



The G20 Peoples' Climate Vote

2021

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

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“The G20 are some of the biggest economies on the planet – what they do will make or break the world’s ability to tackle the climate crisis. They must listen to the voices of their people, especially of their future generations, who will inherit the consequences of actions – or inactions – of G20 leaders.”

Achim Steiner, Administrator,
United Nations Development Programme

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Executive Summary

The world will not be able to tackle the climate crisis without bold action by the world's largest economies. The Group of 20 (G20), made up of 19 countries and the European Union, account for over 80% of global gross domestic product (GDP), 60% of the world's population, and more than 75% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The G20 countries also have immense impacts across sectors, including 90% of global vehicle sales, 75% of the global potential for renewables between 2010 and 2030, 60% of the world's agricultural land, and 80% of world's trade in agricultural products. Given the breadth of their impact, the actions that G20 governments take to tackle the climate crisis will be critical to the future of the planet.

In the run-up to the G20 Summit in Rome, and ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the University of Oxford are publishing the G20 Peoples' Climate Vote.

The G20 Peoples' Climate Vote polled over 689,000 people across 18 of the G20 countries from October 2020 until June 2021. This includes over 302,000 young people under the age of 18. It leverages, an innovative survey methodology using mobile gaming networks. The margin of error of the results is on average +/- 2%.

In some countries, it is the first time that the voices of young people – who in many countries will be entering the workforce, reaching voting age, and engaging more in civic life in just a few years – are heard on climate change. This means the survey has significant value as a predictor of where public opinion is headed on climate policy. It also indicates where stronger efforts to educate the public may be required. .

The G20 and the Climate Emergency

- On average, across the G20 countries surveyed, 65% of adults thought that climate change is a global emergency, compared with 35% who disagreed. Perception of a climate emergency was higher among under-18s, at 70%. This indicates broad public support for G20 leaders to take urgent action and step up on climate ambition, while also suggesting that this will continue to strengthen in the years to come.

Public Opinion and Climate Finance Policy

- There was majority support for more funding of green businesses and jobs in fourteen out of the eighteen G20 countries surveyed, with the greatest support among adults in the United Kingdom (74%), followed by Germany, Australia, and Canada (all 68%). Among under-18s, support was highest in Australia (73%).
- In many countries, making companies pay for their pollution was more popular among

adults than under-18s. In Japan, Mexico and the Republic of Korea there was a stark difference between these two groups (42% vs 31%, 43% vs 36%, and 41% vs 36%, respectively), indicating more public education is needed.

Public Opinion and Cutting Emissions

- Stopping burning polluting fuels was a popular policy in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Germany, and France, with majority support among both under-18s and adults in these countries. There were much lower levels of support elsewhere, with just 30% of adults in India and Saudi Arabia supporting this policy, compared to 36% and 32% of under-18s in these countries, respectively.
- Promoting renewable energy was generally a more popular policy among under-18s than adults, with a generational divide as high as thirteen percentage points in the United States. Support for this policy from under-18s was also high in emerging economies, such as with 64% for Brazil and Turkey, and 62% for Argentina.
- Similarly, there was higher under-18 support for electric vehicles and bicycles, with ten percentage point differences in Australia and Italy, suggestive of coming shifts in public demand.
- Reducing energy waste received mixed support overall, and some significant levels of intergenerational differences. For example, in Germany 59% of adults supported this policy as opposed to 44% of under-18s, while Russia saw the opposite outcome: 32% of adults compared to 38% of under-18s.
- Support among adults and under-18s on policies such as conserving forests and land to address climate change varied depending on the country. It was ten percentage points higher among adults than under-18s in the United Kingdom, for example, whereas in Brazil, Russia and India it was higher among under-18s than adults, ten percent, nine percent and nine percent higher, respectively.

Public Opinion and Climate Adaptation Policy

- There were majority levels of support among adults in twelve of the G20 countries surveyed for building more resilient infrastructure to protect people and property from extreme weather events. The policy attracted greater support in adults than under-18s, such as for the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Germany.
- Installing more early warning systems to support disaster preparedness was a relatively popular policy in general and featured higher levels of public support among under-18s than adults in all countries. Support among under-18s was eight percentage points higher than for adults in both France and the United States, and six for Brazil and Turkey.
- There were surprisingly higher levels of support among under-18s than adults for increasing access to insurance, which can help families, businesses, and communities rebuild after extreme weather events. Under-18s backed this policy with support higher than among adults in the United States (where there was a fourteen percentage point difference), Italy (twelve), and Brazil, France and Japan (where the generational gap was eleven points).

Introduction

On 27 January 2021, the [Peoples' Climate Vote](#) was published by the UN Development Programme and the University of Oxford. The survey used an innovative polling methodology by utilizing mobile gaming networks, and delivered the world's largest ever survey of public opinion on climate change, with 1.2 million respondents across 50 countries.

A key finding was that a majority of people in all countries surveyed believe that climate change is a global emergency. In many of the countries, it was also the first time that public opinion on climate policies had ever been gathered. The survey was discussed in government meetings on climate action, and parliaments, all over the world.

The Peoples' Climate Vote is unusual in that, since it uses mobile gaming networks to engage participants, it attracts a very large sample of under-18s whose voices tend to be overlooked in political decision-making¹. In a matter of years, these future voters will soon be influencing political decisions, so it is imperative that governments already consider their voices when making decisions that will affect them more and for longer than anyone else.

The G20 Peoples' Climate Vote report gives unique insights into never-before-shared data and a new analysis of people's opinions on climate change from the G20 countries. It compares what under-18s think about the climate to what adults think. This approach is both important and insightful: by looking into data on under-18s, we can predict how the policy priorities of the G20 countries will shift once the new generation of voters enter the workforce, reach voting age, and have greater influence.

This new analysis comes at an incredibly important time on the global stage, not only in the timing ahead of G20 Rome Summit and COP26, but also because of the increasingly important role the G20 plays in the world's economy and trade, COVID-19 stimulus packages which will shape the course of the world, and population growth.

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