How to win support for investment in action on climate and development by changing the way we talk about it.
WHY NOW?
In 2022 we embarked on a landmark research project, to understand how can we unlock mass support for international investment in climate and development. In 2023, we built on these findings and expanded the reach of the survey beyond the G7...

15 countries

G7+
- Australia
- Canada
- France
- Germany
- Italy
- Japan
- UK
- US

Emerging Economies
- Argentina
- Brazil
- India
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Nigeria
- South Africa

Fieldwork conducted August 2023
CONCERNS IN CONTEXT

A look at public perceptions of climate action in a wider context.
I. WHAT’S ON PEOPLE’S MINDS?

We asked what issues will be on their minds when voting at the next national election.

**G7 +**

- **45%** Cost of living
- **27%** Healthcare
- **25%** Climate change
- **24%** State of the economy

**Emerging Economies**

- **35%** Unemployment
- **32%** Corruption
- **30%** State of the economy
- **30%** Cost of living
While it isn’t a top voting concern, climate change is a significant concern across all markets.

2. CLIMATE IS A CONSISTENT CONCERN

While it isn’t a top voting concern, climate change is a significant concern across all markets. Climate change appears to get drowned out by other more acute issues, especially during times of economic anxiety.
2. UNEMPLOYMENT, CORRUPTION AND COST OF LIVING ARE THE TOP VOTING PRIORITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Thinking about the next election, which three issues are most likely going to be on your mind when you vote? (rank top 3)

- Unemployment: 53%
- Corruption: 41%
- Cost of living: 34%
- The state of the economy: 30%
- Education: 25%
- Homelessness and poverty: 17%
- Healthcare: 15%
- Social and economic inequality: 12%
- Climate change: 11%
- Water and sanitation: 10%
- Energy policy: 8%
- Tax: 8%
- Housing: 7%
- Pensions: 4%
- Immigration: 3%
- Family life and childcare: 3%
- Future pandemics: 3%
- Defence and security: 3%
- Welfare benefits: 2%
- Transport: 1%
- International aid: 1%
3. CLIMATE CONCERN IS CONTEXTUAL

Concern for the negative impacts of climate change is high across all countries. But concern is significantly higher in Emerging Economies (EE), where the impacts of climate change are felt more directly.

How concerned are you about the negative effects of climate change?

- **G7+**: 6.8
- **EE**: 7.9
- **SOUTH AFRICA**: 8

Not concerned at all

0

Very concerned

10
In G7 countries, we’ve observed a small but significant decline in concern for climate change. Concern has dropped most steeply in France, Germany and Italy. This is likely because of a worsening economic context.

The US went from 6.7 in 2022 to 6.6 in 2023.
4. INVESTMENT IN CLIMATE ACTION HAS BROAD SUPPORT

Respondents in the majority of countries believe funding climate action is either a requirement or a good investment in our future.

“Climate change funding is an opportunity and a good investment in our future.”

“Climate change funding is important. It may be difficult in the short term, but it is a requirement and we definitely need to do it in the long term.”

“Money used to fund initiatives to tackle climate change is another cost we can’t afford at the moment. There are more pressing global issues.

“Don’t know”

G7+  
- 25%  
- 39%  
- 24%  
- 12%

EE  
- 28%  
- 49%  
- 19%  
- 4%
Political affiliation also plays a big role. For example, views on climate spending in South Africa vary significantly by past vote.
4. Investment in climate action has broad support

However, a significant amount of citizens prefer the idea of investing in climate action at home, instead of abroad. In the G7 this tendency has increased since 2022.

“By investing in other countries, we can help them do their part in tackling global problems like climate change”

“We should not be spending money on tackling climate change at all”

“To tackle climate change we should be spending money at home, not abroad”

“Don’t know”

9%

13%

34%

44%
5. ALL NATIONS AGREE RICH COUNTRIES SHOULD PAY MORE

Although emerging economies agree more strongly.

“High income countries should bear a larger part of the costs of climate action than lower income countries because they are historically responsible for more damage to the climate”
There is a high level support for making loans more affordable for emerging economies, to enable them to fight climate change and improve health, education and livelihoods. Japan was a notable exception. Support is highest amongst emerging economies.
7. Trust is a matter of perspective

If the following countries were to invest in lower-income countries, which would you trust to have the best interests of that other country at heart?

- USA: 36%
- UK: 29%
- Canada: 28%
- UAE: 18%
- China: 18%
- Italy: 16%

Top Three: USA, UK, Canada
Bottom Three: UAE, China, Italy
If the following countries were to invest in lower-income countries, which would you trust to have the best interests of that other country at heart? (select all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Nations</th>
<th>G7 &amp; Australia</th>
<th>Emerging Economies</th>
<th>African Nations</th>
<th>USA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<td>45%</td>
<td>51%</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
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<td>UAE</td>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
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HOW WE TALK ABOUT INVESTING IN ACTION REALLY MATTERS.

