
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE – Juli Nikolaus

SDG stands for Sustainable Development Goals. It is the name of seventeen goals that the United Nations came up with in 2015 to improve the world's problems and try to make it a better place for everyone. The ninth SDG focuses on "Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure", which means the goal is to make the industry more sustainable and inclusive, to support innovations and build a resilient and environmentally friendly infrastructure. In theory that may sound short and easy, but it isn't, and we are still far from achieving this goal. In wealthy countries like Austria, goal nine can be and is typically well executed, but these countries also have the money to help accomplish it. Less developed countries however can't keep up with the wealthy ones, so their industry is developing more slowly.

But why is it a problem if we don't achieve goal nine? If the industry stays as it is and continues to use fossil fuels, there will be too many waste products which harm the environment. Therefore, innovation and research have to be supported so that ways to improve and to make the industry more environmentally friendly are found. But all that couldn't happen without a strong infrastructure. To strengthen it there must be, once again, innovation and a well-developed industry because a good economy is crucial for the infrastructure. To specify what needs to happen for goal nine, the United Nations came up with eight targets which have different indicators. They describe the goal and also give exact things to accomplish by 2030. For example, we must increase access to financial services and markets for smaller industrial, and specifically in developing, countries. Another target is to support research financially and to increase access to information and communication technology. Additionally, less developed countries need to support innovation. Lowering carbon emissions is also essential to achieving goal nine. For this reason, the energy that the industry uses has to be from clean recourses like the wind, water, and sun. Things that mark a strong infrastructure are good water supply, good education, and affordable transportation. Transportation, in particular air-transportation, is very harmful for the environment.

What can you do to achieve goal nine?

I think in Austria the industry is better than in other countries but there is always room for improvement. To improve sustainable industry, you as a customer can't make big changes, but you can do little things which will help, especially if more people follow your example. When you buy local things for instance, you support the industry of your country. So, on your next trip to the grocery store, you could look at the origin of the products you're buying. If it is from countries that are far away, the products have to be flown or shipped into your country, which is then bad for the environment. When it comes to innovation in Austria, I think there can always be more support because it's important that we don't stop developing. If you want to help with innovation in your country and if you're creative, write all of your ideas down and begin to implement them. Overall, the most important thing is to keep yourself informed about the SDGs and don't take everything you have as a given.