



Catholic Earthcare Australia Themes and The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

On 25-27 September 2015, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, the Heads of State, Government and High Representatives agreed upon the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2015-2030. They nominated 2015 as a landmark year for sustainability, as the transformative agenda for people centred targets for the coming years is set to face contemporary global challenges.

[Pope Francis says that the Sustainable development is rooted in ethical values](#)





In 2015 Pope Francis addressed the UN General Assembly in New York shortly before member states unanimously adopted **Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals**.



In 2019 and the Pope greeted participants taking part in a two-day international conference entitled, “Religions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Listening to the cry of the earth and of the poor”, where he said, the sustainable development goals “were a great step forward for global dialogue, marking a vitally “new and universal solidarity”. Economic and political objectives, Pope Francis stressed, “must be sustained by ethical objectives, which presuppose a change of attitude: what the Bible would call a change of heart. Already Saint John Paul II spoke about the need to “encourage and support an ‘ecological conversion’”, he said.



Catholic Earthcare Themes and Sustainable Development Goals

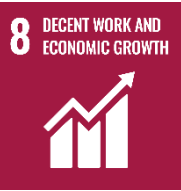

Sustainable schools’ programs around the world develop their own themes, usually on the basis of environmental goals only, however this does not respect the inter-connectedness of environmental and social justice, especially for the poor and vulnerable. The Catholic Earthcare themes are therefore, to be aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals so the ‘cry of the earth’ and ‘cry of the poor’ are reflected in an integral ecological way within school programs.



The table below provides background information on each Sustainable Development Goal, with Earthcare themes populating this chart over time as the program matures. It should be noted that not all themes may be adequately addressed within a school setting, nor are they necessarily meant to be. Some development goals have been renamed for practical and simplicity purposes.


	Links to Sustainable Development Goals	Background links to Laudato Si'	Descriptors for Earthcare Themes (Theme Icons yet to be developed)
	<u>NO POVERTY LINKS</u>	<p>We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. (#49)</p>	<p>NO POVERTY Earthcare is an inclusive programme which can be adapted to any social and cultural background.</p>
	<u>ZERO HUNGER</u>	<p>...we [also] know that approximately a third of all food produced is discarded, and “whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor [LS 90]</p>	<p>ZERO HUNGER Several Earthcare topics promote improved nutrition and sustainable food production. Many schools have gardens to teach sustainable growing techniques, local food products and the importance of biodiversity in agriculture.</p>
	<u>HEALTH</u>	<p>We are speaking of an attitude of the heart, one which approaches life with serene attentiveness, which is capable of being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next, which accepts each moment as a gift from God to be lived to the full.</p> <p>Jesus taught us this attitude when he invited us to contemplate the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, or when seeing the rich young man and knowing his restlessness, “he</p>	<p>HEALTH AND WELL-BEING Encourages schools to promote the health and well-being of young people and the wider community and to make environmental connections between food choice, health and promote human rights.</p> <p>Examples of a health and well-being program include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school canteen menu review coupled with an education program to drive change to menu provision and selection in keeping with best nutrition guidelines • A staffroom coffee review to ensure it is ethically sourced.



		<p>looked at him with love” (Mk 10:21). He was completely present to everyone and to everything, and in this way he showed us the way to overcome that unhealthy anxiety which makes us superficial, aggressive and compulsive consumers [LS 226]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School garden program to provide education and plantings for use in curriculum initiatives and the school canteen. • A combined fitness and healthy eating program with the goal of shifting cultural values from unhealthy physical and eating habits. <p>All these above examples help students engage with and understand their food sources better and therefore improve personal judgement on how much and what type of foods they should consume, thereby reducing waste through refusal, reduction and waste elimination.</p> <p>In combination with a litter and/or waste management program an effective and wholistic school program can benefit both the individual, the family and the environment locally and at large.</p>
	<p><u>EDUCATION</u></p>	<p>Environmental education should facilitate making the leap towards the transcendent which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning. It needs educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care. [210]</p>	<p>EDUCATION</p> <p>The Earthcare 8 steps to ecological dialogue methodology is a powerful tool for providing quality education for sustainable development at all school levels. Its whole institutional approach ensures an inclusive implementation throughout the whole kindergarten, school or campus, and the involvement of all children and students</p>
	<p><u>GENDER EQUITY</u></p>	<p>Human beings too are creatures of this world, enjoying a right to life and happiness, and endowed with unique dignity. So we cannot fail to consider the effects on people’s lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throwaway culture. [L.S.43]</p>	<p>GENDER AND EQUITY</p> <p>The formation of the earthcare committee should have a balance of gender if in a coeducational school. In a single gender school then sharing events in step 8 could include students to help balance attendance.</p>



