

## A low-threshold methodology for the social inclusion of the citizens in poverty and crisis regions: Measuring Social Capital for enabling the progress of the UN Sustainable Development Goals

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Ten years after the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals and the definition of 169 indicators to measure their progress, nine European OECD countries are at the top of the SDG Index every year since 2016. And ten LDCs build the bottom:

Table 1: Ranking of countries by the SDG Index 2024 (1)

1	Finland	158	Madagascar
2	Sweden	159	Sudan
3	Denmark	160	Niger
4	Germany	161	Congo, Dem Rep
5	France	162	Afghanistan
6	Austria	163	Yemen
7	Norway	164	Somalia
8	Croatia	165	Chad
9	United Kingdom	166	Central African Republic
10	Poland	167	South Sudan

But how will the last ten ones and other LDCs be included in the SDGs process to 'leaving no one behind'?

As recently stated in a study from India published by *Springer Nature*: 'Without social cohesion, it will be challenging to achieve SDGs, and individuals could potentially be left behind. Specific core values like trust, solidarity, helpfulness, and hospitality play a vital role in influencing community involvement and will enable stronger social ties to achieve SDGs.' (2)

Recent studies with the use of electronic perception surveys by open access defined SDG relevant indicators such as e.g. the willingness to co-finance public goods by taxes, solidarity, helpfulness, friendliness and hospitality. These new inclusive indicators are measured on a ladder between 10 (high) and 1 (low) in 53 languages as well in the ten LDCs at the end of the SDG Index (3) on any Smartphone without registration <https://trustyourplace.com/> :

- Juba in South Sudan has a tax-willingness of 7.2 points – higher than in most OECD countries
- In 2019, the willingness to invest in small local enterprises reached 7.9 points in Bangui, CAR

- In N'Djanema, Chad, the willingness to pay taxes was at remarkable 5,4 points
- Somalia: Hargeisa showed 6.9 to pay taxes, Mogadishu 8.3 for helpfulness
- The major asset of Taiz, Yemen, is hospitality with 6.6 points
- Herat participates in the Monitor since 2016 yet. In 2024 hospitality was at 6.5 points
- Bukavu, DR Congo, had the best social climate with 7.2 points
- In Niamey, Niger, ten points were given for investment in local SMEs
- With 9.6 points on hospitality, Khartoum, Sudan leads
- In Antananarivo, Madagascar, the social climate became better in 2022

The most recent results can as well be browsed by entering a country (English) or a town (native language): <https://trustyourplace.com/search-score>

In a study on the implementation of the SDGs, published in *Nature* in 2022, the World Social Capital Monitor was featured among ten Global UN SDG Partnerships out of 5400. (4)

"When designing and delivering partnerships for the SDGs, it is important to use approaches that enable local people to participate in the process.", the authors state.

So to including local stakeholders in the SDGs process requires to let them have a say and to measure indicators that their communities can influence by themselves. Aggregated data on income, live expectancy, and education cannot be influenced.

The Social Capital Monitor, hence, would close the large gap that exists in the research of socio-economic processes that influence the implementation of all 17 SDGs in all 193 countries. The Monitor exhibits the situation in small groups like local communities. This would complement the audit of governments to governments (G2G) in the Voluntary National Reports (VNRs) which does not foresee the participation of local communities.

But it is the activities on the local level, which influence most of the GDP-dependent and related to fiscal budgets

indicators themselves. Stakeholders must become aware that the implementation of the SDGs is a socio-economic process which does not only consist of audits by governments and companies.

This has already taken place by representatives of medical and social sciences: they are also discovering the importance of the local level for implementing the SDGs, while previously the emphasis was limited on technologies for renewable energy production, waste prevention and disease control due to the national focus on climate change and COVID 19.

The Social Capital Monitor, by pointing to the weaknesses and strengths of cohesion in the various groups of a society can translate the challenge of social inclusion into concrete policy recommendations. It is a low-technology instrument using innovative methods such as open access and bottom-up data collection.

Recommendations were given by studies recently published in the scientific journal Nature. They show that the widespread call for artificial intelligence (AI) needs to be contrasted with human intelligence (HI). This will serve as a catalyst for implementing the SDGs.

### Recommendations

To States and administrations: please allow your citizens to assess and to enhance their local social goods that are needed to achieve all of the 17 SDGs.

To IGOs, MDBs and other multilateral organizations: please do not focus on aggregated data from National Statistical Offices and Big Data only. The Human Intelligence (HI) of the citizens can only become an asset of the SDGs by giving them an inclusive say.

To all stakeholders of the SDGs process: please do not Cherry-pick the Goals. They interact with each other and cannot be achieved nationally.

### References

- 1 <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/rankings>
- 2 [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-53793-6\\_20](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-53793-6_20)
- 3 <https://trustyourplace.com/>
- 4 <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-022-28230-x>