2026 Global

Social Progress Index

Methodology Summary

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SOCIAL PROGRESS IMPERATIVE

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Introduction

The Social Progress Index is a well-established measure, published since 2013, that is meant to catalyze improvement and drive action by presenting social outcome data in a useful and reliable way. Composed of multiple dimensions, the Social Progress Index can be used to benchmark success and provide a holistic, transparent, outcome-based measure of a country's wellbeing that is independent of economic indicators. Policymakers, businesses, and countries' citizens alike can use it to compare their country against others on different facets of social progress, allowing the identification of specific areas of strength or weakness.

The 2026 Global Social Progress Index ranks 171 countries on social progress. We combine 57 social and environmental outcome indicators to calculate an overall score for these countries, based on tiered levels of scoring that include measures in health, safety, education, technology, rights, and more. We also consider the data of 25 additional countries, calculating component and dimension scores when enough data are available. In all, the Social Progress Index measures at least some aspects of social progress across more than 99.9% of the world's population.

This report describes the methodology used to calculate the Social Progress Index. We start by describing the principles that establish the conceptual architecture of the index and provide an overview of the index framework. We then detail the steps taken to select data and calculate the index. Finally, we discuss the methodology behind assessing countries' strengths and weaknesses, relative to their economic prosperity. We conclude the report with limitations of year-to-year comparisons and information on future directions.

Social Progress Principles

We define 'social progress' as *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.* This definition, established in consultation with a group of academic and policy experts, drives the framework of the Social Progress Index. It alludes to three broad elements of social progress, which we refer to as dimensions: Basic Needs, Foundations of Wellbeing, and Opportunity. Under each dimension are four components whose underlying concepts relate and are guided by questions we seek to answer with available data (see Figure 1). Each component is further defined by a set of outcome indicators that respond to the conceptual questions posed.

Figure 1 / Social Progress Index Component-Level Framework

Together, these interrelated elements combine to produce a given level of social progress. The Social Progress Index methodology allows measurement of each component and each dimension, yielding an overall score and ranking.

Our approach builds on a long line of work constructing country indexes to measure and assess various facets of economic and social performance. However, the Social Progress Index is distinct in its core methodological choices:

- A focus on non-economic dimensions of national performance
- A measurement approach based on outcome indicators, rather than input measures
- A holistic framework consisting of three broad dimensions of social progress, each of which is the sum of four equally weighted components
- Calculation of each component as the weighted sum of a series of measures, with the weights determined through principal component analysis

The Social Progress Index is explicitly focused on non-economic aspects of national performance. Unlike most other national measurement efforts, we treat social progress as distinct though associated with more traditional economic measures such as GDP per capita. In contrast, other indices such as the Human Development Index or OECD Better Life Index combine economic and social indicators. Our objective is to utilize a clear yet rigorous methodology that isolates the non-economic dimensions of social performance.

The Social Progress Index aims to be as outcome-based as possible. Both input and outcome-based indexes can help countries benchmark their progress, but in very different ways. Input indexes measure a country's policy choices or investments believed (or known) to lead to an important outcome, while outcome indexes directly measure the outcomes of these decisions or investments. Input indexes also require a degree of consensus about how inputs lead to outcomes, as well as a process to calibrate the relative importance of different input factors against outcome measures. In the field of social progress, this would mean a clear consensus and understanding of which inputs lead to better social outcomes—a field of research that is still growing and to which the Social Progress Index continues to contribute.

When there are multiple output measures or a lack of consensus on all the inputs that matter, or when data related to inputs are highly incomplete, an outcome-oriented index may be more appropriate (Fleurbaey and Blanchet, 2013). Following this logic, we designed the Social Progress Index as an outcome index. The Social Progress Index has been designed to aggregate and synthesize multiple outcome measures in a conceptually consistent and transparent way that will also be useful for decision-makers benchmarking progress. The Social Progress Imperative continues to explore the role of input measures and policies in determining a country's performance.

Dimensions of Social Progress

At the topmost level of the framework, we synthesize three distinct though related questions that, taken together offer insight into the level of social progress:

1) Does a country provide for its people's most essential needs?
2) Are the building blocks in place for individuals and communities to enhance and sustain wellbeing?
3) Is there opportunity for all individuals to reach their full potential?

Each of these questions describes a dimension of social progress, respectively: Basic Needs, Foundations of Wellbeing and Opportunity. The first dimension, Basic Needs, assesses a population's capacity to survive with adequate nourishment and basic medical care, clean water, sanitation, adequate shelter, and personal safety. These needs are still not met in many developing countries and are often incomplete in some more prosperous countries.

Basic needs have been the predominant focus of research in development economics, but the second dimension of social progress, Foundations of Wellbeing, deserves equal attention. It highlights the extent to which a country's residents can gain a basic education, obtain information and communicate freely, benefit from a modern healthcare system, and live in a healthy environment conducive to a long life. Nearly all countries struggle with at least one of these aspects.

Finally, any discussion of social progress must also include whether a country's population have the freedom and opportunity to make their own choices and pursue higher education. Personal rights, personal freedom and choice, inclusiveness, and access to advanced education all contribute to the level of opportunity within a given society. This dimension of the Social Progress Index is perhaps the most controversial and most difficult to measure. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that societies, high-income or low-income, developed or developing, still struggle to meet the moral imperative to guarantee the equality of opportunity for all citizens.

The multi-dimensional construction of the Social Progress Index should not be interpreted as a step-by-step movement toward progress from one dimension to the next. Rather, the three dimensions are interrelated and, in fact, statistically correlated. While we distinguish between these three aspects of social progress, many issues they encompass interact with one another to drive more meaningful change.

Components of Social Progress

Under each dimension are four components. Components, like dimensions, are categories of outcomes, rather than specific outcomes themselves. Each component highlights a separate aspect of the overall set of outcomes that make up a dimension, building on both academic and policy literature. For example, the Opportunity dimension includes the components Rights and

Voice, Freedom and Choice, Inclusive Society, and Advanced Education. Each of these components describes a related, but distinct aspect of what it means for a society to guarantee opportunity among its population. The Rights and Voice, and Advanced Education components describe the extent to which individuals can pursue their own objectives to the best of their ability. Freedom and Choice and Inclusive Society, on the other hand, describe the extent of limits on individuals. Together, the four components offer a conceptually coherent way of capturing how societies can empower (or limit) an individual's autonomy, freedom, and ability to progress.

The twelve components represent what we believe to be the most complete set of outcome categories given our current understanding of social progress from diverse literature and given the current availability of data. The Social Progress Imperative Advisory Board provided input into selecting the dimensions and the elaboration of the components within each dimension, along with an iterative review of relevant literature.

The framework was established in 2013, and we continue to ensure its relevance each year of publication. We consult extensively with experts across disciplines on the twelve-component structure of the Social Progress Index on an ongoing basis, ensuring it continues to capture the principal aspects of human wellbeing and that the issues measured are comprehensive and apply to all societies, regardless of their country's level of economic development, political stature, or geography.

Indicator Selection

At the most granular level of the Social Progress Index framework, we identify multiple independent outcome measures – indicators – related to each component. Each set of indicators, grouped by component, defines and measures the same aspect of social progress. Depending on data availability and ongoing research into social outcomes, indicators may change with each edition of the Social Progress Index. However, the concepts captured by each set of indicators (i.e., components) remains the same. The 2026 Global Social Progress Index includes 57 indicators, with 4-6 indicators per component (see Figure 2).

