



# The Global Indian Pulse

UAE Market Report



**HSBC**

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Connections to India

# About this research

## Research design

The phrase 'Global Indians' refers to anyone who is not currently living in India but was born there or has a parent or grandparent born there.

Ipsos MORI interviewed 4,152 Global Indians in 9 markets (Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, the UAE, the UK and the USA) using its Online Panel. 1,051 of these interviews were conducted with Global Indians living in the United Arab Emirates. Fieldwork took place 18 August–13 September 2021.

As this is an online sample, it is more urban, more educated, and more affluent than the general population. Data are unweighted.

'Affluent' refers to UAE Global Indians with a personal annual income higher than AED 600,000.



# Executive summary

The UAE Global Indians we spoke to are in a good place – most are happy (84%), safe (88%) and financially secure (72%). More than four-fifths feel supported by both their local community (81%) and the government (83%).

While the pandemic has brought many challenges, it has made many UAE Global Indians feel closer both to their local community in the UAE (80%) and their friends and family in India (80%).

Despite all the upheavals of the pandemic, UAE Global Indians feel optimistic about the future. Two thirds are planning to increase their investments in the UAE (68%) and India (66%). Around nine in ten are already investing in the UAE (87%) and India (93%).

This demonstrates their strong relationship with both UAE and India. A top reason for investing in both is to promote positive change in that country (38% for UAE investments and 39% for Indian investments). Sustainability matters to UAE Global Indians, with four-fifths (78%) saying that environmental or social initiatives are a key part of their decision to invest.

The UAE Global Indians we spoke to rate property (54%) and stocks and shares (40%) as the most important areas to invest in the UAE. In third place are local businesses (36%) – another illustration of their commitment to the UAE.

UAE Global Indians maintain strong ties to India. Almost nine in ten feel a strong connection to India (84%) and are very interested in its success (87%). Nearly three-quarters (73%) are likely to live in India in the future, although a majority (61%) are planning to retire in the UAE.

**These links to India coexist with a sense of commitment to the UAE. This is seen particularly clear among affluent UAE Global Indians. This segment is more likely to feel supported by government (93%) and strongly connected to India (89%). Their number one reason for increasing their investments in the UAE is to promote positive change in the UAE (55%) and local businesses is their top choice of investment class in the UAE (51%).**

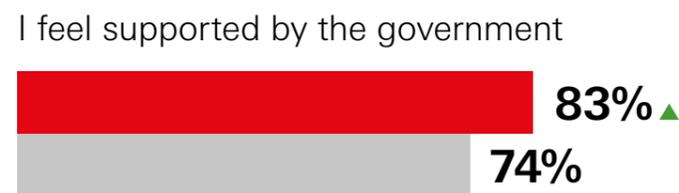
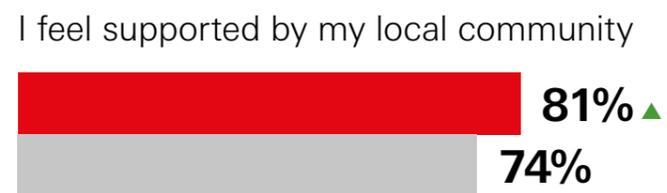
# Where they are now

## Experiences of Global Indians in UAE

**Most of the UAE Global Indians we spoke to are in a good place. Four fifths feel happy (84%) and safe (88%). Most feel financially secure (72%) and think there are good job opportunities in the UAE (71%).**

UAE Global Indians feel supported, both by their local communities and the government. This sense of support is higher compared to Global Indians overall. UAE Global Indians who are affluent are more likely to feel supported by both their local community (91%) and the government (93%).

As we go on to explore, this group of Global Indians is particularly likely to have a sense of connection and commitment to both India and the UAE.

