

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2024 SOCIAL PROGRESS INDEX

Introduction

We are excited to announce the 2024 Social Progress Index®. The Social Progress Index is one of the world's largest curated collections of social and environmental data, using 13 years of data from 2011 to 2023, it is the only measurement tool to focus exclusively comprehensively and systematically on the non-economic dimensions of social performance across the globe with transparent and actionable data.

The 2024 Social Progress Index® uses its 12 components and 57 indicators to measure the social performance of 170 countries fully and an additional 26 countries partially. It helps us understand how people across the world are living, who is being left behind and how to accelerate progress.

This brief focuses on some of the overarching findings that we have taken away from this year's index and includes the following findings:

The world has fallen into its first social progress recession.

As predicted in the 2022 Social Progress Index report, for the first time, the world has declined overall in social progress. In total, 61 countries saw a significant decline in their social progress in 2023 and 77 more stagnated. Only 32 countries saw any real progress. Consequently, four out of five people in the world live in a country where social progress is stagnating or declining.

The world's Social Progress Index score dropped 0.31 points from 2022 to 2023. This was driven principally by deteriorating scores on:

Health (-1.7): declined due to deteriorating mortality 15-50 and life expectancy due to the Covid pandemic.

Access to Information & Communications (-2.2): typically we see strong growth in this area year on year, but for the first time, largely due to declining press freedom, we see it falling backwards.

Rights & Voice (-0.51): rights across the world have been on a long backwards slide since 2011 (-6.49) and this continues to be one of the biggest problems in advancing social progress.

Progress stalled or declined for all G7 countries.

The US (-0.31), France (-0.35) and Canada (-0.94) have all declined since 2022. Four of the G7 countries are in the second tier of social progress (France, Italy, UK and US).

The European Union has overtaken the US in social progress.

For the first time, we see the 27 countries that make up the European Union collectively overtaking the United States in social progress. However, this is largely due to the US backslide as opposed to the EU making great strides. As we see, social progress has

stalled across Europe with the most significant decreases in Austria (-0.77), Lithuania (-0.62), Spain (-0.49), Slovakia (-0.47) and Croatia (-0.41).

Social progress in the United States has declined since 2011 .

The United States lost 0.34 points this year and continues to slide in the ranking to 29th place behind Malta and Cyprus.

While America is holding its own economically – 8th in the world on GDP per capita in 2011 and is still 8th today – it has slipped 10 places in the Social Progress Index rankings since 2011 and its score has declined 1.4 points. The lived experience of Americans is worse today than it was 13 years ago, despite sustained economic growth. The United States’ big areas of weakness are Safety, where it ranks 70th in the world behind Kazakhstan; Health, where it ranks 40th in the world behind Greece; and, Rights & Voice, where it ranks 51st in the world behind Ghana. The US score in all these areas has declined in the last year.

Since 2011, the United States has also seen declines in its scores on Housing, because of the unaffordable cost of housing; Advanced Education, due to falling academic freedom; and, Inclusive Society, due to discrimination and violence against minorities.

The United Kingdom has declined in social progress since 2011.

The UK economy has recovered and continues to rise, following the downturn triggered by Covid-19. However, its social progress has declined by 0.39 points since 2011 and it has fallen 8 places in the ranks since 2011 to 21st in 2023. As in the US, the UK decline is largely driven by declining rights and inclusiveness. However, it is also not meeting the basic needs of people in Housing, Water & Sanitation, Health, and Education.

Beyond these headline empirical findings, we are excited to share this report with you 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 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!

ABOUT THE 2024 SOCIAL PROGRESS INDEX®

2024 will be the biggest election year in history, with more than half the world’s population, four billion people, heading to the polls. As 4 out of 5 people in the world live in countries making no progress or going backwards in social progress, 2024 will prove a

crucial year to hold elected officials to account to address declines in health, education, rights, and other crucial areas that impact the well-being of people.

These elections also come at a time when the world is dealing with massive geopolitical instability driven by factors such as the Israel-Hamas war, the war in Ukraine and US-China tensions. Election outcomes in countries that include the US and India are critical in the fight for world stability and for our ability to reverse the downward trajectory the world is currently on.

Social progress is not only a critical agenda for leaders in government, but also the responsibility for business, finance, and all members of society. Businesses need to make decisions that not only account for their economic health, but which also ensure that economic progress does not come at the cost of the environment, or societal well-being.

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 in 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 commingled 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 57 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.

Each of the framework's twelve components comprises between four and six 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.

Figure 1 / 2024 Social Progress Index® Framework



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.

This is the ninth annual index. For the first time, we can measure 13 years of progress, from 2011 to 2023.

2024 SOCIAL PROGRESS INDEX® RESULTS

The 2024 Social Progress Index® ranks 170 countries that have sufficient available data to assess all 12 components. We group countries from highest to lowest social progress into six tiers. In previous editions of the index, the tiers were based on hierarchical clustering to set empirically determined break points across groups of countries based on their Social Progress Index scores. For the 2024 Social Progress Index, we define deciles in the Social Progress Index scores across the 13 years. We then assign deciles into tiers as per the following: Tier 1: first decile, Tier 2: second and third decile, Tier 3: fourth and fifth decile, Tier 4: sixth and seventh decile, Tier 5: eighth and ninth decile, Tier 6: tenth decile. This method ensures the comparability of tiers across years. Here we present results across all countries and for the world. 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 UK and US performance and the mandate for prioritizing social progress.

