

2014

SOCIAL CHANGE IMPACT REPORT



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At Walden University, we believe that knowledge is most valuable when put to use for the greater good.

Since the first Social Change Impact Report in 2011 to determine the state of global social change, there have been numerous global events related to social change, but one thing remains constant regardless of cause or location:

Change is continuous, and it's important.

Designed to provide a barometer of positive social change, the research in these annual reports identifies who is engaged, what is important to them and how they work together to advance social issues of interest now and in the future.

Each report provides a detailed picture of the state of social change engagement around the world, such as beliefs about social change, issues change agents care about, motivations behind their engagement, actions they are taking to further social change and tools they use.

In 2011, the inaugural report revealed why social change matters, the perceptions of the importance of social change and what the future of social change looks like. Wanting to learn more about what motivates individuals to engage in and lead positive social change to make a local or global difference, the 2012 Social Change Impact Report uncovered why adults engage in social change and the roles individuals, nonprofit organizations, government and media play.

With insight into key motivations, interests and levels of involvement, the 2013 Social Change Impact Report put a face on social change agents by discovering who is leading and contributing to positive social change.

The research identified six distinctive profiles of social change agents around the world: Ultracommitted Change-Makers, Faith-Inspired Givers, Socially Conscious Consumers, Purposeful Participants, Casual Contributors and Social Change Spectators. Each type of social change agent is unique in terms of engagement levels, motivating factors and issues of importance.

The [2014 Social Change Impact Report](#) builds upon these earlier findings by examining people's perceptions of the impact of their engagement in positive social change. The long- and short-term benefits are investigated as well

Recent Global Events Related to Social Change

2014: Kidnapping of school girls in Nigeria by Boko Haram; civil unrest and Russian military intervention in Ukraine; judicial rulings and legislation on same-sex marriage in the U.S.

2013: Protests against the governments in Egypt and Syria; responses to mass shootings in the U.S.; food safety issues in China; garment worker safety issues in response to massive death toll in factory fire in Bangladesh; movements protesting violence against women in India.

2012: Protests against the Syrian government; Greek protests against austerity measures; rise of the Kony 2012 campaign to get Joseph Kony, Ugandan guerrilla group leader and head of the Lord's Resistance Army, arrested.

2011: Protests in Egypt and Libya leading to changes in government; international relief efforts in response to massive earthquake and tsunami in Japan; beginning of the Occupy Wall Street movement.

as how and to what extent they believe they are making a difference and how satisfied they are with their efforts and the efforts of others. In addition, the 2014 survey sheds light on the roles of both the younger and older generations in effecting social change.

Social change can mean different things to different people. For the purpose of this report, positive social change refers to involvement in activities that improve the lives of individuals and communities locally and around the world. It includes a range of activities, such as volunteering or service; donating money, goods or services; and educating others about a particular issue or cause.

Since its founding in 1970, Walden has attracted students who seek knowledge both to advance their careers as well as address challenges in their communities and industries. The Social Change Impact Report illustrates one of the many ways Walden University is leading the conversation about and contributing to positive social change around the world.

Adults across the globe care about positive social change and believe they are making a difference.

Involvement in positive social change continues to be important to most adults and most believe they can make the world a better place by their actions.

Overall, these levels have stayed consistently high in the countries surveyed annually since 2011. Today, 84% of adults, on average, say that it is very or somewhat important to them personally to be involved in positive social change.

The countries where adults are the most likely to say that personal involvement in positive social change is very or somewhat important are Brazil (96%), Mexico (94%) and India (91%). Adults in Canada (76%), the U.S. (74%) and Germany (70%) are the least likely to say this is very or somewhat important.

On average, 79% agree that they can make the world a better place by their actions.

Support for this belief in India and Jordan has decreased slightly from its 2013 peak, while support has increased in Mexico after a dip in 2013.

