

Tackling the world's most pervasive issues

1. Match the adjectives with their meanings. Then, answer the questions.

- a) What are some **contentious** subjects among your family members or friends?
- b) What is the most **pressing** issue you need to deal with this week?
- c) What are some of the professions which face a **chronic** shortage of staff?
- d) What are some of the **pervasive** issues in the job market?
- e) What are some of the most **dire** consequences of the pandemic?

MEANINGS:

- 1) never-ending –
- 2) present everywhere –
- 3) urgent –
- 4) causing disagreement –
- 5) very serious or extreme –

2. Look at the list of some of the world's most pressing issues. Decide which two are: a) the most dire, and b) the most pervasive. Justify your choices. Would you add anything to the list?

dictatorship
disease and lack of access to healthcare services
excessive greenhouse gas emissions
gender discrimination
growing number of refugees
homelessness
hunger
lack of access to drinking water and sanitation
racism

Tackling the world's most pervasive issues

3. Complete the sentences with the words in the box. You may have to change their form.

address deploy eradicate exacerbate plague shine

- a) The pandemic a spotlight on the importance of understanding and supporting people with mental health issues.
- b) Scientists have always tried to lethal diseases.
- c) This issue has been our country for decades.
- d) I'm not sure if we'll be able to this problem on our own.
- e) Fossil-fuelled cars the problem of climate change.
- f) I wasn't able to fully my skills when I worked for them.

4. Look at the issues in ex. 2 again and discuss the questions.

- Which of the issues has the pandemic shined a spotlight on?
- Have any of the issues been plaguing your country?
- Which of these issues are contentious in your country? What exactly do people find it difficult to agree on?
- How are these issues being addressed by the authorities? Do they try to eradicate them or do they exacerbate them? What groups or organizations have been involved in tackling these problems?
- Which of the issues are pervasive in the US? Share what you know about them and about how they are being addressed there.

5. You are going to watch a video about an innovative idea deployed in several US cities. Look at the slogan below and decide what the idea might be about.

Reducing food insecurity. One text message at a time.

Tackling the world's most pervasive issues

6. Watch the [video](https://youtu.be/4laBt9rEx1A) [https://youtu.be/4laBt9rEx1A] about text-based service Bento and answer the questions below.

- What was the speaker's biggest concern at the dawn of the pandemic?
- What was the homeless kids' response to the question 'What do you desire most in life?'
- Why did Bento contact community-based organizations?
- How does a user of Bento inform them that they are in need of a meal?
- What might be the next steps for people who are helped by Bento?

7. Look at the extracts from the video and explain the words and phrases in bold.

- We expected answers like food, clothing, water, shelter, and they answered: a cell phone. **It caught us off guard.***
- (...) people can get food that (...) gives them a way to be **dignified** in how they **claim** their food, so they're not forced to stand in a line and be identified as someone who is either poor or food insecure.*
- So now our distribution sites, as opposed to being just one here and one there (...), now we've got this labyrinth, all of these different **nodes** of distribution.*
- Those organizations define the **eligibility** parameters and make this benefit available to those in their community that meet those parameters. Once they're **deemed eligible**, (...) we enroll them onto our text message service.*
- They get to walk into a restaurant and pick up a meal. (...) No behavior changes have had to happen. And that's why this thing **has taken off** the way that it has.*

8. Discuss the questions.

- In your opinion, what is most innovative about Bento?
- Why is it important for Bento creators that people should claim food in a dignified way? Would you agree with them?
- How will this solution help society in the long run?
- Do you know of any solutions to the food insecurity problem offered in your country?
- Would it be possible to deploy Bento in your country? What challenges might the creators face there?

Tackling the world's most pervasive issues

9. Read the text and answer the questions.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships are collaborations between groups from different societal sectors who want to achieve a greater impact than they would working alone. The stakeholders may include government officials, NGOs, media, companies, business incubators, professionals working in the field, and anyone interested in exploiting different opportunities to achieve a common goal.

- Which of the world's issues could multi-stakeholder partnerships tackle?
- What would be the biggest challenges for them?
- Could multi-stakeholder partnerships eradicate some of the world's problems in the future? Why/Why not?



10. In groups, choose one of the objectives listed below (or come up with a different one based on the list of issues in ex. 2) and discuss how a multi-stakeholder partnership could approach it. Use the questions below as a guide. Then, pitch your idea to other groups.

- providing a meal a day for those who need it in your area or country
- providing jobs for refugees in your area or country
- decreasing greenhouse gas emissions in your area or country
- reducing the gender pay gap in your country

Consider the following questions:

- Would you reformulate the common goal to make it clearer and attainable?
What would be the partnership's specific goals?
- What resources and/or capabilities would each of the possible stakeholders bring to the table?
- What would be some potential challenges?