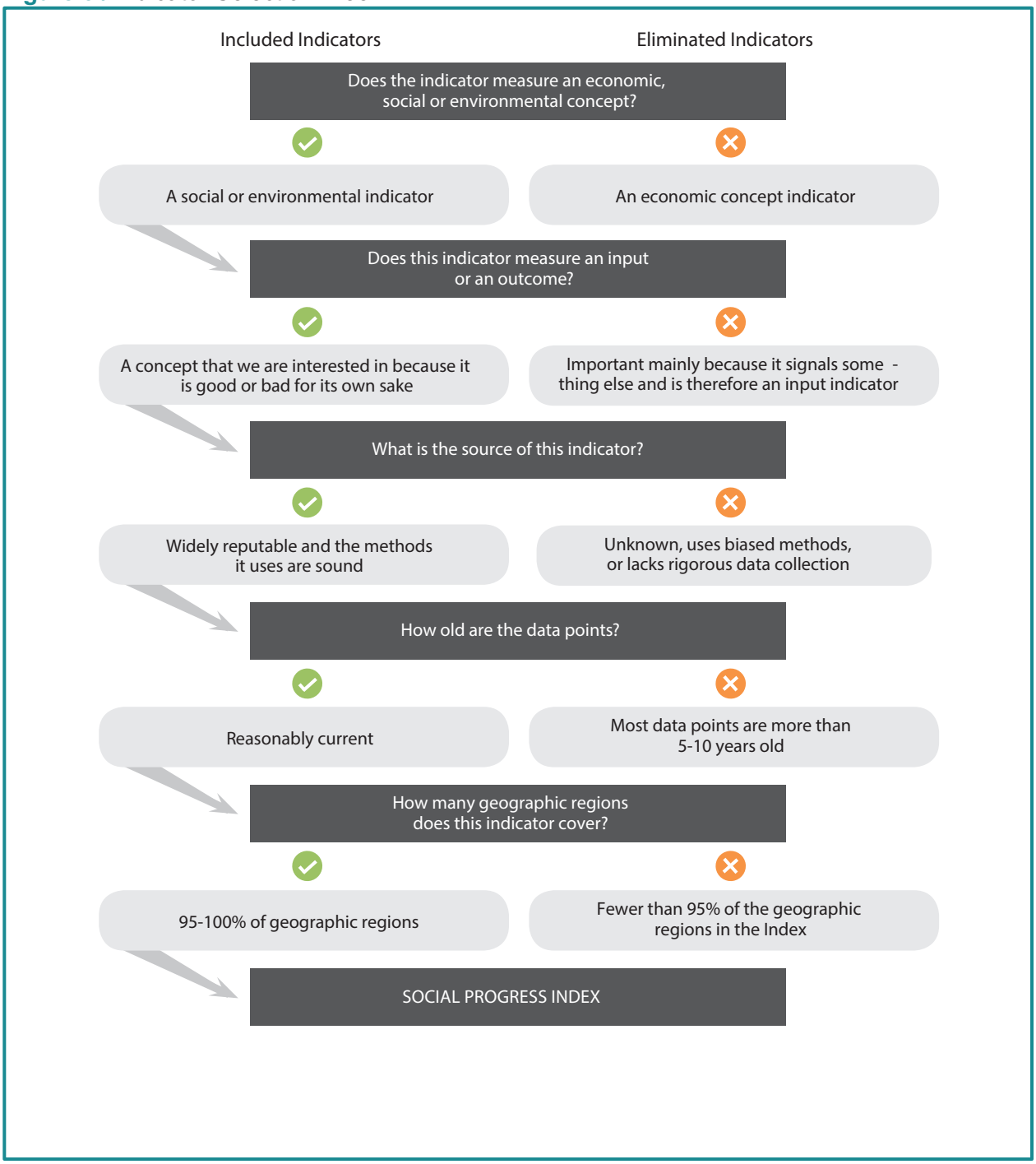
Figure 2 / Social Progress Index Indicator-Level Framework

We only include indicators that are measured well, with consistent methodology, by the same organization and across all (or essentially all) countries in our sample. We evaluate each indicator

to ensure that the procedures used to produce the measure are sound and that it captures what it purports to capture. Data for each indicator must come from the same source to ensure consistency in measurement across countries.

Data sources range from large international institutions like the United Nations to non-governmental organizations such as Freedom House. We also include data collected via global surveys, such as Gallup's World Poll (sources are summarized in Appendix 1). For each indicator, we evaluate the data sources available and consider tradeoffs between the quality and precision of a social indicator and the comprehensiveness of its country coverage. Figure 3 below depicts our decision tree for indicator selection. Geographic coverage tends to exclude many high-quality indicators from consideration because they only cover a subset of countries, such as OECD countries, or a particular region, such as the European Union.

Figure 3 / Indicator Selection Tree



Additionally, we factor into our decision the age of the indicators, only considering the most recent available data. Across the 171 ranked countries we have a total of 9377 data points to calculate the Social Progress Index for 2025.[1] Most of these data are reflective of 2023 (41.0%), 2024 (37.9%) and 2025 (18.2%).

[1] The rest to the total of 9747 observations (57 variables for 171 ranked countries) for the latest year (2025), i.e., 370 observations, were imputed using regression techniques.

A final important criterion for indicator data is that they are publicly available. We strive for transparency both in terms of the data we use to inform the Social Progress Index, as well as our calculation methodology.

Indicator Transformations

When comparing country-level data, we encounter issues that require us to transform the data for certain indicators. In most cases, we transform data to meet clear upper or lower boundaries set by the indicator definition. In others, we address extreme values that may skew results if left untreated. Our main two techniques are to either cap an indicator, setting a clear upper or lower boundary cut-off value, or to transform an indicator. We also create gender parity in secondary attainment to better reflect the parity between boys and girls in a more gender-neutral fashion. Lastly, we calculate a floating average for selected survey indicators to limit annual volatility.

A. Capped Indicators

We impose a top and bottom boundary on a number of indicators, listed below in Figure 4. Child mortality, Infectious diseases, Undernourishment, Maternal mortality, Transportation related injuries, Intimate partner violence, Non-communicable diseases, Life expectancy at 65 (lower end), Outdoor air pollution, Lead exposure, Early marriage, Young people not in education, employment or training, and Citable documents are capped at either the 99th percentile or winsorised usually at values of the second worst performing country (defined for 2008-2025) to limit the influence of a few significant outliers. Additionally, we set a floor at 0.03 for Gender parity in secondary attainment to allow for measurement error based on the recommendations of UNESCO (2010). The Political rights indicator is set to a floor of zero in line with the indicator's definition. Similarly, Discrimination against minorities is set to a floor of one. Lastly, we cap Expected years of tertiary schooling at five years to avoid the influence of a few near-outliers on component-level performance.

