

**Sustainable Development Geek** is a game designed to get people talking about serious topics in a fun way. It is grounded in the belief that successful development requires questioning, discussing, and improving our ideas, rather than finding the “right” answer.

**Sustainable Development Geek** was inspired by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that officially came into force on January 1, 2016. The SDGs apply to all countries of the world, and aim to end poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change by 2030.

We hope this game will challenge assumptions, provoke lively discussions, and open new perspectives. Enjoy and geek on!

### Spread the geekiness!

If you wish to help us with further development, or have any other feedback, we look forward to hearing from you. You can also order more copies and find additional resources, including PDF versions, a reference list, and your very own geek glasses at [www.eda.admin.ch/sdgeek](http://www.eda.admin.ch/sdgeek)




## GETTING STARTED

There are many ways to play this game, some of which are described in this manual, with additional ideas available online ([www.eda.admin.ch/sdgeek](http://www.eda.admin.ch/sdgeek)).

This game contains...

### Question Cards (106)

The **SDG(s)** this question relates to:



**Front**

How many people worldwide rely on wood, coal, charcoal or animal waste for cooking and heating?

**A** 3 billion people (40% of the global population)

**B** 1 billion people (14% of the global population)

**Back**

A - 3 billion people (40% of the global population)

B - 1 billion people (14% of the global population)

3 billion people or 40% of the global population still rely on wood, coal, charcoal or animal waste for cooking and heating. These traditional fuels are often used in inefficient stoves and contribute to indoor air pollution with severe impacts on health. They generally require a lot of time for their collection, which is often ensured by women and girls, and often contribute to environmental degradation, through, for example, deforestation for charcoal production.

### Levels

- novice geek
- trainee geek
- pro geek

Use this number to record questions you would like to re-use again (e.g. for educational, facilitation purposes), or to look up the original source of the information on our references list [www.eda.admin.ch/sdgeek](http://www.eda.admin.ch/sdgeek).

### Play cards

- > SDG Cards (17)
- > A and B Cards (2)
- > Super Geek card (1)



## THE GREAT DEBATE

For those who believe that the best way to tackle an issue is to talk it out.

**5–10 players, 30–60 minutes**

### Materials

- > Question cards
- > A+B cards
- > SDG cards
- > Paper and pen for recording points (can be substituted by tokens)
- > Timer (set to 30 seconds)

### Set up

The players sit in a circle.

Appoint one player as “banker” (records the points), one as “timekeeper” (keeps track of time) and one as “reader” (reads questions from stack of shuffled question cards). These players also participate in the game.

Select, from the play cards, the A and B cards, and as many SDG cards (doesn’t matter which ones) necessary so that the total number of play cards matches the number of players. For example, if 5 people are playing, select the A, B and 3 SDG cards making a total of 5 play cards. Lay the play cards, face down, in the middle of the circle and mix them up.

### How to play

The game is played in several rounds; the winner is the first person to reach 17 points. (Alternatively, you can play until you run out of cards, time, or patience.)

Each round starts with all players picking up a play card, revealing their draw to the group, and placing it in front of them. Those who drew A and B will be the “debaters”, and will defend their respective answers, A or B (see question card). Those who drew an SDG card, will be the deciders and “vote” for the correct answer in the end.

The reader picks the first question card from the stack; s/he reads the question, and two possible answers (A or B) to the players. As the reader is also participating in the round, s/he cannot look at the answer.

After the question is read, debater A has 30 seconds to defend their position,

followed by debater B, also for 30 seconds; the timekeeper notifies the debater when their time is up. Debaters can use any arguments they like. The goal here is to sway as many deciders to their side as possible.

After both arguments have been heard, deciders simultaneously place their SDG cards next to the answer they think is correct – A or B.

Now, the reader flips the question card over, and reads the correct answer.

### Scoring

**DEBATERS** - Get one point for each SDG card they were able to “earn”; they get no points for being correct.

**DECIDERS** - Get one point for choosing the correct answer, and zero points for the wrong answer.

### + SUPER GEEK

Throw in the Super Geek card to add an element of surprise and mischief.