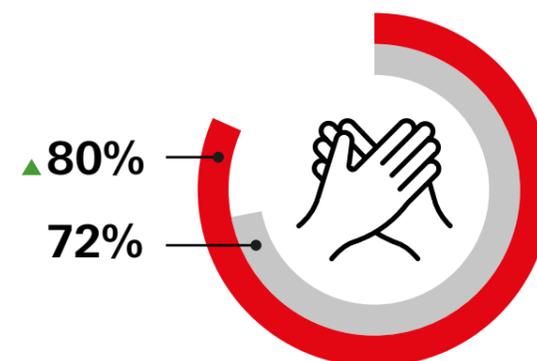


■ UAE Global Indians    ■ Global Indians overall  
 ▲ ▼ Signifies significantly higher / lower than overall

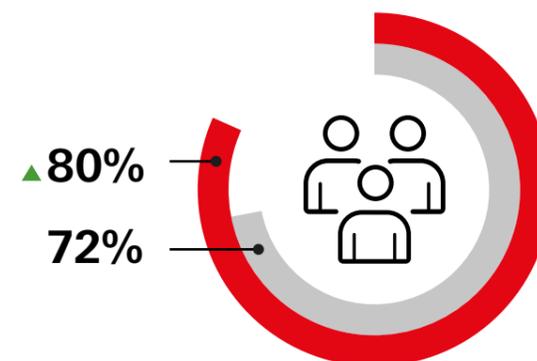
These positive feelings about life in the UAE may in part be down to the size of the Global Indian community – it is the largest expat population in the country. But the longstanding links, particularly in terms of migration and trade, between the UAE and India are also likely to be significant.

For all the difficulties it has brought, Covid has had some positive impacts as well. The pandemic has made Global Indians feel closer both to their community in the UAE and to their family and friends in India. This is particularly the case for affluent UAE Global Indians (92% and 93% respectively). Over 30s are more likely than 18-29 year olds to agree with both statements.

The pandemic has made me feel closer to my community



The pandemic has made me feel closer to my family/friends in India



■ UAE Global Indians    ■ Global Indians overall  
 ▲ ▼ Signifies significantly higher / lower than overall



### Time in the UAE

Around half (51%) of the Global Indians we spoke to have lived in the UAE for more than 10 years.

UAE Global Indians are less likely than Global Indians overall to have lived in their country of residence for more than 25 years (10% vs 23%). However they are more likely to have lived in the UAE for 3-15 years (65% vs 51%).

Affluent UAE Global Indians (21%) are more likely to have lived in the UAE for more than 25 years and women are more likely than men (13% vs 8%) to have that length of residence.

### Indian ties give a helping hand in UAE

Four-fifths (79%) of UAE Global Indians say that being connected to India has helped them in the country they live in now, a higher figure than for Global Indians Overall (70%).

This sentiment is particularly pronounced among affluent UAE Global Indians (92%) and over 30s compared to under 30s (84% vs 70%).

