

# 2021 Social Progress Index

## Executive Summary

**SOCIAL  
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# Introduction

We are excited to announce the 2021 Social Progress Index and a report focused on the relationship between social progress and greenhouse gas emissions. The Social Progress Index is the only measurement tool to comprehensively and systematically focus exclusively on the non-economic dimensions of social performance across the globe with transparent and actionable data.

This is the seventh year of the index, which contains applicable and focused insight for nations and communities around the world. This short brief focuses on some of the overarching findings that we have taken away from this year's index and the sustainability analysis, including five headline findings:

- Overall, social progress is advancing across the world. but progress remains slow and uneven. The population-weighted world average score has improved by 4.63 points since 2011, to 65.05/100.
- Despite this overall progress, the world is declining significantly on personal rights 116 of the 168 countries (69%) measured by the SPI have seen individual rights rolled back since 2011. While not universal, this trend is apparent across all regions and levels of social and economic development.
- Achieving sustainability is tied to improving key areas of social progress. The findings show that there are countries that have been highly effective at improving living standards and quality of life while emitting more modest levels of greenhouse gas emissions, compared to other higher-income countries that are developing at the expense of the environment.
- If every country achieved emissions targets comparable with the most sustainable country at their level of development, the world would achieve a sustainable level of GHG emissions.
- The correlation between SPI score and sustainability has been weakening over time, meaning that higher levels of social progress are less likely to indicate higher emissions in 2021 than was the case just eleven years ago.

Beyond these headline empirical findings, we are excited to share this report with you in order to also continue to engage the growing social progress community. The Social Progress Imperative now works with over 70 partners across more than 45 countries covering 2.4 billion people, to not only chart social progress but to use the insights from systematic measurement to make a positive difference for all.

We look forward to the exciting ways that the general public and decision-makers around the world can engage in this movement and look forward to your feedback and continued engagement on this important mission!

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## ABOUT THE SOCIAL PROGRESS INDEX

Social progress has become an increasingly critical agenda for leaders in government, business and civil society. Citizens' demands for better lives are evident in uprisings since the Arab Spring and the emergence of new political movements in even the most prosperous countries. Since the financial crisis of 2008, there has also been a growing expectation that business must play its role in delivering improvements in the lives of customers and employees, as well as protecting the environment for us all. This is the social progress imperative.

Progress on social issues does not automatically accompany economic development. Rising income usually brings major improvements in areas such as access to clean water, sanitation, literacy, and basic education. But on average, personal security is no better in middle-income countries than low-income ones, and is often worse. And, too many people—regardless of income—live without full rights and experience discrimination or even violence based on gender, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Traditional measures of national income, such as GDP per capita, fail to capture the overall progress of societies.

The Social Progress Index rigorously measures country performance on many aspects of social and environmental performance which are relevant for countries at all levels of economic development. It enables an assessment of not just absolute country performance but also relative performance compared to a country's economic peers. The index gives governments and businesses the tools to track social and environmental performance rigorously, and make better public policy and investment choices. The Social Progress Index also allows us to assess a country's success in turning economic progress into improved social outcomes. Overall, the Social Progress Index provides the first concrete framework for benchmarking and prioritizing an action agenda advancing both social and economic performance.

### The Social Progress Index Methodology

The Social Progress Index follows four key design principles:

*1. Exclusively social and environmental indicators:* Our aim is to measure social progress directly, rather than utilize economic proxies or outcomes. By excluding economic indicators, we can, for the first time, rigorously and systematically analyze the relationship between economic development (measured for example by GDP per capita) and social development. Prior efforts to move “beyond GDP” have comingled social and economic indicators, making it difficult to disentangle cause and effect.

*2. Outcomes not inputs:* Our purpose is to measure the outcomes that matter to the lives of real people, not the inputs. For example, we want to measure a country's health and wellness achieved, not how much effort is expended nor how much the country spends on healthcare.

**3. Holistic and relevant to all countries:** We strive to create a holistic measure of social progress that encompasses the many aspects of the health of societies. Most previous efforts have focused on the poorest countries, for understandable reasons. But knowing what constitutes a successful society for any country, including higher-income countries, is indispensable for charting a course for all societies.

**4. Actionable:** The Social Progress Index aims to be a practical tool that helps leaders and practitioners in government, business, and civil society to implement policies and programs that will drive faster social progress. To achieve that goal, we measure outcomes in a granular way that focuses on specific areas that can be implemented directly.

The design principles are the foundation for our conceptual framework and formulate our definition of social progress. The Social Progress Index uses the following working definition:

*Social progress is the capacity of a society to meet the basic human needs of its citizens, establish the building blocks that allow citizens and communities to enhance and sustain the quality of their lives, and create the conditions for all individuals to reach their full potential.*

The index is structured around 12 components and 53 distinct indicators. The framework not only provides an aggregate country score and ranking, but also allows benchmarking on specific areas of strength and weakness. Transparency of measurement based on a comprehensive framework allows change-makers to set strategic priorities, acting upon the most pressing issues in their societies.

Figure 1 / 2021 Social Progress Index Framework



Each of the twelve components of the framework is made up of between three and five specific outcome indicators. Indicators are selected because they are measured appropriately with a consistent methodology by the same organization across all (or essentially all) of the countries in our sample. Taken together, this framework aims to capture a broad range of interrelated factors revealed by the scholarly literature and practitioner experience as underpinning social progress.

### Sustainability Analysis

The high-level structure of the 2021 Social Progress Index remains unchanged from 2020. However, this year there has been a distinct change in one of the components of the index. In order to examine the relationship between the Social Progress Index and greenhouse gas emissions we had to make changes to the component that measures environmental quality. We removed the indicators that measured greenhouse gas emissions and biome protection in order to be able to do a sustainability analysis against the SPI. We added two new indicators which measure environment quality, including deaths from lead exposure and species protection.

To improve the measurement of component-level concepts and accommodate changes in data availability, some modifications were made to individual indicators and to the composition of several components.

A key advantage of the Social Progress Index's exclusion of economic variables is that we can compare social progress relative to a country's level of economic development. In many cases, it is more useful and interesting to compare a country's performance to countries at a similar level of GDP per capita than to all countries in the world. For example, a lower-income country may have a low score on a certain component, but may greatly exceed typical scores for countries with similar per capita incomes. Conversely, a high-income country may have a high absolute score on a component, but still fall short of what is typical for comparably wealthy countries. For this reason, we present a country's strengths and weaknesses on a relative rather than absolute basis, comparing a country's performance to that of its economic peers.

The first Social Progress Index was released in 2014, which means that this is the seventh annual index. For the first time, we can measure 11 years of progress, from 2011-21.

## 2021 SOCIAL PROGRESS INDEX RESULTS

The 2021 Social Progress Index ranks 168 countries that have sufficient available data to assess all 12 components. We group countries from highest to lowest social progress into six tiers. Tiers are based on hierarchical clustering to set empirically determined break points across groups of countries based on their Social Progress Index scores.<sup>1</sup> Here we present results across all countries

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<sup>1</sup> To determine tiers, we ran a number of iterations of clusters and decided upon the common breaks, with six different tiers being the best fit for the Index. We note that although these tiers show similarities among

and for the world as a whole. We then discuss the relationship between Social Progress and GDP per capita. Finally, we explore changes in social progress at the country level since 2011, with spotlights on US performance and the mandate for prioritizing social progress.

## 2021 Country Rankings

Norway ranks first on the 2021 Social Progress Index, with a score of 92.63. Canada, ranked sixth with a score of 91.41, is the top performing G7 country. All 14 Tier 1 countries are high-income, and all score very similarly on social progress—just 3.19 points separate first-ranked Norway at the top of the tier from 14<sup>th</sup> ranked Austria.

