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Canadians Increasingly Believe (88%, +3) that Children Around the World Face a More Frightening Future than when They Were a Child

Nine in Ten (89%, + 7 pts) Canadian Parents Fear for their Children's Future

Toronto, ON, December 21, 2023 – Given the increase of war, intensifying affordability crisis, widespread hunger and accelerating climate change, a new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of Save the Children reveals that nine in ten (88%) Canadians agree that children around the world face a more frightening future now than when they were a child, up 3 points since last year. Moreover, 50% *strongly* agree that the future for children is more frightening, up a marked 8 points.

Indeed, there are a number of issues that are often keeping many Canadians awake at night, including financial insecurity due to interest rates and inflation (63%, +18 pts), personal and family issues such as children's stress (55%, +12 pts), how global instability will affect future generations (44%, + 12 pts), the escalation of wars and conflict and their impacts on children around the world (42%, +11 pts), extreme weather events as a result of climate change (34%, +5 pts), and Indigenous rights and reconciliation (22%, +4 pts). Each of these issues is impacting a greater proportion of Canadians this year than last year.

Fears are also intensifying for many, as most (89%, + 7 pts) parents say they fear for their children's future. A majority of Canadians are also fearful of the rising cost of living/inflation (92%, + 7 pts), the potential for a whole generation growing up with worsening conflicts and wars (84%), the potential for escalation of the war in the Middle East (76%), extreme weather events affecting their home and community (60%), and COVID and the potential for other pandemics (53%, -13 pts) which is the only fear that is clearly abating.

Sleepless nights and intensifying worries are having an impact on the outlook of Canadians compared to last year. More say that the word that best describes their current feeling is stressed (+9) or discouraged (+10), while fewer feel neutral (-7), hopeful (-7) or even happy (-5).

Word that Best Describes Current Feeling	2022	2023
Stressed	23%	32%
Discouraged	16%	26%
Neutral	22%	15%
Hopeful	23%	16%
Happy	16%	11%

The polycrisis is impacting the way that Canadians are viewing international development charities and how they are supporting charitable causes. While 28% (+2 pts) say they're more likely to give locally, given the state of the world today, others are impacted in various ways, including:



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- 7% say that given the climate crisis, widespread hunger, escalating conflicts and the economy/cost of living, they plan to give more than usual (+1).
- 8% usually give to international development charities and plan to continue to do so (-2)
- 8% say they don't usually give to international development charities, but am considering it this year because of the state of the world (+1)
- 17% say they never give to international development (+1)

Another 30% of Canadians say that they had hoped to give, but that their personal economic pressures mean that they simply can't this year, up 10 points, reflecting the affordability crunch at home.

War, Food Security and Affordability of Housing Identified as Biggest Dangers/Risks

Canadians were asked to identify what challenge posed the biggest danger/risk to children in Canada, to children living in low-income countries, and to children around the world, overall.

Biggest Danger/Risk	To Children in Canada	To Children in Low-Income Countries	To Children, Overall
Equal and free access to education	7%	7%	10%
Food security	21%	33%	29%
Affordability and availability of housing	47%	15%	21%
The impacts of climate change	12%	9%	16%
Wars and conflict	8%	34%	21%
None of these	5%	2%	2%

While for children in Canada, the affordability and availability of housing was identified as the top danger/risk, in low-income countries war and food security were the top dangers, and for children overall it is food security by a significant margin.

Support for Government Action Growing

Thinking about how to address these challenges that children are facing, these are actions that they believe the Canadian government should do to help children in other countries, even if each results in higher taxes, more government debt or decreased spending in other areas. For each, there is slightly less support for action this year than last year:

- 73% say government should invest in food security to ensure that children never face hunger (-3)
- 72% believe it should leverage its international influence to end conflicts and wars (-5)
- 65% agree that it should invest in children's right to survive, learn and be protected (-9)
- 58% agree it should invest in halting and reversing the effects of climate change -7)
- 55% believe government should respond generously to humanitarian crises like earthquakes, flooding and conflict (-12)
- 40% believe government should increase investment in international development programs (-11)



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Thinking specifically about the conflict in Gaza, Canadians believe that there are a number of **critical actions** that should be taken:

- 82% -- Canada and other leading governments holding parties accountable for the grave violations of children's rights
- 81% -- Canada calling for all parties to uphold International Humanitarian Law, including the protection of civilians and unrestricted access so humanitarian organizations can reach children and families in Gaza with lifesaving support
- 77% -- Recognizing children as key voices speaking on this conflict
- 77% -- Canada and other leading governments calling for an immediate and definitive ceasefire
- 75% -- Better engagement of women and children in building solutions for peace and security
- 71% -- Canada playing a bigger role in supporting a sustainable peace

About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted from December 8th to 13th on behalf of Save the Children. For this survey, a sample of 1,000 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed online. Quotas and weighting were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 18+ been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

Sean Simpson
Senior Vice President, Ipsos Public Affairs Canada
+1 416 324 2002
Sean.Simpson@ipsos.com



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