

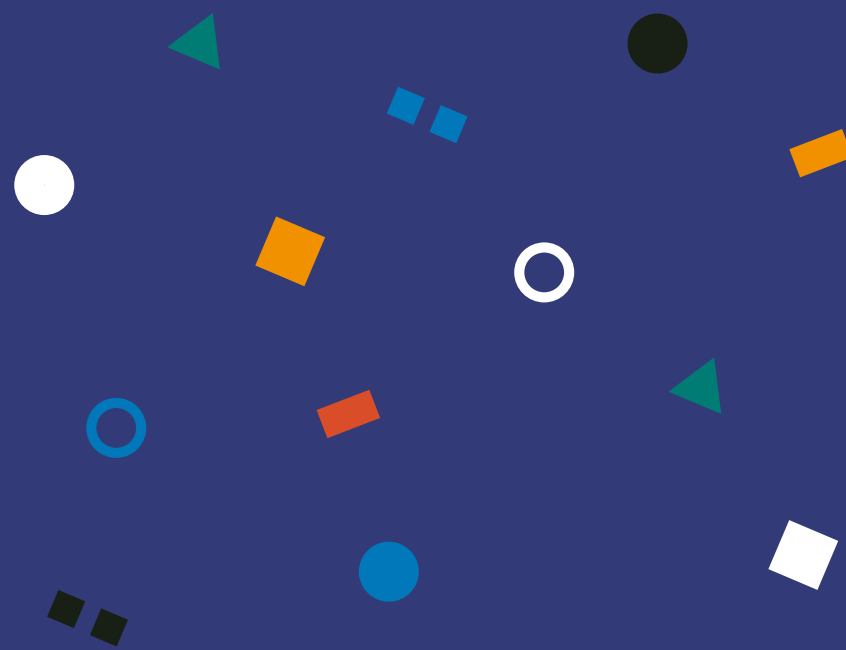


# ENGAGEMENT UPDATE: COVID-19 AND SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN FRANCE

/ 26 May 2021  
// French Partner Meeting  
/// [www.developmentcompass.org](http://www.developmentcompass.org)  
[@DevEngageLab](https://twitter.com/DevEngageLab)

Paolo Morini  
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# DEL TRACKER JANUARY 2021 HIGHLIGHTS



Almost a year into the pandemic, we ask if (and how) engagement with global poverty and sustainable development has changed in France.

While concern for pandemics is on the rise, our data shows little change in public engagement.

