

**Deloitte.**



## Canada's common ground

A survey on the state of unity in Canada, the consequences for private and public sector organizations, and the potential for common purpose



# Introduction

**At Deloitte we are increasingly concerned about the fracturing of Canadian society and the consequences that holds for the smooth functioning of governments and companies.**

Based on this hypothesis, we engaged The Angus Reid Group—a Canadian opinion research firm—to gain an understanding of:

- the general outlook and concerns of the Canadian population
- views on social unity, division and relative consequences
- ideals that are important to Canadians, to what extent they are shared and could be the common ground that allows for unity, cooperation and progress

***This is important because at a time of cumulative systemic crises, a sense of common purpose is a necessary organizing principle for businesses and governments.***

## Survey details

- N = 2,640 Canadians  
N = 2,027 general population with sample boosts to ensure a minimum of n=150 in the following groups: Indigenous, people of colour, new Canadians (<5 years) and 2SLGBTQIA+.
- Sample balanced and weighted on age, gender, region and education according to the latest census data. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would yield a margin of error of +/- 1.8 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

**Source:** The Angus Reid Group—*Deloitte Canada's Common Ground, 2023*



# Deloitte and its motives



Deloitte is a professional services firm, driven by a belief in the power of small groups of good, determined people to bring about great progress. We consider this our call to service.

At Deloitte, we are fundamentally problem solvers for our clients, and almost every public and private sector organization is working to organize its stakeholders in support of some higher purpose.

In Canada, it is becoming more evident that the issue of social cohesion affects all manner of organizations. If any country, community or company is unable to cohere its various stakeholders, it will struggle to move forward.

**We conducted this research with the goal of identifying a critical but less-than-obvious piece of the social cohesion puzzle, to help organizations and leaders better galvanize their stakeholders in common purpose.**



### Note to reader

It is our sincere hope this survey and POV helps people and leaders recognize the essential value of unity to solve the intractable issues of our time. That is our explicit intention with this work.

We know it is inevitable that despite our best intentions for this work to contribute to social cohesion and a spirit of togetherness, there will be some who will choose to use this information for the opposite. This is unfortunate but the threat of uncomfortable conversation must not keep us from this urgent and necessary work. As this survey will show, there is a nearly unanimous interest among Canadians to bridge our divisions and come together to solve the great challenges we face as a people. The voice and desire of the many is where we choose to start.

A willingness to cooperate was the key to humanity's past success, as surely as it will be the key to the future we imagine possible.

**That better tomorrow will start with unity.**

# What the survey says

Canadians feel they don't share values and principles with people who have different points of view on issues. **People feel a deep, philosophical divide in our society.**

Canadians consider the country to be more divided, and recognize unity is essential to address the issues we face, and progress we seek. **People understand the need for social cohesion.**

People view some sectors as contributing to unity and others to division. We share this data as opportunities for reflection, not judgement. **With the will of leadership, any organization can be reoriented as an instrument of cohesion.**

Canadians know they have an essential role to play in mending divisions and fostering unity. **Citizens accept a personal responsibility for social unity.**

Despite such pronounced division, there are a number of ideals—desirable aspirations for a good life or better world—that virtually all Canadians regard as important. **Shared ideals offer a solution to leaders of public and private sector organizations to more effectively galvanize people in common purpose.**