Tier 2 features a much wider range of scores, from Luxembourg (88.75, ranked 15<sup>th</sup>) to Hungary (80.15, ranked 42<sup>nd</sup>). France, the UK, Italy and the US—the rest of the wealthy G7 countries—are ranked in Tier 2 of the Social Progress Index. Most Tier 2 countries are high-income.

Bulgaria (43<sup>rd</sup>), leads Tier 3 with a score of 78.81, with fellow EU member state Romania right behind (44<sup>th</sup>, 78.41) – the only EU member states not to be in tier 1 or 2. Tier 3, also includes large Latin American countries such as Brazil, Colombia and Mexico.

Mongolia tops Tier 4 (69.81, 79<sup>th</sup>) Tier 4 also includes several resource-rich countries, including Qatar (68.07, 86<sup>th</sup>), Bahrain (65.85, 96<sup>th</sup>) and Saudi Arabia (63.73, 105<sup>th</sup>) China and South Africa are also Tier 4.

Tier 5 is home to several of the countries that have improved most over the past decade, including The Gambia (56.49, 122<sup>nd</sup>), Sierra Leone (53.01, 136<sup>th</sup>) and Eswatini (52.00, 141<sup>st</sup>). India is also a Tier 5 country. Tier 5 is mainly comprised of lower-middle- and lower-income countries, many of them in East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

Tier 6 countries exhibit the widest range of scores of any of the six Social Progress Index tiers: 18.32 points separate Pakistan (50.82, 143<sup>rd</sup>) from South Sudan (32.50, 168<sup>th</sup>). Tier 6 countries are generally low income, and several are fragile states where instability has hindered social progress. Some, like South Sudan and Yemen, are also active conflict zones. South Sudan ranks last on the 2021 Social Progress Index.

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countries in terms of aggregate performance, there is significant variation in each country's performance across components.

Figure 2 / 2021 Social Progress Index Rankings

Tier 1			Tier 2			Tier 3			Tier 3			
Rank	Country	Score	Rank	Country	Score	Rank	Country	Score	Rank	Country	Score	
1	Norway	92.63	15	Luxembourg	88.75	43	Bulgaria	78.81	69	Paraguay	71.49	
2	Finland	92.26	16	Belgium	88.68	44	Romania	78.41	70	Colombia	71.35	
3	Denmark	92.15	17	Korea, Republic of	88.42	45	Mauritius	77.90	71	Thailand	70.96	
4	Iceland	91.78	18	United Kingdom	88.25	46	Trinidad and Tobago	76.82	72	Sri Lanka	70.81	
5	Switzerland	91.78	19	France	88.23	47	Serbia	75.99	73	Dominican Republic	70.71	
6	Canada	91.41	20	Spain	87.53	48	Ukraine	75.78	74	Maldives	70.40	
7	Sweden	91.20	21	Estonia	87.38	49	Georgia	75.47	75	Suriname	70.22	
8	Netherlands	90.57	22	Czechia	86.60	50	Kuwait	75.32	76	Cuba	70.18	
9	Japan	90.44	23	Italy	86.56	51	Malaysia	75.22	77	Cabo Verde	70.00	
10	Germany	90.32	24	United States	86.29	52	Panama	75.01	78	Vietnam	69.70	
11	Australia	90.28	25	Portugal	85.97	53	Jamaica	75.00				
12	New Zealand	90.02	26	Slovenia	85.83	54	Belarus	74.83				
13	Ireland	89.47	27	Lithuania	85.58	55	Armenia	74.56				
14	Austria	89.44	28	Malta	85.24	56	Albania	74.51				
			29	Cyprus	85.03	57	Montenegro	74.15				
			30	Singapore	84.73	58	Tunisia	73.95				
			31	Greece	84.37	59	Ecuador	73.85				
			32	Israel	83.81	60	Moldova	73.67				
			33	Slovakia	83.69	61	Peru	73.61				
			34	Latvia	83.43	62	Russia	73.45				
			35	Poland	83.08	63	Republic of North Macedonia	73.05				
			36	Croatia	82.82	64	Kazakhstan	72.23				
			37	Chile	82.18	65	Brazil	72.06				
			38	Costa Rica	81.73	66	Bosnia and Herzegovina	71.91				
			39	Uruguay	81.15	67	United Arab Emirates	71.58				
			40	Barbados	80.74	68	Mexico	71.52				
			41	Argentina	80.38							
			42	Hungary	80.15							

