ENGAGEMENT WITH GLOBAL POVERTY & DEVELOPMENT: HOW DO AMERICANS GET INVOLVED?

March 29, 2022
U.S. Spring Series Webinar #3
www.developmentcompass.org
@DevEngageLab

Soomin Oh
Jennifer Hudson
David Hudson
• How do Americans engage with development? A look across 10 actions (Slide 6)
• Efficacy (Slide 68)
• Getting involved in campaigns (Slide 73)
• Key learnings and insights (Slide 85)
• Appendix (Slide 92)
The global pandemic and change of U.S. leadership in January 2021, presented us with an opportunity to identify the challenges and opportunities we face in engaging the American public on foreign aid and sustainable development.

With input from our U.S. partners, DEL designed a series of 10 engagement measures and two experiments to better understand how the U.S. public would like to engage with development.

This deck shares key insights on how U.S. citizens are engaging with global poverty and development - i.e. what actions are they taking on the issue. Second, what difference does it make if you can make people feel that they can make a difference? Finally, what kind of campaigns and calls to action do people prefer and are more likely to engage with?
The research was conducted by YouGov Plc. in the U.S. on September 6-22, 2021. The aggregate sample size is n= 5,591.

The deck reports both national and state level results. For national results, we use aggregate data weighted to be nationally representative. For state-level results, we use multi-level regression and poststratification to estimate state-level estimates, in two stages:

1. Responses to the survey questions are modelled using multilevel regression as a function of individual’s demographic information (age, gender, education, income, and race) and state-level variables (region, 2016 presidential election results).

2. We then applied post-stratification weights at the state level based on the combination of demographic and state values above using the American Community Survey (ACS).
DATA, USE & CITATION

DATA
The data for this analysis comes from a bespoke survey of the 50 U.S. states (n=5,591). Data are weighted to be nationally representative. Fieldwork conducted by YouGov, Sept 6 – 22, 2021.

USE
DEL data and analysis are a public good and can be used and shared with the appropriate citation.

CITATION
What actions do Americans take to engage with global development?
1. Read, watched, or listened to a news article about it (offline or online)
2. Discussed it with friend, family, or others
3. Shared/forwarded an article or information about it (offline or online)
4. Donated money to an international NGO or charity working on the issue
5. Purchased products/services or boycotted products/services related to the issue
6. Volunteered for an organisation or charity working on the issue (U.S. or abroad)
7. Became a member, followed, liked, or subscribed to a newsletter from a development charity or group
8. Used your voice to influence the issue (e.g. signed a petition, written a blog)
9. Contacted a Member of Congress or other elected official
10. Participated in a march, rally, protest, or other large event on the issue
ACTION 1

Read, watched, or listened to a news article about it (offline or online)
64% of Americans have read, watched or listened to a news article about global poverty in the past 12 months.

Question: Thinking about global poverty and development, which of the following have you done, if any, in the past 12 months? Base: US adults | sample size n=8,079 | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork by YouGov, 10 Sept - 12 Oct 2020
ENGAGEMENT WITH GLOBAL POVERTY CONTENT IS ABOVE 50% ACROSS THE U.S. AND HIGHEST IN THE WEST AND NORTHEAST

• There is a strong geographical thrust to engaging with global poverty news and communications. As seen across this research, actions are highest in the U.S. west and west coast and the northeast.

• The most active is Hawaii (71%) followed by California (68%). Least active is West Virginia (51%).

• However, Florida, Georgia, Alaska and Wisconsin at 60% are median states for this kind of engagement.

Question: Thinking about global poverty and development, which of the following have you done, if any, in the past 12 months? Read, watched, or listened to a news article about it (offline or online) | Base: US adults | Sample size = 5,591 | Fieldwork September 6 – 22, 2021
18-24s are least likely to engage with news about global poverty.
MIDDLE AND UPPER INCOME GROUPS ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO ENGAGE WITH GLOBAL POVERTY NEWS
Discussed it with friend, family, or others
JUST OVER HALF OF RESPONDENTS (53%) SAY THEY HAVE DISCUSSED GLOBAL POVERTY & DEVELOPMENT WITH FRIENDS / FAMILY

Question: Thinking about global poverty and development, which of the following have you done, if any, in the past 12 months? Base: US adults | sample size n=8,079 | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork by YouGov, 10 Sept - 12 Oct 2020
• Similar to who and where consumes information about global poverty, discussing it with family and friends follows similar patterns.