To introduce this variation, switch out one play card with the Super Geek card, face-down on the table. All players draw cards and whoever picks the Super Geek card displays it on the table in front of them until they decide to play it.

Replace the play card into the game, and start playing again normally as described above: All players (including the Super Geek) draw a card in the middle of the circle and reveal it to the other players.

The Super Geek now has the power to “switch” roles with another player whenever s/he wants to, so long as that player has not yet started speaking their arguments. This means that if the Super Geek has an SDG card, but would rather take on a debater role for that question, s/he can use the Super Geek card to “trade places” with debater A or B before they have spoken their respective arguments. The Super Geek may steal debater B’s place even after debater A has spoken their arguments, as long as debater B has not yet started speaking). The person with the Super Geek card can also use this card when they themselves are the debater, but would like to switch sides (A <-> B) or roles (A<-> decider).

The Super Geek card gets transferred to the person who was forced to give up their role, and may be used from the next turn onward. (i.e. the Super Geek card cannot be used more than once per round).

### + REWARD THE DEBATER

If you expect a group with significant prior knowledge on the subject, and/or you would like to particularly reward good debating, you can adjust the scoring as follows.

After both A and B have debated, the deciders **FIRST** place their SDG cards next to the answer they think was better argued. Points are tallied accordingly for debaters (i.e. debaters get one point for each SDG card they were able to earn)

Then, deciders place their SDG card next to the answer they think is correct. Points are tallied accordingly for deciders (i.e. deciders get one point for a correct answer, zero points for incorrect).

### + REBUTTAL

In this variation, debaters are allowed a short rebuttal. This means that after debater A and B present their arguments for 30 seconds each, they rebut each other’s arguments for 10 seconds each, first player A, then B.

### + CONSULTANTS

This variation allows for a debater to “hire” another player as a consultant to argue in their place.

A debater may hire a consultant after the question is asked, but before the debates begin. The debater agrees with their consultant on a price: for example, 2 points before the debate, or split the final points earned 50-50, or 1 point before the debate, and 1 point if the debater earns a minimum of 3 points this round, etc.

Players vote and receive points according to their original role. So if debater A hired a consultant to argue in their place, all points “earned” go to debater A; the consultant maintains their role as decider and votes accordingly.

# ACHIEVE THEM ALL



For risk-takers who want to change the world. **2–4 players, 60 minutes**

## Materials

- › Question cards
- › SDG cards
- › Paper and pen for recording points

## Set up

Lay out the 17 SDG cards in a circle between the players.

The question cards are mixed and left in a stack.

## How to play

This game is played until the group has achieved all 17 SDGs. The winner is the player who achieved the most SDGs.

Each turn, there is a reader and a responder; these roles rotate with each turn.

The turn starts with the reader reading the first question in the questions stack. The responder answers. If s/he is incorrect, the question card is placed on the “discard” pile and the next turn starts.

If s/he is correct, s/he may choose to either continue answering questions, or to stop. The responder must make this choice BEFORE the next question is asked. S/he may however be told which SDG(s) the next question relates to.

At the point at which the responder chooses to stop, s/he may take home all of the question cards s/he answered correctly. However, the responder answers a question incorrectly, all cards earned in that turn are lost to the discard pile and a new turn starts.

With the cards s/he took home that round, the responder “achieves” the corresponding SDGs by placing the question card on the outside of the respective SDG card. If the question card has 2 SDG icons, s/he may choose 1 SDG to achieve; this may not be changed subsequently.

If an SDG has already been achieved, it may not be achieved again. Instead, the corresponding question cards are kept by the player and may be used to buy a question at a later turn.

At the start of their turn, the responder may choose to exchange 3 correctly answered question cards for the possibility to answer a question on a desired SDG topic. When this happens, the three question cards are paid to the “discard” pile, and the reader, starting from the top of the question cards stack, looks for the first question marked with the desired SDG. The reader asks the question, and the game continues as usual. You may buy as many questions as you can afford per turn.

At the end of each turn, record the number of SDGs achieved for that player. Then rotate roles and start a new turn.