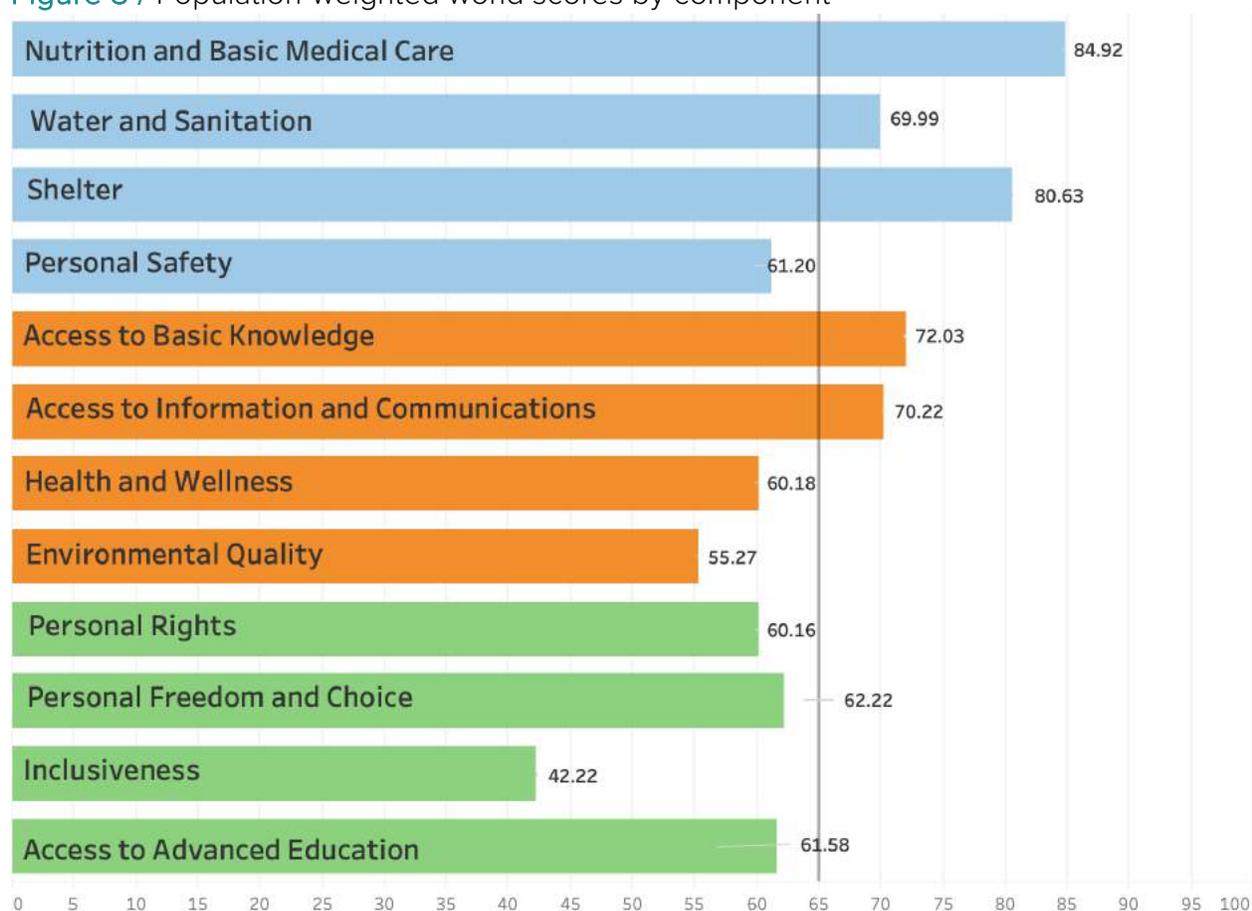
  

Tier 4			Tier 5			Tier 5			Tier 6			
Rank	Country	Score	Rank	Country	Score	Rank	Country	Score	Rank	Country	Score	
79	Mongolia	69.18	109	Egypt	60.29	139	Cameroon	52.07	143	Pakistan	50.82	
80	South Africa	69.17	110	Honduras	60.19	140	Uganda	52.02	144	Burkina Faso	50.65	
81	Fiji	69.06	111	Senegal	59.73	141	Eswatini	52.00	145	Laos	50.09	
82	Kyrgyzstan	68.78	112	Guatemala	59.54	142	Liberia	51.67	146	Djibouti	49.91	
83	Jordan	68.77	113	Nepal	59.06				147	Congo, Republic of	49.45	
84	Bhutan	68.44	114	Timor-Leste	58.85				148	Ethiopia	48.80	
85	Oman	68.09	115	India	58.81				149	Madagascar	48.75	
86	Qatar	68.07	116	Kenya	58.76				150	Mozambique	47.89	
87	Turkey	67.99	117	Myanmar	58.62				151	Mali	47.86	
88	Lebanon	67.79	118	Iraq	58.35				152	Mauritania	47.63	
89	Bolivia	67.69	119	Libya	58.23				153	Angola	47.23	
90	Algeria	67.04	120	Turkmenistan	57.58				154	Equatorial Guinea	46.61	
91	Botswana	66.96	121	Bangladesh	56.87				155	Sudan	46.40	
92	West Bank & Gaza	66.73	122	Gambia, The	56.49				156	Papua New Guinea	46.06	
93	Guyana	66.27	123	Tajikistan	56.33				157	Haiti	45.96	
94	Indonesia	66.26	124	Malawi	55.64				158	Guinea-Bissau	45.49	
95	Uzbekistan	65.90	125	Benin	55.43				159	Guinea	43.25	
96	Bahrain	65.85	126	Tanzania	55.17				160	Burundi	42.64	
97	Philippines	65.73	127	Comoros	54.71				161	Congo, Democratic Republic of	42.11	
98	Iran	65.72	128	Cambodia	54.52				162	Niger	42.02	
99	Ghana	65.67	129	Solomon Islands	54.03				163	Yemen	38.90	
100	China	65.44	130	Lesotho	53.97				164	Somalia	35.62	
101	Morocco	65.24	131	Côte d'Ivoire	53.89				165	Eritrea	35.33	
102	Sao Tome and Principe	64.62	132	Syria	53.78				166	Chad	34.60	
103	El Salvador	64.25	133	Togo	53.51				167	Central African Republic	33.53	
104	Gabon	64.05	134	Zimbabwe	53.37				168	South Sudan	32.50	
105	Saudi Arabia	63.73	135	Zambia	53.29							
106	Namibia	63.38	136	Sierra Leone	53.01							
107	Azerbaijan	62.90	137	Rwanda	53.01							
108	Nicaragua	62.45	138	Nigeria	52.65							

## World Average Performance

We can sum country Social Progress Index scores, population-weighted, to look at world performance. If the world were a country, it would rank between Morocco and Sao Tome and Principe on the Social Progress Index (score: 65.05). On average, the world scores highest on Nutrition and Basic Medical Care and Access to Basic Knowledge. The world performs worst on the Opportunity dimension, and the lowest components are Environmental Quality and Inclusiveness.

Figure 3 / Population-weighted world scores by component

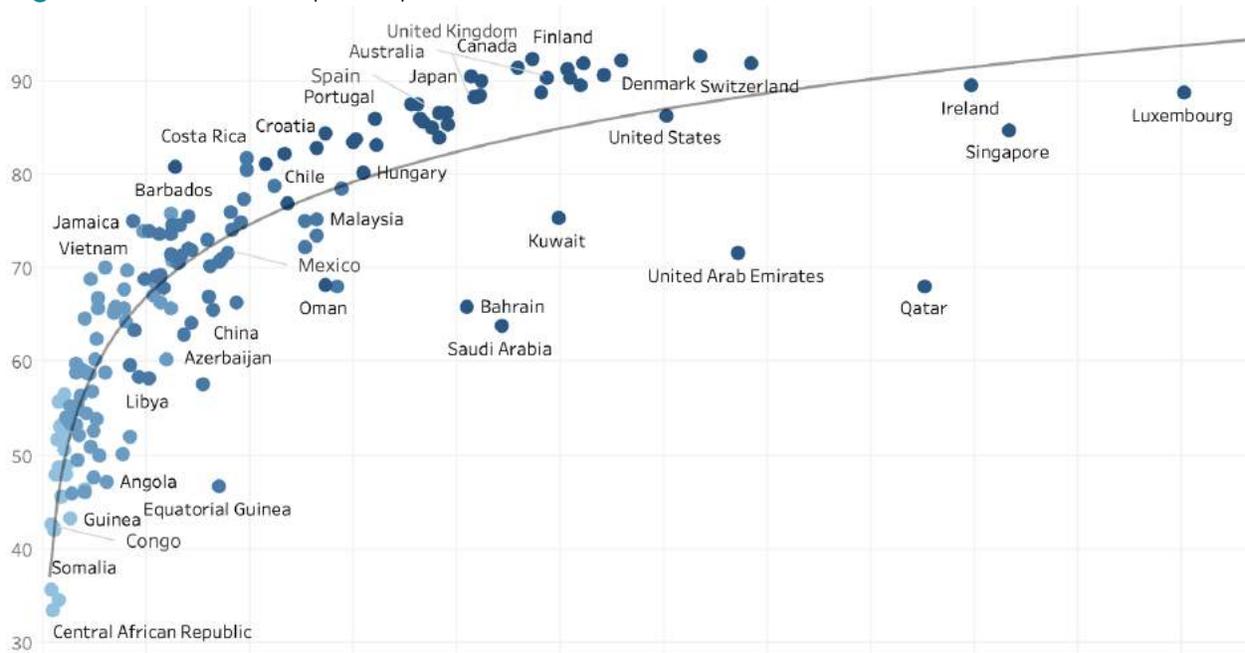


### Social Progress Index vs. GDP per capita

Figure 4 shows the relationship between GDP per capita and social progress. The data reveal several key findings:

- There is a positive and strong relationship between the Social Progress Index and GDP per capita.
- The relationship between economic development and social progress is not linear. At lower income levels, small differences in GDP per capita are associated with large improvements in social progress. As countries reach high levels of income, however, the rate of change slows.
- GDP per capita does not completely explain social progress. Countries achieve divergent levels of social progress at similar levels of GDP per capita.

Figure 4 / SPI vs GDP per capita



## Benchmarking Countries

We can assess a country's performance relative to its level of GDP per capita using the social progress "scorecard". This compares the performance of a country on aggregate social progress, as well on the dimensions, components, and indicators of the Social Progress Index, to the performances of 15 other countries with similar GDPs per capita. By revealing where each country is using its resources more or less efficiently than countries of similar income, the scorecard can point to either successes or specific priority areas for actions and investments, respectively.

The world scorecard compares the population-weighted world average Social Progress Index scores to the median score of the 15 countries with GDPs per capita closest to that of the world. It shows that the world as a whole is underperforming on many aspects of social progress relative to the economic resources, measured in GDP per capita, that are available. We also produce full scorecards for all 168 ranked countries.