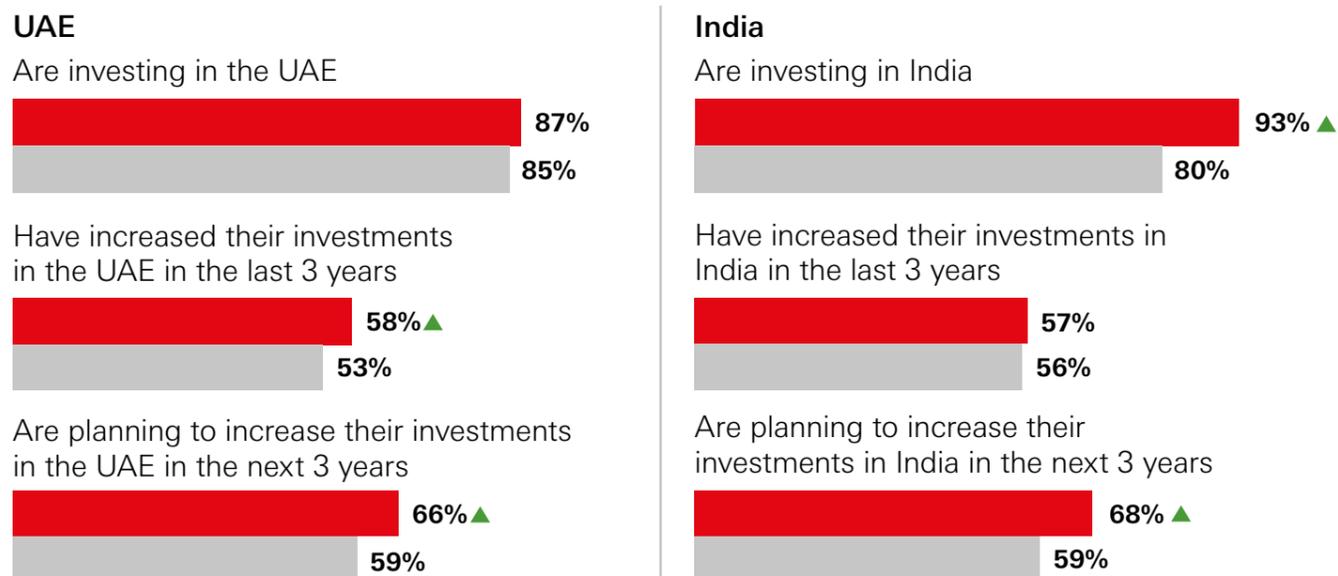
# Investments in India and UAE

## Flows, motives and hurdles



**Most of the UAE Global Indians that we spoke to are investing in both UAE and India, and a majority have increased their investments over the past three years.**

Two-thirds are planning to increase their investments in the UAE and India in the next three years, higher than Global Indians investing in their country of residence overall. This demonstrates a sense of optimism among UAE Global Indians in particular, despite the upheavals of the pandemic.



■ UAE Global Indians ■ Global Indians overall (investments in country of residence)  
▲ ▼ Signifies significantly higher / lower than overall

This sense of optimism is particularly marked among UAE Global Indians over 30. They are more likely to be planning to increase their investments in both India (74% vs 56% of 18-29 year olds) and the UAE (70% vs 57% of 18-29 year olds).

Men (72%) are more likely than women to be planning increases in their investments in India (61%). This may be linked to men being more likely than women to be planning to live in India.

UAE Global Indians are mostly likely to be planning to increase their investments in the UAE for financial reasons but over a third are motivated by wanting to promote positive change in the UAE. This illustrates the sense of commitment that many UAE Global Indians have to the UAE.

This factor is even more important for affluent UAE Global Indians – 55% want to increase their UAE investments to promote positive change, the top reason given by this segment.

*Why will you increase your investments in your country of residence?*



Motivations for increasing investments in India are similar, with returns (42%) and promoting positive change in India (39%) the second and third most important reasons. However family and friends remaining in India comes top (48%) and planning to return to India is a factor for 39%. Both of these score more highly among UAE Global Indians than Global Indians overall (41% and 33% respectively).

UAE Global Indians see property as the most important investment class in the UAE, followed by stocks and shares. However local businesses are also significant, mentioned by a third.