Figure 4 / Capped Indicators

Indicators	Cap
Infectious diseases	47191.56
Undernourishment	52.1
Child mortality	147.6896
Maternal mortality	657.49817
Transportation related injuries	4189.066
Intimate partner violence	5042.298
Non-communicable diseases	41444.28
Gender parity in secondary attainment	0.03
Life expectancy at 65	9.358
Outdoor air pollution	4994.605
Lead exposure	3238.706
Political rights	0
Early marriage	40.995937
Discrimination against minorities	1
Young people not in education, employment, or training	47.532
Citable documents	4.71761
Expected years of tertiary schooling	5

B. Square-root-transformed Indicators

Three indicators, Unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene, Interpersonal violence, and Intimate partner violence (even after capping it at the 99th percentile value) contain extreme values in relation to the rest of the indicator data distribution. Based on external research, we determined that these extreme values are not erroneous and should be preserved as a distinguishing characteristic of the countries they describe. As such, we transform these indicators using square-root transformation. This allows us to retain the unique differences between countries in performance while creating a more sensible distribution that is less extreme.

C. Calculation of parity

We transform Gender parity in secondary attainment in Basic Education to reflect the absolute distance from 1, where 1 represents an equal number of girls and boys enrolled. While in most countries, more boys are enrolled in secondary education than girls, there are a select number of countries in which the opposite is true. We therefore use the absolute distance from 1 to acknowledge the lack of parity for both boys and girls across countries.

D. Limiting volatility of survey indicators

We transform several indicators to limit the annual volatilities of the measures. This method was applied on all indicators from the Gallup World Poll. Indicator values are calculated as floating 3-year average.

Determining the Country Sample

The 2026 Global Social Progress Index ranks 171 countries[2] on social progress. We have selected these countries by collecting all data available across all indicators and determining for which countries we can impute data, and for which countries we will have incomplete information to calculate a Social Progress Index score. Generally, a country cannot have more than one missing indicator per component to be included in the final Social Progress Index score rankings. In some cases, we make exceptions to this rule, particularly it pertains to Basic Education and Advanced Education, where data are notoriously lacking. These exceptions are discussed in the next section.

Alongside the 171 ranked countries, we also include in our country sample 4 ‘partial’ countries. These countries have enough data to calculate between nine to eleven of the twelve components, but not enough data to calculate an overall Social Progress Index score. As with ranked countries, within those nine to eleven components for which enough data are available there cannot be more than one indicator missing per component.

Finally, we exclude from our original calculation sample countries with limited data, but we use the weights generated from PCA (described below) to calculate scores for these countries when possible. These 21 countries do not have enough data to calculate at least 9 components, but they have enough data to calculate at least one component score. We include these countries in imputations prior calculation and during calculation (see below).

In this year’s edition, the 171 ranked countries include a full index score, ranks and relative performance for the West Bank and Gaza. In order to do so, we implement an approach different

[2] We refer to World Population Review regarding country recognition, while also taking into account the above-mentioned data availability.

to other countries, since some indicator sources provide data for the West Bank and Gaza, while several others provide data separately for the West Bank and for Gaza. In these cases, we calculate a population weighted average to obtain one data point for the whole entity, which is then used in the overall index calculation.

Index Calculation

There are five core steps for calculating the Social Progress Index. We first address missing values, then invert and standardize indicators so that they are comparable in scale. We then use Principal-Component Factor (PCF) to aggregate indicators into a component score. Finally, we calculate dimension and overall Social Progress Index scores by averaging components and dimensions, respectively. Each of these steps is described in more detail below.

A. Missing Values

We ensure that all indicators included in the Social Progress Index are missing as few observations as possible to avoid jeopardizing the statistical quality of the index. Missing values can stem from lack of coverage by the data source, incomplete reporting by the country to international organizations, or outdated data. In cases where an indicator is missing a country data point, we assess our imputation methodology both before and during index calculation. Imputations used prior to calculation are included and marked in the published dataset on our website; imputations generated during calculation are not.

Imputations prior to calculation:

We impute missing data prior to calculation under two scenarii: when a country lacks some indicator data at the beginning or end of the examined time period (2011-2025); and when there are gaps in the years of data for indicators. These pre-calculation imputations are imperative to be able to include key countries in Social Progress Index rankings. We mark and publish these values in our dataset available for download, as they rely either on historical data from the same source or supplemental research.

In the first case – to maintain a consistent sample – we carry back the first observed value to impute missing data points at the beginning of the examined period. Similarly, we carry forward the last observed value when historical data is available. In most cases we only carry forward or back a value for the maximum of 5 consecutive years. If more data points are missing, we rely on imputations during calculations (see below).

Under the second scenario of pre-calculation imputations, we impute gaps between years by applying linear interpolation. We do so to ensure smooth year-to-year estimates based on current and historical data and by assuming linear change. In cases where there were data in the examined years, but not for all years aligned with 2011 through 2024 Social Progress Indexes, we rely on data older than 2011 (if available) to create linear estimations for the years in between. This is a necessary step to ensure that our calculations of social progress over time do not exaggerate annual improvement or decline merely due to gaps in the data points themselves.

Imputations during calculation:

After constructing the dataset with pre-calculation imputations as noted above, we assess the number of indicators each country is missing within a component. Using regression imputation, we generally impute data only for those countries for which there is no more than one missing data point per component in each of the twelve components (considered ‘ranked countries’) and

for countries that have no more than one missing indicator data point in nine to eleven components (considered 'partial countries'). We use our country sample data of ranked and partial countries (including both current and historical Social Progress Index years, i.e., 2011-2025) to regress each indicator on the other indicators within a component. By constraining the regression to within-component indicators, we can preserve the signal that the indicator provides to PCF.

In the past, we have strictly adhered to only one missing indicator per component and continue to stress the importance of this aspect of our methodology. However, we allowed for an exception to this rule particularly within the Basic Education component where data availability poses a significant limitation. Therefore, for two indicators within this component we applied a pre-imputation regression methodology: we used indicators not directly included in the index which had a more complete global coverage and were highly correlated with the indicators we needed to predict. We used the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation indicators *Education in years per capita* (total, males, females) and UNDP indicator *Mean years of schooling* (total) to predict males', and females' secondary attainment for approximately 200 missing observations (over 2011-2025). These two variables were then used to calculate the Secondary school attainment and Gender parity in secondary attainment indicators, which were then employed again in the standard regression imputations described above. To predict Primary school enrollment, we excluded the Children grow and learn indicator (sourced from Gallup) from the right side of the regression equation (for data availability reasons). In a similar fashion, in Inclusive Society and Safety components, we use the indicators in the respective component that are not from Gallup to pre-impute the two indicators which come from that source.

Recently, we started pre-imputing the Mobile telephone users indicator from the Gallup World Poll which has data available only from 2016. Instead of repeating the first observed value backward to fill in the missing years, we have combined the observed data with regression predictions for 2011-2015. To predict the values, we used one external variable (Mobile phone subscriptions per 100 people from the International Telecommunication Union) together with Internet users and Online Service Index as predictors. Additionally, to increase accuracy of predictions, the Quality weighted universities indicator was not used among predictors for other indicators within the Advanced education component.