The Social Change Impact Report series has demonstrated that people view their social change activities as global and interconnected. In 2011, a majority of adults in 11 countries around the world (73%, on average) agreed that what happens to communities in other parts of the world affects their local community.¹

The 2013 survey revealed that social change agents focus on issues of both local and global importance, with more than seven in 10 of those engaged in positive social change agreeing that they chose their issue(s) because of the importance for their local community (77%, on average) and nearly as many (72%, on average) saying they chose their issue(s) because of the effects on people around the world.²

FIGURE 1:

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



About the Research: Commissioned by Walden University and conducted by Harris Poll, the 2014 Social Change Impact Report is based on a survey of more than 9,000 adults in Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Jordan, Mexico and the U.S. (see the methodology for more information).

¹ The 2011 Social Change Impact Report: Global Survey was conducted online among more than 12,000 adults in Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Japan, Mexico, Spain and the U.S.

² The 2013 Social Change Impact Report survey was conducted online among more than 9,000 adults in Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Jordan, Mexico and the U.S.



The 2014 survey shows that half of adults believe their efforts on behalf of local and global issues are having a sizable impact.

Half of adults feel they are having a major or moderate impact on improving the lives of individuals in **their community** (53%, on average) and half feel they are having a major or moderate impact on creating a **better world** for everyone to live in (49%, on average).

People also report they are influencing the actions and attitudes of others to improve people's lives. Half of adults (53%, on average) feel they are having a major or moderate impact on changing behaviors of others to **improve people's lives**. Half of adults (52%, on average) feel they are having a major or moderate impact on changing attitudes and beliefs of others to improve people's lives.

However, an area where people believe they are having less of an impact is on systemic changes. Fewer than half of adults (40%, on average) feel they are having a major or moderate impact on changing social structures and systems. Adults in Brazil (70%), India (63%) and Mexico (63%) are the most likely to feel they are having a major or moderate impact on changing social structures and systems.

Adults in Germany (17%), U.S. (22%), Canada (23%) and China (26%) are the **least likely** to feel they are having this level of impact on changing social structures and systems. In fact, four in 10 adults in these countries feel they are having **no impact** in this area (U.S.: 44%; Canada: 41%; China: 40%; Germany: 38%).

There are some indications that optimism about positive social change may be decreasing.

Seven in 10 adults (71%, on average) agree that, in the future, more people in their country will be involved in positive social change activities than are involved today. This represents a decrease from 2013, when 78% (on average) said this. One-quarter of adults (23%, on average) agree that engaging in positive social change is a waste of time. This represents a slight increase from 2013, when 17% (on average) said this.

FIGURE 2:

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Strongly or somewhat agree

	In the future, more people in my country will be involved in positive social change activities than are involved today.		Engaging in positive social change is a waste of time.	
	APR 2013	JUN 2014	APR 2013	JUN 2014
BRAZIL	87%	84%	18%	28%
CANADA	75%	66%	15%	19%
CHINA	87%	73%	13%	28%
GERMANY	54%	40%	15%	17%
INDIA	88%	85%	27%	32%
JORDAN	77%	76%	11%	13%
MEXICO	84%	77%	17%	23%
U.S.	71%	64%	19%	20%



As they did in 2013, most adults in 2014 report that they have participated in positive social change activities in the past six months.

On average, 82% have done something to engage in positive social change in the past six months, including half (48%, on average) who have engaged in social change using digital technology (posting a comment on a positive social change issue on a website, texting messages related to a positive social change issue or participating in a social networking site group dedicated to a positive social change issue).

The 2013 Social Change Impact Report identified six distinctive profiles of social change agents. Among those in the **Ultracommitted Change-Maker** segment, nearly half do something to engage in positive social change at least once a month (46%, on average).

Most in this segment also say they engage in positive social change because it is a lifelong commitment, and they were involved in social change activities in high school.

Another segment characterized by frequent participation is the **Faith-Inspired Giver** segment, in which 39%, on average, do something to engage in positive social change at least once a month.

Other segments are less likely to participate this frequently, including **Socially Conscious Consumers** (37%, on average), **Purposeful Participants** (17%, on average), **Casual Consumers** (24%, on average) and **Social Change Spectators** (9%, on average).