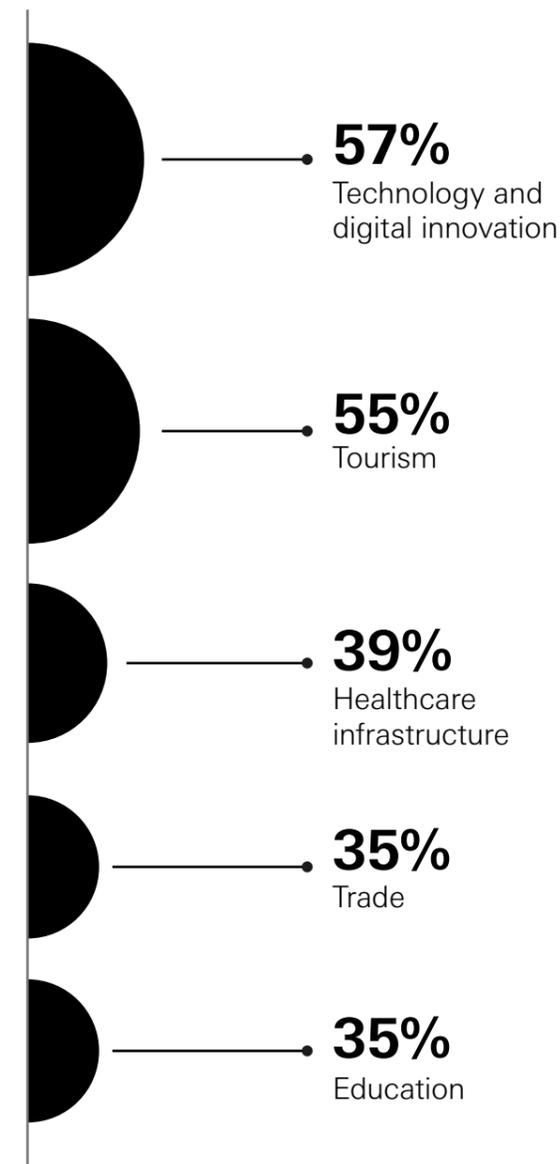
For affluent UAE Global Indians, local businesses are particularly important, chosen by 51%, the most popular answer among this segment. Property comes second on 45%. This highlights the depth of the commitment many wealthier UAE Global Indians have to the UAE.

*Which of the following, if any, do you think are the most important areas to invest in, in your country of residence?*



**UAE Global Indians back technology and tourism as the sectors most likely to perform strongly in the UAE over the next decade or so.**

*In which sectors do you think your country of residence will perform strongly in the next 10-20 years?*