# CONCERN FOR PANDEMICS CONTINUES TO RISE

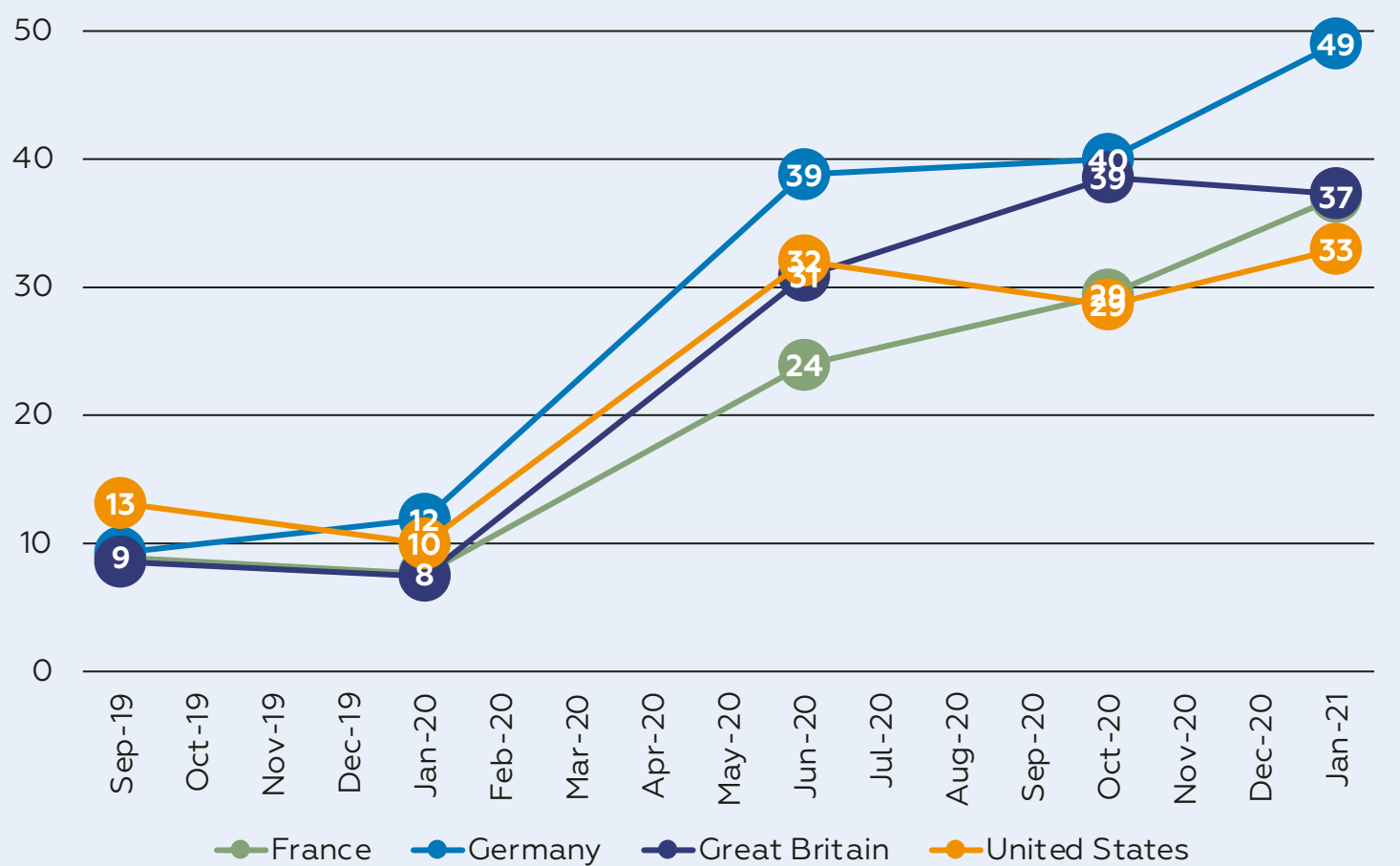


# 37%

Think pandemics are the most concerning issue facing France

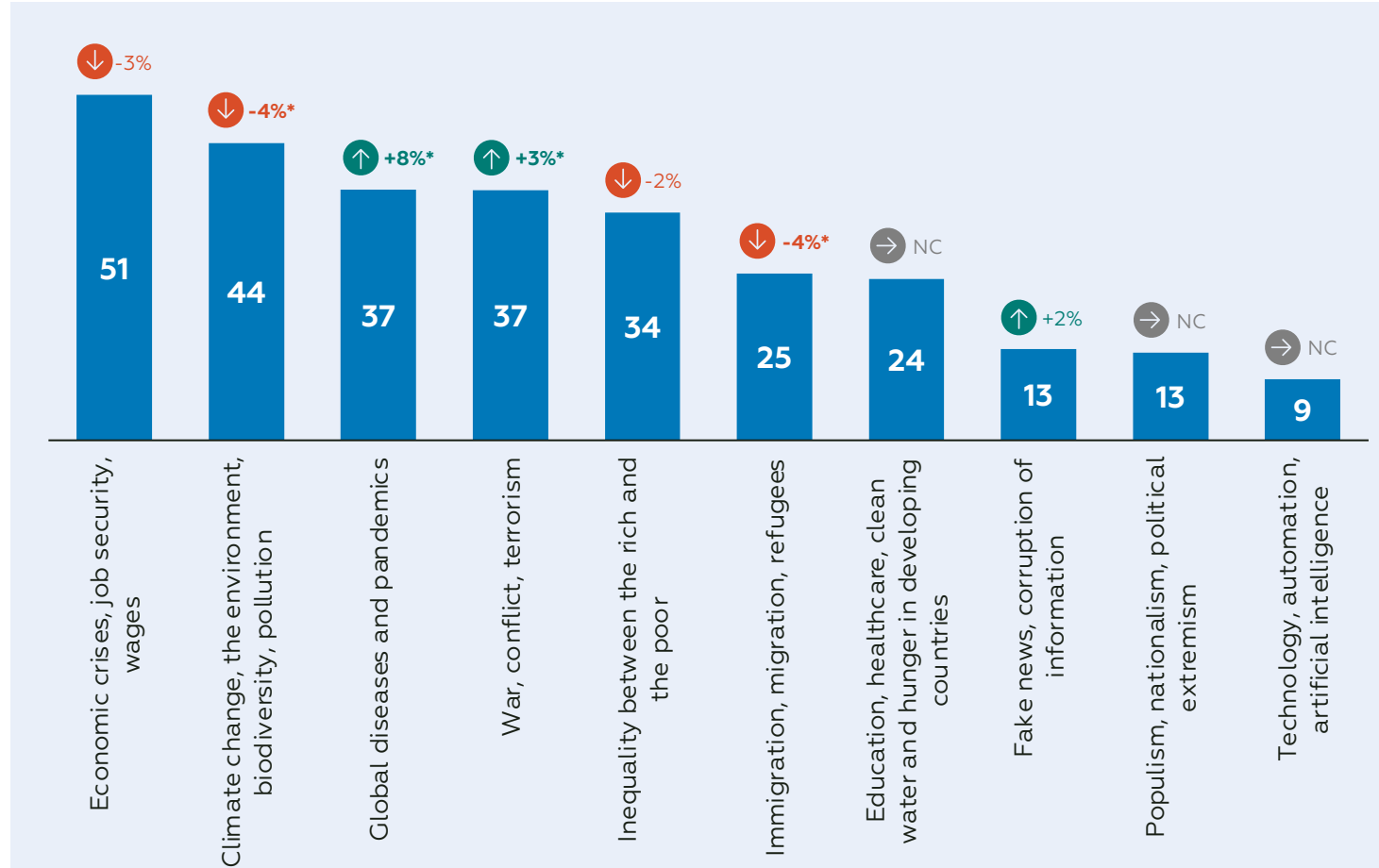
There are no signs that public concern for global diseases and pandemics is waning. The percentage of people concerned is highest in Germany (49%), where pandemics is now the most concerning issue for the country.

In France, 37% of respondents rate global diseases and pandemics as the issue of highest concern. Only economic crises (51%) and about climate change (44%) are more concerning for the French public.



Question: Thinking about the issues below, which of the following do you personally care about? (Global disease and pandemics)  
 Sample size n=1,060 | Base: FR adults | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork by YouGov, 6-8 January 2021  
 Comparison to October 2020

# FALLING CONCERN FOR CLIMATE & MIGRATION



As attention shifts to global diseases and pandemics, other issues become less concerning for the French public. Notably issues connected with immigration, migration and refugees are now the sixth most concerning issue, down 4% since October 2020 to 25%.