• Again, there is the strong west and northeast dimension to discussing global poverty, with California and Washington (59%) most active.

• 50% of respondents in Montana, Wisconsin, Georgia and Florida say they discuss global poverty with their friends and family. As the middle/median states, we see that it is not always traditional blue states that are talking about global poverty.
SIGNIFICANT CONTRAST IN WHO’S TALKING ABOUT GLOBAL POVERTY: TALK IS AMONG HIGHER INCOME, NOT LOWER INCOME GROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lower Income</th>
<th>Middle Income</th>
<th>Upper Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Map of Lower Income" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Map of Middle Income" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Map of Upper Income" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

©2021 | DEVELOPMENT ENGAGEMENT LAB
ACTION 3

Shared/forwarded an article or information about it (offline or online)
JUST OVER 3 IN 10 AMERICANS SAY THEY HAVE SHARED INFORMATION ABOUT GLOBAL POVERTY

Question: Thinking about global poverty and development, which of the following have you done, if any, in the past 12 months? Shared/forwarded an article or information about it (offline or online) Base: US adults | sample size n=5,591 | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork: September 6 - 22, 2021
We asked respondents whether they have shared or forwarded an article or information about global poverty and development in the past 12 months, whether online or offline.

There is variation across the states, from just over 2 in 10 people saying that they have in Pennsylvania up to just under 4 in 10 in Washington.

The overall picture that it paints is while consuming news is something a majority of Americans do, sharing is rarer: not unheard of, but less common.
WHO’S SHARING? 18-34S ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO SHARE THAN OLDER AGE GROUPS
Upper income groups are more likely to share on average, but west coast is the sharing coast across all income groups.
Who donates to an international NGO or charity?
1 in 5 Americans say they have donated to a development organization in the past 12 months.

Question: Thinking about global poverty and development, have you donated money to an international NGO or charity working on the issue in the past 12 months?

Base: US adults | Sample size n=5,591 | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork: September 6 - 22, 2021
Donations to international development organisations have a distinctive diagonal geography.

The states along West Coast, the Southwest, and Northeast are all above average, with the diagonal from Idaho to Texas and Pennsylvania and Virginia down. The exception being the ‘island’ of Illinois, where nearly a quarter of respondents report having made a donation in the past 12 months.

The states with the highest levels of donations are Hawaii and California at 29%. The state with the lowest level of donations is West Virginia, with 13% of respondents report having made a donation in the past 12 months.
18-24 and 25-34 age groups are go to audiences for donations; but geography still matters.
LARGE DISPARITIES AMONG INCOME GROUPS WITH RESPECT TO DONATIONS
Purchased or boycotted products/services related to the issue
A QUARTER OF AMERICANS (25%) SAY THEY HAVE PURCHASED GOODS/SERVICES WITH GLOBAL POVERTY IN MIND

Question: Thinking about global poverty and development, which of the following have you done, if any, in the past 12 months? Purchased products/services or boycotted products/services related to the issue (e.g. purchased products from a charity shop). Base: US adults | sample size n=5,591 | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork: September 6 - 22, 2021
• Nationally, 25% of respondents say they have purchased goods or avoided goods with global poverty in mind. Across the 50 states, this ranges from a low of 12% to a high of 25%.

• Again, we see a concentration of activity in the West and in the Northeast, but there are pockets of above average activity in the Midwest.
AMERICA’S HIGHER INCOME GROUPS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS, BUT EVEN AMONG LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME GROUPS
Volunteered for an organization or charity working on the issue, either in the U.S. or abroad
14% of Americans have volunteered - at home or abroad - for a development organization

Question: Thinking about global poverty and development, which of the following have you done, if any, in the past 12 months? Volunteered for an organization or charity working on the issue, either in the U.S. or abroad Base: US adults | sample size n=5,591 | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork: September 6 - 22, 2021
The question specifically asks respondents about volunteering for organisations working on global poverty and development, not in general.

Californians are the most likely to give their time – with an impressive 1 in 5 saying that they have volunteered in the past 12 months. West Virginians are the least likely to volunteer (8%).

These figures suggest a sizeable minority in each state across the United States that are voluntarily giving their time to the issue.

