

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR UNAAWA SCHOOL PROGRAMS

"I feel more optimistic about the future because of events like this where older people take the time to listen to me and care about what I think."

This sentiment, recently expressed by a school student at a United Nations Association of Australia (UNAAWA) event, is what drives the volunteers who have developed the Association's Global Citizenship programs for primary and secondary schools. These programs seek to inspire and empower our youngsters (and their communities) to become active global citizens.

UNAAWA school programs received international recognition on 15 May at the Global Challenges Foundation Education Awards held at the London School of Economics. The Foundation, based in Sweden, sought innovative approaches to improving the communication of global risks and the need for global governance reform. UNAAWA members Rees and Anne Barrett presented a scalable school education template for *Reshaping Global Governance Through Citizen Empowerment*. It was selected as one of the 10 winning innovations along with entries from Europe (4), USA (3), Asia and Africa.



The question posed to the Foundation and Awards judges: Why invent new governance structures to address global challenges when we already have the UN framework (endorsed by all Member Nations) provided by the SDGs, targets and indicators? Rather, we should ask: How do we empower our youngsters (their families and communities) to leverage the potential of civil society to ensure implementation of the Goals for a sustainable future?

Based on the UNESCO model for Global Citizenship Education (GCEd), the template comprises seven interwoven components that support teachers in reframing and adding value to existing school curricula. The template features the recently accredited senior secondary UNAAWA program *Global Citizenship and Sustainability*, in which students use the SDGs to apply learning across the curriculum and design solutions for global risks. Achievement in the program is recognised on the WA Certificate of Education and for entrance into Curtin University.

Through the template's Awards component innovative teachers like Lis Mathiasen at Westminster Junior Primary School are recognised. Her pedagogy is based on the *Convention of the Rights of the Child*. Acting as a facilitator, Lis engages Year 2 and 3 children in the production and publication of booklets presenting their views on the world. (On 9 September they will be launching their latest effort *Looking After Our Fascinating Earth* at Mirrabooka Library.)

If sustainable development is that which "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" who better to lead the way than our children?



Winning teams of the ten Global Challenges Foundation Educators' Awards, London 2019 (UNAAWA representatives fifth/sixth from left) Photo courtesy Maria Moore for Global Challenges Foundation, Sweden