Figure 5 / 2021 World Scorecard

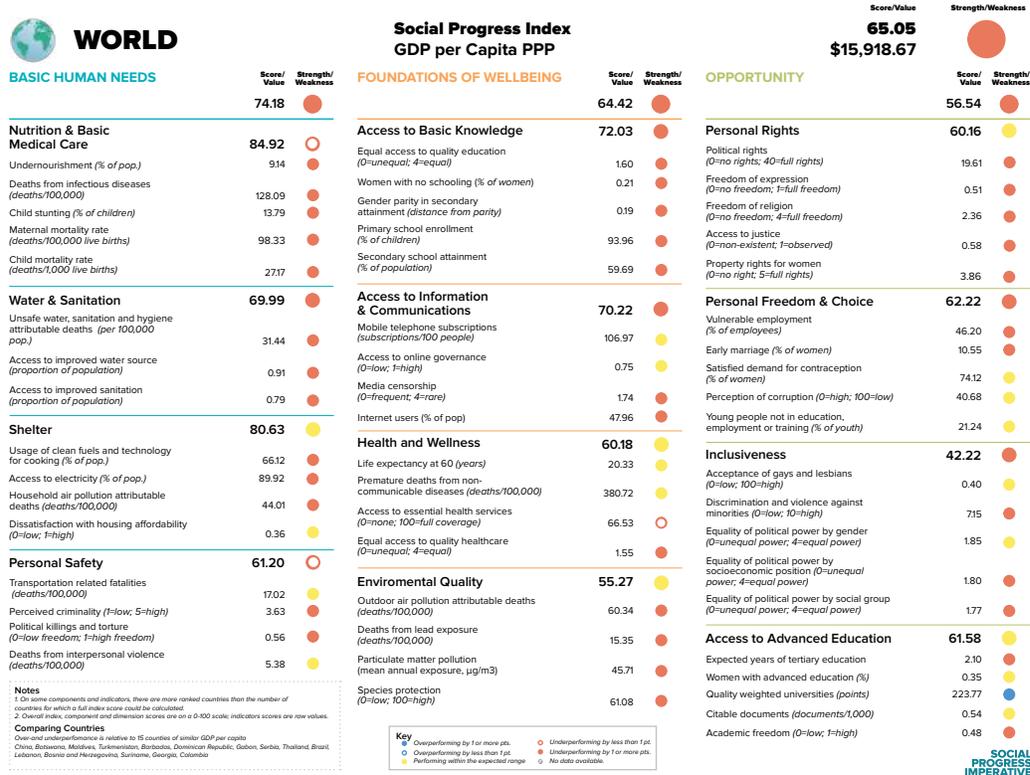
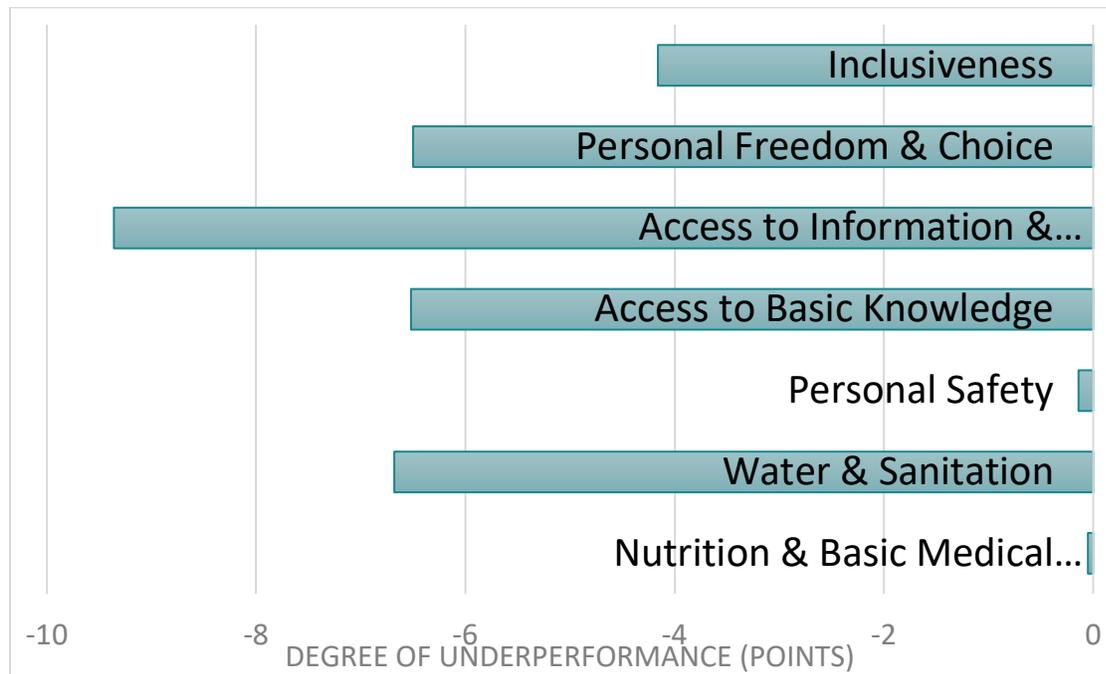


Figure 6 / Degree of world underperformance by component



We also see (Figure 6) that the degree of world underperformance varies widely. The world **underperforms** relative to its income on 7 components.

The world lags most on **Access to Information and Communications, Water and Sanitation and Personal Freedom and Choice**.

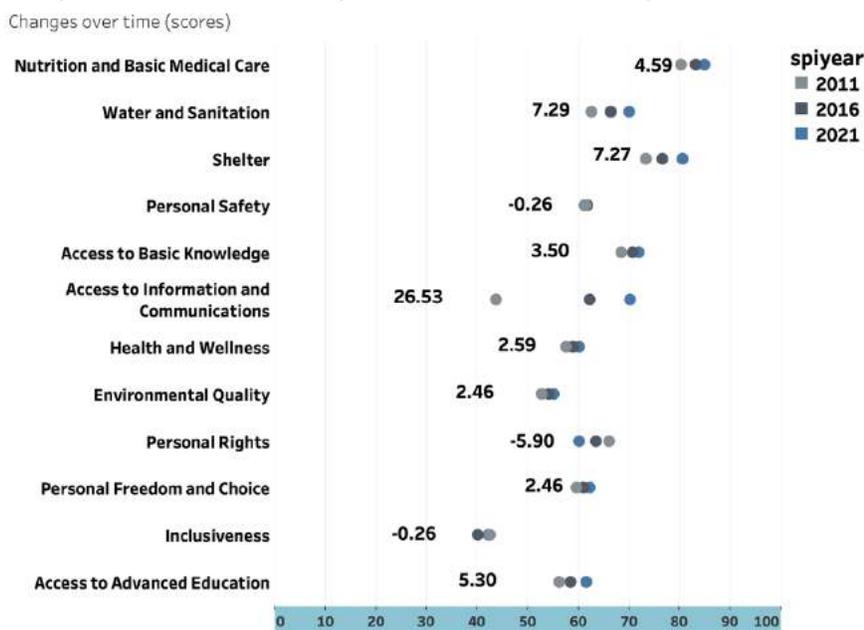
Notably, the world’s absolute performance on Personal Rights and Inclusiveness is lowest among the twelve components. This coupled with underperformance in Personal Freedom and Choice and Inclusiveness represents what we are seeing in terms of a decline of individual rights across the world. While, the specific causes vary from country to country, a loss of political rights, freedom of expression, and access to justice are common themes.

### Changes in Social Progress 2011-2021

In 2021 we can measure changes in social progress over 11 years. To do so, we utilize the 2021 index framework, then apply that methodology across countries and years back to 2011.<sup>2</sup> We can measure the evolution of aggregate social progress and identify the relative movement of each component and dimension of the index. This dynamic analysis is a first and critical step towards not simply measuring social progress for a country but also identifying what is driving social progress improvement.

The world is getting better in terms of social progress. The population-weighted world score on the Social Progress Index rose from 60.42 in 2011 to 65.05 in 2021—a 4.63 point increase.