There are some interesting middle/median states: Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Nebraska and Virginia where 12% of respondents give their time to help those living in poor countries.
18-34s are more likely to volunteer: 45 is clear break in this way of engaging
UPPER INCOME AND MIDDLE INCOME AMERICANS LIVING IN WEST ARE MORE LIKELY TO VOLUNTEER
Became a member, followed, liked, or subscribed to a newsletter from a development charity or group focused on the issue
1 IN 5 RESPONDENTS ENGAGED WITH OR BECAME A MEMBER OF A DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

Question: Thinking about global poverty and development, which of the following have you done, if any, in the past 12 months? Became a member, followed, liked, or subscribed to a newsletter from a development charity or group focused on the issue.

Base: US adults | sample size n=5,591 | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork: September 6 - 22, 2021

©2021 | DEVELOPMENT ENGAGEMENT LAB
Again we see a strong geographical dimension to engagement with development organizations. The U.S. coasts, and in particular the West coast, is the most active in terms of direct engagement with organizations.

At the top is California, where 26% say they have taken these actions, followed by Hawaii (25%), Washington (23%), Arizona (22%) and Oregon (22%).

Texas, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and Ohio are all mid-ranking states in terms of engagement with 16%. More surprisingly, are Idaho and Wyoming – also at 16% - which are traditionally some of the lowest engaged states in DEL research.

Question: Thinking about global poverty and development, which of the following have you done, if any, in the past 12 months? Became a member, followed, liked, or subscribed to a newsletter from a development charity or group focused on the issue | Base: US adults | Sample size = 5,591 | Fieldwork September 6 – 22, 2021
(OLD) AGE MATTERS: SIGNIFICANT DROP OFF IN ENGAGEMENT WITH ORGANIZATIONS AT AGE 45
ACTION 8

Used your voice to influence the issue (e.g. signed a petition, written a blog, etc.)
20% OF AMERICANS SAY THEY HAVE SIGNED PETITION OR WROTE BLOG TO GIVE VOICE TO THE ISSUE

Question: Thinking about global poverty and development, which of the following have you done, if any, in the past 12 months? Used your voice to influence the issue (e.g. signed a petition, written a blog, etc.)

Base: US adults | sample size n=5,591 | Data are weighted to be nationally representative

Fieldwork: September 6 - 22, 2021

©2021 | DEVELOPMENT ENGAGEMENT LAB
As many as one quarter of people in Washington have signed a petition or written a blog in support of efforts to address global poverty.

Kentucky is the state where people are least likely to have used their voice in the past 12 months in support of global development efforts, but even here it is around 1 in 8 people that say that they have done so.

The picture of America that emerges is again one of a significant minority that are engaged on the issue and are saying that they have taken actions to try and influence, in support of, efforts to address global poverty.

Question: Thinking about global poverty and development, which of the following have you done, if any, in the past 12 months? Used your voice to influence the issue (e.g. signed a petition, written a blog, etc.) - to **support** the efforts to address global poverty | Base: US adults | Sample size = 5,591 | Fieldwork September 6 – 22, 2021
WHILE HIGHER INCOME GROUPS ARE MORE LIKELY TO USE THEIR VOICE, IT IS ALSO AN ACTION TAKEN BY MIDDLE AND LOWER INCOME GROUPS.
Participated in a march, rally, protest, or other large event on the issue
FEWER THAN 1 IN 10 RESPONDENTS SAY THEY HAVE PARTICIPATED IN A MARCH, RALLY OR PROTEST IN SUPPORT FOR ADDRESSING GLOBAL POVERTY

Question: Thinking about global poverty and development, which of the following have you done, if any, in the past 12 months? Participated in a march, rally, protest, or other large event on the issue Base: US adults | sample size n=5,591 | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork September 6 - 22, 2021
On average across the U.S., 8% of respondents say they have participated in a march or protest to address global poverty.

This varies significantly by state, with the highest activity in California (14%), followed by Hawaii (12%).

While this activity is low in the Dakotas, Texas, Florida, North Carolina and Virginia, are middle ground states suggesting there is an active audience in these (large) states.
RALLIES AND PROTESTS ARE ACTIONS THAT ARE TAKEN BY YOUNGER AUDIENCES: SIGNIFICANT FALL IN ENGAGEMENT FROM AGE 45
Do Americans think they can make a difference in reducing poverty in poor countries?
“EFFICACY” EXPERIMENT

Control group

How much of a difference, if any, do you think each of the following can make to reducing poverty in poor countries?

• You personally
• The U.S. government
• Development NGOs/charities
• Businesses/corporations
• The United Nations and other international organizations

0 (Can’t make a difference at all) – 10 (Can make a great deal of difference)

Treatment group

Think of a time in the past month where you made a positive impact—however small—on someone’s life. How did it make you feel?