For the 2024 Social Progress Index® we made the decision to include every country for which we were able to get complete data. We know that there are countries whose indicators of social progress are likely not a completely accurate representation due to recent conflict or major upheaval, for example, West Bank and Gaza, Israel or Ukraine. However, we feel that it is better to publish all the data. We publish all the data sources on our website.

2024 Country Rankings

Denmark ranks first on the 2024 Social Progress Index, with a score of 90.38. Germany, ranking tenth with a score of 87.64, is the top performing G7 country. The 20 Tier 1 countries are all high or stable-income economies. A total of 5.78 points separate first-ranked Denmark at the top of the tier from 20 ranked Slovenia at the bottom. Only Germany (10th), Canada (15th) and Japan (16th), of the G7 made it into Tier 1. Of the 20 Tier 1 countries, only Luxembourg, Australia and Slovenia showed an annual improvement in their social progress.

Tier 2 features a much wider range of scores and a wider range of developed countries, from the United Kingdom (84.49, ranked 21st) to Albania (71.7, ranked 57th). Only five of the 37 Tier 2 countries, Latvia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Malaysia and Georgia, have shown any annual improvement. All of the EU member states are in Tier 1 or 2, with Romania as the worst performing of the EU countries at 44th. Tier 2 countries have a very wide wealth gap. The US (81.7) has a 54,510.47 USD GDP per capita¹ and is ranked 29th on the Social Progress Index. Yet, Portugal (84.1) with a significantly lower GDP per capita of 31,798.15² scores nearly 3 points higher on the Social Progress Index and ranks six places higher at 23/169. This highlights that a country's GDP does not have to determine their social progress.

Thailand (58th), which leads Tier 3 with a score of 70.67, is one of only 6 Tier 3 countries to have shown an annual score improvement. Tier 3 also includes many other large emerging economies, as defined by the International Monetary Fund, such as Brazil, China, Colombia, Indonesia, Mexico, the Philippines, Russia, South Africa, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

Tier 4 is home to many of the countries that have improved the most since 2011. Including Timor Leste (57.94, 112th), Cambodia (55.36, 120th), Laos (53.05, 124th), Nepal (58.10, 110th) and Bangladesh (54.60, 121st). Guyana tops Tier 4 (64.52) at 95th. Tier 4 also includes Ghana (60.5, 103rd), Egypt (58.77, 108th), India (58.06, 111th), and Bangladesh (54.6, 121st). It