**Figure 7 /** Change in population-weighted world social progress 2011-2021



<sup>2</sup> As such, our analysis accounts for retroactive data revisions from sources as well as minor changes in the Social Progress Index methodology. Accordingly, the figures cited here may differ from the SPI scores and rankings that were reported in the context of earlier annual reports. Full datasets from 2011-2021 are available on the Social Progress Imperative website: [www.socialprogress.org](http://www.socialprogress.org).

However, the gains in social progress are not evenly distributed across the components of the framework. Since 2011 the world score has improved on nine components: Access to Information and Communications (+25.63 point change), Water and Sanitation (+7.29), Shelter (7.27), Water and Sanitation (+5.57), Access to Advanced Education (+5.30), Nutrition and Basic Medical Care (+4.59), Access to Basic Knowledge +3.50), Health and Wellness (+2.59), Environmental Quality (+2.46), and Personal Freedom and Choice (+2.46).

The world is declining on Personal Rights (-5.90) and stagnating in Inclusiveness (-0.26) and on Personal Safety (-0.26).

The population-weighted world average score has improved by 4.63 points since 2011, to 65.05/100. Since 2011, **147 countries** (86% of those measured) have improved by one point or more. Yet these gains in social progress are also unevenly distributed among countries.

**Figure 8 / Significant improvers and decliners on social progress 2011-2021**



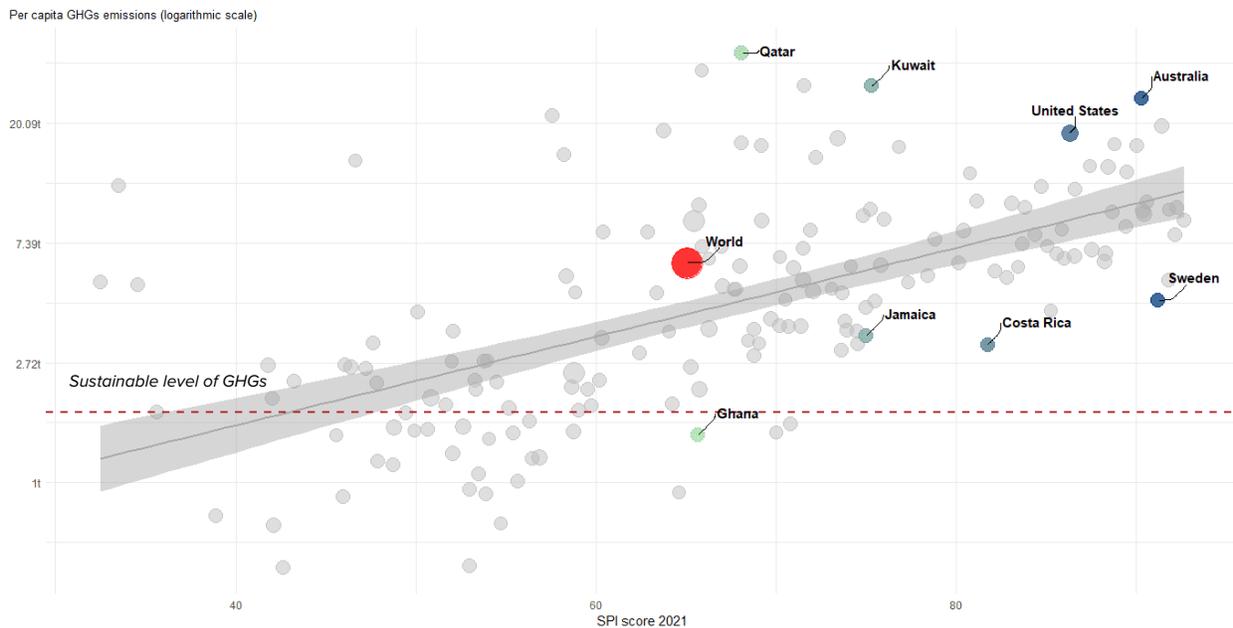
Figure 8 shows that the most improved countries since 2011 have been low and lower middle-income, including The Gambia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Eswatini and Sierra Leone. Richer countries, which overall show stronger performance on the Social Progress Index, have tended to improve more slowly. Only four countries register a decline: the US, Brazil, Syria and South Sudan.

## SPOTLIGHT: SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

### Sustainability does not have to come at the cost of social progress

For the first time, the 2021 Social Progress Index specifically examines the relationship between sustainability and social progress. Our analysis shows that countries with higher social progress, which tend to have higher income, tend to have higher greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), but at every level of development, there are countries that have been highly effective at improving living standards and quality of life while emitting more modest levels.

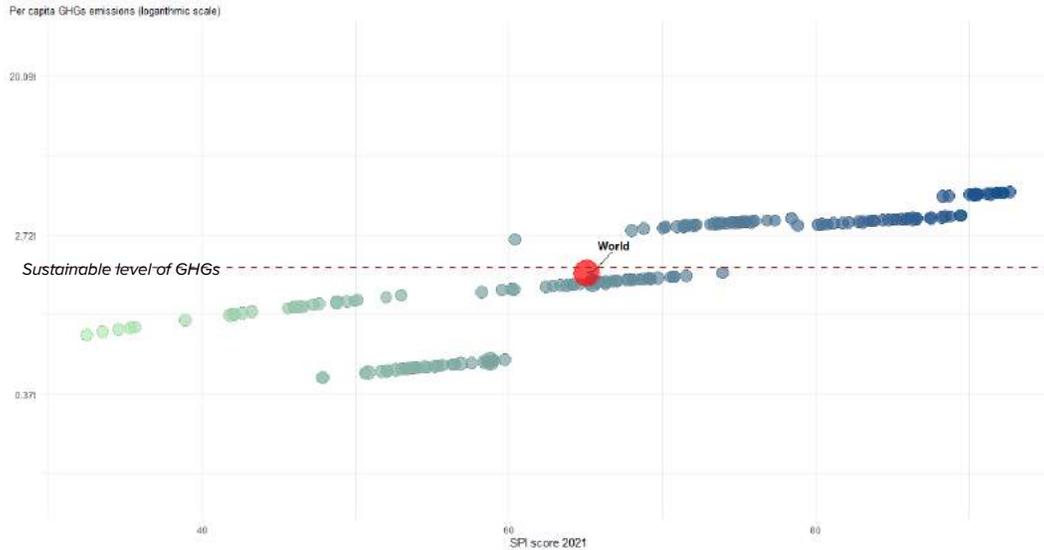
**Figure 9 /** Greenhouse gas emissions per capita to the 2021 Social Progress Index. Highlighting some of the worst and best performing countries and the world, compared to the level of sustainable emissions.



If every country achieved emissions targets comparable with the most sustainable country at their level of development, the world would achieve a sustainable level of GHG emissions.

