

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT

We are facing a global crisis. It is a crisis because some people don't have food and water. It is a crisis because our land, sea and air are being subjected to devastating environmental damage. It is a crisis of injustice, inequality, lack of education and so much more. That's a lot of crises. However, with an estimated population of 7.7 billion people¹ – there are a lot of intelligent minds that can beat these crises. The 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals are a critical starting point to providing a global solution and it starts with individuals like you and me. It is extremely important for us to achieve these goals because we are not only securing a better world for today but also for the future generations of tomorrow. The big question is how can individuals make a real difference? The following article will explore what each of the goals is and what simple ways you can help achieve these goals.

“Eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere”²

Poverty is defined as ‘people living on less than \$1.25 a day’². We need to reduce 50% of people living in poverty. This can be achieved through national social protection systems and access to basic services like housing. On the global level, we need to ensure there is reduced exposure to social and environmental disasters as well as much more support towards implementing policies that actually help end poverty².

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ Use websites like Kiva and help crowdfund loans for disadvantaged people from developing countries so they can start their own businesses³.
- ✓ Support charities combatting poverty like World Vision that are specifically tackling the no poverty goal⁴.
- ✓ If you're a young person – try and engage in Australian policymaking that's addressing poverty⁵.

1 NO POVERTY





“To End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”⁶.

Everyone must have access to basics like food and this food must help address global malnutrition especially in children⁶. The agricultural industry also needs further investment in technology, increased productivity and design of sustainable systems that will enable effective food production well into the future⁶.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ Install apps like ‘sharethemeal’ and for just \$0.50 you can feed a child in need for one day⁷.
- ✓ Take part in the zero hunger challenge⁸.
- ✓ Try not to waste food, did you know 1/3rd of the world’s food is thrown away⁹ (1.3 Billion tonnes!)



“To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”¹⁰.

To achieve this goal we must address it on all levels. For women, maternal mortality ratios need to be reduced. For newborns, we need to end all preventable deaths and mortality rates¹⁰. Globally, we must end epidemic diseases such as AIDS and Malaria¹⁰. A universal health coverage system also needs to be adopted especially for easily curable diseases¹⁰.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ Parents can ensure their families are properly vaccinated protecting their family and public health¹¹.
- ✓ Look after your own health and make healthy choices¹¹.
- ✓ Raise awareness in your local community or schools about why maintaining a healthy lifestyle is so important¹¹.



“Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning”¹².

Achieving this goal requires a commitment towards providing all girls and boy equal and free access to preprimary, primary and secondary education¹². Women and men also must have access to tertiary levels of education¹². We also need to work towards helping disadvantaged groups such as those with disability and indigenous people to have access to education as well¹². Sustainable development itself as a practice in all domains of our life needs to be taught to all students¹². Resources must be increased such as the number of qualified teachers and scholarships for students in developing countries¹².

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ You can raise your voice on the importance of education to your government¹³.
- ✓ You can try to influence private sector industries to invest more in educational infrastructures and tools¹³.
- ✓ In Australia you have opportunities to help refugees and children to read and write English¹³.



“To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”¹⁴.

We need to help end all discrimination, violence and forced / early marriage of girls and women¹⁴. There needs to be equal participation of women in leadership and reform of rights to ensure better access to resources and sexual/reproductive health services¹⁴.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ Men can establish ‘respectful relationships’ with women and support them towards achieving gender equality¹⁵.
- ✓ Cultural practices like genital mutilation can be given more awareness through campaigns and any other practices that limit girls or women towards achieving gender equality¹⁵.



“To ensure access to safe water sources and sanitation for all”¹⁶.

There needs to be universal and equitable access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for all¹⁶. Environmental hazards which degrade and reduce quality and quantity of water must be eliminated. Designing more efficient water use systems are required so we can aim towards better quality water on global water sustainability. Our environmental sources of water also need to be protected such as that on land, forests and the sea¹⁶.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ Get involved in international campaigns such as world water day and world toilet day which promote the action of hygiene problems¹⁷.
- ✓ Individually, we can make sure our water consumption = what we need and nothing more¹⁷.
- ✓ We can write to our Australian government to invest in more water research and development¹⁷.



“To ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”¹⁸.

Modern energy that’s more efficient with universal access and creating a significantly larger uptake of renewable energy practices globally is a must to achieve this goal¹⁸. Additionally global commitment towards further research in clean energy research and helping each other integrate infrastructures which support it is essential especially in developing countries¹⁸.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ As an individual, you can make sure you use alternative means of transport when possible whether that’s a walk, cycle or bus¹⁹.
- ✓ If you’re a business owner you can build a green workplace culture and ensure your business practices are environmentally friendly¹⁹.



“To promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all”²⁰.

Less developed countries need a boost up in their GDP to at least 7%²⁰. The power of technology and innovation can be used to enhance economic productivity²⁰. Also supporting policies that encourage the growth of jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities is required²⁰. Ending critical issues such as forced labour, human trafficking and modern-day slavery is also vital²⁰.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ As a consumer, we can choose to buy from companies that are greener and equal opportunity employers²¹.