¹ <https://data.worldbank.org/>

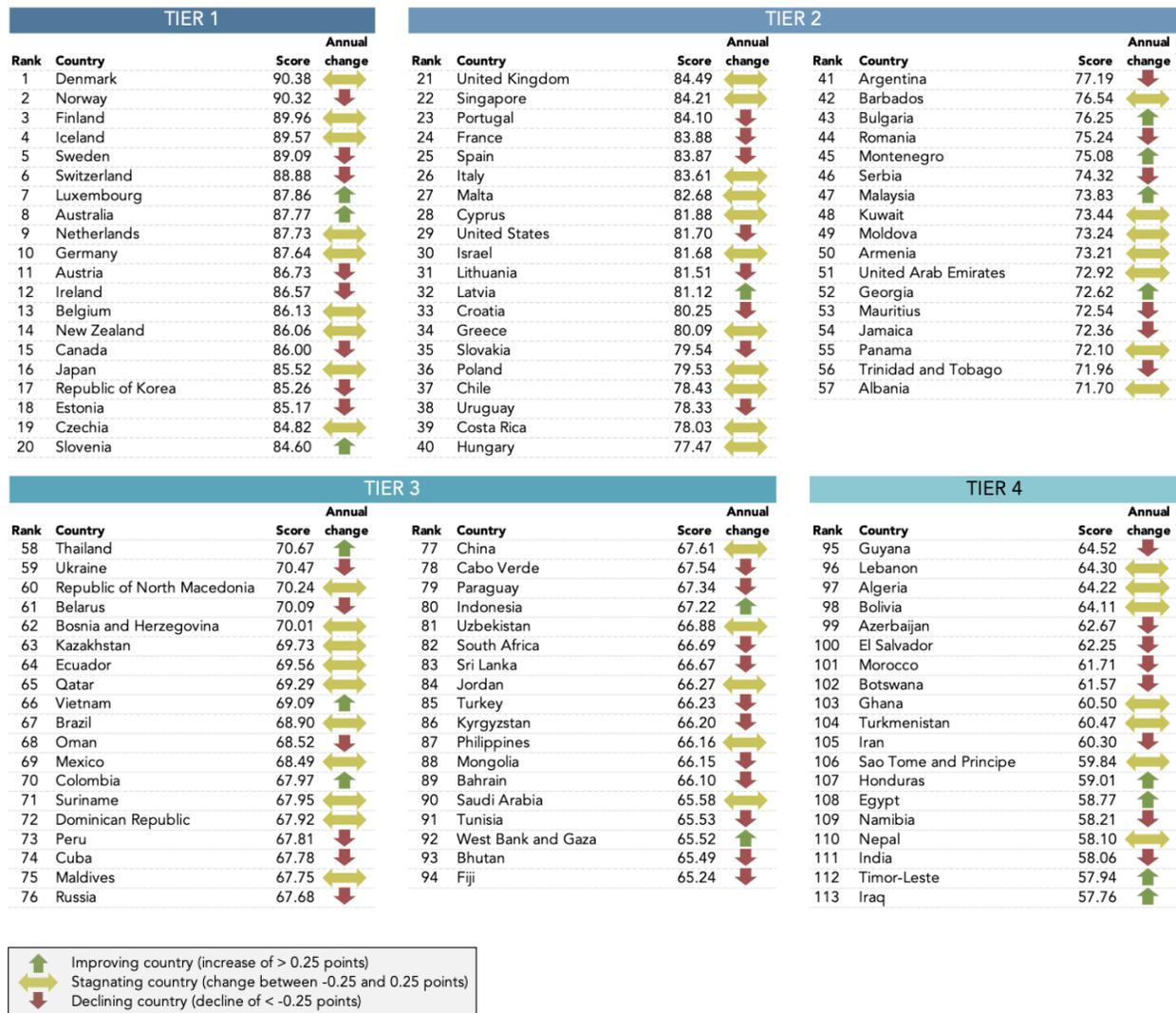
² <https://data.worldbank.org/>

also comprises several Central American countries including El Salvador (62.25, 100th), Honduras (59.01, 107th), Guatemala (57.5, 114th) and Nicaragua (57.49, 115th).

Tier 5 also includes several of the countries that have shown significant improvement over the past 13 years. Tier 5 is mainly composed of lower-income countries, many of them in sub-Saharan Africa.

Tier 6 countries are all poverty stricken; the majority are fragile states with years of political instability which has hindered any progress. A number, like Niger, Somalia, Yemen, South Sudan, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, are active conflict zones and several are fragile states where instability has hindered social progress. South Sudan (25.93) ranks last on the 2024 Social Progress Index.

Figure 2 / 2024 Social Progress Index Rankings



TIER 4 (continued)

Rank	Country	Score	Annual change
114	Guatemala	57.50	↓
115	Nicaragua	57.49	↓
116	Tajikistan	57.45	↑
117	Venezuela	57.23	↔
118	Gabon	56.58	↔
119	Libya	56.39	↑
120	Cambodia	55.36	↔
121	Bangladesh	54.60	↑
122	Senegal	54.53	↔
123	Kenya	53.62	↑
124	Laos	53.05	↑

TIER 5

Rank	Country	Score	Annual change	Rank	Country	Score	Annual change
125	Tanzania	51.94	↔	143	Cameroon	46.05	↔
126	Solomon Islands	51.30	↔	144	Uganda	45.51	↑
127	Myanmar	51.19	↓	145	Mozambique	45.32	↔
128	Zambia	50.53	↓	146	Burkina Faso	44.75	↓
129	The Gambia	50.10	↔	147	Mauritania	44.74	↔
130	Malawi	49.85	↔	148	Sierra Leone	44.73	↓
131	Côte d'Ivoire	49.31	↔	149	Equatorial Guinea	44.70	↔
132	Benin	49.08	↓	150	Papua New Guinea	44.50	↑
133	Lesotho	49.01	↔	151	Republic of Congo	44.45	↔
134	Pakistan	48.87	↓	152	Madagascar	44.21	↑
135	Rwanda	48.82	↔	153	Angola	43.90	↔
136	Comoros	48.82	↓	154	Liberia	43.80	↔
137	Zimbabwe	48.35	↔	155	Sudan	43.79	↑
138	Syria	48.14	↓	156	Guinea-Bissau	43.60	↓
139	Eswatini	48.11	↓	157	Mali	43.46	↑
140	Togo	47.81	↔	158	Ethiopia	43.33	↓
141	Djibouti	47.43	↔	159	Haiti	41.57	↓
142	Nigeria	46.97	↑				