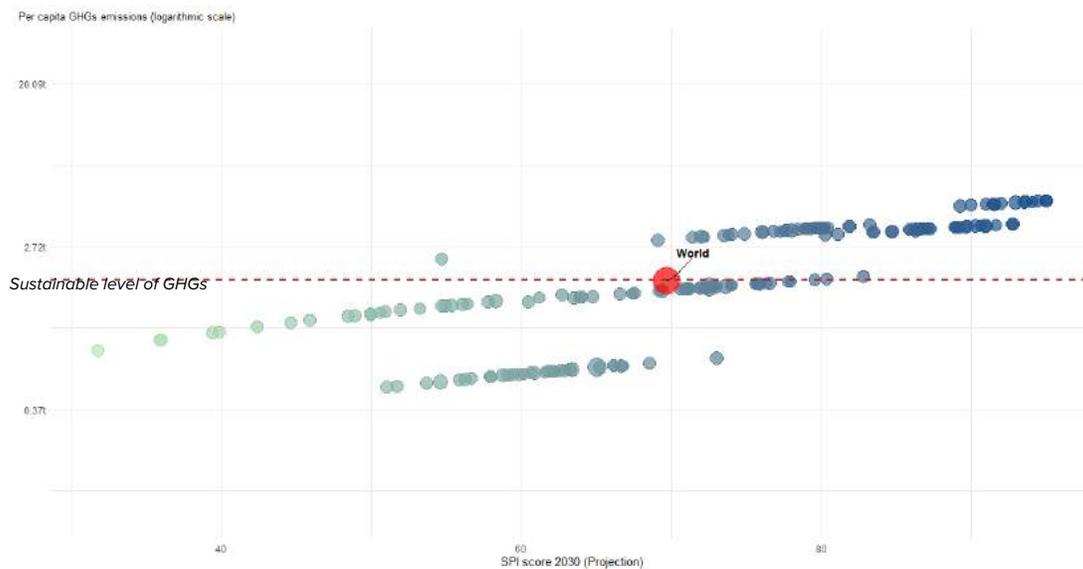
Standout countries such as Sweden, Costa Rica, and Ghana emit at relatively low levels compared to their peers even while out-performing them on many aspects of social progress. There are countries like Australia and the United States whose social progress seems to have come at the cost of the planet; they are among the worst emitters of greenhouse gases.

**Figure 10 /** Countries' SPI scores and their level of emissions in 2021, if all countries achieved emissions levels comparable with the best of the countries at their level of development. The world would be below the sustainable threshold of 1.74t.



Our data forecasts also show that social progress could continue to improve at its current rate to at least 2030 without reaching unsustainable levels of greenhouse gas emissions. While technology and innovation will be critical to ensuring long-term planetary sustainability, our analysis shows that even today, **there is not a simple tradeoff between social progress and sustainability.**

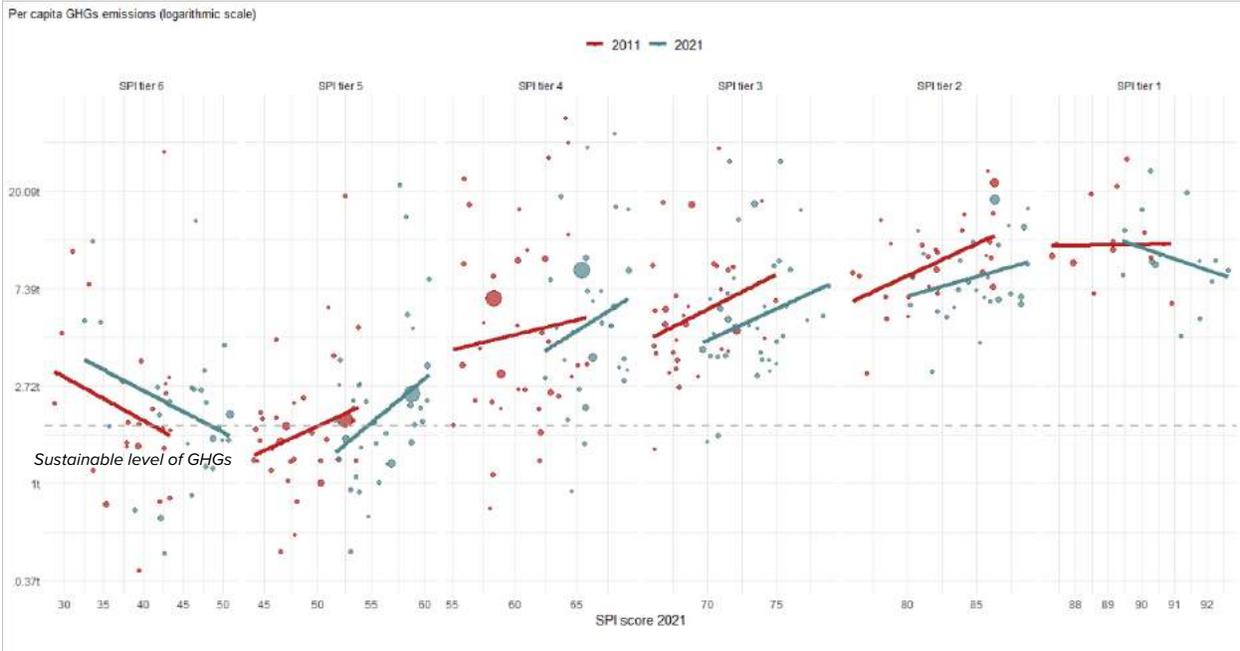
**Figure 11 /** Projection of countries' SPI scores and their level of emissions in 2030, if all countries achieved emissions levels comparable with the best of the countries at their level of development. The world would be at the sustainable threshold of 1.74t.



Our data also show that the correlation between SPI score and sustainability has been weakening over time, meaning that **higher levels of social progress are less likely to indicate higher emissions in 2021** than was the case just eleven years ago. This holds not

only for the countries with higher social progress, who generally have the income to pursue alternative energy sources, but at most levels of development. As green technologies continue to become more affordable and widely available at scale, **the historical link between emissions and economic and social development may continue to weaken.**

**Figure 12 /** Countries in their social progress tiers. In tier 2 countries we begin to see a weakened relationship between ghg emissions and social progress. By tier 1 the relationship has gone into decline, highlighting that higher levels of social progress no longer correlate to higher emissions for the most socially advanced countries in the world.