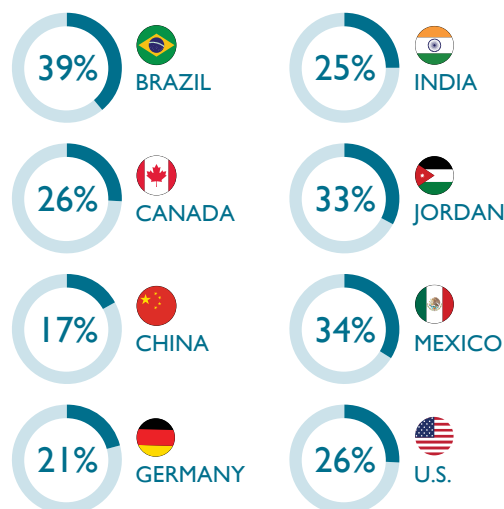
Adults in Brazil (90%), India (87%) and Mexico (87%) are **most likely** to have engaged in positive social change in the past six months, while those in Germany (68%) are the least likely to have done so. Using digital technology is the top social change activity in Brazil (63%), India (61%), Mexico (60%), China (59%) and Jordan (53%). Donating money, goods or services is the top social change activity in Canada (51%), Germany (38%) and the U.S. (51%).

Nearly three in 10 adults (28%, on average) do something to engage in positive social change at least once a month. Only 10% of adults, on average, say that they never do something to engage in positive social change.

FIGURE 3:

Overall, how often do you do something to engage in positive social change?

At least once a month



Social change agents focus on the long term.

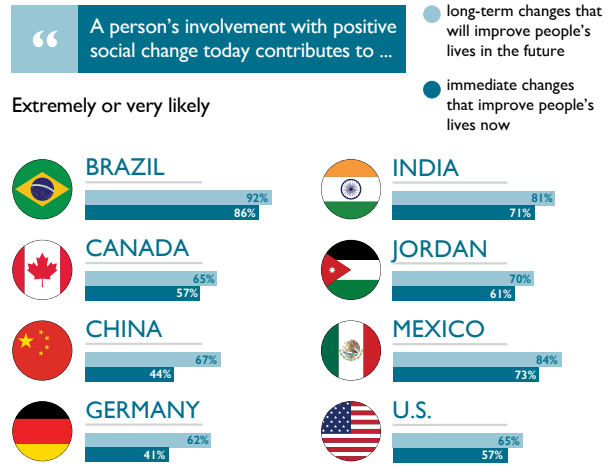
More adults engaged in positive social change activities value long-term changes than immediate benefits.

Nearly three-quarters of adults who have ever engaged in positive social change (73%, on average) say it is extremely or very important that a person's involvement with positive social change today contributes to **long-term changes that will improve people's lives in the future**. In contrast, six in 10 adults who have ever engaged in positive social change (61%, on average) say it is extremely or very important that a person's involvement with positive social change today contributes to **immediate changes that improve people's lives now**.

This emphasis on long-term changes is most apparent in China and Germany. These countries have the largest gaps between the number of social change agents who say that long-term changes improving lives in the future are extremely or very important and the number who say that immediate changes improving lives now are that important (China: 67% vs. 44%; Germany: 62% vs. 41%).

FIGURE 4:

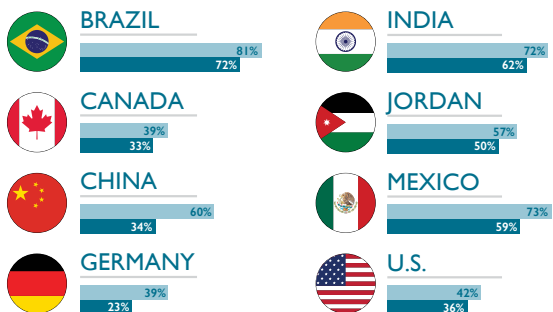
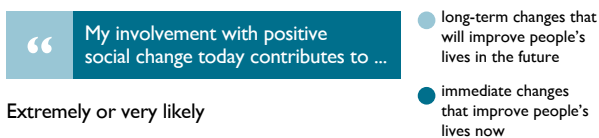
Overall, how important is each of the following?



Organizations play an important role in facilitating social change engagement. According to the 2012 Social Change Impact Report, more adults report that they are most likely to get involved in positive social change through an **organized group** (60%, on average) than say they will as an individual (29%, on average).³ In 2013, most adults (80%, on average) agreed that nonprofit organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) make it easy to be involved in positive social change.⁴

FIGURE 5:

Overall, how important is each of the following?



