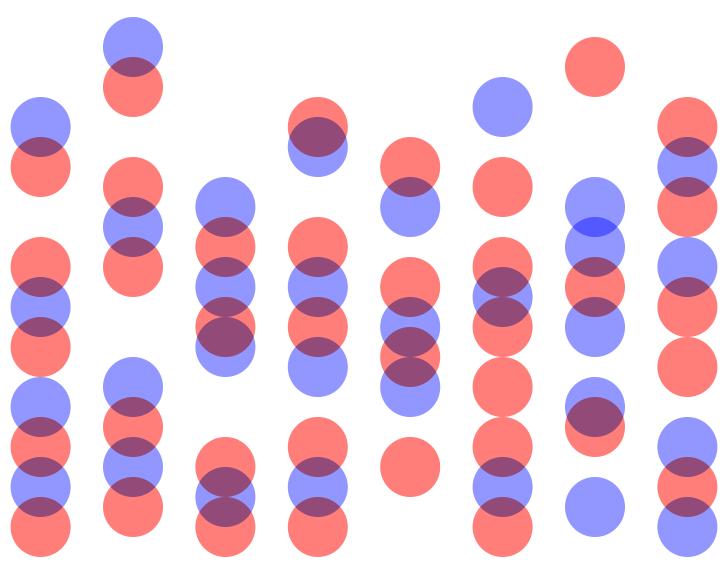
# Post-Pandemic Leader









**Executive Summary Report** 

The COVID-19 pandemic and its accompanying economic challenges have been felt around the world. The recovery has begun, but to date those efforts have produced asymmetrical results. Alongside an intensifying effort to quickly vaccinate as many people as possible, significant resources are being put behind reinvigorating economies and advancing recovery plans. How is the complex relationship between the public and private sectors working to increase investment, expand infrastructure, and improve health and economic outcomes?

The Milken Institute Harris Poll 2021 Listening Project examines priority issues of global citizenry while identifying the characteristics of business leaders we need to both drive growth and foster a more just world. This survey of nearly seventeen thousand people in twenty-seven countries [Figure 01] reveals how social issues have been re-prioritized to identify the top ten most urgent global challenges. This year's report identifies not only the issues that matter most to ordinary citizens, but the skills and competencies they deem essential in an effective post-pandemic leader.

The case for optimism in this report is that citizens increasingly respect corporations and expect them to fill the void of leadership in solving social challenges. Rather, business can be a catalyst to addressing the ever-growing gaps in income, education, and health while increasing inclusivity and opportunity. Business can bring new innovations, technologies, and partnerships to accelerate recovery that is both expansive and more equitable.



Figure 01

### **Key Findings**

### A Resilient Pandemic; Faltering Leadership and Trust

This year was supposed to be different. Despite rapid vaccine development, the Delta variant re-inflicted damage to public health, while creating economic whiplash. And people, fatigued with the continuous dislocation of their lives, cast blame on their leaders: Public support for their government's handling of the pandemic declined thirteen percentage points from (74%) in 2020 to (61%) today.

As a result, more than half (54%) of people globally say their country is on the wrong track (an increase of 13-pts from 2020). This is especially true in countries like Venezuela (95%), Nigeria (90%), Kenya (83%), South Africa (83%), Turkey (83%), Japan (78%), France (69%), Brazil (66%), Mexico (60%). And a general uncertainty extends into Italy (59%), Ukraine (59%), Germany (58%), the United Kingdom (57%), Russia (55%); and Australia and Malaysia (50% respectively).

### Institutional 'Soft Trust'; Divided We Stand

In uncertain times, many nations can rely on their systems and structures. Yet today, institutional trust also declined amid misinformation, politicization of mask-wearing, shutdowns and confusing or contradictory public health guidance. For instance, over a third (35%) say the distribution of vaccines in their country made them trust their government less, while (44%) of global citizens say they do not trust the presidency/head of state.