+ Efficacy question
Recall that the “efficacy” scale ranges from 0 (can’t make a difference at all) to 10 (can make a great deal of difference).

On average, personal efficacy level is low (3.74 for control group respondents). The US public perceives the UN and other IOs, development NGOs/charities, and businesses/corporations to be able to make a difference in reducing poverty in poor countries.

However, priming the respondents to think of an instance they made a positive impact increases their sense of efficacy from 3.74 to 3.97. This shift is statistically significant.

Indicates that individuals are more likely to think of themselves as able to make a difference to reducing poverty when reminded of the tangible, positive, change they have made, however small.
Looking at the results by income groups, we first observe that the lower income and middle income group individuals have a lower sense of efficacy than those in upper income group.

Priming on the “positive impact” has a positive and significant effect on the sense of efficacy amongst the lower income individuals – there is a shift from 3.62 to 4.05.

Messages that remind the lower income individuals that they have made a positive impact on others has potential to increase their perception that they can make a difference to reducing poverty.
What encourages the American public to engage development organizations’ campaigns?
MOTIVATION FOR THE EXPERIMENT

• What encourages the American public to engage from the “comfort of their home”?
• Designed a conjoint experiment to test the impact of 4 different dimensions of campaigns on the public’s propensity to engage.
  1. Mode of campaigning
  2. Frequency
  3. Message
  4. Stated method of getting involved
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campaign 1</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Campaign 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mode</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Message</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods for getting involved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thinking about the two campaigns above, which of the two would more likely lead you to get involved and/or take action?
## 4 Dimensions of Campaigns

### Mode
1. Direct mail, leaflets, door-to-door canvassing, phone calls
2. Posters, adverts, and appeals
3. Emails, micro-targeted ads
4. Social media and TV advertisements

### Frequency
1. Once two weeks
2. Once a month
3. Once 3-4 months
4. Once 6 months

### Message
1. Why fighting global poverty matters for **you**
2. Why fighting global poverty matters for the **world**

### Method of Involvement
1. One clear action you can take is provided. E.g. “Text DONATE5 to 12345 to donate $5.”
2. One clear action you can take is provided. E.g. “Write to the your Member of Congress. The address is United States House of Representatives, House Office Building, Washington DC 20515. Here is a template of a letter you can send.”
3. One clear action you can take is provided. E.g. “Tweet using #EndPeriodPoverty and tag @periodmovement”
4. Various options on how to get involved are provided. E.g. “You can get involved by donating to the cause, writing to your member of congress, and/or by tweeting about it”
5. A list of different ways to get involved and step-by-step instructions for each method are provided.
   - E.g. “Here are ways you can get involved:
     - Donate: Text DONATE5 to 12345 to donate
     - Write to the member of congress: Write to the your Member of Congress. The address is United States House of Representatives, House Office Building, Washington DC 20515. Here is a template of a letter you can send.
     - Tweet. Tweet using #EndPeriodPoverty and tag @periodmovement”
# Question as Presented to the Respondents: Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campaign 1</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Campaign 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct mail, leaflets, door-to-door canvassing, phone calls</td>
<td><strong>Mode</strong></td>
<td>Emails, micro-targeted ads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once 6 months</td>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
<td>Once two weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why fighting global poverty matters for you</td>
<td><strong>Message</strong></td>
<td>Why fighting global poverty matters for the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One clear action you can take is provided. E.g. “Write to the your Member of Congress. The address is United States House of Representatives, House Office Building, Washington DC 20515. Here is a template of a letter you can send.”</td>
<td><strong>Methods for getting involved</strong></td>
<td>Various options on how to get involved are provided. E.g. “You can get involved by donating to the cause, writing to your member of congress, and/or by tweeting about it”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thinking about the two campaigns above, which of the two would more likely to lead you to get involved and/or take action?
ONLINE CAMPAIGNS, ONCE 3-6 MONTHS, WITH A MENU OF ACTIONS (WITH INSTRUCTIONS) ENCOURAGE THE AMERICAN PUBLIC TO TAKE ACTION FROM COMFORT OF HOME

Mode

**Online methods**, including emails and targeted ads, and social media and TV ads, are more likely to encourage action/involvement than more traditional methods of direct mail, phone calls, posters, and appeals.