There isn’t a one-size-fits-all script.

But communicating in the right way can substantially increase support, by up to 20%!
E.G. ‘CLIMATE JUSTICE’

is polarising in G7+ but supported in Emerging Economies.

“I understand what it means and **think it is an important concept.** We need climate justice.”

“I understand what it means but **don’t have an opinion about it.**”

“I understand what it means and **don’t like what it stands for.**”

“I don’t understand what it means”
E.G. ‘CLIMATE JUSTICE’

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“I understand what it means and don’t like what it stands for.”

“I don’t understand what it means”
When you hear the words “climate justice”, which of the following most closely reflects your response?

58% understood and supported it
20% understood but didn’t have an opinion
9% understood but didn’t like what it stands for
13% didn’t understand what it means

There is also a political angle to be aware of when using climate justice to communicate.
OUR MESSAGES NEED TO REACH BEYOND THE BUBBLE!

The research identified a relatively small group of highly concerned, highly active people, ‘anxious globalists’ in the G7.

But is 16% of the population enough to create a movement?
We need to meet the masses in the middle.

We've identified two influential and persuadable groups: 'Soft Right' and 'Middle Class Moderates'.

Their voices carry significant weight in domestic politics.
SIX EFFECTIVE COMMS TACTICS TO WIN SUPPORT BEYOND THE BUBBLE.
Tactic 1

START WITH WHAT THEY CARE ABOUT.

Most people are preoccupied with immediate concerns such as paying bills or finding a job. Messages need to be sensitive to their daily reality.

RECOMMENDATION

Given economic anxieties, messaging should connect climate and development finance initiatives with their positive impact on living costs, the future economy, and – especially in emerging economies – jobs.
Tactic 2

NATURE AND COST OF LIVING CAN OPEN THE DOOR

Do you think that the national government is currently spending too much, not enough, or the right amount on the following issues?

- Helping people deal with the cost of living: 53%
- Protecting and restoring nature: 50%
- Tackling climate change: 46%
- Aid to poorer countries: 23%

% think their government should spend more
Tackling climate change is supported by 50%+ of respondents in South Africa, Kenya, France, Italy, and Argentina.

In Argentina, Brazil, France, Germany and Italy “protecting and restoring nature” received the most support.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Consider positioning government investment in terms of responding to the cost of living crisis or protecting and restoring nature.

This particularly increases support amongst the mainstream “middle” and those who see climate action or investment in other countries as less of a priority.
**Tactic 3**

**FOR INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT, BRING IT BACK TO BASIC NEEDS.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G7+</th>
<th>Emerging Economies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Clean water</td>
<td>1. Green jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hunger</td>
<td>2. Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fighting disease</td>
<td>3. Fighting disease</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Tackle deforestation</td>
<td>12. Tackle deforestation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question: “Imagine that a global fund was established with enough money and expertise to really make a difference in addressing problems relating to climate change, the environment, poverty, hunger, and inequality in the world’s lower income countries. Which of the following areas would you be most and least excited to invest in?”

*Most and least popular options from a list of 14 options*
Tactic 3

FOR INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT, BRING IT BACK TO BASIC NEEDS.

Addressing immediate human needs is generally seen as a more exciting use of a ‘global fund’ than focusing on longer-term investments.

1. Green jobs
2. Reducing poverty
3. Reducing hunger

12. Tackling pollution
13. Tackling deforestation
14. Sustainable transport

RECOMMENDATION

When communicating the impacts of international investment in climate and development, highlight how it will address immediate human needs for G7+ audience, and emphasise the creation of jobs for Emerging Economies.
Treatment Proposal:
This project would support sustainable farming and food production. This would allow them to export food to [your country] more reliably and at a lower cost.

Control Proposal A:
This project would support sustainable farming and food production.

Question: Please imagine that [your government] has put forward a plan to invest $10 million in a lower income country...
Kenya showed less support for the treatment proposal but there were high levels of support for both statements overall.
Win-wins focused around forced migration, food security and improving trade were particularly effective in South Africa.
Tactic 4

WIN-WINS WORK

By communicating the win-wins, it led to an average increase in support of 9%, and in some countries significantly more.

This is particularly effective in countries where the public are initially less open to investing in lower income countries.

Highlighting win-wins that related to reducing forced migration* and improving food security**, were particularly effective.

RECOMMENDATION

When persuading people about the need to invest in international action, highlight a tangible benefit that resonates with the home country of the audience you’re speaking to.

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* "Can help prevent people from being forced to flee their homes and migrate to other countries, benefiting global stability."