We review each imputation to ensure accuracy. In some cases, we combine the regression trend with observed data. For example, when the last observed value for a country is in 2012, we have 13 missing values that we impute by regression predictions. If the predicted data do not match the observed values, we take the regression trend from the predictions and apply it on the observed data. If there are no observed values for a country, we apply standard regression imputations as described above. In cases where these imputations do not match expectations or qualitative research, we use regional cohort estimates or carry values consistently across time to minimize bias. For example, for many Middle Eastern countries where Gallup does not ask its survey question on gays and lesbians due to cultural sensitivities, we consider assessments of countries set by the Human Rights Campaign based on LGBT criminalization laws (death penalty).[3] If a country is not assessed by the survey and criminalization includes the death penalty, we assign the country zero value for the indicator.

The estimation of missing values is necessary prior to undertaking PCF, which requires a complete dataset for the results to be sound. We do not impute values for countries that do not meet the criteria of ranked or partial countries noted above; these countries are excluded from the main calculation process by which PCF weights are determined.

[3] Map of countries that criminalize LGBT people can be found here: https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/Criminalization_Map_101123.pdf

B. Standardization

We convert indicators to the same scale in a three-step process. First, we set best- and worst-case scenarii to provide concrete boundaries on both ends of the scale that are based on theoretical or historical values. We then invert indicators when increasing values reflect lower social progress. Finally, we standardize the indicators into z-scores prior to applying PCF.

While the best- and worst-case scenarii are defined at the indicator level, we strive to follow the same method for similar metrics. For indicators with pre-defined boundaries (all indicators from Varieties of Democracy, summary exposure values etc.) we use these to establish the upper and lower scenarii. We use natural boundaries for indicators that have a natural best-case scenario – such as maternal mortality, primary school enrollment etc. For indicators that do not have a clear worst case or where the probability of reaching an upper boundary is extremely unlikely (e.g., Child mortality, for which the theoretical worst case would be that every child dies before the age of five), we use a boundary based on the worst recorded performance three years prior to the first year of measurement (i.e., three years prior to the 2011 Social Progress Index). Best- and worst-case data values are included with the country dataset when PCF is applied. See Appendix B for the specific values used for each indicator's bounds.

Once we establish a full dataset with indicator values for 2011 through 2025 and the best- and worst-case scenarii, we invert indicators for which a higher value denotes lower social progress. There are 26 inverted indicators in the 2026 Global Social Progress Index. These include: Child stunting, Infectious diseases, Undernourishment, Diet low in fruits and vegetables, Child mortality, Maternal mortality, Basic water service, Basic sanitation service, Unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene, Household air pollution, Dissatisfaction with housing affordability, Money stolen, Interpersonal violence, Transportation related injuries, Intimate partner violence, Gender parity in secondary attainment, Non-communicable diseases, Health problems, Lead exposure, Outdoor air pollution, Particulate matter pollution, Early marriage, Young people not in education, employment or training, Vulnerable employment, Freedom over life choices, and Discrimination and violence against minorities.

As a final step prior to applying PCF, we standardize the indicators into z-scores. Doing so produces scores with a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1, ensuring the comparability of the indicators across the dataset in measurement.

C. Component Scores

To calculate component scores, we aggregate the set of indicators within each component into a factor using PCF and all fifteen years of data.[4] PCF combines indicators in a way that captures the maximum amount of variance in the data while reducing redundancy between indicators. It essentially assigns each indicator a weight, a method we select over equal weighting to ensure that indicators are meaningfully contributing to a component score, while accounting for similarities between them.

Within many of the twelve components, PCF generates similar weights for the indicators we include because we ensure a fair level of correlation between them (e.g., not too high or low a correlation) prior to finalizing our framework. However, for those cases in which indicators are less correlated with other indicators within their component, we consider PCF a good statistical

[4] Each statistical program has several ways to calculate PCF, leading to slight differences in estimations depending on both the command and program used. We use the following command in Stata: *factor [standardized indicator names], factor(1) pcf*

approach for determining these indicators' contribution to the component scores while remaining objective.

The formula below reflects indicator aggregation into a principal component, where c=Social Progress Index component and i=indicator.

Formula 1

$$Component\ value_c = \sum_i (w_i * indicator_i)$$

Our choice of PCF as the basis for aggregation at the component level was also influenced by the quality and quantity of data available on social progress. For the analysis to be valid, each indicator must be relatively free of measurement error (Dunteman, 1989). Thus, it should precisely measure what it was intended to measure and do so consistently across countries. Our design principles and the data we use fulfill this requirement.

To convert each principal component into a component score on a scale of 0 to 100, we use a simple min-max formula, where X=component value and j=country.

Formula 2

$$Component\ score_c = \frac{(X_j - Worst\ Case)}{(Best\ Case - Worst\ Case)} * 100$$

As noted in the prior section, only countries that are ranked or qualify as 'partial' are included in the country sample that determines PCF-generated weights. For countries that do not have enough data to calculate at least nine components, we use the weights generated by the original country sample to calculate component scores when possible. If a country outside the ranked and partial country sample has enough data to calculate all four components within a dimension, we proceed to calculate dimension scores as well.

D. Dimension Scores

Each dimension is the arithmetic average of the four components that make up that dimension. Countries that do not have scores in all four components of a given dimension do not have a dimension score. The formula for calculating a dimension score is below, where d=dimension and c=component.

Formula 3

$$Dimension_d = \frac{1}{4} \sum_c Component\ score_c$$

E. Index Scores

The overall Social Progress Index score is calculated as the arithmetic average of the three dimensions. Countries that do not have scores in all three dimensions do not have a Social Progress Index score. The formula for calculating a Social Progress Index score is below, where d=dimension.

Formula 4

$$Social\ Progress\ Index\ score = \frac{1}{3} \sum_d Dimension_d$$

We provide the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values of the calculated component, dimension, and Social Progress Index scores in Appendix D. In establishing country rankings for overall performance, we divide country scores into six tiers (see below).

F. World Score Calculation

To provide the most accurate assessment of world performance on social progress, we account for countries' populations as well as the statistical interaction between indicators. Therefore, to calculate the World Social Progress Index score, we first aggregate indicators into population-weighted values using data of all ranked and partial countries. We then apply the PCF weights generated by the original ranked and partial country sample to derive component scores and proceed as noted above to calculate dimension and the overall Social Progress Index scores. It is important to note that this method is different than calculating population-weighted scores, and in essence treats the world as a country. We use this method to calculate regional scores as well.

Tiers of Performance

For the 2026 Global Social Progress Index, we define deciles in the Social Progress Index scores across the 15 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 comparability of tiers across years.

Assessing Countries' Relative Strengths and Weaknesses

The component, dimension, and overall Social Progress Index scores are scaled from 0 to 100 to provide an intuitive scale for the interpretation of absolute performance, benchmarking a country against the best and worst-possible scenarios in terms of social progress performance. However, it is also useful to consider relative performance, comparing the level of social progress among countries of similar levels of economic development. For example, a lower-income country may have a low score on a certain component but could greatly exceed typical scores for countries with similar GDP 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 have developed a methodology to present a country's strengths and weaknesses on a relative basis, comparing a country's performance to that of its economic peers. Results of this analysis are the basis of our country scorecards, which can be found on our website.

