, the Accord is model that could be replicated elsewhere to improve the governance of labour standards in global supply chains.



Resources

Student assignment

You are the Minister for Labour in a medium-sized high-income country where many multinational companies are headquartered. Some of these multinational companies have been found to be engaging contractors in lower-income countries with exploitative labour practices, which has led to consumer boycotts and significant criticism from unions, NGOs, investors and the media. The Minister for Trade has tasked you with developing a strategy to ensure that multinational companies headquartered in your country are held accountable for labour standards in the global supply chains.

What factors would you consider in developing this strategy?

Is it possible for national governments to hold companies responsible for the behaviour of businesses within their global supply chains?

What are the benefits and risks that you need to consider?

Which stakeholders would you need to collaborate with to ensure that the strategy is successful?

Further resources

Books

- Colfer, B., Harney, B., McLaughlin, C. & Wright, C.F. (eds) (2023) Protecting the Future of Work: New Institutional Arrangements for Safeguarding Labour Standards. Bingley: Emerald Publisher Limited.
- Newsome, K., Taylor, P., Bair, J. and Rainnie, A. (2017). Putting Labour in its Place: Labour Process Analysis and Global Value Chains. London: Bloomsbury
- Nolan, J. and Boersma, M. (2019) Addressing Modern Slavery. Sydney: UNSW Press
- Reinecke, J. and Donaghey, J. (2023) Stitching Governance for Labour Rights: Towards Transnational Industrial Democracy? Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

- Ruggie, J.G. (2013) Just Business: Multinational Corporations and Human Rights. New York: W.W. Norton & Company
- Coe, N.M. and Yeung, H.W.C. (2015). Global production networks: Theorizing economic development in an interconnected world. Oxford University Press.

Articles

- Anner, M., 2020. Squeezing workers' rights in global supply chains: Purchasing practices in the Bangladesh garment export sector in comparative perspective. *Review of international political economy*, 27(2): 320–347
- Donaghey, J., Reinecke, J., Niforou, C. and Lawson, B. (2014). From employment relations to consumption relations: Balancing labor governance in global supply chains. *Human Resource Management*, 53(2): 229–252
- LeBaron, G. (2021) The role of supply chains in the global business of forced labour. *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 57(2): 29–42
- Schuessler, E., Frenkel, S. and Wright, C.F. (2019) Governance of labor standards in Australian and German garment supply chains: The impact of Rana Plaza. *ILR Review*, 72(3): 552–579
- Wright, C.F. and Kaine, S. (2015) Supply chains, production networks and the employment relationship. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 57(4): 483–501

Podcasts and videos:

- Apple podcast: How Foxconn Treats the Workers Who Built Your iPhone w/ Jenny Chan

Websites

- Can Global Brands Create Just Supply Chains?
- International Accord for Health and Safety in the Garment and Textile Industry
- UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights



Institutional investors demand a more sustainable capitalism

Anna Young-Ferris



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

Target 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

Honey gathering is a solitary job in Indigenous communities. The collector then shares the honey with their community but refrains from joining in the honey feast themselves. The idea is that the gathering is not about their gratification, it's about their contribution to the collective.

Such restraint might seem unnecessarily altruistic to Western eyes. However, it exemplifies the kind of long-term and collective thinking required amidst the escalating climate, biodiversity, and inequality crises across all market economies. How can we say our capitalist institutions and economy are strong when more than half of the world's population live on less than AUD\$10 per day?

In market economies the 'honey gatherers' needed to usher in this kind of collective thinking might well be institutional investors. Institutional investors will be one of the major forces behind achieving SDG 16, target 16.6: develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels.

Investors choose where they put their money. For publicly listed companies, the investors also vote for the composition of the board of directors, who in turn are responsible for ensuring companies are effective, accountable and transparent.

As my research reveals, investors are increasingly demanding companies integrate environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations into their decision making, while standard setters and regulators are slowly but surely following. Would you invest in a highly profitable company that used child labour? No, that would be utterly repugnant.

What this tells us is in business, profit does not have to be the only primary signal. ESG impacts are increasingly being construed as sometimes more important than the short-term fluctuations of the stock market. Such investor pressure can change corporate behaviour. Companies that do not uphold the concerns and values of their investors will suffer an outflow of funds.

One foundational concept I challenge in my teaching and research is the notion of shareholder primacy i.e. the relentless pursuit of profit in Western business. Research confirms that investors can act with financial interest *and* in the best interest of the planet and its people.

Business schools have been complicit in the false narrative around the primacy of the profit motive in business. It is possible to offer a broader view and even perhaps reach outside of traditional Western approaches to consider how we can reframe the relationship of business in society.

A student in our 'Responsible Business Mindset' postgraduate course in the University of Sydney Business School told me recently they were thrilled to learn that business does not only have to be about making money. The course challenges the 'logic' that profit always has to be the foundational driver of business. It is possible for business to pursue profit in a purposeful way – by providing good jobs, goods and services – without exploiting humans and damaging the environment in the process.

Certainly, when considering the sustainability crisis – it is tempting to fall in with 'capitalism is broken' thinking.

But improved transparency across the production and consumption value chain process has raised ethical and sustainability concerns (modern slavery, fossil fuels addiction, depleting scarce resources) and investors are increasingly seeking to divest from entire supply chains of companies. It may well be possible to repatriate investment markets, albeit with an interconnected system of more effective, accountable, transparent corporate and government institutions at all levels.

This will take a transformative shift in mindset. Western capitalism has ingrained in us the belief that our individualistic lifestyle is the natural norm. Through education and conditioning, we have been led to think and behave in a highly materialistic manner.