**Plans to increase investments reflect the optimistic outlook of UAE Global Indians**

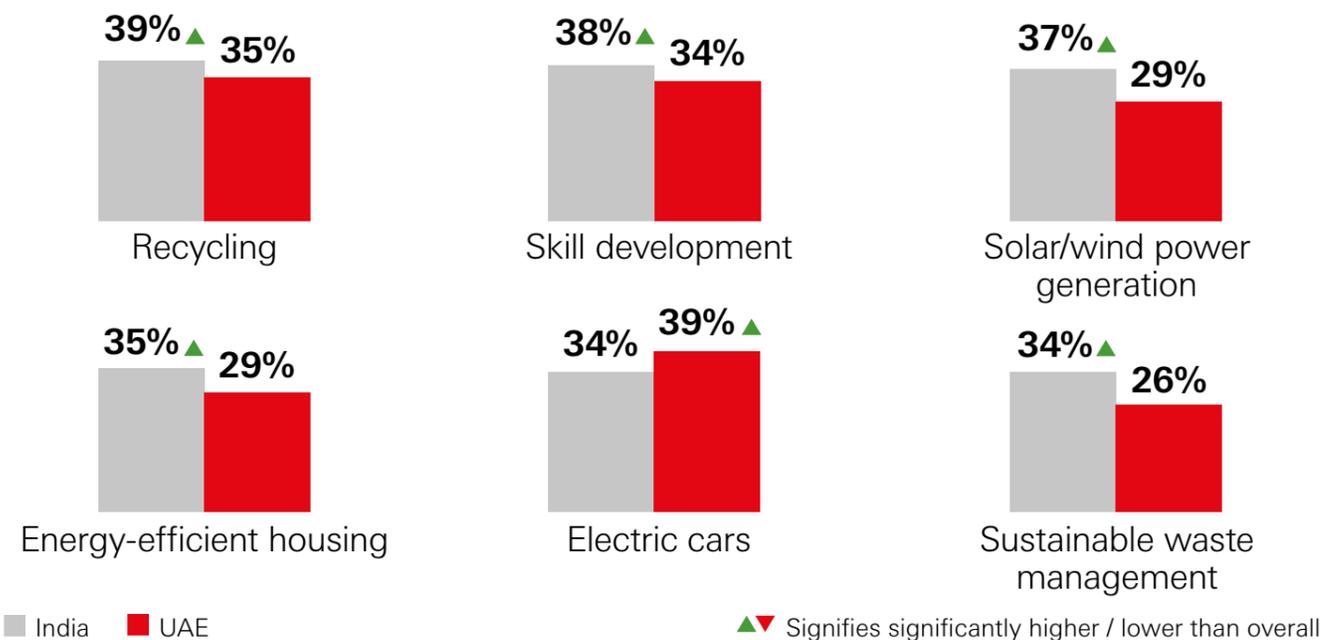
# The future is sustainable

Sustainability is an important factor for the investment decisions of the UAE Global Indians we spoke to. Four-fifths (78%) say that environmental or social initiatives are a key part of their decision to invest. This is particularly the case for affluent Global Indians (91%) and for over 30s (80%) compared to under 30s (72%). As we have seen, these are both groups which are planning to increase their investments in the UAE and India in the next three years.

UAE Global Indians are planning a range of sustainable investments in both the UAE and India. There are some differences in their priorities, with electric cars coming top in the UAE and recycling in India.

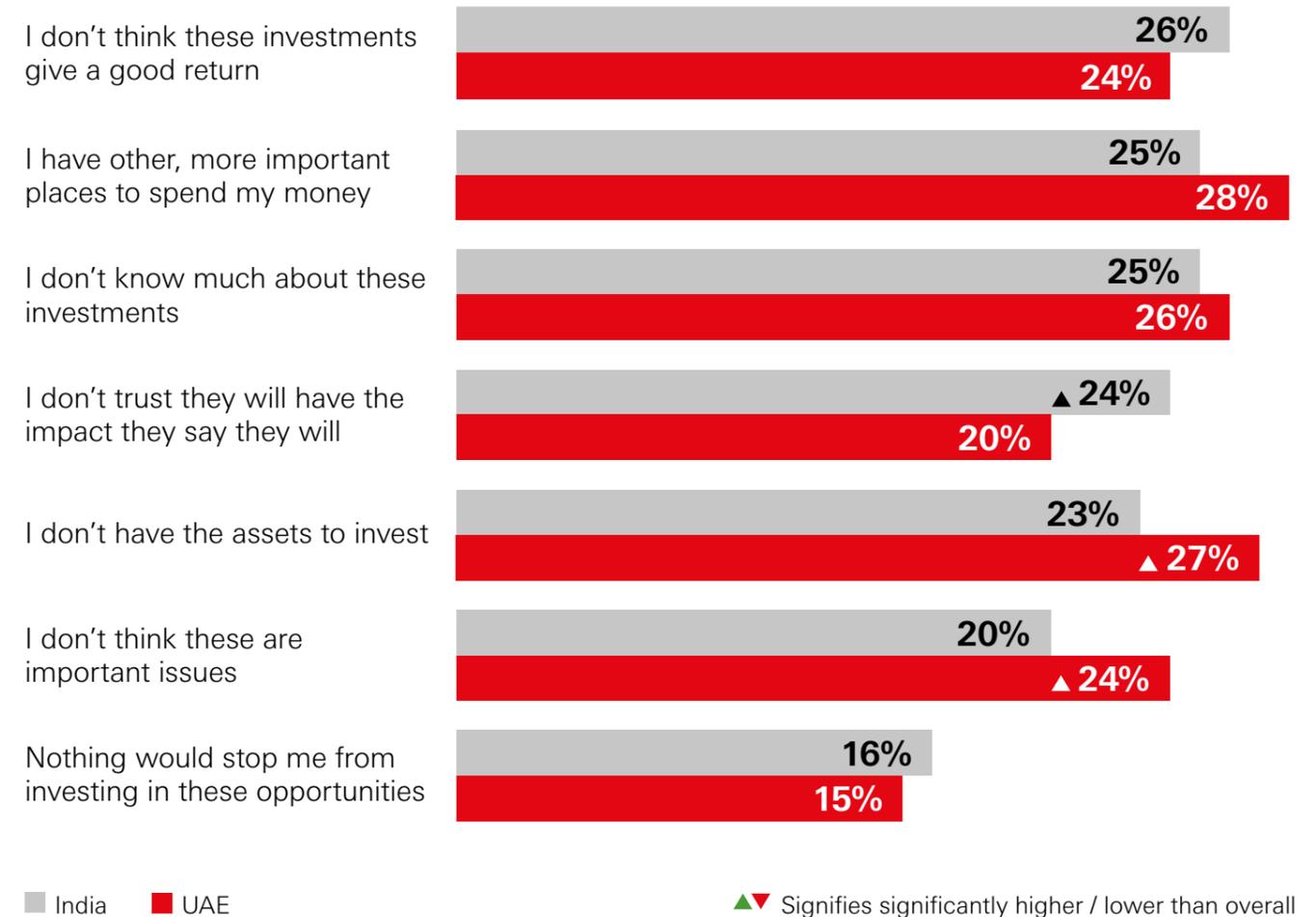
Which of the following, if any, do you... a) plan to invest in, in India, in the next 2 years, b) plan to invest in, your country of residence, in the next 2 years

