

EDUKI 2019/2020 COMPETITION

TAKE ACTION FOR PEACE!

10 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT SDG 16

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1. What is peace?

Contrary to what one might think, peace is not simply the absence of conflict. In reality, peace can be defined in many ways and one could, for example, consider that there is peace when:

- violence is not tolerated, and everyone can live in safety;
- everyone is equal before the law and protected by it;
- everyone participates in political decision-making;
- everyone has their basic needs met (housing, education, well-being, food, etc.);
- there is no discrimination;
- the state can be concerned with issues other than security within its territory and can allocate funds towards health, education, transport, gender equality, sustainable development.

2. What constitutes a lasting peace as meant by SDG 16?

Lasting peace is a broad concept, a complex condition in which state and society evolve continuously. Its enduring feature is that it has all the necessary elements to last in time. The United Nations has identified 10 targets and 2 sub-targets for SDG 16 that focus on a few key areas where action can be taken to build a lasting peace.

Although these measures are intended for States who, by signing the 2030 Agenda, committed to implement them on their territory or in their relations with the international community, it is nevertheless up to citizens to ensure that their governments keep their promises. Likewise, these targets give rise to actions that can be undertaken by each of us at our level and in our daily lives.

Below is a list of measures to be taken by States to achieve SDG 16:

- Reduce illicit financial flows and arms trafficking;
- Strengthen the recovery and return of stolen goods;
- Fight against all forms of organized crime;
- Reduce corruption;
- Participation of developing countries in global governance institutions;
- Guarantee legal identity to everyone;
- Combat terrorism and crime;
- Promote peaceful societies;
- Have justice for all;
- With effective, accountable and inclusive institutions;
- Reduce all forms of violence;
- Promote the rule of law;
- Protect fundamental freedoms;
- Apply non-discriminatory laws and policies.

For actions, individuals can take refer to question 6.

3. What is justice?

Justice is a principle where everyone is treated equally, before the law and in society. Both equality of human beings in the face of justice and the equal treatment of human beings contribute to a more just society for all and facilitate peaceful relations.

Without this principle of justice, inequality of treatment between human beings would be present. Because of this, tensions, conflicts, injustices could decimate communities, societies and systems. For lasting peace, justice in both peace and war is paramount. For example, respect for the Geneva Conventions and its Protocols that protect people who do not participate in conflict is essential. In conflicts, few distinctions are made to separate the civilian population from soldiers or an ethnic community from attacks from a belligerent group. For example, during a bombing campaign, often the warring parties target the whole territory without distinction whether it is an infrastructure such as a school or hospital, or even civilian population, etc.

Justice is also implemented by the judicial institutions. These are an integral part of the effective institutions mentioned in SDG 16. For justice to be applied to all, these institutions must operate dynamically, effectively and impartially. SDG 16 is closely linked to SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Justice for all also enables the elimination of all forms of discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for all.

4. In which areas of life do we find injustices against which we must act?

It is possible to suffer injustice in many areas of life, such as at school, in the family, at work, during migration, over our beliefs, on social networks, in politics, etc. It is therefore important to be able to distinguish the forms of injustices against which we must act and the multitude of actions to be undertaken in each of these areas. It is by improving the life of everyone, as a whole, that a society will be at peace and more just.

Here are a few examples:

- School
 - Harassment on the playground or in the classroom.
 - Exclusion or discrimination of students because of their belonging to a certain religion, ethnicity, opinion, nation, race, gender, etc.
- Family
 - Unequal treatment in terms of marriage rights (e.g. in a majority of countries same-sex couples cannot get married).
 - Unequal treatment at the tax level (e.g. tax breaks that only benefit married couples and therefore exclude same-sex couples).
 - Family exclusion (a young person can be excluded from his family for his sexual orientation or his/her parental ties).
- Work
 - Inequality of wages between women and men.
 - Unfair working conditions (e.g. non-compliance with the right to break-times, lack of remuneration for overtime, unfair pay between a woman and a man for the same job, etc.).
 - Discrimination during the hiring process because of belonging to a certain ethnic group, religion, political opinion, gender, etc.
- Migration
 - Shortcomings in the institutions responsible for integration measures for migrants (at school or in the workplace).
 - Separation of migrants according to their country of origin (geographical segregation).
 - Shortcomings at the level of institutions / organizations that offer psychological treatment for migrants.
- Beliefs
 - Social exclusion or discrimination because of belonging to a certain religion (e.g. Islam or Judaism).
 - Prohibition of religious practice.
- Social networks
 - Cyberbullying or hate speech (violent criticism, harassment, etc.).
 - Breach of Internet privacy (improper use of personal information).
 - Data protection (unlimited access to private information and all other information published on the Internet and social networks).
- Politics
 - Under-representation in political functions (e.g. linguistic or social minorities, women)
 - Electoral fraud.
- Etc.

5. Why are strong institutions needed?

Effective institutions contribute greatly towards sustainable development, as they enable the establishment and implementation of actions by the state and local authorities. If institutions are corrupt, unrepresentative of the population, biased according to ethnicity, religion or internal conflict, they will not be able to ensure peace and justice in a country.