The Indigenous honey gathering story tells us that selfishness is not hardwired into human behaviour. The honey gatherer wants their community to thrive and knows that a different member will be assigned this task the next day, then they will share in the honey feast. It's about collective benefit. Only a collective and just mindset within the institutions – particularly the investment ones – that form the foundation of capitalism can serve humanity well.

Resources

Articles:

- Revelli, C., & Viviani, J.-L. (2015). The financial performance of socially responsible investments: Insights and challenges. Journal of Business Ethics, 120(4), 549–557.
- Busch, T., Bauer, R., & Orlitzky, M. (2016). Can Sustainable Investing Save the World? Reviewing the Mechanisms of Investor Impact. Organization & Environment, 29(3), 347–368.



Goal 17: *Partnership for the Goals*

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

Achieving the SDGs will require building multi-stakeholder partnerships and strengthening capacity and capabilities across sectors. Revitalising the Partnership will bring organisations from civil society, business, and government including PRME together to maximise SDG impact.



Partnering for refugee employment

Betina Szkudlarek



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets addressed:

17.16 Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries

17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships

When considering their talent pipelines, few companies think outside-of-the-box. Most follow their conventional recruitment strategies, targeting the usual pool of talent.

This shortsighted approach can overlook whole groups, such as refugees, leaving them out of the corporate recruitment processes. Certainly, many refugees don't come armed with local references, recognised qualifications or local experience. But our research shows that when given the opportunity, most refugees flourish in the workplace, and so do the businesses that hire them, along with the employees working alongside them.

Our research team tapped into the many misunderstandings and erroneous assumptions many employers hold about refugees. We found that employers who have not hired from this talent group vastly overestimate the challenges, and underplay the benefits, of refugee recruitment. Conversely, employers who hire refugees reported pay-offs in terms of employees' strong work ethic, high productivity and good morale.

Moreover, the positive impact expands across the whole workforce as local employees often discover a new meaning to their work through building relationships and learning from people from a refugee background.

Our research into refugee employment links to SDG 17 (Global Partnerships) in that successful recruitment and retention of people from a refugee background into local businesses requires support from multiple parties. The necessary partners are employers, social enterprise organisations, and governments.

Non-government organisations that help settle refugees are not in a position to offer them employment. However, NGOs play a critical role both in preparing refugees to flourish in their new work environment, and also supporting companies to effectively onboard refugees.

Organisations that do want to diversify their talent pool frequently don't know how to locate refugees. They will likely require assistance in transitioning individuals into a new work environment, and in preparing the local workforce to embrace diversity.

Governments need to set the policy parameters to ensure workplaces are ready to employ people from a refugee background. Refugees should not be viewed as a form of cheap, transient labour. They are not backpackers passing through looking to supplement their travel budgets. They are committed to their families and communities and need decent pay and scope for advancement.



When these parties collaborate effectively, refugees gain employment opportunities and the chance to rebuild their lives in a new country, while employers benefit from acquiring valuable workers.

Everyone who hires someone from a refugee background creates a transformative effect for the family of that person, for their own organisation and for their wider community.



Resources

Inclusive Leadership

Objective: Explore challenges and potential solutions to inclusive leadership in the workplace.

Video Questions:

Pre-screening sample questions:

What are the challenges faced by people from a refugee background and other migrants in finding employment in their new country?

In your view, why should leaders engage in proactive hiring of immigrants, including people from a refugee background?

What makes a company's recruitment processes inclusive? What hinders inclusiveness?

What does inclusive leadership mean in practice? What specific examples of inclusive leadership in action are you familiar with?

Video: Watch the "[Inclusive Workplaces: Employment is Life](#)" video or the entire set of "[Inclusive Workplaces](#)" videos.

Post-screening questions:

What are the key takeaways from the video?

What best inclusive employment practices have you heard of?

What else could leaders do to make their organizations more inclusive?

What personal actions can you take to advance a supportive and inclusive environment in your teamwork? How can you lead inclusion?

Who and how can employers partner with to advance their inclusive strategy?

Resources continued

Assignment:

Your team of consultants has been engaged to review the level of inclusion practices among new incoming and current employees at a client organization. Your assignment involves two tasks: 1) assess what policies and practices are in place in this organization in support of an inclusive work environment; 2) design an evaluation tool to evaluate whether these policies and practices are effective; and 3) decide who the organization can partner with and in what way to increase their inclusivity?

Q1. What corporate practices would you look for to assess the organization's inclusivity culture and practices? Consider both the reactive practices (i.e., those focused on the elimination of discrimination), as well as the proactive ones (i.e., those focusing on enhancing the climate of inclusiveness and belonging for everyone).

Q2. For each identified practice, how would you assess its effectiveness? What would you measure to understand whether the organization is truly inclusive?

Q3. What specific actions could be taken by leaders to increase corporate inclusiveness?

1 Students can choose an organization, or the teacher can assign an organization that students should investigate.

Q4. Who and how can the organisations partner with to achieve better outcomes?

Q5. Which of these learnings can you apply in your own teamwork?

Recommended readings:

Articles:

- Lee, E. S., Szkudlarek, B., Nguyen, D. C., & Nardon, L. (2020). Unveiling the canvas ceiling: A multidisciplinary literature review of refugee employment and workforce integration. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 22(2), 193–216.
- Szkudlarek, B., Roy, P., & Lee, E. S. (2022). How Multinational Corporations Can Support Refugee Workforce Integration: Empathize Globally, Strategize Locally. *AIB Insights*, 22(3), 1–5.

Video

- Overcoming the canvas ceiling: promoting refugee employment