Perhaps even more concern is the knock-off effect where adjacent institutions are also failing to have public support: More than half (51%) of people globally say they distrust the criminal justice system, (60%) social media (50%) lawmakers, and (43%) television news in their country. [Figure 02]

"The compounded social casualty of COVID is 'soft trust' in Institutions: Once unwavering public pillars like Science, the Medical System, Technology and the Military are today trusted somewhat (or distrusted somewhat) by fifty-six to seventy-two percent of people around the world." —John Gerzema, CEO of The Harris Poll

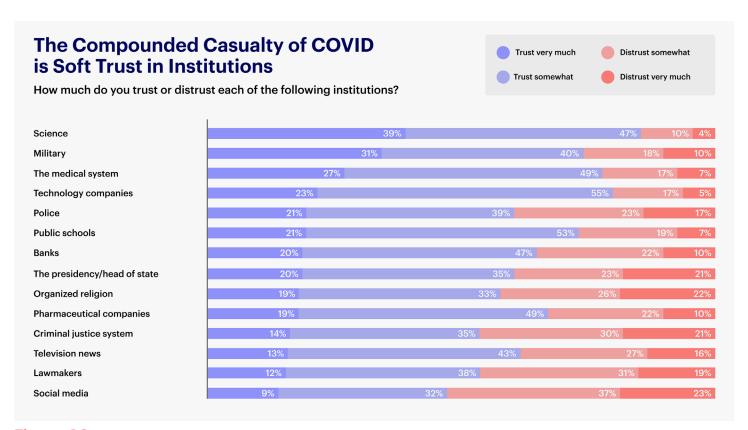


Figure 02

Adding to this social uncertainty are concerns of political and cultural divisiveness. Most countries report feeling less united or the same level of divisiveness (59%) than before COVID-19. And what's more, a pessimistic country outlook appears to be correlated with a nation's level of divisiveness. For example, our data shows countries with the most negative outlook are also ones that feel the most divided. [Figure 03]

### The Personal Economy Lags the Macro Recovery

If people are critical of their leaders and institutions, it is also because they do not feel they are part of the recovery. There is a stark dichotomy between how global citizens assess the economic health of their country versus that of their own. While seven in ten (70%) say their economy is weak, they also say it is better now than it was in 2020 (+4 pts globally, Australia +14pts, India +12pts, Philippines +9pts, US +8pts). [Figure 04]

But our data shows this optimism does not reach to the individual level; most citizens (77%) report their personal financial situation as the same or getting worse. [Figure 05]