We define the group of a country's economic peers as the 15 countries closest in GDP per capita (PPP). Standard groupings of countries, such as the World Bank's country income classifications, are not appropriate for relative comparison of countries for two reasons. First, the groupings are too large, representing excessively wide ranges of social performance and therefore few relative strengths and weaknesses. Second, using these groups, countries at the top or bottom of a group may appear to have a misleadingly large number of strengths or weaknesses simply because the group the country is being compared to is at a much lower or higher level of economic development.

Each country's GDP per capita is compared to every other country for which there is full Index data, and the 15 countries with the smallest difference on an absolute value basis are selected for the comparator group. We have found that groupings larger than 15 resulted in a wider range of typical scores and showed too few relative strengths and weakness, while smaller groupings become too sensitive to outliers. Additionally, to reduce the influence of year-to-year fluctuations in GDP data, we use a four-year average (i.e., 2022–2025 Social Progress Index years).

Once the group of comparator countries is established, the country's performance is compared to the median performance of countries in the group. The median is used rather than the mean to

minimize the influence of outliers. If the country's score is greater than (or less than) the average absolute deviation from the median of the comparator group, it is considered a strength (or weakness). Scores that are within one average absolute deviation are within the range of expected scores and are considered neither strengths nor weaknesses. A floor is established so the thresholds are no less than those for poorer countries and the minimum distance from median to strength or median to weakness is 1 point.

We define comparator groups for all countries, regardless of whether they have complete Social Progress Index data or sufficient data for only some indicators, components, and dimensions. However, to maintain stability in comparisons, only countries with full data across all components of the index are included in comparator groups for other countries. Among ranked and partial countries, we do not calculate strengths and weaknesses for Cuba, Eritrea, North Korea, South Sudan, Venezuela, and Yemen due to missing GDP data.

Structural Integrity of the Social Progress Index

Throughout the indicator assessment and calculation process, we conduct statistical tests to ensure the structural integrity of the Social Progress Index. Our goal is that no single indicator majorly affects a country's component, dimension, or overall score, and that the indicators within each component are statistically related and compatible. To achieve this, we look at correlations between indicators and between indicators and aggregated scores, Cronbach's alpha, and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.

In understanding the correlations between indicators, we strive for indicators within components to show correlations of between r=0.25 to r=0.92 (absolute values). Indicators with correlations below 0.25 generally show little conceptual and statistical relation to other indicators. Likewise, if two indicators are too highly correlated (i.e., r>0.92), we find that the indicators overlap too much in concept and become statistically redundant, which would place too much weight on the concepts they are capturing within the component; we generally remove one of these indicators as well. In the 2026 Global Social Progress Index framework, correlation coefficients range from 0.16 to 0.89. However, all correlations are statistically significant at the 1% level.

To evaluate the fit between indicators within each component, we calculate Cronbach's alpha after we transform the indicators and impute missing values. Cronbach's alpha provides a measure of internal consistency across indicators. An applied practitioner's rule of thumb is that the alpha value should be above 0.7 for any valid grouping of variables (Bland and Altman, 1997). As shown in Figure 5, all twelve components meet the 0.7.

Figure 5 / Cronbach's Alpha for Each Component

		Cronbach's Alpha
Basic Needs	Nutrition and Medical Care	0.94
	Water and Sanitation	0.93
	Housing	0.81
	Safety	0.86
Foundations of Wellbeing	Basic Education	0.84
	Information and Communications	0.81
	Health	0.89
	Environmental Quality	0.73
Opportunity	Rights and Voice	0.93
	Freedom and Choice	0.75
	Inclusive Society	0.81
	Advanced Education	0.85

Cronbach's alpha is a good preliminary screen for conceptual fit; however, it does not provide a direct measure of the goodness of fit of a factor analysis (Manly, 2004). Rather, we assess goodness of fit using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy. Generally, KMO scores should be above 0.5. In our data, the mean KMO score is above 0.5 for all components, suggesting that the grouping of indicators chosen for the components of the Social Progress Index provides a good measure of the underlying construct.

Figure 6 / KMO for Each Component

		Mean KMO
Basic Needs	Nutrition and Medical Care	0.87
	Water and Sanitation	0.84
	Housing	0.73
	Safety	0.82
Foundations of Wellbeing	Basic Education	0.78
	Information and Communications	0.73
	Health	0.84
	Environmental Quality	0.67
Opportunity	Rights and Voice	0.83
	Freedom and Choice	0.73
	Inclusive Society	0.79
	Advanced Education	0.80

Year-to-Year Results Comparison

Each year we conduct a comprehensive review of all indicators included in the Social Progress Index framework to check data updates (which frequently include retroactive revisions) and whether new indicators have been published that are well-suited to describing social progress concepts. Many data sources that we use revise their data collection or estimation methods, which impacts not just newly published data but also previously published data. The Social Progress Index undergoes the same process for the sake of comparability. Using the 2025 Social Progress Index framework and methodology, we provide comparable historical data for fourteen additional years of the Social Progress Index, from 2011 to 2024. Results for the years 2011 to 2024 are therefore different from results that we have previously published.

It is important to note that while we establish a fifteen-year time-series of social progress from 2011 to 2025, not all indicator data are updated on an annual basis. Therefore, change over time is best interpreted over the entire span of these fifteen years rather than focusing on annual change.

The underlying conceptual framework (components and dimensions) of the Social Progress Index has remained the same as in previous years. However, we added several new indicators and removed a few due to their discontinuation or the lack of updated data. We also changed the sources and the measurement of a handful of indicators. Additionally, of the 57 indicators, majority were retroactively revised by the data sources. We list indicator changes by component below.

Nutrition and Medical Care: The composition of the component remained unchanged.

Water and Sanitation: The composition of the component remained unchanged. However, we changed the source and measurement for two indicators: both Basic water service and Basic sanitation service are now sourced from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. They are now measured as summary exposure value (SEV).

Housing: The composition of the component remained unchanged. However, the indicator Usage of clean fuels and technology now pertains to rural population using clean fuels and technologies for cooking, heating and lighting.

Safety: The composition of the component remained unchanged. However, we changed measurement for the Intimate partner violence indicator, which is now measured as female age-standardized Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) per 100,000 female population due to intimate partner violence.

Basic Education: The composition of the component remained unchanged.

Information and Communications: The E-participation index was replaced with Online Services Index from the same source (United Nations E-Government Knowledgebase) due to a broader conceptual coverage.

Health: The composition of the component remained unchanged.

Environmental Quality: The composition of the component remained unchanged.

Rights and Voice: The composition of the component remained unchanged.

Freedom and Choice: The composition of the component remained unchanged.

Inclusive Society: The composition of the component remained unchanged.

Advanced Education: The composition of the component remained unchanged.

Limitations

The Social Progress Index measures how countries at the national level perform on a certain set of indicators that meet the standards and concepts represented by the Social Progress Index framework. It is an important tool that is used to compare countries and assess both absolute and relative levels of performance on social progress to find best practices and to target areas which need improvement or from which other countries can learn. While the Social Progress Index framework captures the multi-dimensional concepts underlying social progress, we are limited in how we measure these concepts by the data available from public sources. Country performance is dependent upon the data published by other sources, and we defer to these sources to respond to country inquiries about the different aspects of social progress (a full list of sources is included in Appendix A).

