

GOAL 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE*

'Whatever you do, do it with a smile'
[proverb from Sri Lanka]

One day spent with Rubina from Sri Lanka

Hāyi! Mama Rubina inne! I am 15 years old and right now I am sitting in a tree next to a mound in Thambala in Sri Lanka. Over there is our house, where I live with my father. My mother and brother live and work in the capital city Colombo. I only get to see them once a year, but that is ok because it is always good to have something to look forward to. The last time they came to visit me, they brought me a big present: a smartphone! They managed to get it quite cheap because the screen was a little cracked, but it works fine, although the screen sometimes goes black and it is a bit slow. I don't mind though because I can be patient. When I first got my mobile phone, I was so excited and I wanted to use it straight away, but in our little village we do not get any internet reception.

Just imagine that! You get given such a cool thing, but you can't use it! I tried every corner in our village, looking for reception and I finally was successful! Right here, in this tree, here is the only reception I could find and where I can surf the Internet. The higher I go up in the tree, the better the reception gets!

Ever since I have found this spot, more and more people have joined to sit with me up here. I have just looked up the weather forecast. I want to know, when the next monsoon season starts. The monsoon rainfall is really

important for our natural environment here. When we know, when the next monsoon is about to happen, my father can prepare the rice fields just in time. We often had the problem that we were surprised by heavy rainfalls and the fields weren't prepared for that. I also found out on the Internet, that there are more efficient cultivation methods we could use. So many new technologies have been invented, it's unbelievable! When I told my dad about this, he agreed that smartphones can indeed be helpful. I didn't tell him about all the games I downloaded. Through a chat messenger I am able to talk to my mum and brother every day – for free.

The friends I have met on this tree have told me that a big company has developed internet balloons, which will make it possible to receive internet in all parts of the world. And now listen to this: They will try out these new balloons here on our island in Sri Lanka! The balloons fly twice as high as airplanes or clouds. One of the balloons can stay up to 100 days in the sky and provides us with a good signal. Then it falls to the earth and new balloons will be sent up there. That sounds to me like a fairy tale. But I am really looking forward to this experiment! I will then be able to check my emails from home or look up the news on the Internet. That's what the future sounds like! Every person should have the same access to knowledge and new technologies.





Promote and ensure access to infrastructure for all

Internet is important for many reasons: to gain knowledge, to communicate with other people, or to trade or exchange important information, such as weather or disaster warnings. Worldwide more and more people use the internet. However, most of them come from the more developed countries. More than four million people still don't have access to the internet. When we talk about infrastructure we don't just mean the internet. We also mean streets, water and electricity lines, sanitary facilities, schools, hospitals, waste disposal and public transport.

Many rural regions in the developing countries still don't have access to sufficient traffic routes and means of transport. This makes transport in those regions difficult and expensive and complicates the economic development. Also, some businesses rather relocate their production plants to countries, where there is a better infrastructure. This generates new jobs and is good for the economy of those countries.

In cities the infrastructure is usually better than in the countryside. That is why many people move from the country into the cities. One can also observe this in Austria: Many young people go to the cities to go to university and when they get their degree, they decide to stay there to find a job. In cities there are more universities, libraries, cinemas and so on. In the countryside there are pubs, small supermarkets, schools and post offices that struggle getting enough people come in there and often have to shut down because of financial difficulties. This in turn leads people to leave the rural areas – it is a vicious circle. In order for this not to happen, Goal 9 ensures to expand infrastructure, especially in the rural regions.

Until 2030 there should be worldwide and affordable access to Internet, electricity, to sanitary facilities, water supply and waste disposal. It is a great challenge since we currently have 2.6 billion people in developing countries, which have no access to electricity or sanitary facilities. 800 million people, especially in the desert regions of Africa and in southern Asia have no access to clean drinking water. We need a lot of smart people to gather innovative ideas to discover new possibilities and opportunities.

What can we do to reach this goal?

- When talking about building new infrastructure such as streets and buildings, there is nothing much we can contribute from here. However, you can draw attention to the people responsible if you can think of any changes or if you have ideas for improvement. When for example in your city there is space for another cycle path you can get in touch with the competent authority.
- Just like in the story with Rubina, Goal 9 is about the access to the Internet. Here, it is especially important to learn how to correctly use the internet. The EU initiative **safeinternet.at** helps children and young adults, parents and teachers in Austria how to use the digital media in a responsible manner. The platform offers amongst other things a lot of information, teaching material or workshops. You can find out more here: www.saferinternet.at

**Pia (11) from
Wilhelmsdorf, Styria**

'We wanted to have a playground in our village. All the children came together and talked to the mayor. Now they will start building the playground soon!'

**Mehmet (15) from
Oberndorf, Tyrol:**

'Our rural youth group built a barrier free hiking path last year. I believe that when building new streets and paths that all people should be able to access them. We had a lot of discussions how we could make this possible. Talking about new ideas, promotes innovation!'

- The Austrian organization **Jugend eine Welt** works in many developing countries and helps building schools and universities. They also help rebuild the infrastructure after natural disasters. You can support them by raising money. Take part in a charity run for example. Maybe you want to help locally for a year, when you turn 18. More information: www.jugendeinewelt.at