Concern for climate change and the environment has also decreased significantly between October 2020 and January 2021 by 4%, but this is still the second most concerning issue in France.

Concern has increased for issues connected with war, conflict and terrorism. This is up 3% to 37% since October 2020, and is now the fourth most concerning issue.

Concern for livelihoods in developing countries is stable at 24%, the seventh most concerning issue on the list.

**Question: Thinking about the issues below, which of the following do you personally care about?**

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Comparison to October 2020

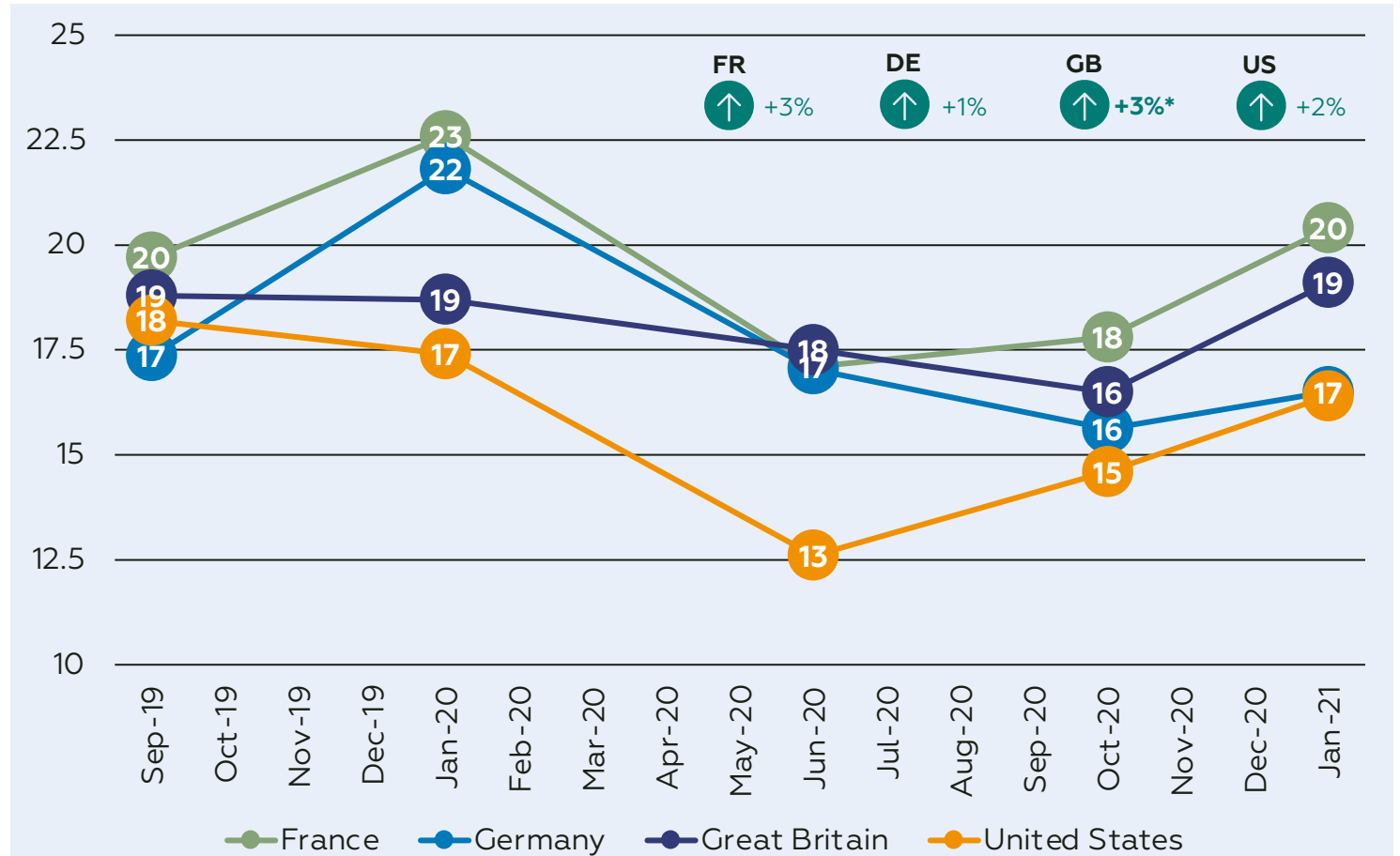
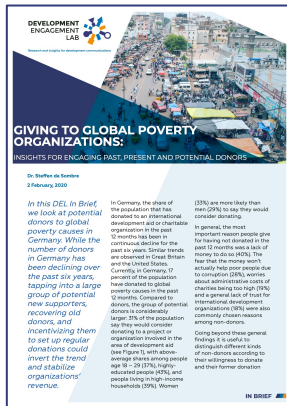


# DONATIONS RETURN TO NORMAL AFTER JUNE FALL

The percentage of donors to a global poverty charity has increased in all countries since October 2020. In France, the number of donors increased by 3%.

We have noted a peak in donations in France and Germany in January 2020, so we are still watching trends for seasonality effects.

## MORE ON DONATIONS ON DEVELOPMENTCOMPASS.ORG



**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?**

Sample size n=1,060 | Base: FR adults | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork by YouGov, 6-8 January 2021  
Comparison to October 2020



# GLOBAL POVERTY AND SDG ATTITUDES REMAIN STABLE



9%



say they know what the Sustainable Development Goals are



46%



think France should do more to reach the SDG objectives by 2030



50%



are concerned or very concerned about levels poverty in poor countries



26%



think development aid is effective or very effective



40%



think the Government can make a difference to reduce global poverty



17%



Think they can personally make a difference to reduce global poverty

Question listed in each box

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## DEL FRENCH TRACKER HIGHLIGHTS

Concern for pandemics continues to rise: 37% of respondents say global diseases/pandemics are the most concerning issue.