To better understand the link between institutions, people and the environment, it is necessary to understand the concept of state. A state is a population (people), a territory (the environment) and a government that administers (institutions). In order for a state to function properly and for its population and territory to prosper, its government must administer it correctly. With one of these components unsatisfied, the state balance is destabilised.

There are many types of effective institutions, not just state authorities. There are also international organizations, associations, non-governmental organizations, foundations. In each of these structures, there is an institutional power that needs to be competent so that its actions are effective and focused on peace, justice and sustainable development.

What constitutes strong institutions?

- Equal representation of the population in decision-making bodies at the local, national and global levels.
- Open institutions for the entire population.
- Transparency of institutions.
- Rule of law.
- Promotion of cultural diversity (no culture is superior to another).
- Inclusion guaranteed (everyone is included in the decision-making process, strategic thinking and application of actions).
- No corruption at all levels of power.
- Coherence of national and international policies.

6. What actions can we all take to contribute to SDG 16?

It is through the actions in everyday life and by everyone that a peaceful and fair society with effective institutions can be established. At the local, national and international level, it is above all about human relations. It is therefore through the commitments, gestures and actions of each individual that progress can take place.

Here is a non-exhaustive list:

- Participate in the political life of your country by engaging politically;
- Report any violence that you witness;
- Deal with problems constructively and through discussion;
- Avoid the use of violent language and insults;
- Appreciate different thoughts, cultures and beliefs;
- Take an interest in other cultures and remain open-minded and respectful;
- Help and encourage people on social networks rather than criticize them;
- Help people who have a lack of knowledge of their rights or who do not have access to information, technology, infrastructure, etc.;
- Request more transparency in the policy by making requests for information from authorities;
- Denounce any injustice you witness;
- Participate in the activities of your neighbourhood / town / city;
- Include migrants and refugees from your neighbourhood/ town/city in activities and sports, cultural and community events;
- Participate in decision-making bodies (city, town, class or school council, etc.);
- Find out about local / national / global news, and actions organizations in your region and throughout the world.

7. What is the link between peace, justice and strong institutions and sustainable development?

Sustainable development is often perceived as a problem of developed countries that have the means, the framework conditions and the time to focus on the elements that constitute sustainable development. Why is this so?

Developing countries often face armed conflicts, institutional corruption, multiple forms of violence (social, domestic, child, etc.), political instability, and so on. Such an environment is not conducive to achieving the SDGs, which require favourable political, social and economic frameworks to implement development measures. Thus, peace, justice and effective institutions identify prerequisites for the implementation and achievement of the SDGs in many countries. Developed countries are not exempt from structural problems either, which is why the three fields of action - peace, justice and effective institutions - that make up SDG 16 are so fundamental and concern any State.

A peaceful society is less rooted in the problems of the present and can focus on the progress needed for future generations, especially in ecological terms. For example, according to UN Environment, 40% of the conflicts over the past 60 years are linked to natural resources. Both anticipating these conflicts upstream and contributing to sustainable reconstruction just after a conflict, peace will be possible for everyone.

Effective and strong institutions allow everyone to be included in the political process in order to have a liveable and sustainable society for all.

For more details and examples, visit: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/agenda2030/fr/home/themen/paix.html> (in French or German)

8. What are the links between SDG 16 and the other SDGs to be achieved by 2030?

The Sustainable Development Goals were conceived as interdependent with each other. SDG 16, in particular, is at the centre of the drive towards sustainable development. Indeed, having a fair and peaceful society with strong institutions is often a prerequisite, or at least a facilitator, towards accomplishing other SDGs.

A few examples:

- SDG 5 - Equality between the sexes: this SDG is a fundamental requisite for “a just society for all”; discrimination against women would hamper the building of such a society.¹
- SDG 4 – Quality Education: Education is a major component of a vibrant society where justice and peace can be built. If everyone has access to quality education, they will be able to contribute in society and act in an inclusive and respectful way.²
- SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and communities: having effective institutions in cities makes it possible for cities to become sustainable and therefore achieve this goal. For a city to be sustainable, it needs to take environmental measures (large and protected green spaces, efficient energy management, road traffic reduction, etc.) and social measures (social cohesion, welcome and integration policy, cultural policy, versatile services to the population, etc.)³

Conversely, since unequal access to natural resources can be one of the causes of conflict, efforts towards achieving other goals such as access to clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), reduced inequality (SDG 10) or responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), all help attain SDG 16.

«Peaceful, just and inclusive societies are necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). People everywhere need to be free of fear from all forms of violence and feel safe as they go about their lives whatever their ethnicity, faith or sexual orientation. In order to advance the SDGs we need effective and inclusive public institutions that can deliver quality education and healthcare, fair economic policies and inclusive environmental protection.»⁴

1 More information: <http://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/global-goals/gender-equality/>

2 More information: <http://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/global-goals/quality-education/>

3 More information: <http://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/global-goals/sustainable-cities-and-communities/>

4 Source: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/16.pdf>

9. What Switzerland doing for the SDGs and in particular SDG 16?

Switzerland contributed to the development of the Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015. In particular, Switzerland is committed to improving health, gender equality, water conservation and the promotion of peace.