<p>6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</p> 	<p><u>WATER</u></p>	<p>Fresh drinking water is an issue of primary importance, since it is indispensable for human life and for supporting terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems [LS 28]</p> <p>One particularly serious problem is the quality of water available to the poor [LS 29]</p>	<p>WATER</p> <p>Water is essential to all life cycles and sustainability. In Australia, the driest of continents, it is even more crucial for students to understand the need to use water sustainably.</p> <p>The Water topic especially focuses on this issue by providing an introduction to the importance of water both locally and globally and by raising awareness of how simple actions can substantially cut down water use.</p> <p>Water projects for schools can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leadership ensuring water efficiency is included in facility management and upgrades as it not only models good management behaviour, it also saves the school money in the long term. • Behaviour change programs with students inclusive of data gathering and monitoring can encourage water conservation at school and in the home • Combining water conservation with caring for country through use of mulching of gardens can be of mutual benefit.
<p>7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</p> 	<p><u>ENERGY LINKS</u></p>	<p>The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system... Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate...The problem is aggravated by a model of development based on the intensive use of fossil fuels, which is at the heart of the worldwide energy system [LS 23]</p>	<p>ENERGY USE AND EFFICIENCY</p> <p>Energy is an Earthcare theme to promote energy saving initiatives and innovative solutions to reduce energy consumption within the schools, within students' and teachers' homes, as well as within the wider community.</p> <p>All members of the school work together to increase the awareness of energy issues and to improve the energy efficiency within the school. Furthermore, the students learn how to save energy at home.to focus schools on a short- and long-term benefit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term the school saves money it will otherwise spend every time a bill arrives. • Longer term the school contributes to lowering carbon emissions

		<p>Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and eco-systemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry [LS 25]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ripple effect is that with the inclusion of students in the process the school becomes an affective educator of families and in turn contributes to a wholistic approach to lowering of carbon emissions. <p>Energy projects in schools can include: School leadership ensuring energy efficiency is included in facility management and upgrades which saves money and models good behaviour</p> <p>Behaviour change programs inclusive of data gathering and monitoring to reduce energy such as 'switch off' programs and policy formation on turning on/off air conditioning systems and other electrical appliances can inform conservation at school and in the home.</p>
 <p>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p>	<p><u>DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</u></p>	<p>Although change is part of the working of complex systems, the speed with which human activity has developed contrasts with the naturally slow pace of biological evolution. Moreover, the goals of this rapid and constant change are not necessarily geared to the common good or to integral and sustainable human development. Change is something desirable, yet it becomes a source of anxiety when it causes harm to the world and to the quality of life of much of humanity.{L.S.40]</p>	<p>SOCIAL JUSTICE: WORK AND CONDITIONS</p> <p>The Earthcare programme promotes and fosters a deep understanding for sustainability issues among students which are also of increasing importance in the working environment.</p> <p>Through the implementation of the programme students learn how to take leadership in sustainability development and to find sustainable solutions. Their knowledge and experiences gained through the Earthcare programme can further on arouse their interest in employments related to sustainability issues and broaden their opportunities on the labour market.</p>
 <p>9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	<p><u>INDUSTRY INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</u></p>	<p>The social dimensions of global change include the effects of technological innovations on employment, social exclusion, an inequitable distribution and consumption of energy and other services, social breakdown, increased violence and a rise in new forms of social aggression, drug</p>	<p>THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Through the implementation of the Earthcare programme innovation in sustainable development is enhanced within the education sector. Especially Earthcare Campuses, providing a framework for scientific research in sustainable innovations and practices. Waste, energy and transport will intersect with this goal.</p>

		trafficking, growing drug use by young people, and the loss of identity.[L.S. 40]	
	<u>INEQUALITY</u>	<p>The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet: “Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest”. [L.S 48]</p>	<p>SOCIAL JUSTICE: INEQUALITY The earthcare proram should be integrated with social justice programs as capacity an competency grows within the school committees.</p>
	<u>SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</u>	<p>Transportation Some forms of pollution are part of people’s daily experience. Exposure to atmospheric pollutants produces a broad spectrum of health hazards, especially for the poor, and causes millions of premature deaths. There is also pollution that affects everyone, caused by transport [LS 20]</p>	<p>TRANSPORT The transport theme aims to engage the community in a conversation about ways for pupils, staff and local government to work together to raise awareness of transport issues and come up with practical solutions that will make a real difference to pupils’ everyday lives and encourage active travel and sustainable travel into the future.</p> <p>Examples of actions may include an active travel program, Walking Wheeling Wednesdays, both of which integrate with a health and well-being theme.</p>
		<p>Waste and the throw-away culture Some forms of pollution are part of people’s daily experience [LS 20]. Each year hundreds of millions of tons of waste are generated, much of it non-biodegradable. In many parts of the planet, the elderly lament that once beautiful landscapes are now covered with</p>	<p>WASTE Waste in schools requires a methodical approach to supply chain management. Waste is also connected to local government services and at times private waste contractors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste projects for schools could include behaviour change programs to change packaging on school lunches (nude food) which can save money through the elimination of external waste disposal services.