However, concern for global challenges has not translated into greater public engagement with global poverty.

Donations have recovered to pre-pandemic levels: 20% of the French public have donated in the past 12 months, matching Sept 2019 levels.

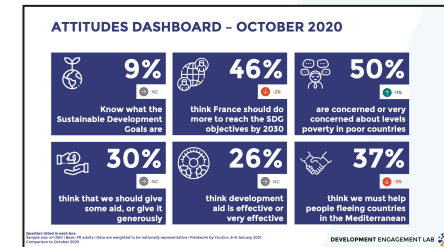
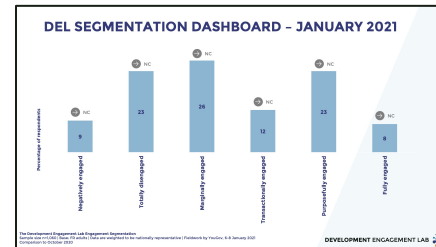
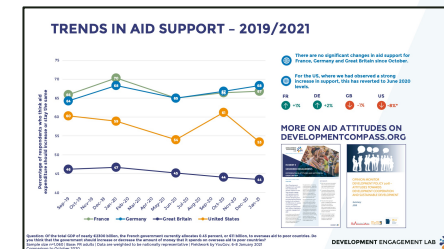
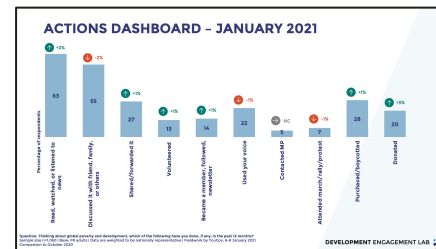
# JANUARY 2021 DASHBOARD AVAILABLE @ DEVELOPMENTCOMPASS.ORG

**DEVELOPMENT ENGAGEMENT LAB**

## DEL DASHBOARD FRANCE JANUARY 2021

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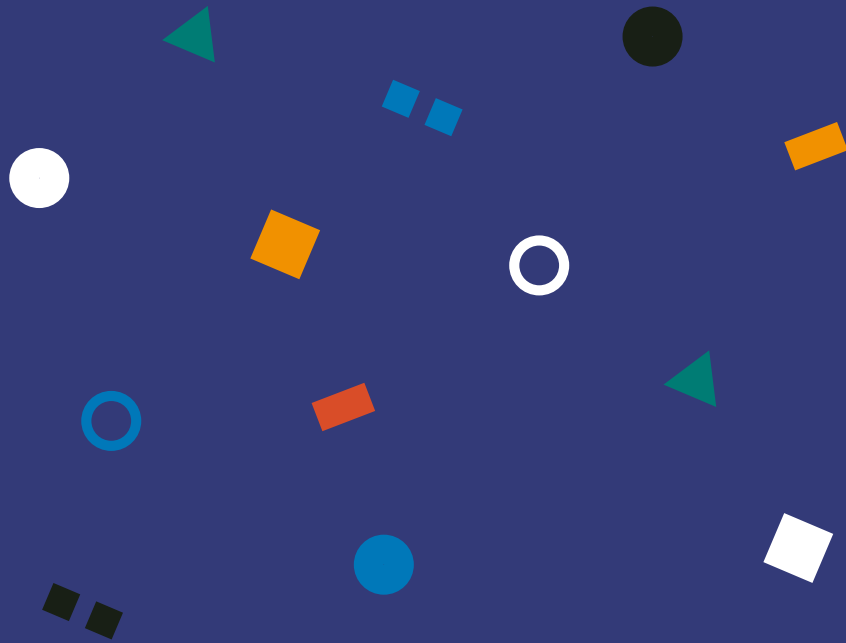
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Next Tracker Update: June 2021

