

Most (85%) Want Canada to Be Known as a Global Leader in Finding Solutions to Poverty and Protecting the World's Children

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Nine in Ten (88%) Say Canada Should use its Influence in Hosting the G8 and G20 to Make Sure Promises to Reduce Childhood Deaths are Kept

Toronto, ON- The welfare of children around the world is important to Canadians and they want governments around the world to commit to previously-made pledges to protect the world's children, according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of World Vision.

Nine in ten (88%) 'agree' (39% strongly/49% somewhat) that 'Canada should use its influence in hosting the G8 and G20 to make sure that promises made to reduce childhood deaths are kept', and a similar proportion (87%) believes (40% strongly/47% somewhat) that 'despite the economic downturn, because Canada and other G8 countries made promises to reduce the number of child deaths by two thirds in poor countries by 2015, Canada should still keep this commitment'.

Regardless of the current economic situation, a majority (52%) of Canadians 'agree' (14% strongly/39% somewhat) that 'Canada should increase the amount of foreign aid it gives'. Further, six in ten (58%) believe (14% strongly/44% somewhat) that the 'economic crisis has had the largest impact in poor countries so Canada should increase aid to these countries'.

and most (85%) 'agree' (39% strongly/46% somewhat) that they 'want Canada to be known as a global leader in finding solutions to poverty and protecting the world's children'.

With the spread of H1N1 here in Canada, a lot of effort has been placed on trying to immunize Canadian children from the virus. To this effect, most (84%) think (42% strongly/42% somewhat) it's great that a lot of focus is placed on immunizing Canadian children against the H1N1 flu and other diseases, but eight in ten (79%) 'agree' (36% strongly/43% somewhat) that 'since children in poor countries are much more susceptible than Canadian children to contract preventable diseases, we should be placing just as much focus on immunizing them as Canadian children'.

Fully one half (50%) of Canadians have a special child in their life who is currently under the age of five. Moreover, 8% of Canadians have been struck with tragedy and have had a child in their life die before reaching the age of five.

According to Statistics Canada, for every 1,000 children in Canada, 6 die before the age of five, but in many other countries the child-mortality rate is higher. Canadians were asked to select how many times higher the under-five mortality rate is in these poorer countries, based on an average of the 30 countries with the highest rates. While two in ten (21%) correctly identified that the child-mortality rate is 26-times higher, on average, in these countries, one quarter (24%) believed it to be even higher at 35-times. Still, a majority (55%) underestimated the under-five child-mortality rates at 18-times higher (24%), eleven-times higher (19%) and five-times higher (12%). Nine in ten (90%) 'agree' (53% strongly/37% somewhat) that 'its' not right that children in poor countries are more likely to die before they are five years old than children from rich countries'.

Thinking about why these differences exist, two in three (66%) believe it's because 'governments in poor countries are not doing enough to help their own citizens', while a majority (56%) believes 'world leaders aren't placing a priority on improving child health in poor countries'. Others believe the differences exist because 'governments in wealthy countries aren't doing enough to help the people of poor countries' (42%). One quarter (22%) thinks 'there's not enough medicine in the world to treat everyone who is ill', while 18% think that 'there's simply not enough food in the world to go around'. One in ten (13%) attribute it to some other reason.

According to Statistics Canada, the primary causes of death of children under the age of 5 in Canada are accidents, birth defects, cancer, heart problems and the flu. Nearly one half (45%) of Canadians correctly identified illness or disease as a top-five killer in Canada (and another 7% specifically the flu), while fewer correctly identified accidents (35% unspecified, 18% car accidents), cancer (21%), heart problems (7%) and birth defects (5%) as a top-five cause of child deaths.

But it appears that perhaps Canadians were primarily thinking of children living in wealthier countries when offering their thoughts on what could kill children. In fact, very few mentioned the top-five most-common deaths for children under 5 globally: birth complications [including malformation (2%), premature birth (2%), or stillbirth (2%)], dehydration due to diarrhea (0%), malaria (2%), measles (0%) and HIV AIDS (6%).

Canadians are split on who is most responsible for preventing the deaths of children under the age of five around the world. Asked to choose two of the following, one half (49%) believe that governments of poor countries are most responsible, while other believe that the responsibility falls to governments of wealthy countries (36%), the United Nations (29%),

influential global leaders (29%), the parents of children (22%), charities and NGOs (14%), wealthy individuals around the world (10%), or some other (5%) entity.

Whatever the cause and whoever is responsible for preventing these deaths, almost all (92%) Canadians 'agree' (63% strongly/30% somewhat) that 'children dying before the age of five anywhere in the world is not acceptable'. Moreover, most (91%) believe (54% strongly/37% somewhat) that 'we live in world that has enough resources that children shouldn't die of preventable causes', however nine in ten (89%) believe (45% strongly/43% somewhat) that 'parents of children in poor countries don't have the resources to provide their children with all of the health care they need, so they need our help'.

Two in three (64%) 'agree' (13% strongly/50% somewhat) that 'given the state of the economy, it's understandable that governments haven't been giving as much foreign aid as they otherwise might be able to in a time of economic prosperity, even if it means not meeting promises to reduce child deaths'.

With the Olympics coming to Vancouver and then the G8 and G20 meetings next year, all eyes will be on Canada, and the government will have an opportunity to raise awareness on some key issues affecting the world. Choosing two issues that they believe the Government of Canada should emphasize the most on the global stage, nearly one half (47%) believes that the global economic recovery should be the issue Canada focuses on, while nearly the same proportion believes that food, hunger and poverty around the world (46%) should be tops, followed by climate change (43%). Others believe that the emphasis should be placed on terrorism or global security (26%), child deaths (12%), preventing the spread of H1N1 (12%), Afghanistan (11%) and HIV/AIDS (4%).



Interestingly, those who have lost a child in their life under the age of five are twice as likely (22% vs. 11%) to choose child deaths as the issue that should receive the most attention on the world stage.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between November 11 and 16, 2009, on behalf of World Vision Canada. For this survey, a national sample of 2,029 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-2.2 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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