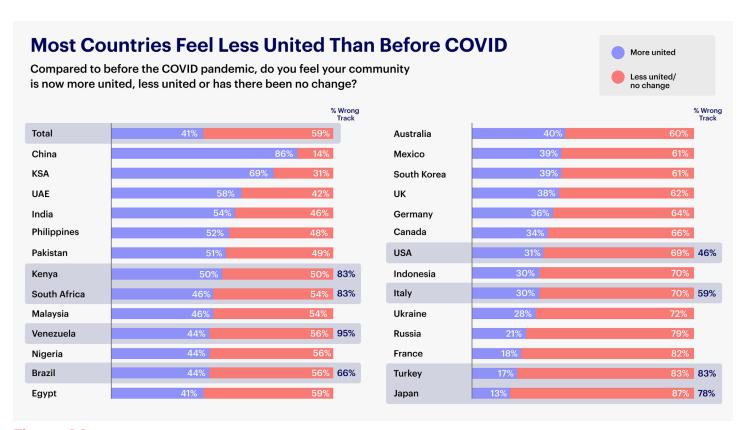


Figure 03

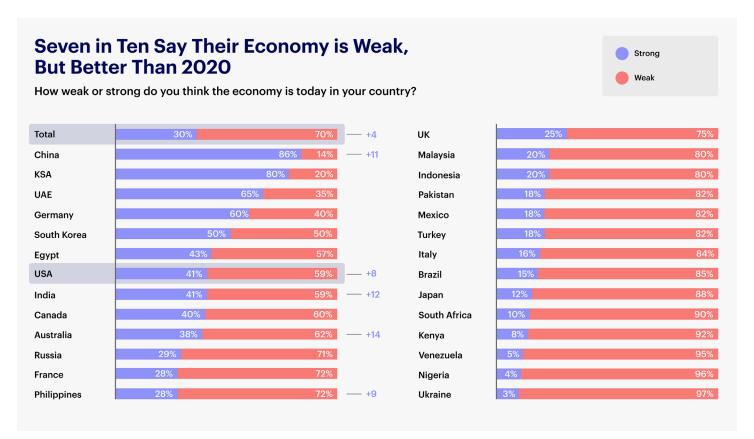


Figure 04

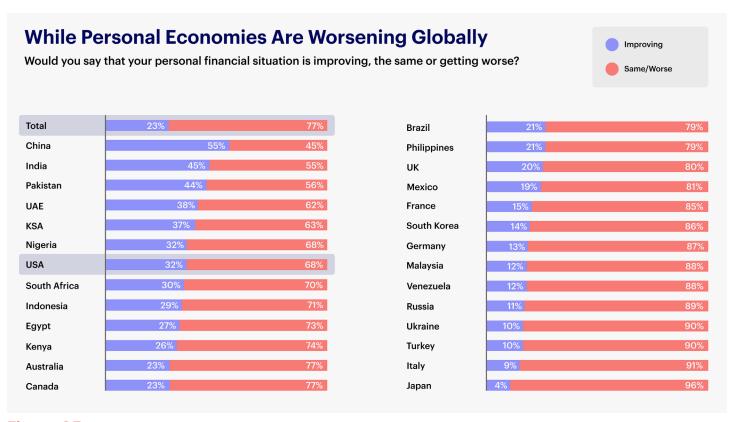


Figure 05

### **Uncertainty in People's Lives Cast Doubt on a Recovery**

Amid snarled supply chains, delayed return-to-work orders and mental health strains on society, the hope for 2021 was that it would bring promise and transition from last year. And while that's true in many economies, still more than half (56%) of people around the world believe the worst of the pandemic is still ahead. [Figure 06]

At the core of a perception of future COVID volatility is a function of access; from vaccine inequity to deepening divides in education, healthcare, employment, and other challenges. Strong majorities of citizens say the pandemic amplified the lack of access to social services and equity including healthcare and social services (78%), while amplifying food and water insecurity (58%), access to education and job opportunities (56%), equality and fairness (48%) and ever-present threats from climate change (48%). Also noted is a lack of resources that citizens believe in but cannot get at. For instance, seven in ten (70%) people around the world trust vaccines but most cannot get them, while majorities trust educational systems (74%), but cannot utilize them.

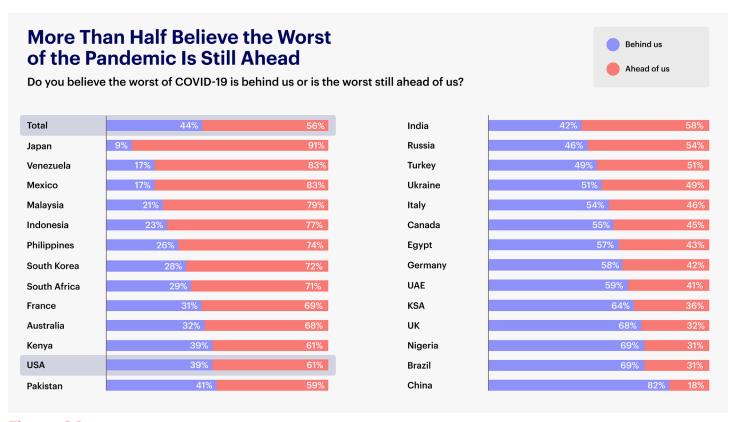


Figure 06

As a result, between two-thirds to eight-in-ten people globally fear new COVID-19 waves (79%), variants (83%), recessions (80%), lost jobs (64%) and even returning to public life (67%). Ultimately, recovery is in the eye of the beholder with far greater numbers of people feeling left out and falling behind. Until leaders and institutions can reach and support people where they are, negative perceptions of an equitable recovery will endure.

### **Creating a More Equitable Society: Mastering the Basics**

Each year, the aim of The Listening Project is to bear witness to the real lives, needs and opinions of a representative body of ordinary people across the world. In our survey conducted between July and September of 2021 we modeled public opinion data of twenty-seven nations on various social issues. [Figure 07]

First, global survey respondents (weighted proportionately to the national populations in each of our twenty-seven countries) were asked to prioritize the importance of forty-eight social issues based on how much of an impact it would have for them personally if solved, compared to another social issue. From this we modeled natural clusters of issues which were most strongly related to each other. These clusters were then prioritized by their importance vs. each other to identify the ten most important global challenges. [Figure 08]

We can see this year **extended from a public health crisis into a multi-faceted array of social deficits and scarcities brought on by the virus' wake**. If as almost a return to the basic framework of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the social and economic infrastructure underlying basic human needs mattered most: Food and water insecurity, access to healthcare and social services, education, and jobs. They were followed in priority by where the government is lacking in both governance and transparency and health investment and innovation.