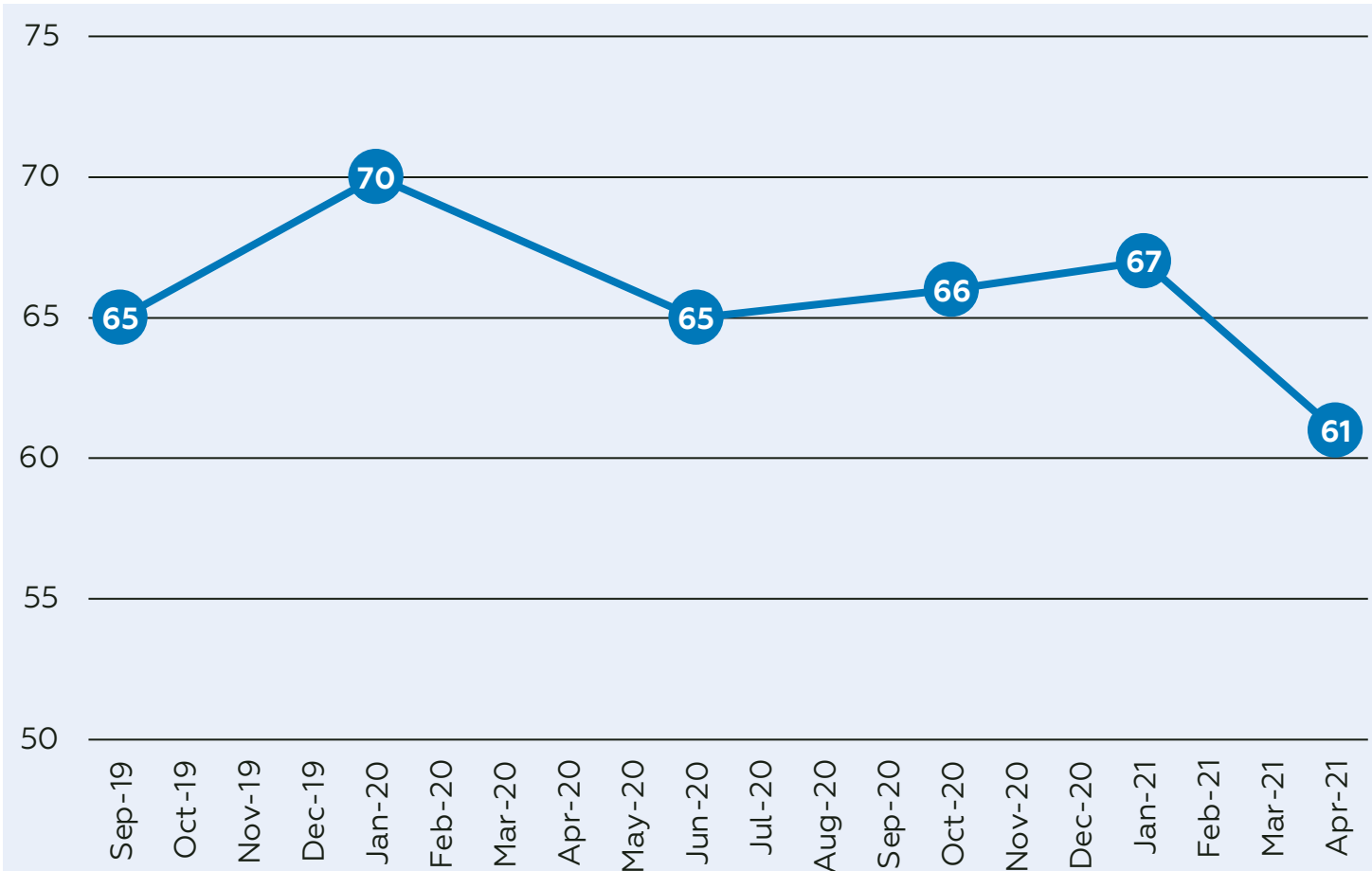


# COVID-19 AND SUPPORT FOR AID IN FRANCE



We investigate how perceptions on the consequences of COVID-19, progress in fighting global poverty, and feelings of solidarity affect support for development cooperation among the French public.

# A MAJORITY OF THE FRENCH PUBLIC SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION SPENDING



# 61%

think the current aid budget should be maintained or increased

April 2021 saw a significant decrease in support for aid expenditure in the French budget, down 6% from January 2021 to 61%.

However, a majority of respondents are still supportive of aid spending, with 23% of respondents saying France should increase aid expenditure, and 38% saying France should keep current expenditure levels.

Question: Of the total GDP of nearly €2300 billion, the French government currently allocates 0.43 percent, or €11 billion, to overseas aid to poor countries. Do you think that the government should increase or decrease the amount of money that it spends on overseas aid to poor countries?  
Sample size n=2,060 | Base: FR adults | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork by YouGov, 30 Apr – 5 May 2021