Since 2012, it has an action plan in which measures are established for achieving the SDGs. For example, it has prioritized the following fields:

- Responsible consumption and production;
- Urban development, mobility and infrastructure;
- Energy and climate;
- Natural resources;
- Economic and financial system;
- Training, research and innovation;
- Social security;
- Social cohesion and gender equality;
- Health.

As for SDG 16, the Swiss Confederation focuses its actions in the following areas:

- Promote the transparency of institutions;
 - Creation of a computer portal accessible to all to consult public documents.
- Fight corruption;
 - Switzerland is among the five least corrupt countries according to the Corruption Perceptions Index in 2017. Elements of improvement include the transparency of the financing of political parties and election campaigns for which new regulations are being introduced. to be adopted by the Townships.
- Promote inclusive decision-making processes;
 - One third of the population does not have the right to vote and therefore does not take part in political decisions. These are young people aged under 18 and foreign residents who have the right to vote and eligibility only in certain cantons and municipalities. To improve this situation, it would be possible to lower the age limit to 16 years and / or to grant eligibility and voting rights to foreign residents in each municipality and canton.
- Strengthen protection against violence and victim support;
 - Increased protection for victims of domestic violence and harassment.
 - Adoption of restrictive EU arms standards.
- Guarantee the rule of law and human rights;
 - Application, promotion and respect of the various international conventions, including the Geneva Conventions, which notably constitute international humanitarian law and the protection of persons not taking part in conflicts.
 - Respect of the various recommendations of action of the UN institutions, particularly concerning the rights of children, at work, migrant people, etc.
- Fight against fraudulent or illicit financial flows and return stolen assets.
 - Monitoring these flows through the use of various instruments. The means of improvement are to develop even more effective instruments and to adapt these tools to new sectors (e.g. associations, NGOs, foundations). In addition, thanks to its favourable geopolitical situation (neutrality, host country of the UN, in the centre of Europe, regular collaboration with neighbouring countries), Switzerland contributes to the SDG at the international level by promoting peace, human rights and democracy and by contributing to the peaceful coexistence of peoples.⁵

You can consult the monitoring reports of the SDGs by the Federal Statistical Office to track the progress Switzerland has made for each of the goals according to the action plan.⁶

⁵ Source : <https://www.eda.admin.ch/agenda2030/fr/home/berichterstattung/nationale-berichterstattung.html> (DFAE, 19.08.2019)

⁶ More information: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/statistiques/developpement-durable/monitoring-objectifs-agenda-2030/selon-objectifs.html>

10. What skills should be developed in school to foster a peaceful society?

Low level of education has been identified as one of the factors contributing to violence, conflict, impunity, fragile contexts and vulnerability to crises at the local, national and global levels.⁷

In the 1996, Jacques Delors, chair of UNESCO's International commission on education for the twenty-first century, defined four pillars of learning that structure skills development. Each type of learning is built on previous knowledge.

Les différents savoirs
pour bien vivre ensemble



Source: Graines de paix

Learning to Know (Savoir-agir): Knowledge is used to educate students about peace and the culture of peace, understanding the different forms of violence and their unacceptable nature, the links between peace and human rights, peace and democracy, peace and respect for nature.

Learning to be (Savoir-faire): Soft skills allow the self-development of students, based on a better knowledge of oneself. This construction includes their identity and values, their ability to modulate their emotions and to adopt attitudes and behaviours free from fear and violence. Students understand and assimilate the knowledge and lessons that emerge. Therefore, they change their attitude and their view of things accordingly.

Learning to do (Savoir-être): Know-how such as peace skills, i.e. psychosocial skills - relational, intercultural, civic and reflexive that contribute to social and intercultural peace. Students will learn in class how to build relationships together and between cultures, to adopt reflexes of peace to ease tensions, to become active and proactive citizens, and to reflect with discernment. They have all the knowledge and skills to act.

Learning to Live together (Savoirs): This knowledge is about learning through collective acts of life - participating, cooperating, deciding / voting, resolving and intervening proactively, which are the basis of living together and which work all the better as they appeal to the knowledge of peace. To each knowledge or know-how corresponds a pedagogical practice: participative, cooperative, democratic, resolute and proactive, which will be exploited to better learn the main subjects.⁸

⁷ Source : <https://www.eda.admin.ch/agenda2030/fr/home/agenda-2030/die-17-ziele-fuer-eine-nachhaltige-entwicklung/ziel-16-friedliche-und-inklusive-gesellschaften-fuer-eine.html> (DFAE, 18.07.2019)

⁸ Source : <https://www.grainesdepaix.org/fr/activites/formations-denseignants/former-les-enseignants> (Graines de paix, 18.07.2019)