## Conclusion

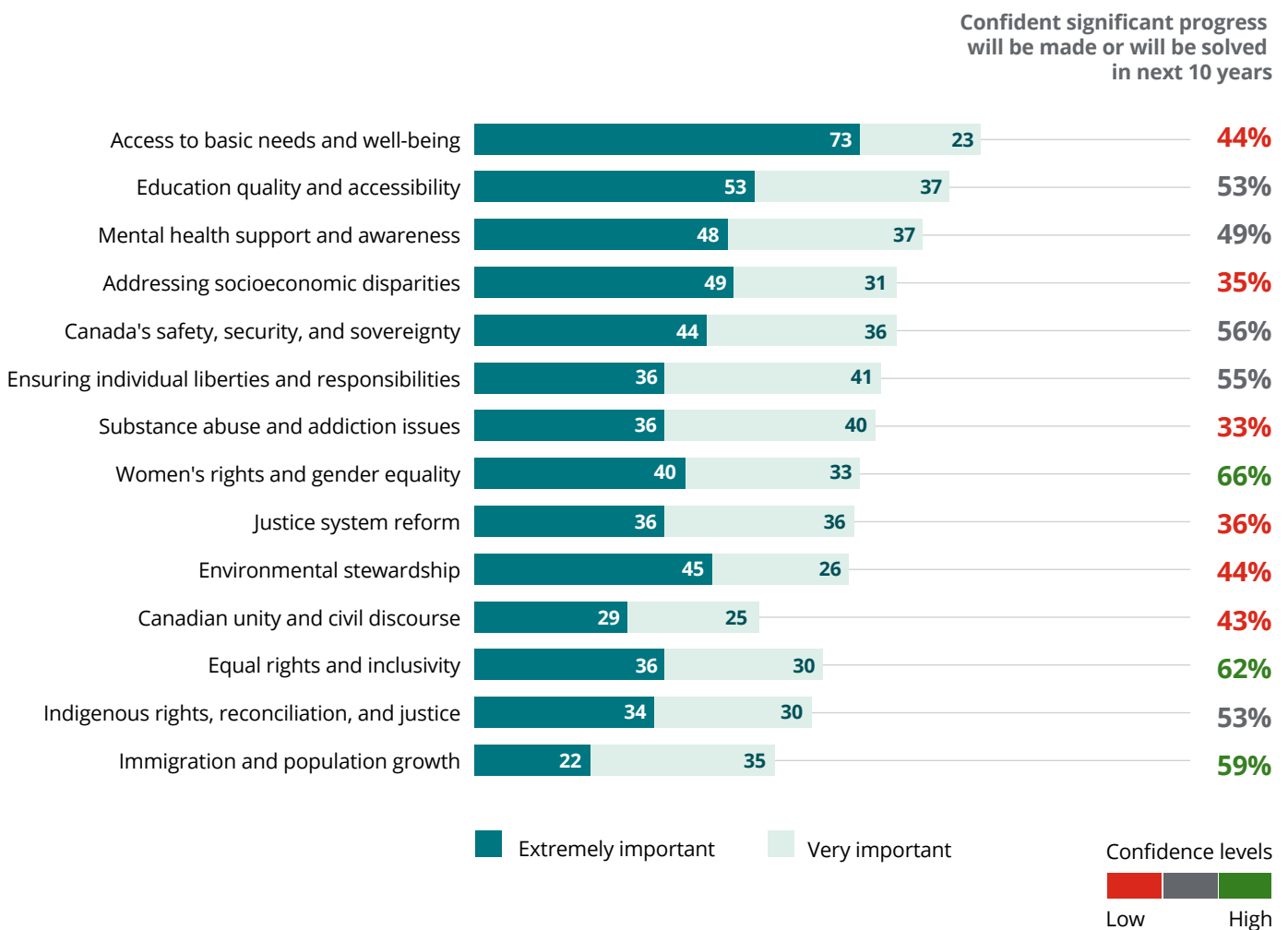
**The general public is aware of the consequences of social division.**

**A more methodical and concerted effort amongst all public and private sector leaders is required to create common ground and address the intractable issues we face. Doing so will also help advantage and strengthen such organizations as a result.**

# Analysis

## Canadians are concerned about many issues and our ability to solve them.

### Importance of issues facing Canada

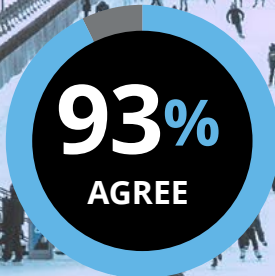




Canadians know how important unity is to social progress, and are concerned we are too fractured to address the critical issues we face.



*"Over the past five years we have become more fractured as a society"*



*"The only way we can solve important problems is together"*



*"I worry that because of a lack of civility there will never be progress on serious issues"*

\*among those who consider Canadians divided

## Canadians see a number of organizations and sectors as contributors to social cohesion, and places from which momentum can be built.



## Canadians point to the media and politics/politicians as contributors to division in Canada.



Every organization can be oriented as a force for social cohesion and togetherness. Although businesses and corporations currently play a fairly neutral role on this subject, we can contribute much more.



Canadians no longer  
sense they share  
values and ideals  
with other Canadians.



*“My values are  
significantly different  
than people who have  
a different stance  
on issues”*

Issues and problems invite differences of opinion, which over time can lead to deep divisions in a society.

*Drawing on its wealth of reference material, this Gen-AI observation draws the consequences of this philosophical divide into sharp relief.*

**Deloitte.** Gen-D DBOT HELP EN MR

Welcome/Bonjour  
Hi, welcome to Gen-D! Go ahead and send a message.