# SUPPORT LEVELS BY DEMOGRAPHICS AND VOTING

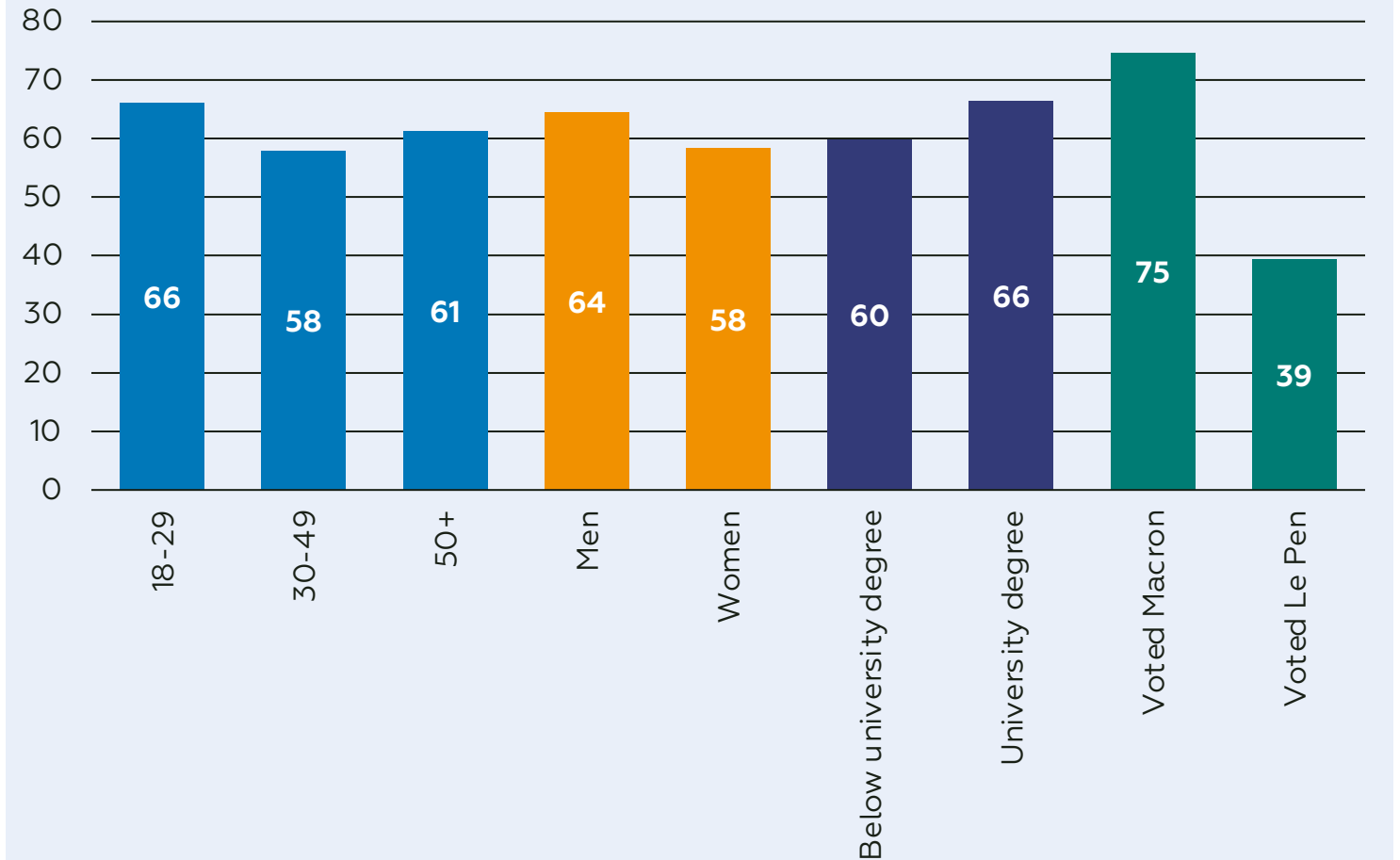


## 61%

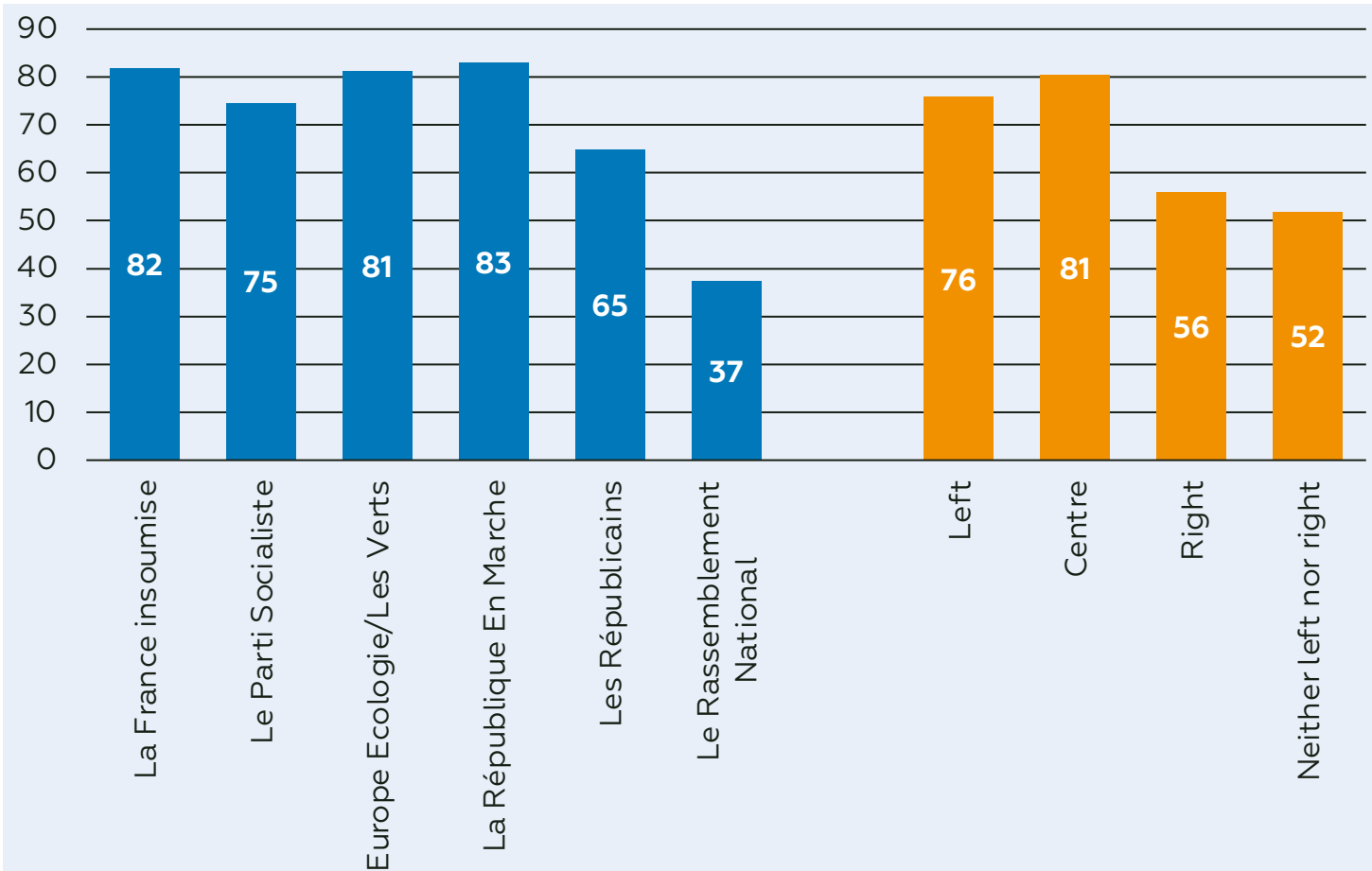
think the current aid budget should be maintained or increased

Support for aid is highest among younger respondents (aged 18-29), for respondents who identify as men, and those with university degrees.