Adults engaged in positive social change activities also believe that it is more likely that their involvement contributes to long-term changes than to immediate changes to people's lives.

Six in 10 adults who have ever engaged in positive social change (58%, on average) say it is extremely or very likely that their involvement with positive social change today contributes to long-term changes that will improve people's lives in the future. In contrast, slightly less than half (46%, on average) say it is extremely or very likely that their involvement today contributes to immediate changes that improve people's lives now. Social change agents in Brazil are the most likely to say it is extremely or very likely that their involvement contributes to both long-term changes (81%) and immediate changes (72%).

³ The 2012 Social Change Impact Report survey was conducted online among more than 8,900 adults in Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Jordan, Mexico and the U.S.

⁴ The 2013 Social Change Impact Report survey was conducted online among more than 9,000 adults in Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Jordan, Mexico and the U.S.



People feel they could be doing more for social change and that there is more to be done.

Although most adults are involved in social change and feel they are making a difference, a majority of adults are not highly satisfied with the frequency they are engaged in social change activities or how much they are helping to improve people's lives.

On average, only 36% of adults are extremely or very satisfied with the frequency that they are engaged in positive social change activities. On average, 36% of adults are extremely or very satisfied with how much they are helping to improve the lives of individuals and communities.

Adults in Brazil (51%), India (47%) and Mexico (46%) are the most likely to be extremely or very satisfied with the frequency that they are engaged, while adults in Jordan (25%), Canada (27%) and Germany (29%) are the least likely to be that satisfied.

Adults in Brazil (53%) and India (51%) are the most likely to be extremely or very satisfied with how much they are helping, while adults in Jordan (24%), Canada (25%) and Germany (26%) are the least likely to be that satisfied.

Even fewer adults are highly satisfied with how much people in their country are involved in positive social change activities or with the availability of opportunities to be involved.

On average, 25% of adults say that they are extremely or very satisfied with how much people in their country are involved in positive social change activities, and slightly more (29%, on average) are not at all satisfied with this. Fewer than four in 10 adults (36%, on average) say they are extremely or very satisfied with the availability of opportunities to be involved in positive social change.

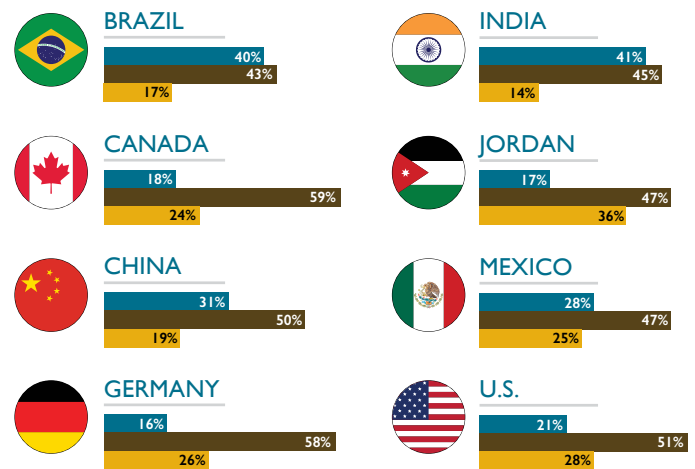
Satisfaction with their fellow countrymen is highest in India where 40% of adults say they are extremely or very satisfied with how much people in India are involved in positive social change activities. Satisfaction with availability of opportunities is highest in India (50%) and Brazil (49%).

FIGURE 6:

Overall, how satisfied are you with the following:

“ How much the lives of individuals and communities are improving.

- Extremely or very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not at all satisfied



The need for more positive social change engagement still exists.