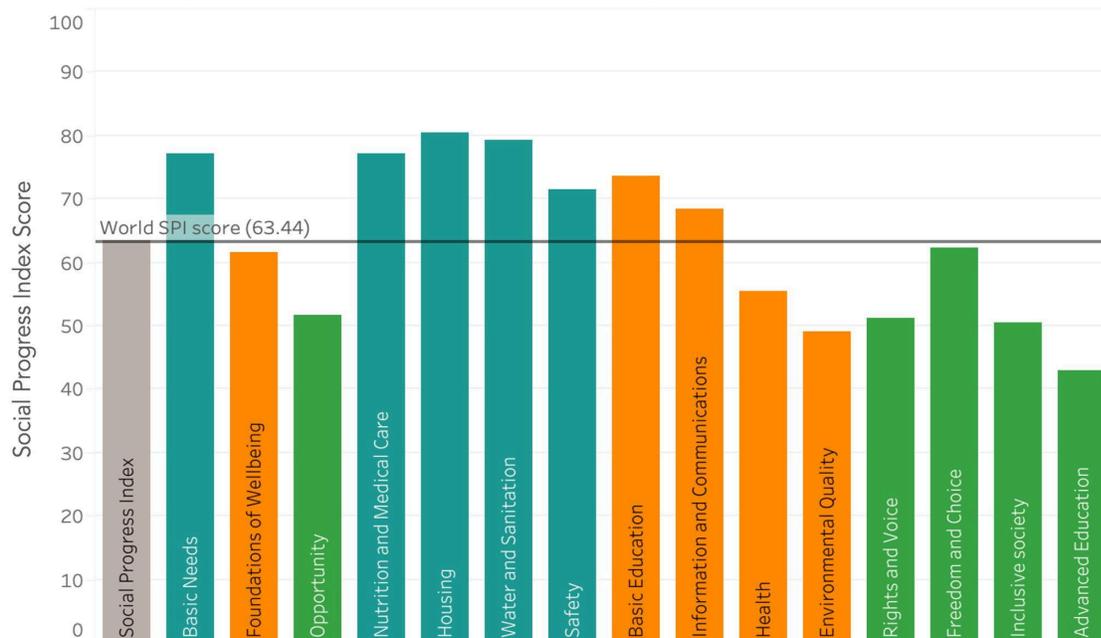
TIER 6

Rank	Country	Score	Annual change
160	Guinea	40.61	↔
161	Niger	40.29	↑
162	Burundi	39.90	↔
163	Yemen	39.88	↔
164	Democratic Republic of Congo	37.63	↔
165	Eritrea	36.76	↑
166	Somalia	33.87	↔
167	Afghanistan	32.15	↓
168	Chad	30.20	↔
169	Central African Republic	27.37	↓
170	South Sudan	25.93	↑

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 be a tier 4 country, ranked between Bolivia and Azerbaijan on the Social Progress Index (score: 63.440). On average, the world scores highest on Housing and Water & Sanitation. The world performs worst on Advanced Education and Environmental Quality.

Figure 3 / Population-weighted world scores by component

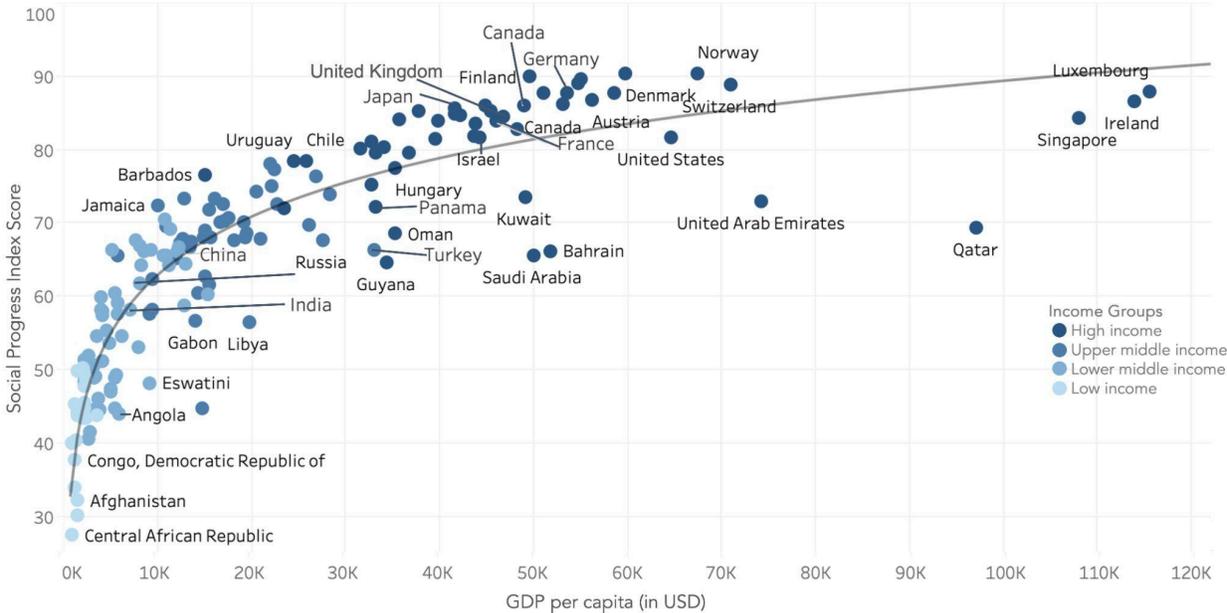


Social Progress Index vs. GDP per capita

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, this marginal effect diminishes/declines etc.
- 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