Unsurprisingly, aid support varies by voting patterns: Macron voters are much more likely to support aid than Le Pen voters. 30% of Macron voters would support increases in aid expenditure. 31% of Le Pen voters would still like to keep current expenditure levels.



# AID SUPPORT AND THE ELECTION AHEAD



# 61%

think the current aid budget should be maintained or increased

Support for aid spending in France is highest for those who identify as political centrists.

However, with the exception of Le Rassemblement National supporters, we find support for development cooperation spending across the political spectrum.

Question: Of the total GDP of nearly €2300 billion, the French government currently allocates 0.43 percent, or €11 billion, to overseas aid to poor countries. Do you think that the government should increase or decrease the amount of money that it spends on overseas aid to poor countries?  
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# IS THE DROP IN SUPPORT RELATED TO COVID-19?

## SUFFERING THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected countries around the world. Countries, however, are affected to different degrees by the pandemic in their economy and their health systems.

If the public feels like donor countries are more affected by COVID-19, then they might be less willing to support the aid budget as it stands, or to increase it.

**Our data shows that 50% of respondents think that the health implications of the pandemic have been worse in poorer countries, but only 24% of respondents think poorer countries' economies have been hit the hardest due to COVID-19.**

## MORE PESSIMISM IN DIFFICULT TIMES

A key driver of support for aid is for people to know the money they allocate to fight global poverty is used effectively and that progress is visible.

This is always true, but pandemics can affect both the sense of progress people have ("it's the XXI century, we are still having global pandemics?"), and more in general affect their sense of optimism about world affairs.

**Our data shows that 20% of respondents feel optimistic about prospects of real progress in fighting poverty in poor country by 2030.**

## THE PANDEMIC CAN BRING US CLOSER TOGETHER OR PULL US FURTHER APART

As a common challenge, the pandemic can heighten the public's sense that the world should face global issues together, including COVID-19. This could mean that during the pandemic the public has started feeling more solidarity towards people living in other countries.

On the other hand, the public, feeling threatened by the huge challenge of controlling a global pandemic might "shut down" and opt to go it alone, reducing the sense of global solidarity with people in other countries.

**Our data shows that 25% of respondents feel more solidarity, 49% say their feelings haven't changed, and 10% feel less solidarity since the start of the pandemic.**



# SUPPORT FOR AID IN COVID TIMES - RESULTS



## OPTIMISM ABOUT PROGRESS

Optimism about progress translates into significant more support for aid.  
**71% of pessimists support aid, compared to 87% of optimists.**



## SOLIDARITY AFTER COVID-19

**Respondents who feel a stronger sense of solidarity** with people living in other countries are more likely to support aid – **86% support aid** compared to 54% of those that don't.



## CONSEQUENCES OF COVID-19

If people think poor countries have faced worse economic and health consequences from COVID than rich countries, they are not any less or more supportive of aid.



## EDUCATION

**University degree holders are 3% more likely to support aid** compared to those who do not have a university degree.



## MACRON VOTERS

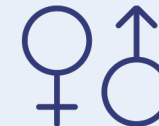
Compared to Le Pen voters, **Macron voters are 25% more likely to be aid supporters.**



## OTHER FACTORS NOT AFFECTING AID SUPPORT



Age



Gender



Income

Question: Of the total GDP of nearly €2300 billion, the French government currently allocates 0.43 percent, or €11 billion, to overseas aid to poor countries. Do you think that the government should increase or decrease the amount of money that it spends on overseas aid to poor countries?  
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# HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED AID SUPPORT?

The percentage of respondents who support aid in France is down 6% since January 2020.

The majority of French people still supports aid, especially among those who voted for Macron at the last elections.

People who feel a stronger sense of solidarity due to COVID-19 are more likely to be more supportive of development aid.



