Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

The Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Inclusive and equitable quality education is of utmost importance, as there are many countries across the globe that do not offer proper (quality) education, let alone (quality) education and further learning opportunities to women and girls. The literacy rate around the globe has gone up, yet even greater attempts need to be made to ensure that the populations not able to read or receive proper education are equipped to provide this in the future. This in turn lines up with the concept of sustainability: if there are enough chances for everyone on the planet to get an education and keep learning throughout their lives they might feel more empowered and are more able to learn about sustainable practices overall. The goal’s targets assigned were:

* 4.6: *by 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy:* percentage of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex
* 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:*  extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment.

Why is this SDG target important to Aruba? It is important to Aruba, as it creates a platform for the part of the Aruban population that is not able to read and write, to be able to achieve literacy and numeracy, making it easier for them to be able to be a part of the working population, with universal literacy and numeracy on the island, Aruba will benefit from more jobs being created and can thus improve the citizens’ quality of life. Even though Aruba has a public education law in place, this is not properly enforced, and in the previous decades it was not in place, which made for a significant part of the population that are illiterate and innumerate. Additionally, it is still interesting to know that there is a part of the population that have only finished elementary school, there’s also currently many the population that have only finished high school or a lower equivalent thereof. The better educated the population is, the more able they are to learn and care about sustainable development, sustainability in general, and would be more interested in leading a sustainable lifestyle. An educated population will also be more aware of what their rights are and would be better prepared to fight for any injustice being pushed onto them. Regarding equality and equal rights for all citizens, more people will feel included, respected and content, which in turn increases performance at school, work and in life. This all helps the overall sustainability of the island, as it creates opportunities for all citizens regardless of their gender, social class, sexual orientation or religion. It makes for a more humane community which will want to make sure that their future generations are also able to enjoy our island.

SDG target & goal’s relation to waste management in Aruba: if you look at the current population’s way of handling waste you can see that the SDG target and goals lineup in the sense that a better educated population is more able to learn about proper waste management: currently people don’t care about reducing their waste, recycling their waste or disposing of it properly. People just throw oil with their waste, batteries are being disposed in household waste, with zero regards to its potential damaging effects on their own environment. Due to ignorance, or perhaps a lack of education, we are currently only disposing of waste via the local landfill and this is the worst way to handle waste and we’re destroying our environment at the same time. Education can lead to awareness and awareness can lead to the abolishment of illegal dumping areas around the island and it can stop the population from dumping their junk and trash in mondi’s or protected areas. In Sta. Cruz near the entrance of the Arikok National Park’s visitor center, you can always find trash in the mondi, or people driving up with their pickups just to dump their old microwaves or refrigerators in the area. Due to the lack of education and awareness on sustainability on the island (in a way that the population can understand) is probably one of the main reasons that the population remains ignorant and uncaring regarding better waste practices. They simply cannot, or do not want to see the negative impact this is having on our island: all the plastic being disposed of improperly ends up flowing into the ocean and can influence our marine life, and thus influence the sustenance of those dependent on it (fishermen, pescatarians, etc.)

Find out if the described indicator is being monitored in Aruba:

Currently there are statistical information to be found on the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) website regarding education levels, illiteracy and innumeracy numbers from their household surveys. The latest results (statistics) are from 2010.

There is also the establishment of the National SDG Commission, which happened in January of this year, with the mandate to coordinate SDG implementation. Aruba is combining sustainable economic growth, social equity and environmental awareness in order to enhance the quality of life and raise living standards for all Arubans. One of the Commission’s key conclusions is that in Aruba, prosperity must go beyond material concern and success or a larger GDP, to encompass quality of life and wellbeing. Aruba has established an indicator working group with a mandate to assess the relevance of the SDG indicators and localize them. Stakeholders are also actively being involved in implementing the SDGs. The Aruban National SDG Commission has supposedly conducted a survey of stakeholder involvement around the pillars people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. The plan is to continue to involve the private sector, trade unions and civil society organizations in consensus-based decision-making on major policy issues. The Commission also has the goal to foster awareness in the broader community on the island and have established different social media accounts to reach the population with information regarding the SDGs and the implementation of the 2030 agenda. This was found in the Report on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the Kingdom of Netherlands of the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable development 2017 (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/16109Netherlands.pdf)

References

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