

Social Change Impact Report

Executive Summary of Results

The Social Change Impact Report provides a detailed picture of the state of social change engagement in America, including: Americans’ beliefs about social change, the issues they care about, the motivations behind their engagement, the actions they are taking to further social change and the tools they use.

High Levels of Engagement



In the past 12 months, nine in 10 Americans have engaged in positive social change.

Impact of Digital Technology



Four in five adults (81%) believe technology has created a fundamental shift in how social change occurs.

Social change is important to Americans and they are taking action.

Americans believe they can make the world a better place with their own actions (85%) and nearly all adults (92%) have taken action to engage in positive social change in the past year.

- 91% say it is important to society as a whole that individuals are involved in positive social change.
- 77% say it is important to them personally to be involved in positive social change.

Individuals and digital technology are the future of positive social change.

Americans have a strong belief in their own power to effect change. Digital technology empowers individuals to engage in social change, making it easier and faster to get involved.

- Americans say they are most likely to get involved in social change in the future as individuals acting on their own or in informal groups (52%), and 43% believe that individuals will play a larger role in social change in the future.
- Nine out of 10 Americans (88%) agree that digital technology can turn interest in a cause into a movement more quickly than anything else.
- Americans believe that digital technology enhances social change by making it easier to do many things, particularly following news and events related to social change (79%) and increasing awareness about issues or needs (77%).

Education is the most important social change issue.

Not only is education important, it’s also a pathway for individuals to engage in positive social change. Educational institutions will continue to have an important role impacting individuals’ perspectives and experiences related to social change.

- Adults find education to be the most important social change issue right now (40%), followed by health issues (35%) and poverty issues (33%).
- Adults who have a graduate or college degree are more likely to say that positive social change is important to them personally (83% v. 70% of those with a high school degree or less).
- Many adults who find social change important to them say this is because of what they learned in elementary, middle or high school (60%) or while at college or university (46%).

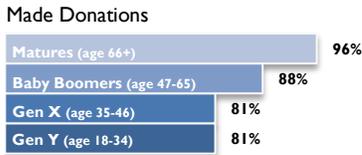
Social Change Issues of Importance

	Now	Future
Education	40%	63%
Health issues	35%	53%
Poverty	33%	52%
Children or youth	29%	56%
Social justice	27%	41%
Availability of clean water and food	25%	60%
The environment and "green" issues	25%	47%
The elderly or aging	24%	50%
Conflict, war and terrorism	23%	55%
Public safety	17%	41%

(% who say each is most/very important)

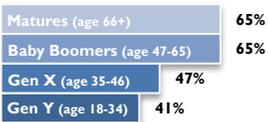
Social Change Impact Report
Summary of Results

Generational Differences in Social Change Engagement



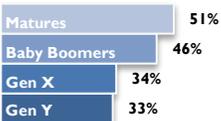
Past 12 months

Written To or Called Any Politician



Past 12 months

Expressed an Opinion on Positive Social Change by Writing to an Editor of a Newspaper or Magazine or Calling Into a Radio or TV Show



Past 12 months

Social change issues of the future will be both local and global.

Americans believe global change starts locally and most adults believe the world will become more connected in the future.

- 83% agree that the world will continue to become more integrated in terms of economies, trade, competition and cultures.
- Most adults (88%) agree that the best way to have an impact on the world is to make a change at the local level.
- Three in four Americans (77%) agree that what happens to communities in other parts of the world affects their local community.

Baby Boomer and Mature generations are more engaged in social change in America.

While all generations are engaged in positive social change, the older generations are more likely than younger generations to get involved.

- Older generations are also more likely than younger generations to regularly follow news or events related to social change in the media (33% of Matures and 29% of Baby Boomers do this very often vs. 15% of Gen X and 12% of Gen Y).
- The top ways for Generation Y to get involved still focus on more traditional methods, rather than through digital technology. In the past 12 months, young adults were most likely to have engaged in positive social change by making donations (81%), educating others (70%) and volunteering (68%).

About the Social Change Impact Report

Dedicated to its mission of effecting positive social change, Walden University commissioned this study to assess the impact of social change and to learn more about the individuals creating and applying ideas, strategies and actions to promote the worth, dignity and development of society. The Social Change Impact Report was designed to provide a barometer of who is engaged in social change, what is important to them and how they work together to advance social change issues of interest now and in the future. www.WaldenU.edu/impactreport

This summary of results highlights the major conclusions from a national survey conducted online within the United States of 2,148 U.S. adults (age 18 and over). The Social Change Impact Report was conducted by Harris Interactive between March 16 and March 24, 2011 on behalf of Walden University. 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 Social Change Impact Report, including the methodology and a questionnaire providing answers to each survey question, please contact Jen Raider at 1-443-627-7452 or jen.raider@waldenu.edu.