Top 6 answers for India



We see similar barriers to investment in sustainable initiatives in the UAE and India. However UAE Global Indians are more concerned about investments not having the promised impact in India, while insufficient assets and not seeing these as important issues score higher for the UAE.

Which of the following, if any, would stop you from investing in these environmental or social-focused investment opportunities?





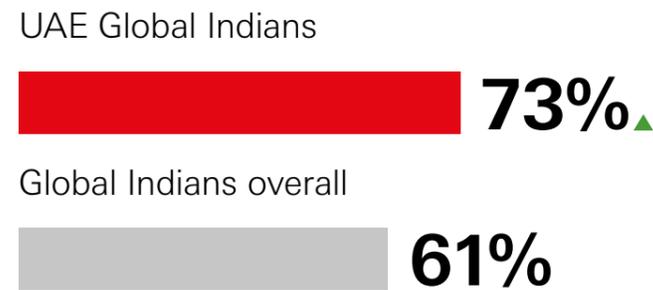
# Patterns of movement to and from India

**The UAE Global Indians we spoke to are frequent visitors to India. Before the pandemic, half (52%) visited at least once a year, considerably higher than the figure for Global Indians overall (32%). This is no doubt linked to the geographical closeness of the UAE to India. Another factor is that almost all (96%) Global Indians in UAE have an Indian passport.**

Family and retirement are the top reasons for moving to India and these are chosen more often by UAE Global Indians than Global Indians overall. Another factor which is more important is their children's education (28% vs 22%). However immersing themselves in Indian culture is a less important motivator compared to Global Indians overall (25% vs 32%). Perhaps this is because, as we shall go on to see, UAE Global Indians already feel very connected to India.

These factors may also explain why so many UAE Global Indians are planning to live in India in the future. A fifth (21%) are planning to do so in the next 12 months, compared to 16% of Global Indians overall.

*How likely, or unlikely, are you to live in India in the future?*



Three groups are particularly likely to intend to live in India in the future – men (77% compared to 67% of women), the over 30s (79% versus 60% of 18-29 year olds) and the affluent (81%).

## Top 3 reasons for moving to India

*Why do you plan to live in India in the future?*

I want to live closer to family / friends



I want to be able to care for my parents and elderly relatives in India



Retirement

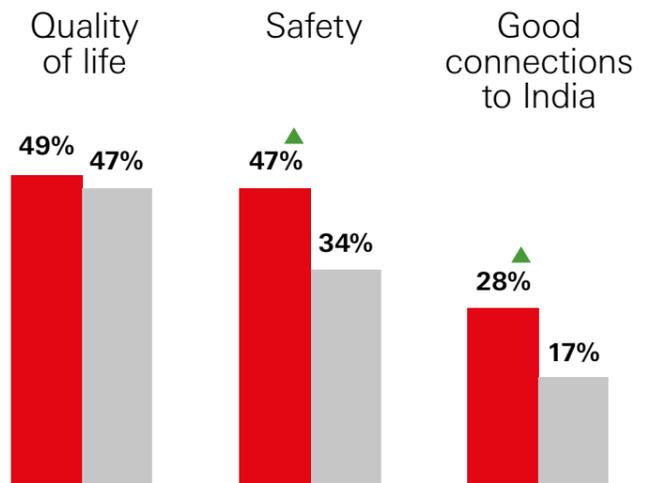


■ UAE Global Indians ■ Global Indians overall  
▲▼ Signifies significantly higher / lower than overall