# WHAT ABOUT SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION?

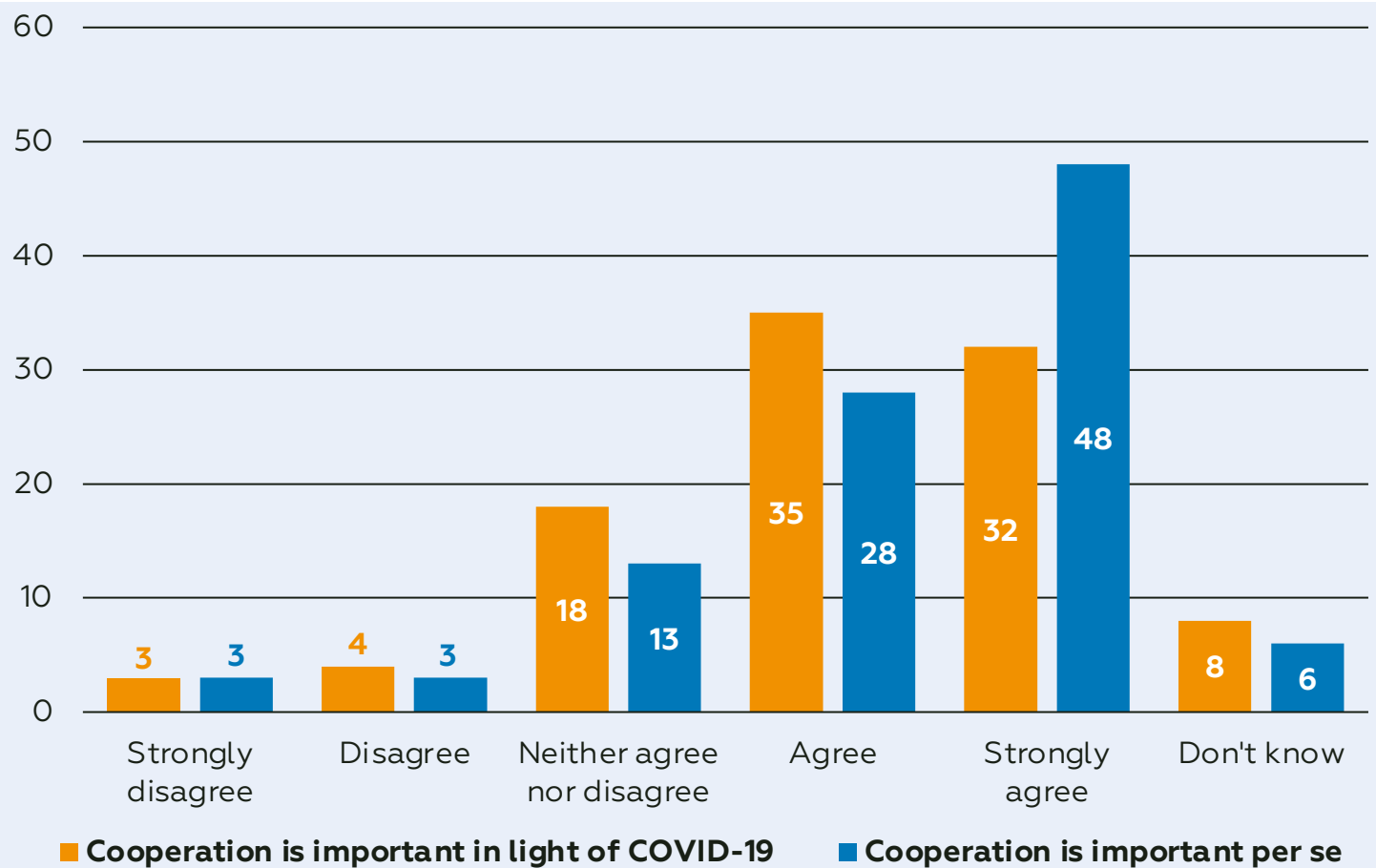


We ran a small experiment to see how support for cooperation to tackle global issues is affected when making people think about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Surprisingly, bringing attention to the pandemic decreases support for international cooperation!



# COVID-19 FRAMES FOR COOPERATION BACKFIRE



Two groups of respondents were presented with a question asking them if they agree that cooperation among countries is important to tackle global issues.

In one version of the question, we prompted respondents to think about the pandemic and its consequences.

Surprisingly, support for international cooperation decreases when the cue about COVID-19 is used: 48% of respondents strongly agree that cooperation is important, which falls to 32% for those that received our COVID-19 cue. More people just agreed, or said they had no strong feelings either way.

Campaigners who are hoping that COVID-19 would strengthen the case for international cooperation may need to be cautious in their messaging.

Question: Dans quelle mesure êtes-vous en accord ou en désaccord avec la phrase suivante : "Des événements tels que la pandémie de COVID-19 révèlent l'importance de la coopération entre les États pour faire face aux défis auxquels le monde est confronté".  
 Sample size n=2,060 | Base: FR adults | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork by YouGov, 30 Apr – 5 May 2021



# RECAP AND KEY MESSAGES

## HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH DEVELOPMENT?

DEL Tracker data shows us that COVID-19 has not had a negative impact on public engagement with sustainable development and global poverty.

The public is increasingly concerned about global pandemics and diseases, and less concerned about climate change and migration. However, climate change and economic crises are still the most concerning issues facing French respondents.

With the percentage of donors matching pre-pandemic levels and relatively unchanged attitudinal engagement, the pandemic has not been a disaster for public engagement. The exception is public support for aid expenditure.

## WHAT HAPPENED TO PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AID?

As France commits to reaching the 0.7% expenditure target in law, public support for aid remains generally positive and strong, but it decreased significantly between January and May.

61% of respondents still think aid expenditure should be kept at current levels or increased, but this is down from 67% in January 2021.

We find that people are more likely to support aid if they felt more solidarity with other countries, more optimistic about progress in reaching the 2030 targets, are university educated or voted for Macron.

Thinking that poorer countries experienced the worst consequences of COVID-19, both economically and health-wise, made no difference to public support.

## WILL WE FEEL MORE SOLIDARITY AFTER FACING THE PANDEMIC TOGETHER?

A sense of solidarity towards other countries affects support for aid, but, surprisingly, bringing up COVID-19 in messaging to bolster these feelings of solidarity might backfire.

In our experiment we asked people if they think cooperation among countries is key to addressing global issues.

While most people agree with the statement, when reminded about the consequences of the pandemic, support for international cooperation falls.

Organizations should not assume the pandemic makes the case for international cooperation.



**DEVELOPMENT  
ENGAGEMENT  
LAB**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM**

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 funded by 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](http://www.developmentcompass.org), follow us on Twitter [@DevEngageLab](https://twitter.com/DevEngageLab) or by contacting [del@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:del@ucl.ac.uk).

Cover photo: [World Bank on Flickr](#)