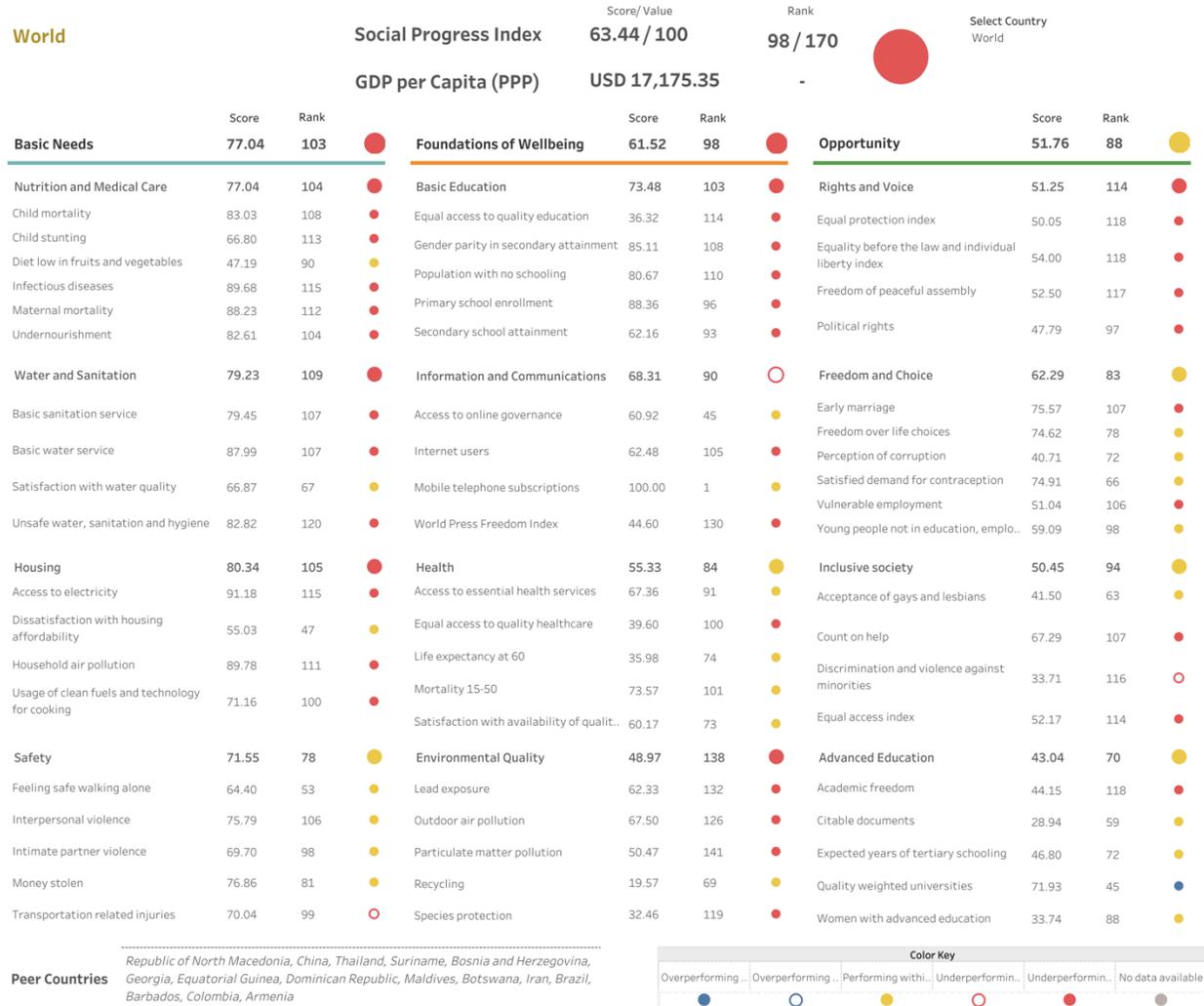
Benchmarking Countries

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 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 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 170 ranked countries.

Figure 5 / The world scorecard



If the world was a country, it would have a score of 63.44/100. It underperforms on seven out of 12 components. Nutrition & Medical Care, Water & Sanitation, Housing, Basic Education, Information & Communications, Environmental Quality, and Rights & Voice. It performs as expected on Safety, Health, Inclusive Society, Freedom & Choice, and Advanced Education.