We also recognize that the indicators in many of the topics we measure are not perfect. We strive to ensure each indicator meets our standards of quality; however, some issues are much more complex than the numbers we use to communicate them. We view these indicators as a starting point for measurement and conversation, and we continue to refine the index each year to accommodate more recent data with greater geographic coverage that cover important aspects of social progress still not captured by the current indicators available, including violence against women, national environmental degradation, fresh water withdrawals, and more.

Furthermore, the Social Progress Index provides a view into how a country performs on average, which helps inform the many policies and investments that affect social progress at the national level. However, it is only a starting point: aggregate data can obscure substantial regional and state differences in performance that are equally important to a country's policy considerations,

especially in geographically large regions. For this reason, we have established several initiatives across Latin America, Europe, South Asia, and North America to explore social progress at a disaggregated regional level. We apply the same Social Progress Index framework to more localized geographic regions, contextualizing indicators and concepts with the input of local stakeholders. These initiatives help further drive action from the broader issues highlighted in the global Social Progress Index.

Conclusion

The Social Progress Index provides a benchmark by which countries can compare themselves to others, and can identify specific areas of current strength or weakness. Additionally, scoring on a 0–100 scale gives countries a realistic benchmark rather than an abstract measure. This scale allows us to track absolute, not just relative, performance of countries over time on each component, dimension, and the overall model.

The 2026 Global Social Progress Index results are a starting point for many different avenues of research into the ways a country is successful or not and whether conclusions can be drawn about the overall effect of social progress on economic growth. Furthermore, while disaggregated scores provide insight into the behavior of the different components that contribute to a country's performance, we believe disaggregation within a country (e.g., regional or state) also provides important insight and actionable information to those seeking to increase social progress. We continue to test our process and methodology at the regional and city level, replicating the steps outlined in this report to produce meaningful results in different areas of the world.

Appendix A: Indicator Definitions and Sources

All data used to calculate the 2026 Global Social Progress Index and relevant analyses are the most recent available as of October 31, 2025.

COMPONENT	INDICATOR NAME	DEFINITION	SOURCE	LINK
DIMENSION: BASIC NEEDS				
Nutrition and Medical Care	Infectious diseases	Age-standardized Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) rate caused by HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, diarrhea, intestinal infections, respiratory infections, otitis media, meningitis, encephalitis, diptheria, whooping cough, tetanus, measles, varicella, herpes zoster, malaria, Chagas disease, leishmaniasis, typanosomiasis, schistosomiasis, cysticercosis, cycstic echinococcosis, lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, trachoma, dengue, yellow feber, rabies, intestinal nematode infections, food-borne trematodiases, leprosy, ebola, zika virus, guinea worm disease, sexually transmitted diseases (excluding HIV), hepatitis, and other infectious diseases per 100,000 people.	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool
	Child mortality	Probability of dying between birth and exactly 5 years of age, expressed per 1,000 live births.	UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation	http://www.childmortality.org
	Child stunting	Stunting prevalence among children under 5 years of age.	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	https://vizhub.healthdata.org/sdg/
	Maternal mortality	Maternal mortality ratio (maternal deaths among women aged 15-49 years per 100,000 live births).	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	https://vizhub.healthdata.org/sdg/
	Undernourishment	The prevalence of undernourishment expresses the probability that a randomly selected individual from the population consumes an amount of calories that is insufficient to cover her/his energy requirement for an active and healthy life. The indicator is computed by comparing a probability distribution of habitual daily dietary energy consumption with a threshold level called the minimum dietary energy requirement. Both are based on the notion of an average individual in the reference population.	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB
	Diet low in fruits and vegetables	Risk-weighted, age-standardized prevalence of nutrition low in fruits and vegetables as measured by the summary exposure value (SEV).	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool
Water and Sanitation	Basic water service	Risk-weighted, age-standardized prevalence of unsafe basic water services as measured by the summary exposure value (SEV).	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool
	Basic sanitation service	Risk-weighted, age-standardized prevalence of unsafe basic sanitation services as measured by the summary exposure value (SEV).	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool
	Unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene	Age-standardized Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) rate attributable to unsafe water, sanitation, and hygiene (per 100,000 population).	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool
	Satisfaction with water quality	The proportion of respondents answering 'satisfied' to the question, "In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of water?"	Gallup World Poll	https://ga.gallup.com/

COMPONENT	INDICATOR NAME	DEFINITION	SOURCE	LINK
Housing	Household air pollution	Age-standardized Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) rate caused by household air pollution from solid fuels per 100,000 people. Household air pollution includes exposure to particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM2.5) due to the use of solid fuels for cooking, including coal, charcoal, wood, agricultural residue, and animal dung.	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool
	Dissatisfaction with housing affordability	The proportion of respondents answering 'dissatisfied' to the question, “In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the availability of good, affordable housing?”	Gallup World Poll	https://ga.gallup.com/
	Access to electricity	The percentage of the population with access to electricity.	World Bank, World Development Indicators	https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.ACCS.ZS
	Usage of clean fuels and technology	Proportion of rural population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology (measured in %). It is calculated as the number of people using clean fuels and technologies for cooking, heating and lighting divided by total population reporting that any cooking, heating or lighting, expressed as percentage. "Clean" is defined by the emission rate targets and specific fuel recommendations (i.e., against unprocessed coal and kerosene) included in the normative guidance WHO guidelines for indoor air quality: household fuel combustion.	World Health Organization	https://data.who.int/indicators/i/6A64C9A
Safety	Interpersonal violence	Age-standardized Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) per 100,000 people from interpersonal violence. Interpersonal violence is defined as death or disability from intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, from another person or group not including military or police forces.	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool
	Transportation related injuries	Age-standardized Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) due to transport injuries (per 100,000 population).	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool
	Intimate partner violence	Female age-standardized Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) due to intimate partner violence (per 100,000 female population).	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool
	Feeling safe walking alone	The proportion of respondents answering 'yes' to the question, "Do you feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live?"	Gallup World Poll	https://ga.gallup.com/
	Money stolen	The proportion of respondents answering 'yes' to the question, "Within the last 12 months, have you had money or property stolen from you or another household member?"	Gallup World Poll	https://ga.gallup.com/
DIMENSION: FOUNDATIONS OF WELLBEING				
Basic Education	Children grow and learn	The proportion of respondents answering 'yes' to the question, "Do most children in this country have the opportunity to learn and grow every day?"	Gallup World Poll	https://ga.gallup.com/
	Equal access to quality education	Country experts' aggregated evaluation of the question, "To what extent is high quality basic education guaranteed to all, sufficient to enable them to exercise their basic rights as adult citizens?"	Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), Dataset Version 15	https://v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/
	Primary school enrollment	Total number of students of official primary school age who are enrolled in any level of education, expressed as a percentage of the total population of official primary school age. Statistic is termed 'total net primary enrollment rate.'	UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics	https://databrowser.uis.unesco.org/