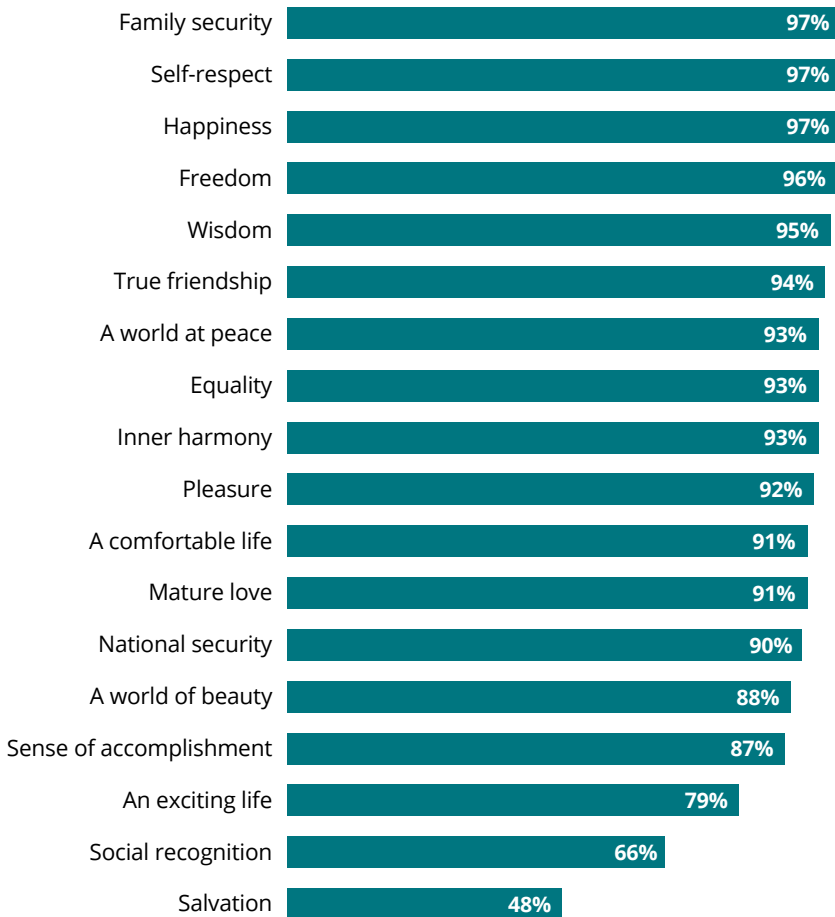
MR What happens if there are no shared ideals or beliefs in a society?

If there are no shared ideals or beliefs in a society, it can lead to a lack of social cohesion and a breakdown in social order. This can result in conflicts, misunderstandings, and a general lack of trust between individuals and groups. Without shared values and beliefs, it can be difficult to establish common goals and work towards them as a society. This can also lead to a sense of alienation and isolation among individuals who do not share the dominant values and beliefs of the society. In extreme cases, it can even lead to social unrest, political instability, and violence. Therefore, it is important for societies to have some degree of shared ideals and beliefs in order to maintain social harmony and stability.

Was this response helpful/accurate? Yes No

In contrast to divisive issues of the moment, ideals are shared notions of a good life or better world, and present an effective tool to establish common ground.

## Shared ideals for a good life, or more civil society, offer clear points of near unanimous common ground.



These human ideals define the purpose and meaning we seek in life, either that of a good life for the individual or a better world/society for all of us.

***Companies and organizations that have embraced one of these ideals as their deep purpose better organize people in support of their direction and success.***

When a company implores us to *Think Different* or *Just Do It*, it compels us to join in support of an ideal we can't achieve on our own—creative freedom and a sense of accomplishment respectively.

Similarly, countries formed by idealistic language such as *We the People* and *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* give the citizenry a sense of the people we aspire to be, and a sense of belonging.

Source: The Angus Reid Group—*Deloitte Canada's Common Ground*, 2023

**This is the change people want to be a part of, the purposes in life we all desire.**

**These are the common purposes that mobilize and galvanize people in support of public and private sector organizations.**



The subject of purpose has become popularized of late, and most organizational leaders have already embarked upon a purpose journey of some kind; which is such an important first step.

With these human ideals, we gain further clarity on this still ambiguous subject.

In these ideals we quantify where people want to go in life, what they want out of life. Make your company or organization an instrument of a human ideal, and you'll do more than contribute to social cohesion.

Doing so will increase the affinity people have for your organization, and the effort they're willing to apply to help it succeed.

**So how can your organization help people toward one of these shared ideals?**

The Purpose Group at Deloitte has some experience and imagination to lend should that be a question you'd like your organization to answer.

# Where to from here?

Shared ideals for a good life and a better world represent the common ground we seek. This is the first and necessary step to galvanize disparate groups, and move forward together.

When people share fundamental ideals, they are more likely to approach debates with a sense of understanding and respect for others' opinions. This encourages a healthy and constructive exchange of ideas, where participants actively listen, engage in thoughtful discussions, and remain open to different viewpoints.

Individual companies and organizations can become an explicit force for one of these shared human ideals, and our firm has created a specialized group and advisory service to help leaders in that journey.

Grassroots and community organizations have a critical role to engage the citizenry and create agency for individuals to contribute to social cohesion, and Deloitte is eager to support that effort.

The cohesion of Canadian society requires our attention, and Deloitte invites all organizational leaders from all sectors to join this urgent and necessary dialogue. Dialogue among social and corporate leaders from all sectors is the essential first step.

**Tomorrow needs us.**



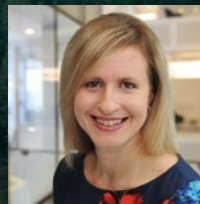


# Contact

**Our Purpose Group leaders are eager and enthusiastic to talk should this subject be of interest.**



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