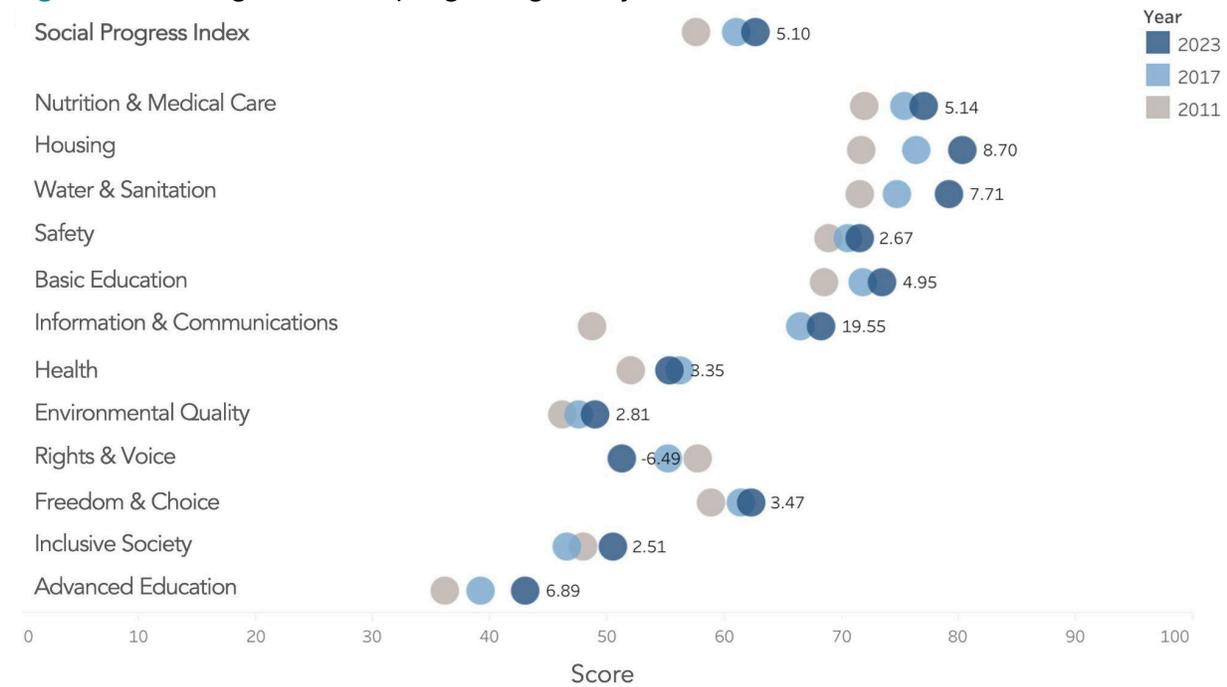
Changes in social progress 2011-2023

In 2024 we can measure changes in social progress over 13 years. To do so, we utilize the 2024 index framework, then apply that methodology across countries and years back

to 2011.³ 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.

Since 2011 the world has improved in terms of social progress, however this year, for the first time, we see that not only has the rate of progress significantly slowed down in recent years, but that we have declined overall since 2022. The population-weighted world score on the Social Progress Index rose from 58.34 in 2011 to 63.75 in 2022 and declined to 63.44 in 2023.

Figure 6 / Change in social progress globally 2011-2023



The gains in social progress are not evenly distributed across the components of the framework. Since 2011 the world score has improved in 11 out of 12 components. We see the biggest gains in Information & Communications (+19.55), Housing (+8.70) and Water & Sanitation (+7.71). However, since 2011 we also see that the world has gone backwards in Rights & Voice (-6.49).

Since 2022, the world has declined or stagnated in 10 out of 12 components leading to an overall social progress decline (-0.31). It shows declines in Basic Education, Information & Communications, Housing, Rights & Voice, and Inclusive society.

³As 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 dataset from 2011-2023 plus additional exclusive features is available for Premium Access at <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/2024socialprogressindex>.

62 countries saw a significant decline in their social progress in 2023 and 74 more stagnated. Only 34 countries saw any real progress.

