

Shift the Power for Post-COVID SDG Progress

31 January 2023, 8:15-9:30am, UN Headquarters, Conference Room 5

Concept Note

Then-Secretary General Kofi Annan once said “Development happens in communities.” At least 12 of the 17 SDGs require integrated solutions at the community level. Yet many of the lowest income people live in communities that lack the resources and autonomous decision making authority to lead progress in all these areas.

We now live in a world of increasing shocks due to climate change, conflict and contagious diseases such as COVID19 that are setting back progress on the SDGs. The first responders are always community leaders, from both civil society and local government. From a systems perspective, it is well known that decentralized systems are the most resilient to shocks. However, there is much more that national governments, INGOs and donors can do to decentralize and make resources and opportunities accessible to communities and local organizations, in order to accelerate progress.

Our event will look at how local ecosystems responded to the COVID19 crisis, the lessons from the pandemic that we need to take forward (especially around “Less is More”) and how Shifting the Power is the only pathway towards meeting the SDGs. This session will be a dynamic conversation, initiated by our speakers and then opened to the whole room, among practitioners from civil society and local government on how to accelerate the process of shifting a greater share of resources and decision making power to local communities.

Speakers will include:

[Matthew Cruse](#), Senior Director, Accountability, Impact, and Measurement, Relief International

[Louise Umutoni-Bower](#), Policy Director, Spark Microgrants

[Nelly Mecklenburg](#), (Moderator), Program Manager and Advisor, Community and Social Development, Institute for State Effectiveness

[Pablo Sanchez](#), Senior Data Scientist, The Hunger Project.

[Zipporah Wambua](#), Director for Participatory Development, Makueni County, Kenya