		<p>rubbish [LS 21] These problems are closely linked to a throwaway culture.</p> <p>We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them. [LS 22]</p> <p>At the same time, we have “a sort of ‘superdevelopment’ of a wasteful and consumerist kind which forms an unacceptable contrast with the ongoing situations of dehumanizing deprivation” [LS 90]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leadership can develop policy over purchasing stock such as photo copy paper and its prudent use and recycling • Teachers can ensure separation of waste within classrooms • Students can monitor waste separation at lunch times. Bottles and cans can be recycled for refunds which in turn can support social justice programs.
		<p>Litter As per waste</p>	<p>LITTER Litter, while being part of waste management is a worthy individual theme because it centres on behaviour change across the whole school community and its interface with other themes. Examples of litter programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter bin placement and education programs • Nude food programs • Litter picker roll out to students
	<p><u>CLIMATE CHANGE</u></p>	<p>...the effects of climate change will be felt for a long time to come, even if stringent measures are taken now, some countries with scarce resources will require assistance in adapting to the effects already being produced, which affect their economies. In</p>	<p>CLIMATE CHANGE The steps to ecological dialogue programme help schools and communities build Climate Change resilience.</p> <p>Examples of school activities include projects for rainwater harvesting, soil stabilisation, food production, sanitation, and waste management amongst many other.</p>

		<p>this context, there is a need for common and differentiated responsibilities. [L.S 127]</p>	
 <p>14 LIFE BELOW WATER</p>	<p><u>OCEANS</u></p>	<p>Oceans not only contain the bulk of our planet’s water supply, but also most of the immense variety of living creatures, many of them still unknown to us and threatened for various reasons. What is more, marine life in rivers, lakes, seas and oceans, which feeds a great part of the world’s population, is affected by uncontrolled fishing, leading to a drastic depletion of certain species. [L.S.40]</p>	<p>OCEANS</p> <p>Marine litter and the exploitation of the oceans are two of the most urgent matters of the twenty-first century. Students can learn about the sources of marine litter and its negative effects on the marine flora and fauna.</p> <p>Furthermore, the importance of using the oceans’ resources responsibly is communicated to the students.</p> <p>Examples of actions can include the elimination of plastic in school lunches and supply chain management for school administration to reduce plastic ewaste.</p>
 <p>15 LIFE ON LAND</p>	<p><u>LIFE ON THE LAND</u></p>	<p>Caring for Country is a term used to describe the different sustainable land management practices and initiatives that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples undertake, and the key role these practices play in continuing culture.</p> <p>In an urban or school setting Catholic Earthcare is using this term to acknowledge firstly that indigenous Australian were caring for country long before western society established itself with cool burning, matrix burning to manage fire risk and food supply.</p> <p>The earth’s resources are also being plundered because of short-sighted approaches to the economy, commerce and production. [L.S. 32]</p>	<p>CARING FOR COUNTRY</p> <p>The Earthcare programme promotes the protection, restoration and the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems through the work of the student-led committee</p> <p>Examples of Caring for Country in a school setting are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree planting for improving shade opportunities and diminishing overheating of people and thermal loading on facilities. • Selective plantings to encourage an improvement in bio-diversity on site such as flowering plants for fostering native and honey producing bees and honey suckling bird life. • Selective plantings to provide a protective habitat for smaller birds from predators. • Corridor plantings to create linkages to external habitats for migrating animals

		<p>33. It is not enough, however, to think of different species merely as potential “resources” to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves. Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost for ever. [L.S. 33]</p>	<p>BIODIVERSITY Supporting biodiversity corridors is an important function of schools, especially if they have significant grounds, are adjacent to treed areas or waterways. From ensuring native flowering plantings to support honey eating birds and insects, currently in decline through, to ensuring sedimentation runoff from school property does not clog creek systems or allow pesticides and pollutants to flow into waterways for fish and animal consumption.</p>
 <p>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p>	<p><u>PEACE AND JUSTICE</u></p>	<p>Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life”. [L.S.148]</p>	<p>PEACE AND JUSTICE Peace and justice are integral elements of Catholic schools Through the student-led Earthcare committee process the pupils learn how democratic decision-making works and how to respect the views and opinion of others.</p>
 <p>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p>	<p><u>PARTNERSHIPS</u></p>	<p>Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Here I want to recognize, encourage and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share. Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world’s poorest. (L.S.13]</p>	<p>PARTNERSHIPS Through Education for Sustainable Development the Sustainable Development Goals are implemented within the Earthcare Schools network and networks associated with each school</p>