COMPONENT	INDICATOR NAME	DEFINITION	SOURCE	LINK
	Secondary school attainment	Population with at least some secondary education (% ages 25 and older).	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Data	https://hdr.undp.org/data-center
	Gender parity in secondary attainment	The absolute deviation from parity (=1) in secondary education attainment of women and men.	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Data	https://hdr.undp.org/data-center
Information and Communications	Online Service Index	The Index evaluates e-government services provision based on responses to a comprehensive questionnaire about each country's national government portal and key ministerial websites, this metric assesses how governments leverage digital technologies to enhance e-governance and public engagement.	United Nations E-Government Knowledgebase	https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Data-Center
	Internet users	The estimated number of Internet users out of the total population, using the Internet from any device (including mobile phones) in the last 12 months.	International Telecommunication Union	https://datahub.itu.int/query/
	Mobile telephone users	The proportion of respondents answering 'yes' to the question, "Do you have a mobile phone that you use to make and receive personal calls?"	Gallup World Poll	https://ga.gallup.com/
	World Press Freedom Index	Expert assessment of press freedom, which is defined as "the ability of journalists as individuals and collectives to select, produce, and disseminate news in the public interest independent of political, economic, legal, and social interference and in the absence of threats to their physical and mental safety". The Index is scaled from 0 to 100, with 100 representing the highest possible level of press freedom and 0 the worst.	Reporters without borders	https://rsf.org/en/index
Health	Life expectancy at 65	The average number of years that a person of 65 years of age could expect to live, both sexes.	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division	https://population.un.org/wpp/downloads
	Non-communicable diseases	Age-standardized Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) per 100,000 people attributable to non-communicable diseases.	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool
	Equal access to quality healthcare	Country experts' aggregated evaluation of the question, "To what extent is high quality basic healthcare guaranteed to all, sufficient to enable them to exercise their basic political rights as adult citizens?"	Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), Dataset Version 15	https://v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/
	Access to essential health services	Coverage of essential health services, as defined by the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) service coverage index which is based on an effective coverage of 23 indicators that cover population-age groups across the entire life course.	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	https://vizhub.healthdata.org/sdg/
	Health Problems	The proportion of respondents answering 'yes' to the question, "Do you have any health problems that prevent you from doing any of the things people your age normally can do?"	Gallup World Poll	https://ga.gallup.com/

COMPONENT	INDICATOR NAME	DEFINITION	SOURCE	LINK
Environmental Quality	Outdoor air pollution	Age-standardized Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) per 100,000 people resulting from ambient particulate matter pollution, including emissions from industrial activity, households, cars and trucks.	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool
	Lead exposure	Age-standardized Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) per 100,000 people attributable to lead exposure. Lead exposure is defined as acute exposure, measured by micrograms of lead per decilitre of blood, and chronic exposure, measured by micrograms of lead per gram of bone.	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool
	Particulate matter pollution	Population-weighted mean levels of fine particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns in aerodynamic diameter (PM2.5), which are capable of penetrating deep into the respiratory tract and causing severe health damage.	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	https://ghdx.healthdata.org/record/global-burden-disease-study-2021-gbd-2021-covariates-1980-2021
	Waste recovery	The proportion of waste that is treated in a way that not only controls for environmental risks, but also recovers energy and/or materials (i.e., recycling, composting, anaerobic digestion, or incineration with energy recovery) and thus contributes to a circular economy.	Environmental Performance Index	https://epi.yale.edu/
DIMENSION: OPPORTUNITY				
Rights and Voice	Political rights	An evaluation of three subcategories of political rights: electoral process, political pluralism and participation, and functioning of government on a scale from 0 (no political rights) to 40 (full political rights). Some countries and territories score below zero on the questions used to compose the indicator.	Freedom House	https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world
	Rights equality	Country experts' aggregated evaluation of the question, "How equal is the protection of rights and freedoms across social groups by the state?"	Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), Dataset Version 15	https://v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/
	Equality before the law and individual liberty index	Country experts' aggregated evaluation of the question, "To what extent are laws transparent and rigorously enforced and public administration impartial, and to what extent do citizens enjoy access to justice, secure property rights, freedom from forced labor, freedom of movement, physical integrity rights, and freedom of religion?"	Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), Dataset Version 15	https://v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/
	Perception of corruption	The perceived level of public sector corruption based on expert opinion, measured on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).	Transparency International	www.transparency.org/cpi
	Freedom of peaceful assembly	Country experts' aggregated evaluation of the question, "To what extent do state authorities respect and protect the right of peaceful assembly?"	Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), Dataset Version 15	https://v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/
Freedom and Choice	Satisfied demand for contraception	The percentage of total demand for family planning among married or in-union women aged 15 to 49 that is satisfied with modern methods.	United Nations Population Division	https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/data/family-planning-indicators
	Early marriage	The percentage of women aged 15-19 years who are married or in-union.	United Nations Population Division	https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/data/family-planning-indicators
	CSOs repression	Country experts' aggregated evaluation of the question, "Does the government attempt to repress civil society organizations (CSOs)?"	Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), Dataset Version 15	https://v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/

COMPONENT	INDICATOR NAME	DEFINITION	SOURCE	LINK
	Vulnerable employment	Contributing family workers and own-account workers as a percentage of total employment.	World Bank, World Development Indicators	https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.EMP.VULN.ZS?view=chart
	Freedom over life choices	The proportion of respondents answering 'dissatisfied' to the question, “In this country, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your freedom to choose what you do with your life?”	Gallup World Poll	https://ga.gallup.com/
Inclusive Society	Young people not in education, employment or training	The proportion (%) of youth who are not in employment and not in education or training. Youth are defined as persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. The series is part of the ILO modelled estimates.	International Labor Organization	https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/
	Equal access index	Country experts' aggregated evaluation of the question, "How equal is access to power?"	Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), Dataset Version 15	https://v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/
	Count on help	The proportion of respondents answering 'yes' to the question, “If you were in trouble, do you have relatives or friends you can count on to help you whenever you need them, or not?”	Gallup World Poll	https://ga.gallup.com/
	Discrimination and violence against minorities	Group Grievance indicator: discrimination, powerlessness, ethnic violence, communal violence, sectarian violence, and religious violence.	Fund for Peace Fragile States Index	https://fragilestatesindex.org/
	Acceptance of gays and lesbians	The proportion of respondents answering a good place to the question, “Is the city or area where you live a good place or not a good place to live for gay or lesbian people?”	Gallup World Poll	https://ga.gallup.com/
Advanced Education	Citable documents	Citable documents - articles, reviews and conference papers - per 1,000 population.	Scimago Journal & Country Rank	https://www.scimagojr.com/countryrank.php
	Academic freedom	Country experts' aggregated evaluation of the question, "To what extent is academic freedom respected?"	Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), Dataset Version 15	https://v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/
	Women with advanced education	Proportion of females (aged 25-29) with 12–18 years of education.	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation	https://ghdx.healthdata.org/record/ihme-data/global-educational-attainment-distributions-1970-2030
	Expected years of tertiary schooling	Number of years a person of tertiary school entrance age can expect to spend within tertiary education. For a child of a certain age a, the school life expectancy is calculated as the sum of the age specific enrollment rates for the levels of education specified. The part of the enrolment that is not distributed by age is divided by the school-age population for the level of education they are enrolled in, and multiplied by the duration of that level of education. The result is then added to the sum of the age-specific enrolment rates. The indicator seeks to show the overall level of development of an educational system in terms of the average number of years of schooling that the education system offers to the eligible population, including those who never enter school.	UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics	https://databrowser.uis.unesco.org/