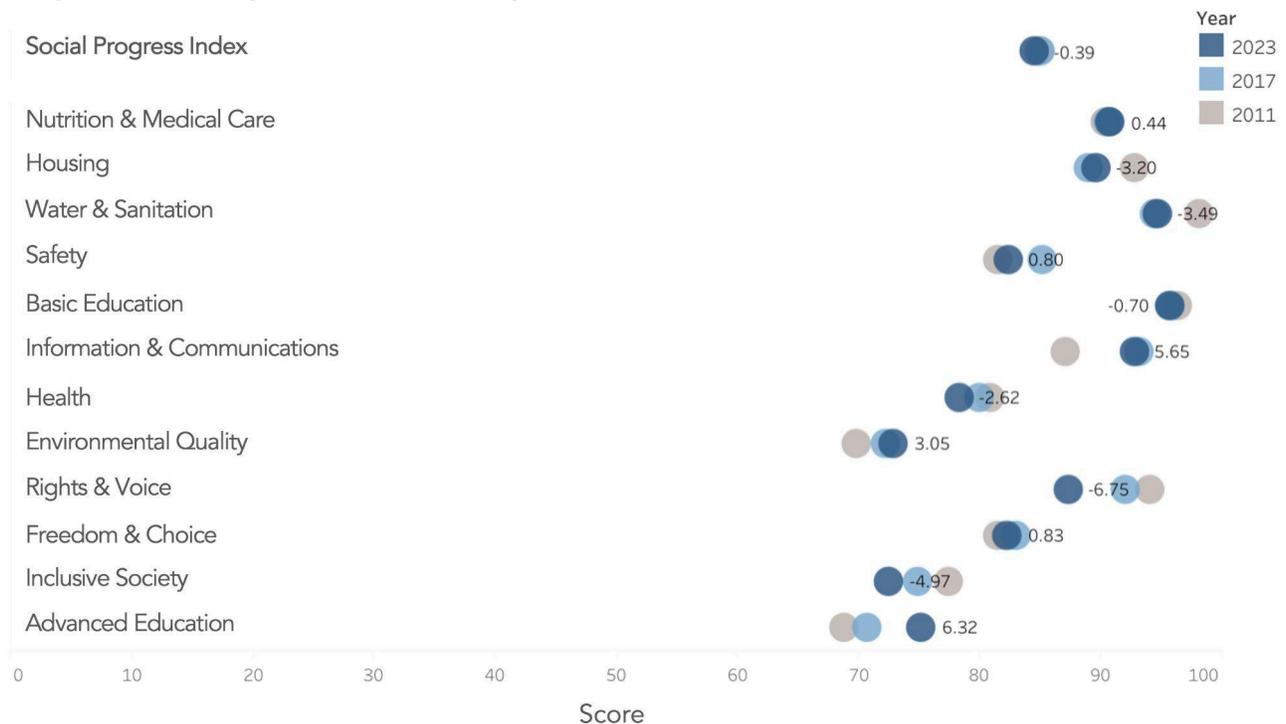
SPOTLIGHT: UK SOCIAL PROGRESS

The United Kingdom has declined in social progress since 2011 (-0.39). It has dropped 8 places in the ranks to be 21st in the world and has been relegated into the second tier of social progress. The 2024 Social Progress Index is dominated by the Nordic countries with Denmark, Norway and Finland taking the top three slots. Yet since 2014, when the Social Progress Index was first launched, the UK had maintained a place in the top tier of countries, alongside G7 peers such as Canada, Germany, and Japan. The UK has been replaced in the top tier by countries such as South Korea, the Czech Republic and Estonia.

The UK’s social progress slide has been slow and steady. Since 2011, when the dataset starts, the UK has gone backwards on social progress (by 0.39 points), one of only four countries to do so, the others being the United States (-1.40), Syria (-4.22) and Venezuela (-6.18).

The areas where the UK has declined since 2011 are Rights & Voice (-6.75), Inclusive Society (-4.97), Water & Sanitation (-3.49), Housing (-3.20), Health (-2.62) and Basic Education (-0.70). In each of the 12 components of the Social Progress Index, the UK ranks lower in 2023 than in 2011.

Figure 8 / Change in UK social progress 2011-2023



The UK has steadily been declining in Rights & Voice (-6.75) over the past 13 years. It is currently ranked 33rd in the world, behind countries that include Chile, Greece, and Cabo Verde. It performs particularly poorly in freedom of peaceful assembly, where it's ranked 64th down from 44th in 2011. Inclusive society has also been on the decline in the UK over the past 13 years (-4.97). We see this play out in the discrimination and violence against minorities, where it ranked 95th in 2022, yet in 2011 it was 37th in the world. This confirms a trend we have seen of an increasingly intolerant UK whose liberties are in retreat.

The UK ranks 52nd on Nutrition & Medical care, worse than Cuba, Albania and Tunisia. We see this play out prominently in a diet low on fruits and vegetables where it is ranked 82nd. However, it is also ranked at just 41st for maternal mortality, 32nd for infectious diseases and 31st for child mortality.

The UK is 36th in Safety, worse than Bosnia, Hungary and Montenegro, this is due to high rates of theft as it ranks 78th for money stolen, as well as 49th for feeling safe walking alone.

The UK ranks 47th in Housing, worse than China, Bulgaria, Serbia and Barbados. At 83rd it ranks lower than Mali, Mexico, Russia, and France in terms of dissatisfaction with the affordability of housing.

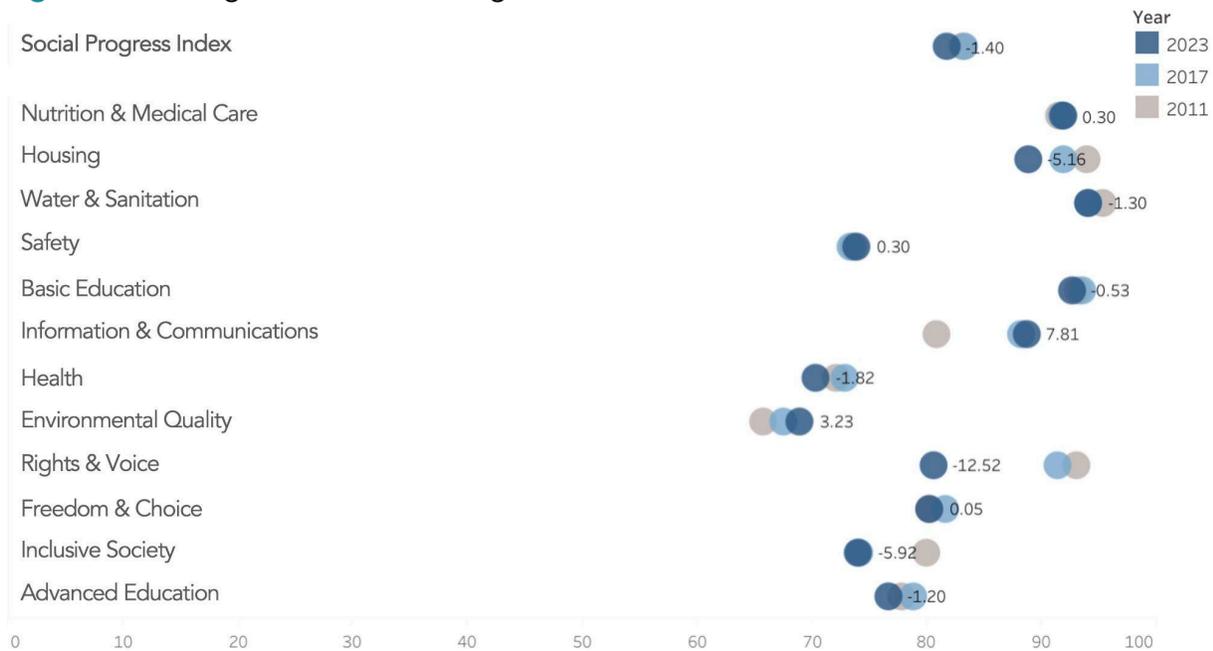
SPOTLIGHT: US SOCIAL PROGRESS

The United States lost 0.34 points this year and continues to slide in the ranking, to 29th place behind Malta and Cyprus. While America is more than holding its own economically - it was 8th in the world on GDP per capita in 2011 and is still 8th today - it has slipped 10 places in the Social Progress Index rankings since 2011 and its score has declined 1.4 points. The real lived experience of Americans is worse today than it was 13 years ago, despite sustained economic growth.