“To build resistant infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and faster innovation”²².

To achieve this goal there needs to be a focus on 3 key areas²². Firstly investing in infrastructures such as transport and energy²². Secondly ensuring manufacturing and infrastructure industries are more environmentally friendly²². Finally, facilitate industrialization particularly in developing countries²². There needs to be further technological progress to support this such as more technological products, innovation within manufacturing²².

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ You can use social media to raise awareness about the Industries, infrastructure and innovation goal. Include information like what is it about and why is it important²³.



“To reduce inequalities within and among countries”²⁴.

Inequality exists on many levels whether that’s in health, education, income, within or across countries²⁴. We need to pay much more attention to these areas as well as supporting disadvantaged groups such as children in the developing world suffering from extreme poverty and hunger²⁴.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ The most powerful way we can reduce inequality is by educating people about it. We can use social media platforms to raise awareness about discrimination occurring both in Australia as well as internationally. Pick a cause you are passionate about and inspire others to do the same²⁵.



“To ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”²⁸.

The buildings used, resources used and our consumption of products need to be made more sustainable and efficient given the high rate at which we are using resources²⁸. To achieve the goal of more responsible production and consumption we need things like more sustainable management systems, companies engaging in greener practices, consumers to reduce unnecessary consumption and halve our food waste²⁸.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ Waste less food.
- ✓ Be more mindful about your purchase decisions²⁹.
- ✓ Use a reusable bag



“To make cities inclusive, safe, resistant, and sustainable”²⁶.

Populations in cities are set to increase to 5 billion people by 2030²⁶. We need to be able to meet the demands of increasing populations through ways such as managing our resources more efficiently²⁶. Other ways we can achieve the goal includes enabling greater access to housing, sustainable transport systems and greener space²⁶.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ You can advocate for what your local Australian city needs based on a shared goal or vision of your community²⁷.
- ✓ Questions you might consider answers to include where your nearest public transport is or how close is the nearest healthcare service provider²⁷.



“Taking urgent action to tackle climate change and its impacts”³⁰.

Climate change is a significant global challenge that requires an international effort. The issue is broad from high levels of carbon and rising sea levels to destructive air pollution³⁰. Further to this, disadvantaged groups such as the poor are the most at risk³⁰. Some of the ways in which we can achieve climate action goal is to increase education of the issue and help better integrate climate change into national policies³⁰.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ There is a whole ‘lazy persons GUIDE’ to get you started on this issue which you can access [here](#). Individuals can make SO much difference on this particular problem³¹.



“To conserve and sustainable use the world’s oceans, seas and marine resources”³²”

The ocean is one of life’s most essential resources. As the largest source of water, it supports life all around us from humans and animals to the rich diversity in the plant kingdom³². However, it is struggling to maintain its purpose given the extensive environmental damage we are causing including pollution and increasing levels of acidity³². To ensure we meet the “life below water” goal we need to take actions such as reducing marine pollution, regulating fishing practices and managing the ocean in more sustainable ways³².

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ You can try not to excessively consume ocean products such as seafood ³³.
- ✓ Arrange a local beach clean-up in your area³³.
- ✓ Completely get rid of plastic bag use.



“Sustainably managing forests, combat deforestation, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss”³⁴”

The management of our forestries is absolutely critical given it is the source of the rich biodiversity of plants and animals, it provides food sources and it helps to combat big problems like climate change³⁴. Currently, forests are being significantly degraded and subject to mass environmental damage³⁴. To achieve the “life on the land” goal we need to do things like engaging in more sustainable forestry management systems and defeat problems like deforestation³⁴.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ You can ensure you choose only to take part in wildlife opportunities that limit wildlife disturbance³⁵.
- ✓ You can indirectly make an impact to reduce biodiversity loss by eating from sustainable sources and using energy efficiently.



“To promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies”³⁶”

There are so many occurrences that are threatening the existence of safe societies. Some of the most detrimental include murder, violence and human trafficking³⁶. This is particularly more of a pressing problem in regions such as Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa³⁶. Some of the actions we can take to achieve a more safe society include ending all violence, trafficking and murder and creating much more transparent government systems³⁶.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- ✓ You can campaign against human trafficking and violence in your local community area and help others get educated about their consequences to society at large³⁷.



“To revitalize the global partnerships for sustainable development”³⁸”

To support the actions of the SDG’s one of the core things to tie everything together and ensure international commitment and cooperation is the development of strong partnerships³⁸. This will help to facilitate the progression in developing countries by enabling the more fluid transfer of key resources such as money to where it’s needed most³⁸.

MOVING FORWARD

The world is our home, and caring for humanity should be everyone’s responsibility. In Australia, we are fortunate enough like many western developed economies to be blessed with basics like food, water and shelter. The UN sustainable development goals are certainly ambitious, but achievable through individuals like us. I implore you to not only read this article but to contribute towards achieving these goals. Pick up to 3 actions for this year in a goal area of your interest or passion and plan them into your calendar or diary. We all have busy lives but big change starts small.

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