And then mapping these ten global challenges by their importance and solvability also reveal both their perceived difficulty and the importance to whom. While some challenges are concentrated and others more universal, they all share a perception that mastering the basics of universal access to food, water, healthcare are vital to all, and great outcomes would result.

How we frame these challenges is key: Policies are often opaque but coordinated efforts to take on the biggest moonshots have shared visions of possibility for all.

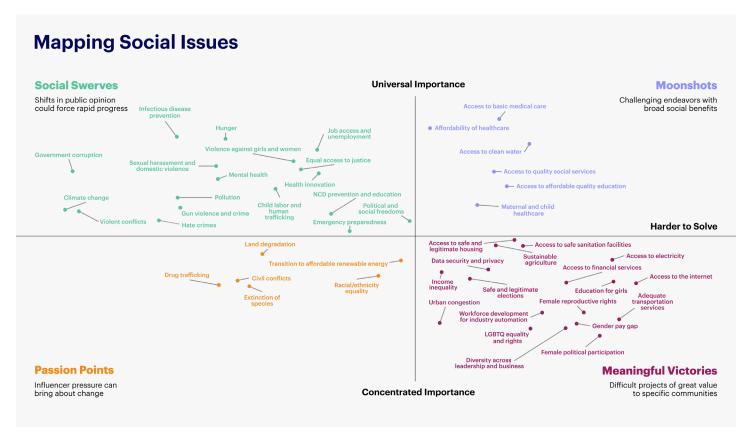


Figure 07

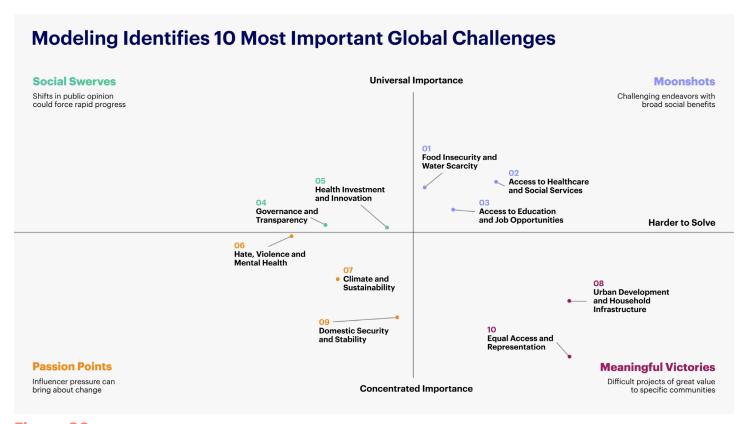


Figure 08

### **Empathy Is a Precious Commodity**

At the root cause of frustration and lack of hope is that people feel a collective loss of caring from their leaders right at the time when they need them the most. Consider at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020 (60%) of people globally said, "Government leaders in my country care more about their citizens than they used to," but today, that number dropped to just under half (49%).

And as applied to solving each of the ten global challenges, Indifference and Apathy (defined as people who say, "Leaders in my country are focusing on the wrong things, indifferent or corrupt." and "Our leaders are not in touch with common people to understand the pervasiveness of this problem.") rose to the top roadblock to solving each of the ten global challenges. [Figure 09]

### Post-Pandemic Leadership: "Grit and Grace"

Faced with indifferent leaders and seemingly intractable problems, global citizens are calling for a new kind of leader, one that can match temerity with tenderness. When we asked what modern skills and competencies are