The United States scores poorly in Safety, where it ranks 70th in the world behind countries that include Kazakhstan, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. This is largely due to very high rates of interpersonal violence where it is ranked 110th and intimate partner violence where it is ranked 88th.

In Health, it is ranked 40th in the world behind countries that include Greece, Barbados, and Malaysia. In Rights & Voice, it has also been on a steady downhill slide since 2011, ranking 51st behind countries that include Ghana, Suriname, and South Africa. Since 2011 the United States has also seen declines in its scores on Housing, because of the unaffordable cost of housing; Advanced Education, due to falling academic freedom; and, Inclusive society, due to discrimination and violence against minorities.

Figure 9 / Change in US Social Progress 2011-2023

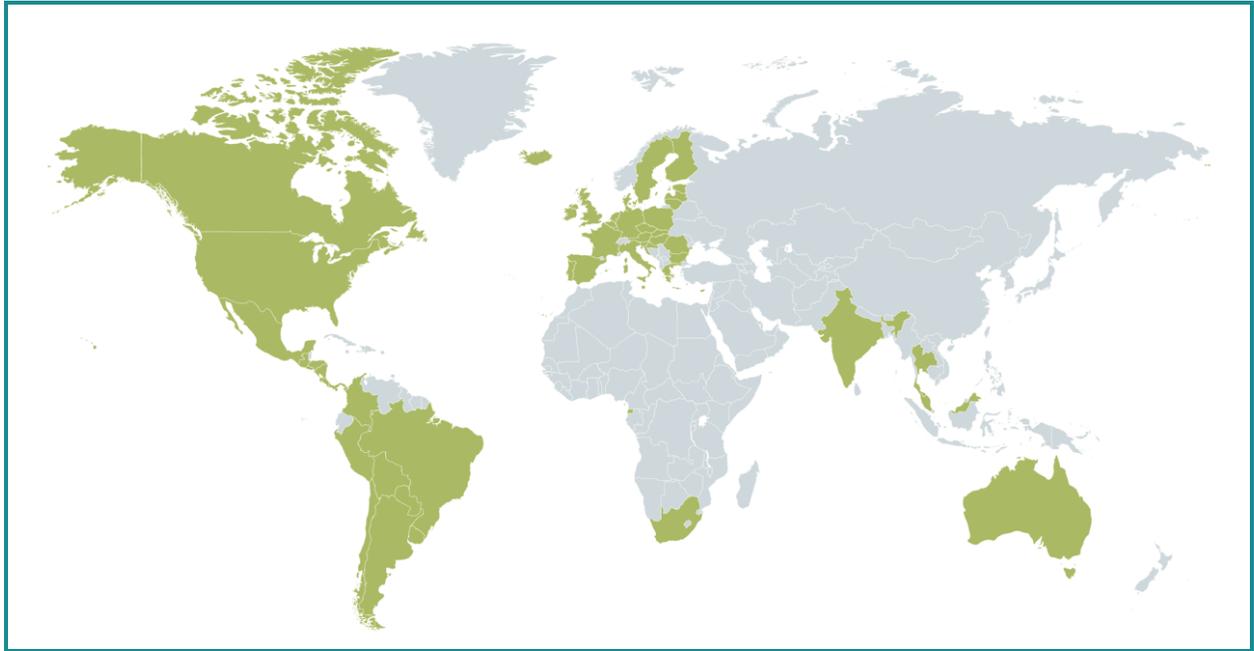


Health and equity in the United States

The US spends far more on healthcare than any other OECD country, it is an extremely profitable business, in 2022 US health insurers made a gross profit of \$41 billion. Yet despite the vast amounts of money the US is not delivering good health outcomes. Overall, in health it ranks 40/170 and in 15-50 mortality it is 74th in the world, falling behind countries that include Syria, Iran, Bangladesh and beyond. Moreover, it is an inequitable system, and the US places at 89th position in terms of ensuring equal access to quality healthcare. Maternal mortality is another area which highlights the inequity of US healthcare, despite the huge financial resources available, it falls at just 61st place with very high numbers of women dying because of childbirth. The abortion restrictions we are seeing in many states mean that these numbers are likely to skyrocket in coming years.

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 50 countries around the world and include leading institutions from government, business, finance, and civil society.

Figure 10 / 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.

Authors:

Michael Green
Jaromir Harmacek
Mohamed Htitich
Petra Krylova

Contact us: www.socialprogress.org/contact

Follow us on social media: