

DEval Policy Brief 6/2018

PUBLIC OPINION OF THE 2030 AGENDA

Results of the DEval Opinion Monitor for Development Policy 2018

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals – the general public also needs to get involved

Key findings of the DEval Opinion Monitor for Development Policy 2018 on the 2030 Agenda

- The German population supports the basic idea behind the 2030 Agenda.
- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are largely unknown among the general public.
- Many people have concerns as to whether the 17 SDGs will be achieved by 2030.
- The general public believes itself to have a moderate influence on the achievement of the SDGs. They also consider their actual contribution towards achieving the goals to be moderate.
- The greater citizens consider their influence to be, the more they contribute to reaching the SDGs.
- The general public is somewhat more actively involved in SDGs relating to consumption and the environment and believes to have somewhat better chances of exerting an influence here than with respect to the other SDGs.¹

The basic idea behind the 2030 Agenda meets with approval

The Opinion Monitor 2018 shows that the German population is aware of global challenges. Many people consider the social inequalities between the Global North and South to be unjust. At the same time, citizens do not overly dissociate themselves from the situation in the Global South. The basic idea of global solidarity behind the 2030 Agenda therefore meets with a basic

awareness among German citizens. However, their political orientation plays a role here, as the further to the right people are positioned in the political spectrum, the less they perceive global inequalities and the more they dissociate themselves from the situation in the Global South.

SDGs largely unknown

Although the basic idea behind the 2030 Agenda meets with approval, the majority of people are not familiar with the 17 SDGs. Around 60% of citizens had not yet heard anything about them in the summer of 2017 (see figure). Only around 10% knew the term and claimed to know what it implies. It is notable that there has been little change in these values since the 2030 Agenda was adopted in September 2015.

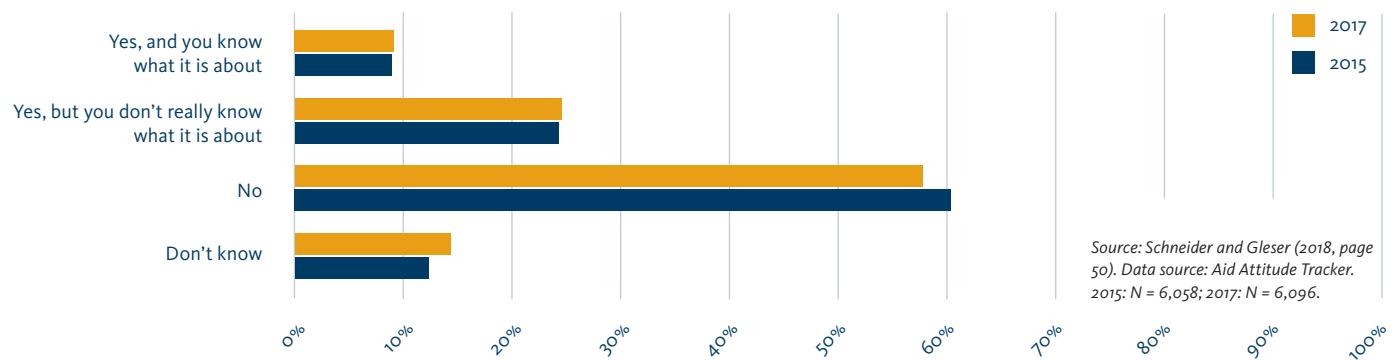
Concerns as to whether the SDGs can be achieved

Citizens have major concerns as to whether the 17 SDGs can be achieved by 2030. They hardly differentiate between the various goals. It is only with regard to achieving goal 12 “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns” that the general public is somewhat more optimistic. They consider the more remote goals to “End poverty in all its forms everywhere” (SDG 1) and “Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies” (SDG 16) to be the most difficult to achieve.

Overall, the general public assess their own influence on the achievement of the SDGs as moderate. People believe themselves to have a somewhat greater influence in the areas of consumption and the environment (SDGs 7, 12, 13, 14, 15), where they consider themselves to be relatively effective. This could be due to the greater relevance of these goals in everyday life. The question

¹ The DEval Opinion Monitor for Development Policy 2018 is essentially based on data from the Aid Attitudes Tracker (AAT), a survey conducted in Germany, France, Britain and the US. Since 2013, the AAT has conducted a longitudinal survey every six months of around 6,000 individuals in each country with regard to attitudes, knowledge and engagement towards development policy and cooperation and related issues. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation finances the survey, while the survey research institute YouGov collects the data online. For the survey phase in the summer of 2017, DEval added questions to gauge attitudes towards the 2030 Agenda.

Figure: Have you already heard about the Sustainable Development Goals or read anything about them?



regarding engagement and thus their own contribution to achieving the goals meets with a similar answer among citizens. Again, the engagement that they report in the area of consumption and the environment, which is overall moderate, is somewhat higher than that for the other goals. The relevance to everyday life may play a role here, too. On top of this, a higher sense of self-efficacy has a positive effect on engagement.

The 2030 Agenda and the general public – there is still a lot to be done

Three possible implications of the results of the Opinion Monitor 2018 for politics and civil society are as follows:

1. The basic idea behind the 2030 Agenda is more accessible for the general public than its complex system of goals. In order to get all citizens to make a contribution towards sustainable global development, however, those involved must take account of the limited detailed knowledge of their target group.
2. They should make the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs more widely known. In this respect, emphasising the basic principles appears to be more expedient than communicating the individual SDGs.
3. A key to promoting the engagement of the general public for the 17 SDGs is to increase their self-efficacy. This could be supported by increasing the visibility of successes achieved and opportunities to exert an influence.

References

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The German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) is mandated by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to independently analyse and assess German development interventions. Evaluation reports contribute to the transparency of development results and provide policy-makers with evidence and lessons learned, based on which they can shape and improve their development policies.