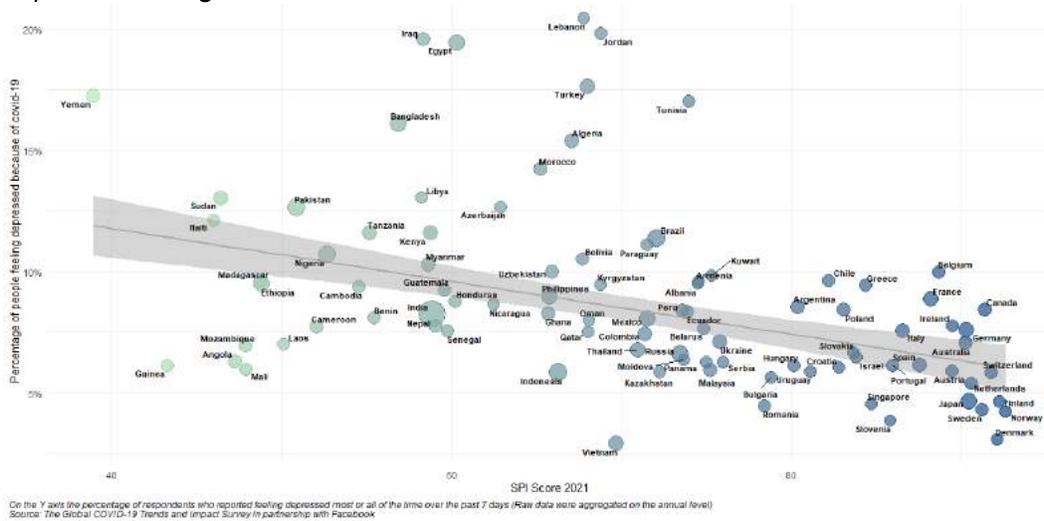


## SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19

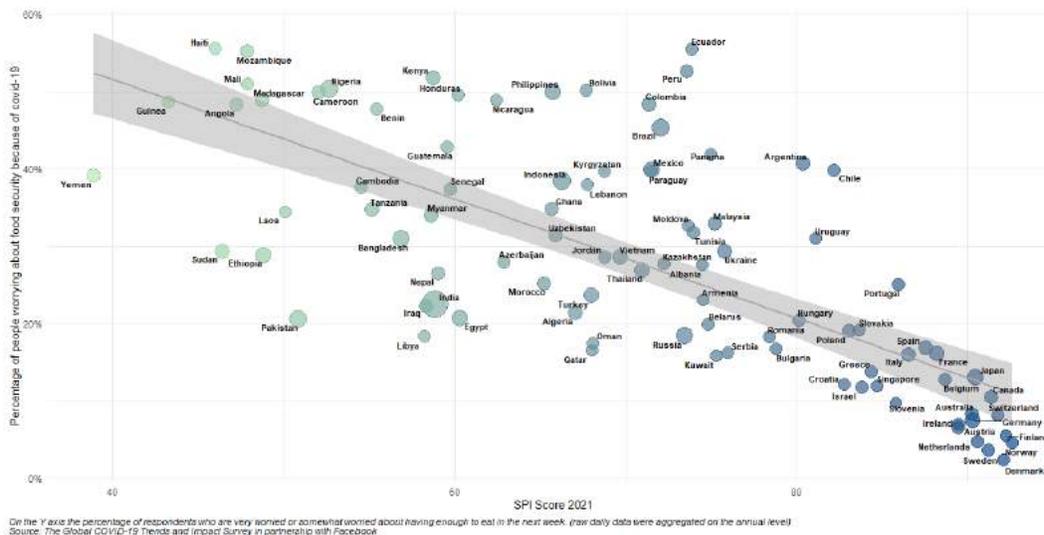
The Social Progress Index shows that countries with higher social progress were more resilient to the wider social impacts of the Covid crisis.

The pandemic brought trauma and devastation to communities across the world, beyond sickness and death toll. It impacted mental health, food security, education and more. Our data show that the countries with higher social progress are also the ones who have been most resilient to the non-health related stresses caused by the pandemic. Higher levels of social progress across the board, not just investment in any one area, may be an important factor for weathering the multidimensional effects of future shocks.

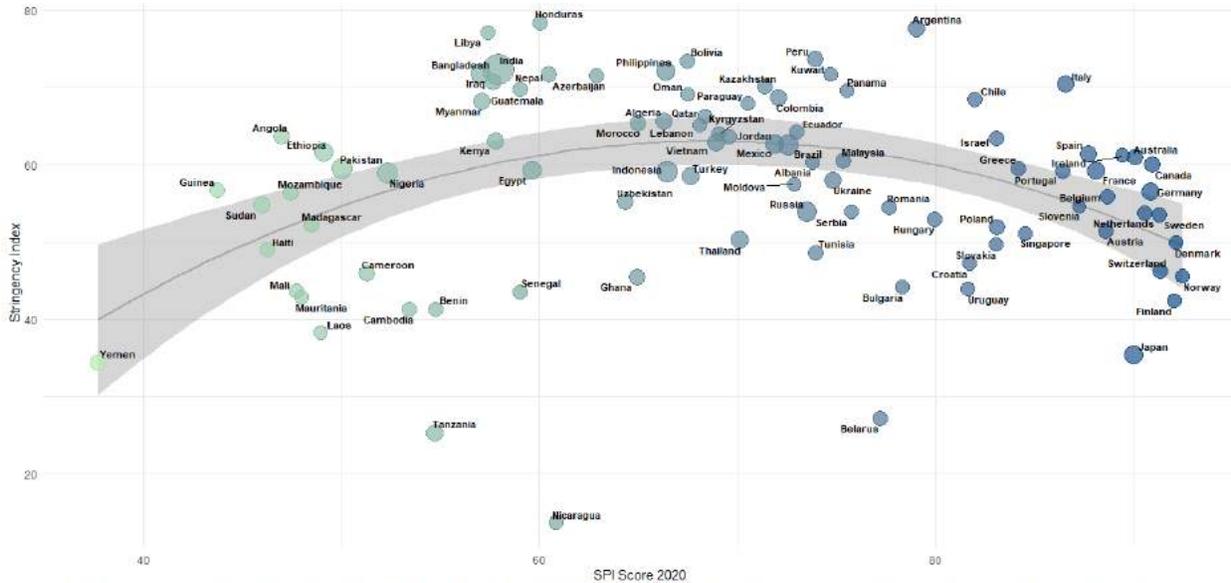
**Figure 13 / Countries with lower social progress scores had a higher percentage of people who felt depressed during Covid-19**



**Figure 14 / Countries with lower social progress scores had more people worried about having enough to eat**

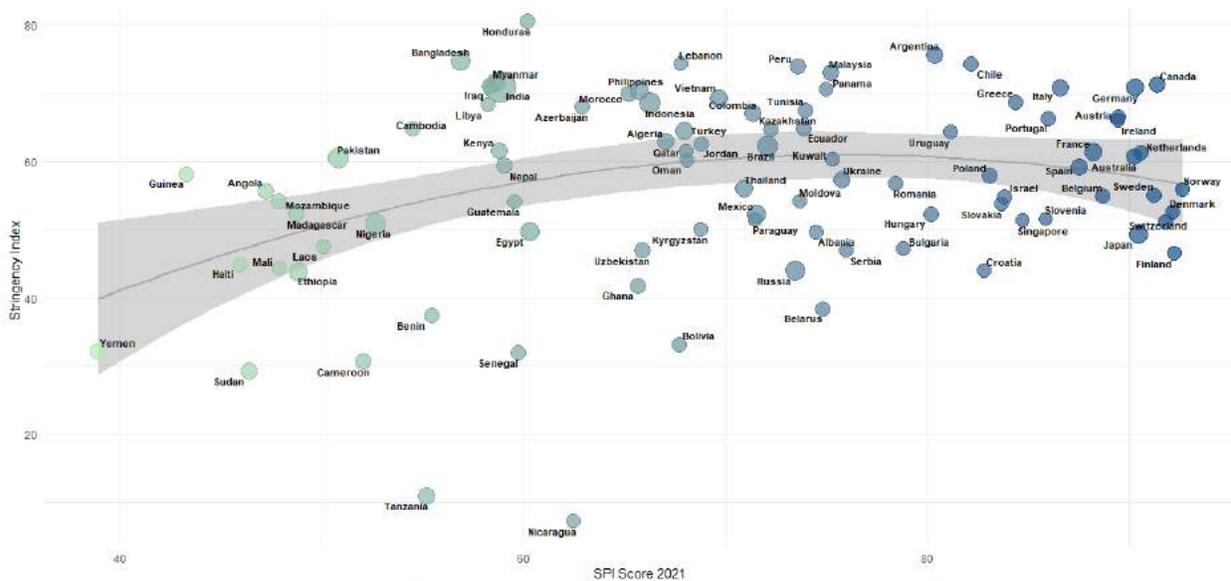


**Figure 15 /** In 2020 we saw a trend of countries with mid-levels of social progress locking down harder and longer – exacerbating mental health and food insecurity issues



The index records the strictness of 'lockdown style' policies that primarily restrict people's behaviour. It is calculated using all ordinal containment and closure policy indicators, plus an indicator recording public information campaigns. Source: Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker

**Figure 16 /** In 2021 as countries with high social progress faced stricter measures – it did not reduce their resiliency to the wider social impacts of the Covid crisis.