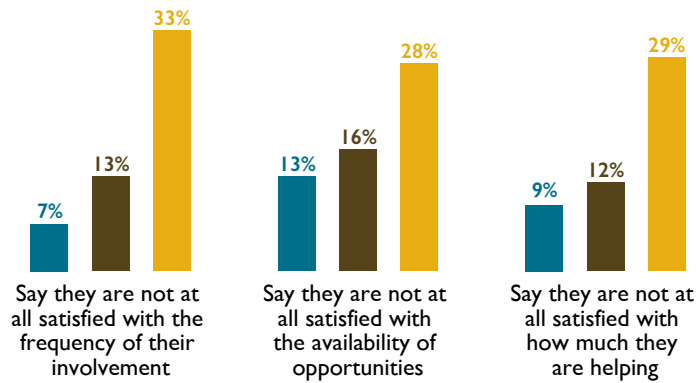
Most adults are not highly satisfied with how much the lives of individuals and communities are improving. On average, 27% of adults are extremely or very satisfied with how much the lives of individuals and communities are improving, and a similar number (24%, on average) are not at all satisfied.



Many adults who rarely or never engage in positive social change activities are not necessarily happy with their current lack of involvement—they are the most likely to be not at all satisfied with the frequency of their involvement, the availability of opportunities to be involved and with how much they are helping to improve people’s lives.

Engage in Positive Social Change

- At least monthly
- 2–11 times a year
- No more than once a year or never



The more frequently people engage in positive social change, the more impact they report having locally, globally and even systemically.

Two-thirds of adults who engage in positive social change at least monthly (66%, on average) say they are having a major or moderate impact on [improving the lives of individuals in their community](#), compared with a little more than half (55%, on average) who engage 2–11 times a year and 35%, on average, of those who engage less often.

Six in 10 adults who engage in positive social change at least monthly (59%, on average) say they are having a major or moderate impact on [creating a better world for everyone to live in](#), compared with half of those (50%, on average) who engage 2–11 times a year and 37% (on average) who engage less often.

Nearly half of adults who engage in positive social change at least monthly (48%, on average) say they are having a major or moderate impact on [changing social structures and systems](#), compared with four in 10 (40%, on average) of those who engage 2–11 times a year and 29% of those who engage less often.

Both younger and older generations have important roles in fostering positive social change.

While a majority of adults believe that younger adults have more passion about social change, there is a strong consensus that older adults provide younger adults with the knowledge essential for social change to occur.

Nearly nine in 10 adults (86%, on average) agree that in order for positive social change to happen, it is necessary for older adults to share their knowledge and experience about social change with younger adults. Two-thirds of adults (66%, on average) agree that younger adults are more passionate about positive social change than older adults.

A majority of people in most of the countries surveyed believes that older adults have an edge on being able to impact social change.

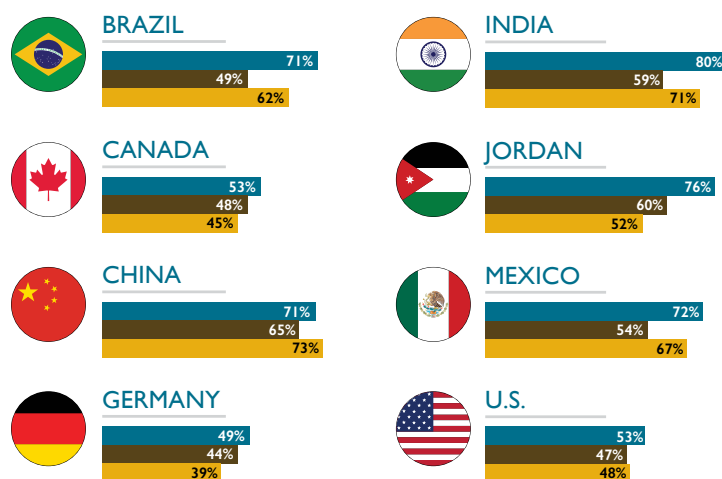
Six in 10 adults (57%, on average) agree that when it comes to positive social change, older adults can make more of a difference than younger adults. However, nearly as many believe that older adults are more resistant to innovation. Half of adults (53%, on average) agree that older adults are not willing to try new ideas to make a difference in positive social change.

FIGURE 7:

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Strongly or somewhat agree

- Younger adults are more passionate about positive social change than older adults.
- Older adults are not willing to try new ideas to make a difference in positive social change.
- When it comes to positive social change, older adults can make more of a difference than can younger adults.