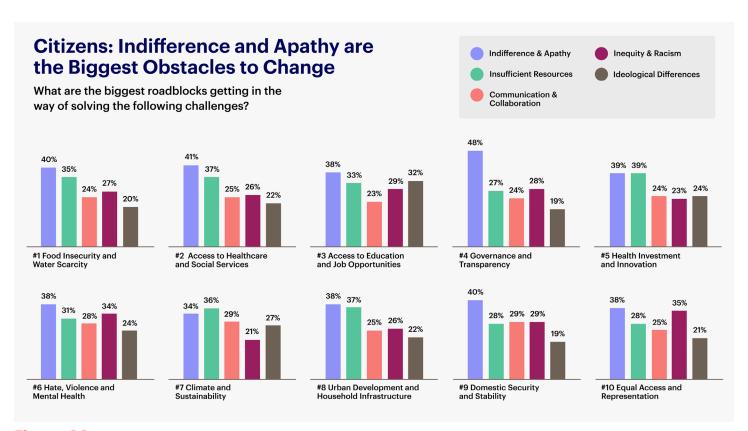


Figure 09

crucial to solving the ten challenges, the skills that rose to the top were a mix of hard and soft skills such as honesty, resiliency, decisiveness, logic, visionary-thinking, innovation coupled with honesty, humility, empathy, listening, diplomacy, and collaboration. And when asked, what is the single most important leadership trait of a post-pandemic leader, "honesty" was ranked the highest by more than twice the score of the next closest trait. [Figure 10]

# An Expectation of Business to Help Solve Social Challenges

As a result of its performance during the pandemic, **business has proven itself as a leader around the world**. We continue to see high levels of respect and esteem across sectors of industry. [Figure 11]

In search of a new leader to fill the void of leadership, **global citizens** are asking business to help. [Figure 12]

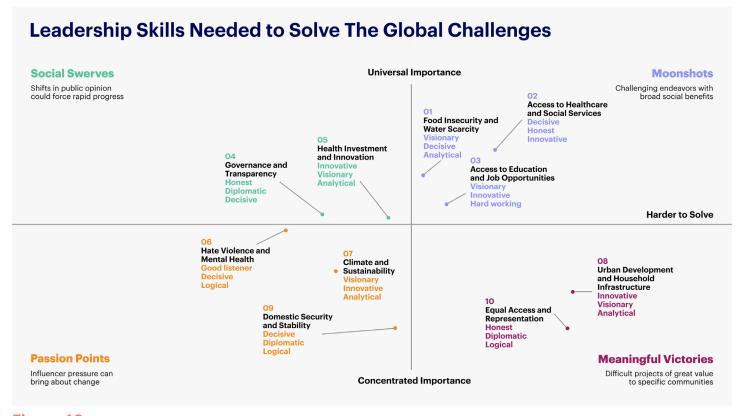
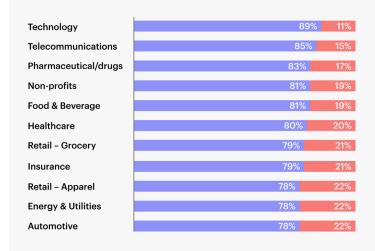


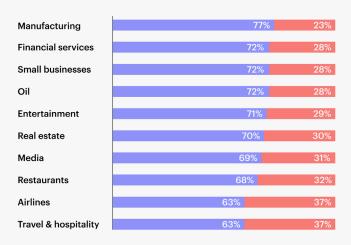
Figure 10

### **Business is a Proven Leader Around the World**

How has your view of each of the following industries changed since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic?







Business Average: 76% (+1 pt from 2020)

Figure 11



Companies have been more

reliable than the government in

keeping my country running

during COVID-19.

Figure 12

I expect leadership within

my country's companies to speak

out on social issues.

Large companies with resources,

infrastructure, and advanced logistics

are even more vital now to my country's

future than before COVID-19.

I trust companies more than

my government to find solutions

on COVID-19.

# **Business, Social Issues and Risk:** Reframing the Argument

Conventional wisdom on social issues is that they carry heavy corporate risk by alienating customers, employees, and investors. And in an ever-more divisive society the risks of bringing politics into the business are arguably even higher.

However, several data-driven insights can be gleaned from The Listening Project that argues what leaders fail to consider is *what could go right* instead of what could go wrong. The data points to supporting that social investment can be a growth vehicle to the business in several ways.

First, we found that people see progress on most of the global challenges will improve both equitable and economic expansion. In other words, solving problems on the ground will have a "trickle up" effect for the market-place, innovation, and investors. Although our respondents are by no means "experts", it interesting that they see these challenges as foundational infrastructure for inclusive growth. [Figure 13]

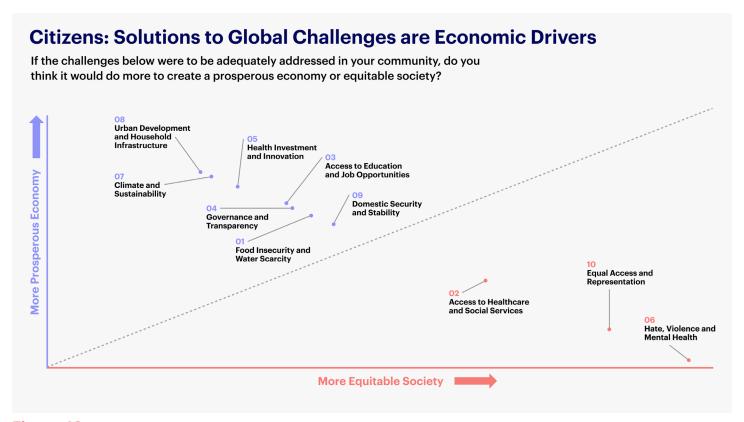


Figure 13

Secondly, nearly two-thirds (62%) of people globally say there is **more reward in a CEO speaking out on social issues** and (67%) say CEOs being more active in expressing their own political views or those of their company is good for the company. [Figure 14]

While the U.S. is equally divided on whether speaking out is a risk or a reward, in contrast across the world— including many fast-growing countries where government leadership has its detractors— speaking out is higher reward versus risk. [Figure 15]

Lastly, our data also shows that if businesses were to address these ten global challenges, enhanced marketplace metrics including better reputation and trust are the most common outcomes, but other metrics rise as well, including investor-relations, attracting talent and influencing consumers. At a time when business is focusing on D&I and ESG initiatives, it is useful to see these endeavors as investments that are also a growth vehicle to the enterprise. [Figure 16]



Figure 14

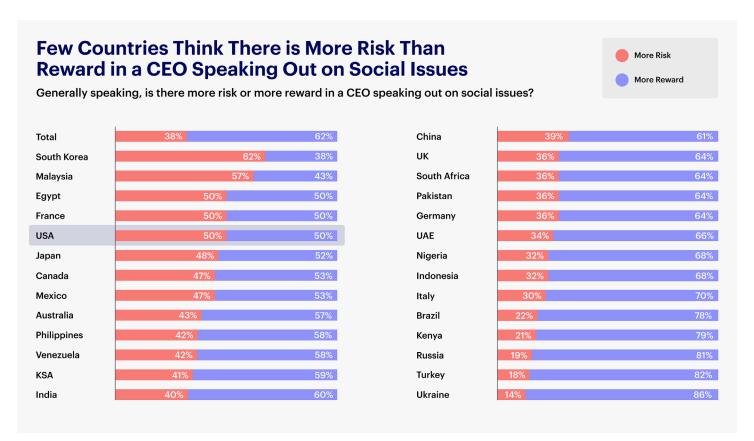


Figure 15

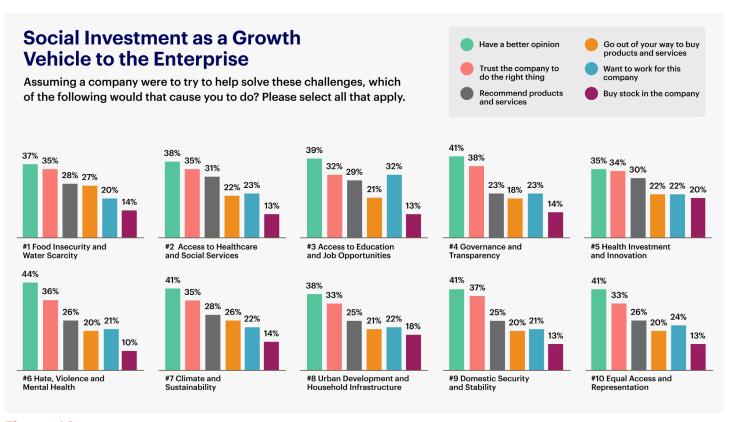


Figure 16

### **Conclusion**

Solutions for post-pandemic world will require new leadership archetypes based on hard and soft skills in order to both command outcomes while engaging across an ever-expansive array of cultures, interests and perspectives. Our research suggests, no one type of leader can address these challenges alone, but business has a much bigger role to play with possible outcomes that are beneficial across its stakeholders.

Charting a new course for post-pandemic leadership will require new policies that empower collaboration across sectors, equipping groups of private and public leaders to address social issues with a multidisciplinary set of skills, competencies, and resources. economic prosperity and a more equitable society. The aperture of responsibility for business leaders has widened, but so to as the opportunity.

