

Global challenges like climate change, pandemics, and political instability affect all of us, but tackling them requires coordinated efforts, including individual actions, collective initiatives, and effective policies. Governments and organizations play a critical role, yet their success often depends on public engagement—whether it's adopting environmentally friendly behaviors, supporting policies, or volunteering for community initiatives. However, why do some people take action while others do not? What motivates us to engage, and how can we encourage more people to participate in solving global problems?

This project seeks to answer these questions by exploring the psychological factors behind public engagement. It focuses on two key components: how much people feel a crisis matters to them (Want) and how confident they are that their actions can make a difference (Expectancy). By understanding these drivers, the project aims to identify barriers to engagement and develop solutions to overcome them.

The research will be conducted in three phases. First, a global survey across 60+ countries will examine how people perceive crises like climate change, social inequality, and violence and political instability, and how these perceptions vary across cultures. Second, the project will test strategies, such as targeted messaging and advocacy training, to enhance motivation and action. Finally, using computer simulations, the study will model how people's motivations evolve over time and under different conditions, providing insights into large-scale patterns of engagement.

Scientifically, it will advance our understanding of the psychological drivers of engagement, providing new insights into why people act—or fail to act—during crises. Practically, it will produce tools like an open-source simulation model and interactive data visualizations to support evidence-based policymaking and public awareness campaigns. By addressing the psychological barriers to collective action, this project will help us better address global challenges and fostering a more resilient and engaged society.