** "Supports stable global food supplies and prices, benefiting all countries."
Globally, 73% of respondents support “polluter pays” policies – that would tax industries that profit from fossil fuels in order to fund poor countries to reduce their carbon emissions.

South Africa – 83% supported!

The more polluted the country, the more they agree.
We asked...

To tackle the climate crisis and reduce global poverty, people have argued that we would need [XX] of additional funding and investment worldwide. Would you support or oppose a campaign that would advocate for this level of investment to be made available?

**OPTIONS**

1. $2.4 Trillion
2. Funding equivalent to 2–3% of global GDP
3. Funding equivalent to 2–3% of global GDP. This is the same as the world spends on military and defense spending each year
4. Whatever it takes
Tactic 6

TRILLIONS AND BILLIONS DON’T WORK

Communicating cost as a percentage of global GDP increased support by an average of 7%.

In some countries, changing the framing increased support by 10 – 20%;

Support in South Africa increases by 10% (53% to 65% or 62%. Support is also high for ‘whatever it takes’ at 56%)

Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, US

Argentina, Canada, Brazil, Germany, Australia, UK, France

RECOMMENDATION

Don’t talk about billions and trillions! Instead create a meaningful comparison to give your audience context.
THE MESSENGER MATTERS.
A significant number of people don’t know who to trust when it comes to climate change. Scientists were the most trusted from our list.

- **41%** Scientists
- **34%** Environmental organisations
- **22%** International organisations
- **20%** Victims of climate disaster
This reflects last year’s findings that ‘middle class moderates’ and ‘soft right’ audiences in the G7 don’t like partisan voices or activist language.
**WHO DO YOU TRUST?**

Which of the following do you feel are the most trustworthy sources of information on climate issues?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Select Group of Countries:</th>
<th>Select Country:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
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<th>Renewable energy companies</th>
<th>News/ Journalists</th>
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<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
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<td>40%</td>
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<td>26%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Most trusted messengers by country and demographic group**

Select country: [South Africa]

Select demographics: [Post vote]

| Political affiliation plays a large role in trusted messengers with scientists being favoured by ANC and independent party supporters where environmental orgs are favoured by DC and EFF | Tableau |
IN CONCLUSION
1. Let your message become too disconnected from people’s daily lives.

2. Assume that a message that works for one country or audience will work for another.

3. Talk about the cost of tackling climate change and global poverty in billions and trillions.

4. Use activists as messengers to reach mass audiences.
DO

1. Connect communications to what your audience really cares about e.g. cost of living, nature.

2. Highlight the win–wins! Connect investment in action with tangible benefits that resonate locally.

3. Talk about making polluters pay for climate action.

4. Talk about the cost of tackling climate change and global poverty as a % of GDP or another meaningful comparison.

5. Try to find “messengers in the middle” to reach mass audiences.
The majority of people, across all countries, care about climate change and support investment in action on climate and development!

LETS NOT FORGET...
Three 90-minute focus groups were conducted in South Africa. **These groups each focused on a different segment of South African society**, with participants from LSM 4-1 in Group 1, LSM 6-7 in Group 2 and LSM 8-10 in Group 3.

The findings from the groups supported the research, and showed:

- **South Africans are incredibly concerned about the state of their country** – concerns about prices, corruption, load shedding and crime dominate, and as a result can often drown out issues like climate change.
- However when discussed, **climate change is seen as an important issue**, and participants noted that they are **already directly experiencing the impacts** of the planetary crisis.
- **Win-win framings increase support from South Africans** – particularly when linked to forced migration.
- There is **generally low awareness of international actors** like the World Bank, UN and IMF.
- **There is low awareness and understanding of what the government are currently doing** – South Africans feel their government could do more to help countries in the region with climate change and development, but also feel that South Africa needs more support from richer and more powerful countries.
- **Climate justice as a concept is generally supported.**
For Money Talks 2023, Stack Data Strategy surveyed 30,034 individuals across 15 countries.* Approximately 2,000 interviews were conducted in each of the countries including South Africa. All interviews were conducted online and collected using multiple online panels. The survey took place between August 18th and September 1st 2023.

In South Africa, responses were weighted against the national census for age, gender, education and region variables, and election results for past political voting behaviour.

Surveys were checked for bot responses (to ensure participants were human) as well as for respondents who were simply not paying attention. These responses were identified, discarded and not included in the survey analysis.

* The countries surveyed were the UK, US, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, India, Indonesia.
Research was undertaken by Stack Data Strategy.

Research consisted of a poll of 30,000 people across the G7, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa (2000 per country).

Fieldwork was conducted between 18 August and 1 September 2023.

Huge thanks to ONE, Earth4ALL, Global Citizen, E3G, Sharing Strategies, African Climate Foundation, GSCC, Project Everyone and others for their inputs and support.
We have also created an interactive dashboard where you can toggle between country and demographic specific results.