John Gerzema, CEO The Harris Poll jgerzema@harrispoll.com

### **Methodology**

The Harris Poll conducted the first wave of this survey online from July 30 to August 11, 2021, among 5,839 adults ages 18 and older in 27 countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, The United Kingdom, The United States, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela) to understand the relative importance of 48 social issues in a forced choice/direct comparison for which respondents indicated which social issue being solved would make the biggest difference in their lives and which would make the least difference. These challenges were measured in 2020 and reprised for this study. The importance ranking of these issues were then analyzed against how easy or difficult each issue is to solve in order to signal which issues are a priority for leaders to focus on.

To better understand the impact of these 48 social issues, we applied a hierarchical clustering analysis to arrange the 48 social issues into homogeneous groups - based on how strongly issues are related to each other and therefore indicating that solving one issue will impact others within its cluster - to identify the top 10 global challenges faced by global citizens.

The Harris Poll then conducted the second wave of this survey online from August 25 to September 9, 2021, among 10,214 adults ages 18 and older in the same 27 countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, The United Kingdom, The United States, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela) to uncover insights related to what global citizens want, or need, in a post-pandemic leader to adequately address or solve these global challenges.

Country selection was based on accredited and widely accepted global indices from World Bank Economies Groupings (calculated using the World Bank Atlas method) and the Milken Institute Global Opportunity Index. These indices allowed us to choose a group of countries tiered by key economic and social indicators such as levels of economic income, opportunities, and standards of living and balanced across geography, country size, GDP, etc.

Data in each country were weighted to be nationally representative of the country based on standard demographics for each country which include gender, region, race/ethnicity, household income, education, employment, marital status, and size of household where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population. Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the online panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. Market research in authoritarian countries syndicates many respondents with a "socially desirable answer", in which respondents tend to overreport their support for their government. As such, China data in this study should be viewed with a lower level of confidence.

## Appendix

### **Most Important Global Challenge by Country**

	Australia	Brazil	Canada	China	Egypt	France
01	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Access to Healthcare and Social Services
02	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Domestic Security and Stability	Climate and Sustainability	Access to Education and Job Opportunities
03	Equal Access and Representation	Climate and Sustainability	Equal Access and Representation	Climate and Sustainability	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure
04	Climate and Sustainability	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Climate and Sustainability	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Domestic Security and Stability	Equal Access and Representation
05	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Domestic Security and Stability	Domestic Security and Stability	Equal Access and Representation	Equal Access and Representation	Climate and Sustainability
06	Domestic Security and Stability	Equal Access and Representation	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Domestic Security and Stability
07	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Governance and Transparency	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity
08	Governance and Transparency	Governance and Transparency	Governance and Transparency	Governance and Transparency	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Hate, Violence and Mental Health
09	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Governance and Transparency				
10	Health Investment and Innovation	Health Investment and Innovation	Health Investment and Innovation	Health Investment and Innovation	Health Investment and Innovation	Health Investment and Innovation

	Germany	India	Indonesia	Italy	Japan	Kenya
01	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Climate and Sustainability	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Access to Education and Job Opportunities
02	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Climate and Sustainability	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Climate and Sustainability
03	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Equal Access and Representation	Access to Healthcare and Social Services
04	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Domestic Security and Stability	Equal Access and Representation	Equal Access and Representation	Climate and Sustainability	Equal Access and Representation
05	Equal Access and Representation	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Domestic Security and Stability	Domestic Security and Stability	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Domestic Security and Stability
06	Climate and Sustainability	Equal Access and Representation	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Domestic Security and Stability	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure
07	Domestic Security and Stability	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Governance and Transparency	Climate and Sustainability	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Governance and Transparency
08	Governance and Transparency	Governance and Transparency	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Governance and Transparency	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity
09	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Governance and Transparency	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Hate, Violence and Mental Health
10	Health Investment and Innovation	Health Investment and Innovation	Health Investment and Innovation	Health Investment and Innovation	Health Investment and Innovation	Health Investment and Innovation