However affluent UAE Global Indians, who are more likely to feel strongly connected to India, are also more likely to want to move to India to immerse themselves in Indian culture (41% vs 25% overall). Other reasons which are more significant for this segment compared to UAE Global Indians on average are using their skills and experience to bring about change in India (39% vs 24%) and COVID-19 making them re-assess their plans (27% vs 17%).

**Quality of life is an important motivator for Global Indians generally to retire in their country of residence but safety and good connections to India are particularly important for UAE Global Indians.**

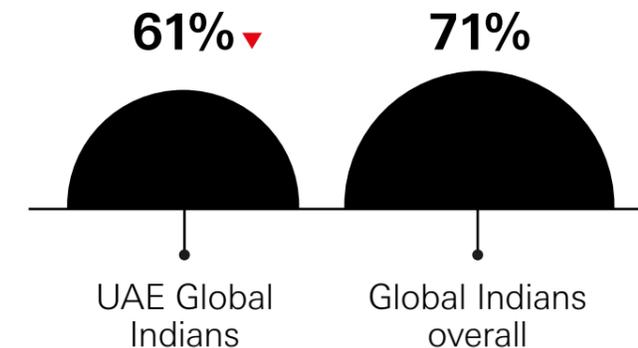
*What are the key reasons for you planning to retire in your country of residence?*



■ UAE Global Indians ■ Global Indians overall  
▲▼ Signifies significantly higher / lower than overall

Although many intend to live in India in the future, three-fifths are still planning to retire in the UAE. This figure is lower than Global Indians overall, 71% of whom are planning to retire in their country of residence. 18-29 year olds (52%) are less likely to be planning to retire in the UAE.

*Do you plan to retire in your country of residence?*



▲▼ Signifies significantly higher / lower than overall

Women are more likely than men to mention quality of life (55% vs 45%) and safety (53% vs 43%) as reasons to retire in the UAE. Men are more likely to give infrastructure as a rationale (24% vs 16%).

# The ties that bind

## Connections to India

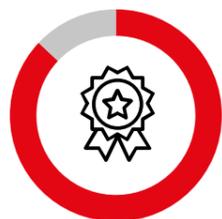
**The Global Indians we spoke to have deep bonds to India, and this is particularly true in the UAE. Almost nine in ten feel a strong connection to India and are very interested in its success.**

Affluent UAE Global Indians and over 30s are more likely to agree with all three statements – 93% of the affluent feel a strong connection to India and 89% of over 30s. Both of these groups are more likely to intend to live in India in the future. Men (80%) are more likely than women (73%) to feel invested in the future of India.



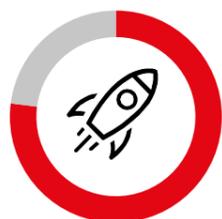
**84%** ▲

I feel a strong connection to India  
77% Global Indians overall



**87%** ▲

I am very interested in the success of India  
80% Global Indians overall



**77%** ▲

I feel invested in the future of India  
68% Global Indians overall

▲ ▼ Signifies significantly higher / lower than overall



### Missing you

The top 3 things UAE Global Indians miss about India are family (73%), friends (61%) and food (54%).

Men (64%) are more likely than women (55%) to miss friends, while 18-29 year olds are the most likely to miss food (60%) and the least likely to miss friends (51%).

**UAE Global Indians are most likely to stay connected to India through food but sending money to family/friends and cultural festivities are also significant ties. Only 1% do not stay connected to India.**

*How do you stay connected to India? Please select all, if any, that apply.*



The scores on all of these ties are higher for UAE Global Indians than for Global Indians overall, illustrating their strong links to India.

Affluent UAE Global Indians are more likely to be part of an Indian community (58%), suggesting that wealthier UAE Global Indians may be better networked.



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