



POLICY TAKEAWAYS



THE UNIVERSITY
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Centre for Policy Futures

Mapping Human Rights and the SDG-CSO Ecosystem in Queensland: Setting a National Agenda

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are key actors driving local sustainability transformations. They contribute significantly to addressing complex social, economic, and environmental issues such as poverty, housing stress, food insecurity, health inequity, and climate resilience. Currently, there is no comprehensive data infrastructure capturing the scope, scale, and impact of CSO engagement with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at state or national level.



We closed a key data gap by mapping Queensland's civil society SDG ecosystem. Using 2023 Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission data and AI-assisted analysis of over 5,000 charities, we created a detailed snapshot of CSO activity aligned with the SDGs. The study demonstrates how better digital tools and data coordination can strengthen government-CSO partnerships and support inclusive, rights-based policy aligned with the 2030 Agenda.

Key Takeaways

1

Recognise CSOs as vital SDG actors

Accelerating SDG progress requires stronger focus on practical action, systemic change and strategic priority setting. Governments at all levels should recognise CSOs as vital SDG actors, enhance their participation in planning, financing, and evaluating local sustainability efforts, and build information-sharing platforms that connect local governments, researchers, and CSOs to exchange insights and co-develop locally relevant solutions. This requires improving support, financing and inclusion of CSOs in debating, measuring and implementing the SDG Agenda domestically.

2

Identification of gaps

Mapping the SDG-CSO Ecosystem provides crucial evidence for strengthening rights-based approaches to SDG implementation. CSOs can use it to identify gaps in interconnected action on environmental and socioeconomic factors around health equity, poverty alleviation and food security. Mapping this ecosystem can help CSOs identify, track, and prioritise human rights-related work.

3

Increase engagement with SDG framework

Over 2,500 CSOs are already contributing to SDGs, yet very few explicitly refer to the SDGs in public communications. CSOs should increase their engagement with the SDG framework as they seek to communicate what they do to the public, situate their work within global sustainability contexts, and develop meaningful impact measures. They can use the SDG framework to better articulate their impact, attract support, and connect local action with global agendas.

4

Australia-wide implementation

Digital SDG mapping is emerging as a powerful way to empower CSOs, helping them align their missions with global goals, improve visibility, and strengthen collective action across regions. Further investment in digital mapping can enable sector-wide uptake, improve SDG reporting capacity, and foster more inclusive and collaborative sustainability governance. A user-friendly and searchable online SDG Movement Map for Australia has significant potential to enable more comprehensive public engagement with the SDGs - It should be replicated for the rest of Australia, as a crucial step towards 'leaving no one behind'.

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