**Frequency**

**Lower frequency** of campaigns – once 3-4 months, or once 6 months – is associated with greater propensity to take action/get involved. Higher frequency steers the public away from engaging.

**Message**

Whether the message is framed as how fighting global poverty matters to **you** or the **world** does not matter for the public’s likelihood of getting involved.

**Methods for getting involved**

There is preference for being provided a **menu of actions** – especially so when the menu includes detailed, step-by-step instructions on getting involved. Providing “one clear action” is less likely to encourage engagement, but providing details on how to **contact your Member of Congress** also encourages action/involvement.

These patterns are consistent across age groups, partisanship, and income groups.
Summary of key takeaways from DEL’s deep dive into engagement with global poverty
KEY INSIGHT 1: GEOGRAPHY MATTERS

• Across the 10 actions we look at, geography is a key dimension: there is distinctive west/coast and northeast prominence to engagement that persists even after looking at socio-demographic factors.

• However, the geographic dimension is strongly correlated with “blue states” as per 2020 Presidential election vote.

• Likely that partisanship/left/center-left ideology that is underpinning engagement.

• What about “new blue” (AZ, GA) states?
KEY INSIGHT 2: DONATIONS

• Across the U.S., just 1 in 5 respondents say they have donated in the past 12 months.

• Most likely donors:
  • 18-34s
  • Significant decline in donations for ages 45+
  • Racial and ethnic minorities
  • Upper income groups
  • West and northeast
KEY INSIGHT 3: LOWER INCOME GROUPS

• Less likely to read, watch, listen to news on issue and discuss with family/friends, but they do share information.

• Much less likely to volunteer, but as a group they do engage with development organizations (esp. in western U.S.).

• This group is takes civic actions – fewer than higher income groups – but are active: signs petitions, contacts elected officials, and goes on march/protests.
KEY INSIGHT 4: 18-24S

• 18-24s are least likely to read, watch or listen to global poverty content, but they are most likely to share it.

• Get content to younger audiences (formats/news challenges) to get multiplier effect.

• Most likely to:
  • Volunteer (alongside 25-34s)
  • Engage with organizations’ content/become a member
  • Sign petition/write blog
  • Attend rallies and protests
KEY INSIGHT 5: “YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE – BECAUSE YOU HAVE!”

• Reminding the public, especially the lower income groups, of the positive impact they have made on others. This positively impacts their sense of their ability to make a difference in reducing poverty in poor countries.
KEY INSIGHT 6: CAMPAIGNS

• Online modes of campaigning – email, TV, or social media – are more likely to encourage action.
  • Frequency of contact matters – too much can steer the public away.
• Campaigns that provide a menu of actions, with detailed step-by-step guide on how to take action/get involved are more likely to generate greater engagement.
# SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White (69.4%)</td>
<td>18-24 (10.8%)</td>
<td>Lower income ($0 - $39,999) (27.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black (9.6%)</td>
<td>25-34 (14.7%)</td>
<td>Middle income ($40,000 - $149,999) (51.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic (12.8%)</td>
<td>35-44 (14.4%)</td>
<td>Upper income (&gt; $150,000) (21.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian (5.5%)</td>
<td>45-54 (15.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial (two or more races) (1.7%)</td>
<td>55+ (44.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Alaska native &amp; Native</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander) (1.0%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Development Engagement Lab (DEL) is a five-year study of public attitudes and engagement with global development in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States (2018-2023).

DEL is a partner focussed research programme, convening and co-producing research and insights with over 30 international development NGOs and government agencies to understand the drivers of engagement and inform development communications.

Fieldwork is carried out by YouGov and surveys are weighted to be a nationally representative of the adult population. DEL is a grantee of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and led by Professor Jennifer Hudson (University College London) and Professor David Hudson (University of Birmingham).

The Development Engagement Lab (Aid Attitudes Tracker Phase 2) has three goals:
1. Co-production of an evidence base for development campaigning
2. Enabling collaboration across the sector
3. Increasing advocacy capacity through the sharing of research and strategic insights

You can find out more information about DEL research at www.developmentcompass.org, follow us on Twitter @DevEngageLab or by contacting del@ucl.ac.uk

Cover photo: Dave Winer on Flickr
Photo on key insights: Varun Yadav on Unsplash (86)
Matt Collamer on Unsplash (87)
Casey Horner on Unsplash (88)
Ryan Parker on Unsplash (89)
Toomas Tartes on Unsplash (90)
Burnt Pineapple Production on Flickr (91)