Players play until all 17 SDGs have been achieved. At that point, the player who was able to achieve the greatest number of SDGs wins.

## + DIFFERENT EXCHANGE RATES

If you notice that there is a big difference in knowledge between players (e.g. development expert playing with development novices), you can adjust the exchange rate for buying a question: for example, 2 question cards for novices, 4 for experts.

## + SUPER GEEK

Lay out the A, B and Super Geek cards alongside the other SDG cards in the circle.

To achieve the A or B cards, players must answer 3 cards correctly in a row. To achieve the Super Geek, players must answer 5 cards correctly in a row. Mark the achievement of the A, B or Super Geek with any question card of your choice; the other cards earned may be used as normal, to achieve SDGs or to buy a question later.

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Where consensus leads to a better world. **10–70 people, 45 minutes minimum** (or “continuously” where people drop in and out)

## Materials

- › Question cards (for smaller groups) or presentation on computer and projector
- › A stock of chocolates (or other small giveaway; roughly 15 per player)
- › “Misconceptions pot”: a transparent pot/vase
- › A few special prizes for the debate round
- › Small tables (standing tables work well)
- › 2 cups (paper cups work well), with “A” and “B” marked on them.
- › Timer and horn/bell/gong for signaling time (optional)

## Animators

1 Presenter – responsible for presenting the questions and answers

1–6 Stewards – responsible for running the logistics of the game. If not available, provide a stock of chocolates at each table and rely on the honor system for distribution of chocolates.

## Set up

The presenter is responsible for presenting the questions and answers to the audience, and may use a projector to display the questions.

The stewards are responsible for running the logistics of the game. They manage the stock of chocolates and assist participants with the game.

The players sit or stand around tables in small groups.

On each table there are two cups marked with the option “A” or “B”.

## How to play

At the start of each round, stewards distribute one chocolate to each player. The presenter then picks a question and reads it aloud or displays it on the projector.

The players around each table discuss the question. They must reach a consensus on one answer and put all of their chocolates into the corresponding cup: A or B.

It is up to the presenter to decide whether s/he wants to set a time limit for the discussion of the questions. S/he may also use a horn/gong/bell for signaling time.

Once all the groups agreed on their answers, the presenter reads aloud or displays

the correct answer. The players who chose the right answer can keep the chocolate. The players who chose the wrong answer have to put their chocolate into the misconception pot (stewards can assist with this).

## + DEBATE ROUND

To bring more dynamics into the game, every now and then the presenter can announce a debate round.

Before the question of the debate round is revealed, two volunteers are selected to represent A or B. The presenter then reads aloud or displays the question. Each debater has 30 seconds to defend their position to the audience. The other players are free to vote for the one they prefer by placing their chocolate in the corresponding cup. Stewards collect and tally the chocolates.

The debater who earns the most votes wins the round. For this round, the presenter may present the volunteer with the most votes (does not have to be the correct answer) with a prize.

## + SCORING

There is no scoring necessary for this format, especially if it is played during an event where the participants drop in and out. In a more structured event setting, you could make the tables play against each other – 1 point for each correct answer in a normal round and 3 points if their “delegate” wins the debate round.

# FACILITATION



Sustainable Development Geek can be used for facilitation or group events.

## Warm up

At the start of a workshop, break the participants into smaller, 2–4 person teams and encourage them to reach a consensus on a common answer before flipping the card over to find out the real answer. Encourage teams to share their previous experiences, preconceptions, or reactions to the question.

## Energizer

Before the session, pick a few questions that are relevant to your topic (each card is marked with up to two SDGs they relate to); or let chance pick for you.

When the energy level drops, designate one side of the room as “A”, the other as “B” and ask participants to line up, one in front of the other, along the partition.

Read the question and ask participants to walk to the side they think is correct (A or B). You can stimulate a discussion by asking someone from each side to defend their answer before reading the correct response.

## Ice Breaker

Leave the cards scattered around at the coffee break or cocktail reception to get participants talking with each other about sustainable development.

For more ideas on events and educational settings: [www.eda.admin.ch/sdgeek](http://www.eda.admin.ch/sdgeek).

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