COMPONENT	INDICATOR NAME	DEFINITION	SOURCE	LINK
	Quality weighted universities	The number of universities in a country weighted by the quality of universities, measured by university rankings on any of the three most widely used international assessments. Three categories were created: top 400 universities on any of the three lists, listed and non-listed universities. Weights are assigned in such way that no number of universities in the lower category can compensate a university in the higher category.	Times Higher Education World University Rankings, QS World University Rankings, and Academic Ranking of World Universities; UniRank and Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), Dataset Version 15, SPI calculations	https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings https://www.shanghairanking.com/rankings https://www.4icu.org/ https://v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/
	Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita	GDP per capita based on purchasing power parity (PPP). PPP GDP is gross domestic product converted to international dollars using purchasing power parity rates. An international dollar has the same purchasing power over GDP as the U.S. dollar has in the United States. GDP at purchaser's prices is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources. Data are in constant 2021 international dollars.	World Bank, World Development Indicators	http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.KD

Appendix B: Indicator Boundaries

INDICATOR	WORST CASE	BEST CASE
Maternal mortality	657.4982	0
Child stunting	56.4308	0
Child mortality	147.6896	0
Diet low in fruits and vegetables	100	0
Undernourishment	52.1	2.5
Infectious diseases	47191.5586	0
Basic water service	100	0
Basic sanitation service	100	0
Unsafe water, sanitation & hygiene	124.8013	0
Satisfaction with water quality	0.19	1
Usage of clean fuels and technology	0	100
Access to electricity	0.8	100
Household air pollution	10067.0195	0
Dissatisfaction with housing affordability	0.85	0
Interpersonal violence	86.5621	0
Transportation related injuries	4189.0659	0
Money stolen	0.61	0
Feeling safe walking alone	0.12	1
Intimate partner violence	71.0091	0
Children grow and learn	0.11	1
Equal access to quality education	0	4
Secondary school attainment	6.04	100
Gender parity in secondary attainment	0.8524	0.03
Primary school enrollment	34.4035	100
Internet users	0	100
Mobile telephone users	0.17	1
Online Service Index	0	1
World Press Freedom Index	0	100
Non-communicable diseases	41444.2813	11009.4033
Life expectancy at 65	9.358	24.3747
Access to essential health services	0	100
Health problems	0.57	0
Equal access to quality healthcare	0	4
Waste recovery	0	100
Lead exposure	3238.7061	0
Outdoor air pollution	4994.6050	0
Particulate matter pollution	95.2427	0
Perception of corruption	0	100
Political rights	0	40

INDICATOR	WORST CASE	BEST CASE
Freedom of peaceful assembly	0	4
Equal protection index	0	1
Equality before the law and individual liberty index	0	1
Civil Society Organization (CSO) repressions	0	4
Vulnerable employment	93.9912	0
Early marriage	40.9959	0
Satisfied demand for contraception	0.9	100
Freedom over life choices	0.74	0
Acceptance of gays and lesbians	0	1
Count on help	0.23	1
Equal access index	0	1
Young people not in education, employment or training	47.532	0
Discrimination and violence against minorities	10	1
Citable documents	0	4.7176
Expected years of tertiary schooling	0.0239	5
Women with advanced education	0.0128	1
Academic freedom	0	1
Quality weighted universities	0	100

Note: Values are truncated and rounded to a maximum of four decimal places.

Appendix C: PCA-Derived Indicator Weights

INDICATOR	UNSCALED	SCALED
Maternal mortality	0.200	0.175
Child stunting	0.186	0.163
Child mortality	0.200	0.175
Diet low in fruits and vegetables	0.174	0.152
Undernourishment	0.183	0.160
Infectious diseases	0.198	0.174
Basic water service	0.288	0.262
Basic sanitation service	0.289	0.263
Unsafe water, sanitation & hygiene	0.287	0.261
Satisfaction with water quality	0.237	0.215
Usage of clean fuels and technology	0.339	0.295
Access to electricity	0.343	0.299
Household air pollution	0.342	0.298
Dissatisfaction with housing affordability	0.125	0.109
Interpersonal violence	0.232	0.186
Transportation related injuries	0.248	0.199
Money stolen	0.263	0.211
Feeling safe walking alone	0.244	0.196
Intimate partner violence	0.258	0.208
Children grow and learn	0.212	0.167
Equal access to quality education	0.262	0.207
Secondary school attainment	0.282	0.223
Gender parity in secondary attainment	0.270	0.214
Primary school enrollment	0.240	0.189
Internet users	0.354	0.297
Mobile telephone users	0.336	0.282
Online Service Index	0.334	0.280
World Press Freedom Index	0.167	0.141
Non-communicable diseases	0.239	0.203
Life expectancy at 65	0.268	0.228
Access to essential health services	0.264	0.224
Health problems	0.173	0.147
Equal access to quality healthcare	0.233	0.198
Waste recovery	0.304	0.227
Lead exposure	0.349	0.261
Outdoor air pollution	0.357	0.267
Particulate matter pollution	0.328	0.245

INDICATOR	UNSCALED	SCALED
Perception of corruption	0.204	0.182
Political rights	0.237	0.211
Freedom of peaceful assembly	0.223	0.199
Equal protection index	0.215	0.191
Equality before the law and individual liberty index	0.244	0.217
Civil Society Organization (CSO) repressions	0.191	0.139
Vulnerable employment	0.327	0.237
Early marriage	0.313	0.227
Satisfied demand for contraception	0.298	0.216
Freedom over life choices	0.249	0.181
Acceptance of gays and lesbians	0.289	0.218
Count on help	0.262	0.198
Equal access index	0.259	0.195
Young people not in education, employment or training	0.258	0.194
Discrimination and violence against minorities	0.259	0.195
Citable documents	0.265	0.216
Expected years of tertiary schooling	0.284	0.231
Women with advanced education	0.269	0.219
Academic freedom	0.150	0.122
Quality weighted universities	0.262	0.213

Appendix D: Descriptive Statistics for the 2026 Global Social Progress Index

The following descriptive statistics for the Index, and its dimensions and components, are based on the sample of 175 countries for which we can calculate at least 9 components for the 2026 Global Social Progress Index (data year 2025).

VARIABLE	OBS.	MEAN	ST.DEV.	MIN	MAX
Nutrition and Medical Care	175	77.77	15.75	30.20	95.63
Water and Sanitation	175	71.15	19.85	19.46	98.75
Housing	174	73.28	21.27	17.30	96.83
Safety	175	71.60	13.06	31.76	92.07
Basic Education	174	71.39	17.70	22.49	97.64
Information and Communications	175	68.50	18.36	14.67	97.43
Health	175	56.65	15.05	22.68	88.09
Environmental Quality	175	65.73	14.46	10.08	96.12
Rights and Voice	174	55.79	24.03	6.12	95.99
Freedom and Choice	174	69.13	15.06	23.06	92.59
Inclusive Society	173	55.93	17.30	7.38	94.60
Advanced Education	175	42.78	22.47	5.71	90.53
Basic Needs	174	73.39	16.49	29.62	93.46
Foundations of Wellbeing	174	65.46	14.48	32.94	92.43
Opportunity	172	55.88	17.82	14.31	91.40
Social Progress Index	171	64.85	15.38	27.71	91.73

Appendix E: Bibliography and Further Reading

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