As might be expected, adults in countries with the oldest populations—Canada, Germany and the U.S.—are less likely than those in other countries to say that younger adults are more passionate about positive social change than older adults and less likely to think that older adults are not willing to try new ideas. Yet, paradoxically, adults in these countries are also the least likely to say that older adults can make more of a difference than can younger adults.

Belief that young adults' involvement in positive social change is on the upswing is more common in countries with the youngest populations.









Majorities of adults in India (76%), Jordan (73%), China (71%), Brazil (68%) and Mexico (65%) agree that young adults today are more involved in positive social change than young adults were 20 years ago. Half or fewer in Canada (51%), the U.S. (49%) or Germany (38%) hold this view.

In several countries, young millennials (18- to 24-year-olds) are the ones who see young people as more passionate and who see older adults as less willing to try new ideas. In Brazil, China, Germany and the U.S., millennials are more likely than older adults (those over 40 years old) to agree that younger adults are more passionate about positive social change and that older adults are not willing to try new ideas to make a difference in positive social change.

FIGURE 8:

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Strongly or somewhat agree

	Younger adults are more passionate about positive social change than older adults.		Older adults are not willing to try new ideas to make a difference in positive social change.	
	18-24	Over 40	18-24	Over 40
 BRAZIL	77%	61%	56%	40%
 CANADA	51%	49%	47%	47%
 CHINA	73%	60%	70%	58%
 GERMANY	58%	42%	54%	38%
 INDIA	76%	89%	60%	60%
 JORDAN	73%	74%	57%	58%
 MEXICO	72%	66%	54%	54%
 U.S.	63%	48%	53%	44%

Young millennials are particularly focused on the **environment** as a social change issue. The 2011 Social Change Impact Report found that a majority of millennials in Mexico (80%), Brazil (73%), Canada (70%), China (72%), Germany (58%) and India (58%) say that the environment in other parts of the world will have a major impact on life in their own country.⁵

⁵ The 2011 Social Change Impact Report: Global Survey was conducted online among more than 12,000 adults in Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Japan, Mexico, Spain and the U.S.



Change is continuous, and it's important.

The [2014 Social Change Impact Report](#) provides new insights into the public's views on the priorities of social change and the impact of public engagement. It also demonstrates that involvement in positive social change activities is widespread and diverse. Adults across the globe are confident they are making a difference. Even in a world of instant gratification, adults emphasize the importance of contributing to long-term changes versus changes with more immediate benefits.

Regardless of age, involvement continues to be important to most adults; however, the future of positive social change relies on older adults who must share their knowledge and experience with younger generations. Although younger adults are more passionate about positive social change, this exchange of ideas is important as older adults are most likely to make more of a difference than their youthful counterparts.

Still, the 2014 survey also demonstrates that there is more work to be done as adults around the world indicate there is ample room for improvement, both in terms of improving people's lives and in providing opportunities to engage in positive social change. While there are some indications that optimism about positive social change may be waning, social change remains important now and in the future.

At Walden University, we believe higher education institutions have a greater opportunity to play a significant and conscious role in social change. The purpose of our annual Social Change Impact Report is to contribute to and advance the ongoing social change discussion and debate at local, national and global levels.

To learn more about the report or to find out what kind of social agent you may be, visit www.WaldenU.edu/impactreport.

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Methodology

The 2014 Social Change Impact Report survey was conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of Walden University between June 1 and 17, 2014, among a total of 9,138 adults within Brazil (1,009 adults ages 18–64), Canada (1,003 adults ages 18–64), China (1,021 adults ages 18–64), Germany (1,000 adults ages 18–64), India (1,021 adults ages 18–64), Jordan (1,027 adults ages 18 and older), Mexico (1,020 adults ages 18–64), and the U.S. (2,037 adults age 18 and older).

Data for each country were weighted to the general or online population within each country. This online survey is not based on a probability sample, and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. A complete survey methodology is available upon request.

For more information on the 2014 Social Change Impact Report, including the methodology, per country results for findings included in this summary and a questionnaire providing answers to each survey question, please contact Jen Raider at 1-443-627-7452 or contact jen.raider@waldenu.edu.

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