The index records the strictness of 'lockdown style' policies that primarily restrict people's behaviour. It is calculated using all ordinal containment and closure policy indicators, plus an indicator recording public information campaigns. Source: Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker

## Equally, the Social Progress Index spotlights inequalities exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic

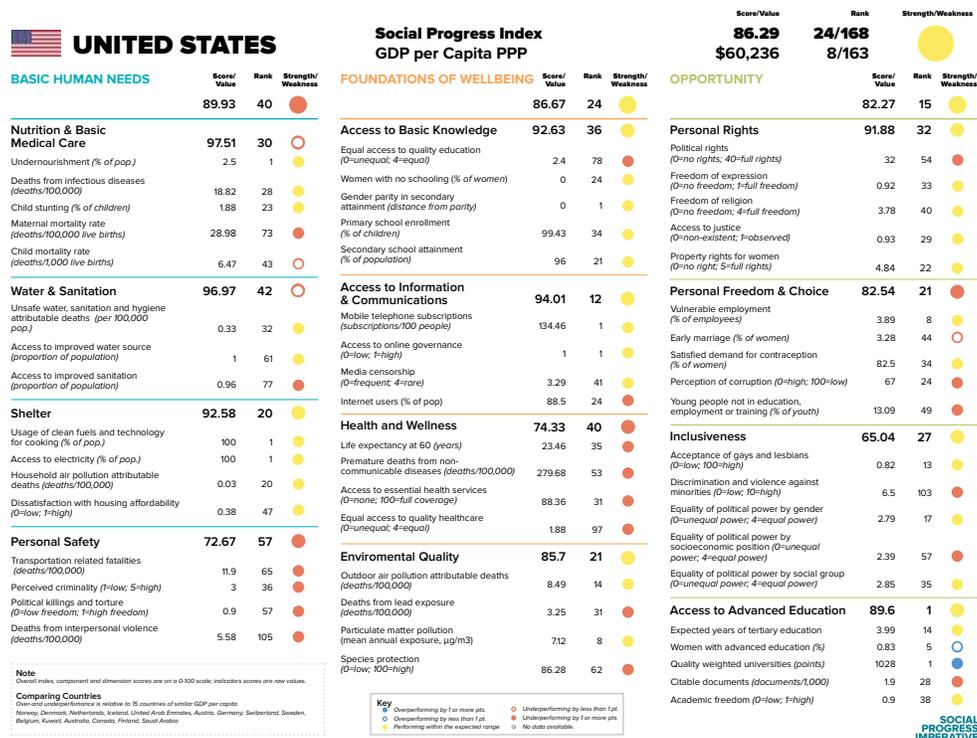
The Social Progress Index has consistently shown that social systems and safety nets across the world are broken. Existing gaps, pressure points and inequalities have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 virus and must be addressed in the pandemic's aftermath.

The 2021 Index is based on a variety of data, much of which was collected before the Covid-19 pandemic. However, some of our indicators do capture the effects of the pandemic. Notably, in 44 countries measured by the Index, access to quality healthcare has become more unequal during the last year, while in the majority of others there has been little or no improvement.

## SPOTLIGHT: US AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

Since the first Social Progress Index in 2014, the United States has consistently shown under-performance relative to its GDP per capita. This is exceptional among leading economies. That trend continues in 2021 (see Figure 9 below). The US ranks 24<sup>th</sup> in the world on social progress, between Italy and Portugal and the lowest of the G7. On Access to Basic Knowledge, the US performs worse than Cuba and Uzbekistan, while on Health and Wellness the US score is comparable to Albania's. On Personal Safety, the US ranks below Senegal and Sierra Leone.

Figure 17 / 2021 US Scorecard

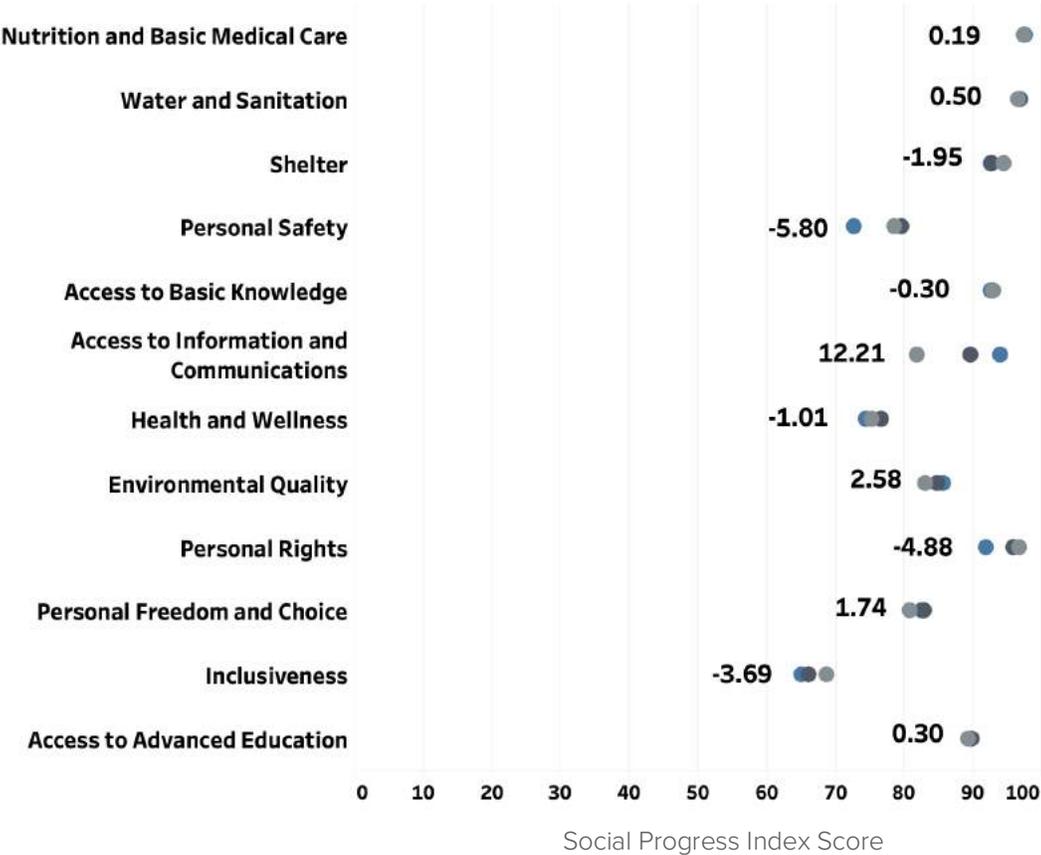


The United States is also an outlier amongst its peers as one of only four countries that has seen a decline in social progress since 2011 (see Figure 10). The most significant deteriorations are in Personal Safety (-5.80), Personal Rights (-4.88) and Inclusiveness (-3.69), There have also been declines in Shelter (-1.95), Health and Wellness (-1.01) and Basic Knowledge (-0.30).

Declines in Personal Safety partly reflect increased levels of political violence, while the US decline in Shelter reflects a housing affordability crisis that the US shares with other wealthy nations, especially in Europe. The US has also seen increasingly unequal access to quality healthcare since 2011, a trend that long predates the Covid-19 pandemic but is likely to be exacerbated by it.

Figure 18 / Change in US Social Progress 2011-2021

- 2011
- 2016
- 2021



Even before Covid, too many Americans have been dying from preventable deaths. From maternal and child mortality to traffic-related fatalities to murders, even before Covid, the US is losing far more human lives than other high-income countries. If the US was able to improve in these areas to comparable levels to its high-income peers, a quarter of a

million lives could well be saved. With the murder rate skyrocketing by 30% across the US last year, and a record number of deaths by overdose, as well as a pandemic whose full effects are not capture by our data, this already bleak picture has been made much worse.

## FROM INDEX TO ACTION TO IMPACT

The Social Progress Imperative publishes the annual Social Progress Index in order to build a common language and data platform that supports benchmarking, collaboration and change. Throughout the world, the Social Progress Imperative has catalyzed the formation of local action networks that bring together government, businesses, academia, and civil society organizations committed to using the Social Progress Index as a tool to assess strengths and weaknesses, spur constructive dialogue, catalyze change, and improve people's lives.

We have over 70 partners in 45 countries around the world and includes leading institutions from government, business, finance and civil society.

**Figure 11** / Map of the Social Progress Network



Our network continues to expand globally, providing more and more change-makers around the world with the data and insight they need to change lives. To learn more about the Social Progress Index and the ways in which it is driving impact around the world, visit [www.socialprogress.org](http://www.socialprogress.org).

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