	Malaysia	Mexico	Nigeria	Pakistan	Philippines	South Africa
01	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Climate and Sustainability	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Access to Healthcare and Social Services
02	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Climate and Sustainability	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Climate and Sustainability	Climate and Sustainability
03	Domestic Security and Stability	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Access to Education and Job Opportunities
04	Equal Access and Representation	Climate and Sustainability	Domestic Security and Stability	Domestic Security and Stability	Equal Access and Representation	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure
05	Climate and Sustainability	Equal Access and Representation	Equal Access and Representation	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Domestic Security and Stability	Domestic Security and Stability
06	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Domestic Security and Stability	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Equal Access and Representation	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Equal Access and Representation
07	Governance and Transparency	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Governance and Transparency	Governance and Transparency	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Governance and Transparency
08	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Governance and Transparency	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Governance and Transparency	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity
09	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Hate, Violence and Mental Health
10	Health Investment and Innovation					

	Russia Fed.	KSA	South Korea	Turkey	Ukraine	UAE
01	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Domestic Security and Stability	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Access to Healthcare and Social Services
02	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Climate and Sustainability	Domestic Security and Stability	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Climate and Sustainability
03	Domestic Security and Stability	Access to Education and Job Opportunities	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Domestic Security and Stability	Access to Education and Job Opportunities
04	Climate and Sustainability	Domestic Security and Stability	Climate and Sustainability	Equal Access and Representation	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure
05	Equal Access and Representation	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Equal Access and Representation	Climate and Sustainability	Climate and Sustainability	Equal Access and Representation
06	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Equal Access and Representation	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Access to Healthcare and Social Services	Equal Access and Representation	Domestic Security and Stability
07	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Governance and Transparency	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity			
08	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Food Insecurity and Water Scarcity	Governance and Transparency	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Governance and Transparency
09	Governance and Transparency	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Hate, Violence and Mental Health	Governance and Transparency	Governance and Transparency	Hate, Violence and Mental Health
10	Health Investment and Innovation	Health Investment and Innovation	Health Investment and Innovation	Health Investment and Innovation	Health Investment and Innovation	Health Investment and Innovation

	GBR	USA	Venezuela
01	Access to	Access to	Access to
	Education and Job	Education and Job	Healthcare and
	Opportunities	Opportunities	Social Services
02	Access to	Access to	Access to
	Healthcare and	Healthcare and	Education and Job
	Social Services	Social Services	Opportunities
03	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Domestic Security and Stability	Climate and Sustainability
04	Climate and	Equal Access and	Domestic Security
	Sustainability	Representation	and Stability
05	Equal Access and Representation	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Equal Access and Representation
06	Domestic Security and Stability	Climate and Sustainability	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure
07	Food Insecurity and	Food Insecurity and	Hate, Violence and
	Water Scarcity	Water Scarcity	Mental Health
08	Governance and	Governance and	Governance and
	Transparency	Transparency	Transparency
09	Hate, Violence and	Hate, Violence and	Food Insecurity and
	Mental Health	Mental Health	Water Scarcity
10	Health Investment	Health Investment	Health Investment
	and Innovation	and Innovation	and Innovation

### **Most Important Global Challenge by Global Demographics**

	Male	Female	Age 18-39	Age 40+
01	Access to	Access to	Access to	Access to
	Education and Job	Healthcare and	Healthcare and	Education and Job
	Opportunities	Social Services	Social Services	Opportunities
02	Access to	Access to	Access to	Access to
	Healthcare and	Education and Job	Education and Job	Healthcare and
	Social Services	Opportunities	Opportunities	Social Services
03	Climate and	Climate and	Climate and	Climate and
	Sustainability	Sustainability	Sustainability	Sustainability
04	Domestic Security and Stability	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Domestic Security and Stability	Domestic Security and Stability
05	Equal Access and Representation	Equal Access and Representation	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Equal Access and Representation
06	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure	Domestic Security and Stability	Equal Access and Representation	Urban Development and Household Infrastructure
07	Food Insecurity and	Food Insecurity and	Food Insecurity and	Food Insecurity and
	Water Scarcity	Water Scarcity	Water Scarcity	Water Scarcity
08	Governance and	Governance and	Governance and	Governance and
	Transparency	Transparency	Transparency	Transparency
09	Hate, Violence and	Hate, Violence and	Hate, Violence and	Hate, Violence and
	Mental Health	Mental Health	Mental Health	Mental Health
10	Health Investment and Innovation			



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