



Global
Partnership
for Sustainable
Development Data

NAVIGATING CHALLENGES TOGETHER

Our Network in 2020

Partner Engagement Report



Foreword

The Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data is a mission-oriented network of organizations subscribed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our network is underpinned by shared values and together we work to ensure that everyone has the right to life, dignity, and security on a healthy planet.

2020 brought the global shock of the COVID-19 pandemic. When the world needed answers, in real time, collectively we responded. Our network is an engine for new ideas, collaboration, and action. It's wider than ever—with more than 275 governments, business and civil society organisations from across the globe working together.

We have listened to government partners about what's keeping them up at night, then drawn upon the network for data solutions, capacity building efforts, rapid surveys and even hardware where that was a limiting factor. Whilst the last year has forced us to adapt to new realities, our partners have more than risen to the task in navigating these challenges together: connecting virtually has enabled more people from more countries to be part of catalytic conversations; has seen lively digital debate and discussion; and a greater range of resources made available.

Data, and the need for better data, has been thrust into the global spotlight like never before, central to addressing the immediate health crisis and the slow-burning threats of climate change and inequality. Data enables us to trace the thread between individual and collective experiences—to illuminate systemic and overlapping inequalities between people with different bodily abilities, ages, racial profiles, geographies and more. Recognizing this, we are centering inclusivity across all our work: embedding it in the core principles which guide how we broker partnerships; expanding the

representation of civil society organizations in our network; and ensuring a diversity of voices and perspectives in our knowledge sharing resources.

We take listening seriously, and information from partners is invaluable in reflecting, learning and, ultimately, amplifying the change we can make together. That's why our Annual Partners Survey is such a critical tool for evolving our network. Reflections from the 2019 survey led to new peer exchanges and webinars, committing to broadening the languages in which we share knowledge and resources, and directly informed the expansion of our emerging and more targeted learning agenda.

In engaging with partners—both through formal mechanisms like surveys and informal conversations—what comes through most strongly is a sense of belonging. As we look ahead to the rest of 2021 the insights you'll find here are incredibly valuable in continuing to cultivate that sense of belonging, and deepen and broaden our collective voice and impact.

We know there's much more to say than we can show in the data. If you have reflections or suggestions for improving the Global Partnership network then don't hesitate to reach out via info@data4sdgs.org.

Sincerely,



Charu Vijayakumar,
Associate Director of Impact
and Learning



Alonso Ortiz Galán,
Senior Engagement Manager

Introduction

Our partners sit at the heart of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (Global Partnership)'s work. The strength of our network lies in the breadth and depth of partners' expertise and engagement with each other, and the wider data for development community and agenda. 2020 tested that strength, and showed the power and adaptability of our network in overcoming unprecedented challenges.

The Secretariat servicing our network consists of 26 staff working across 10 countries on four continents, supporting partners to coordinate, collaborate, and drive better data for better lives. Throughout 2020, we adapted the nature and focus of our activities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, shifting our engagement mechanisms to become almost entirely virtual.

The pandemic abruptly increased the need for data partnerships, knowledge generation, and information exchange at scale and speed. In response, we adopted additional partnership brokering models: increasing the number of countries in which we engaged by more than three-fold; expanding the range of focus areas and stakeholders in our policy and advocacy work; and increasing the number and diversity of our digital learning and knowledge-sharing activities.

“ The Global Partnership has been able to adapt to the needs of the world situation both at the level of the issues addressed, methodologies, methods of inter-institutional relations and the use of virtual tools. ”

- Government agency partner, 2021 Partner Survey

In the face of the change and uncertainty this year, engagement amongst our partners has highlighted:

- the strength of our virtual network,
- the feasibility and value of aggregating needs and solutions to deliver a range of partnerships,
- the need for innovation alongside strengthening foundational systems, and
- the importance of sharing experiences, opportunities, and challenges for collective growth and benefit.

This is reflected in increased partner engagement and perception of the value of that engagement over time. In 2017¹, 72% of partners were moderately or strongly engaged with the network and 79% were satisfied with their engagement. By 2020 these figures had grown to 78% and 84%.



¹ The Partner Survey was first conducted in 2017.

Our Network

The Global Partnership network consists of 275 registered partners² with headquarters in 58 countries, across 115 cities. The network also includes many partners who are not officially registered but engage across a variety of activities. Our annual Partner Survey³ was open to all partners, and saw a 63% response rate from registered partners and 37% from non-registered partners.

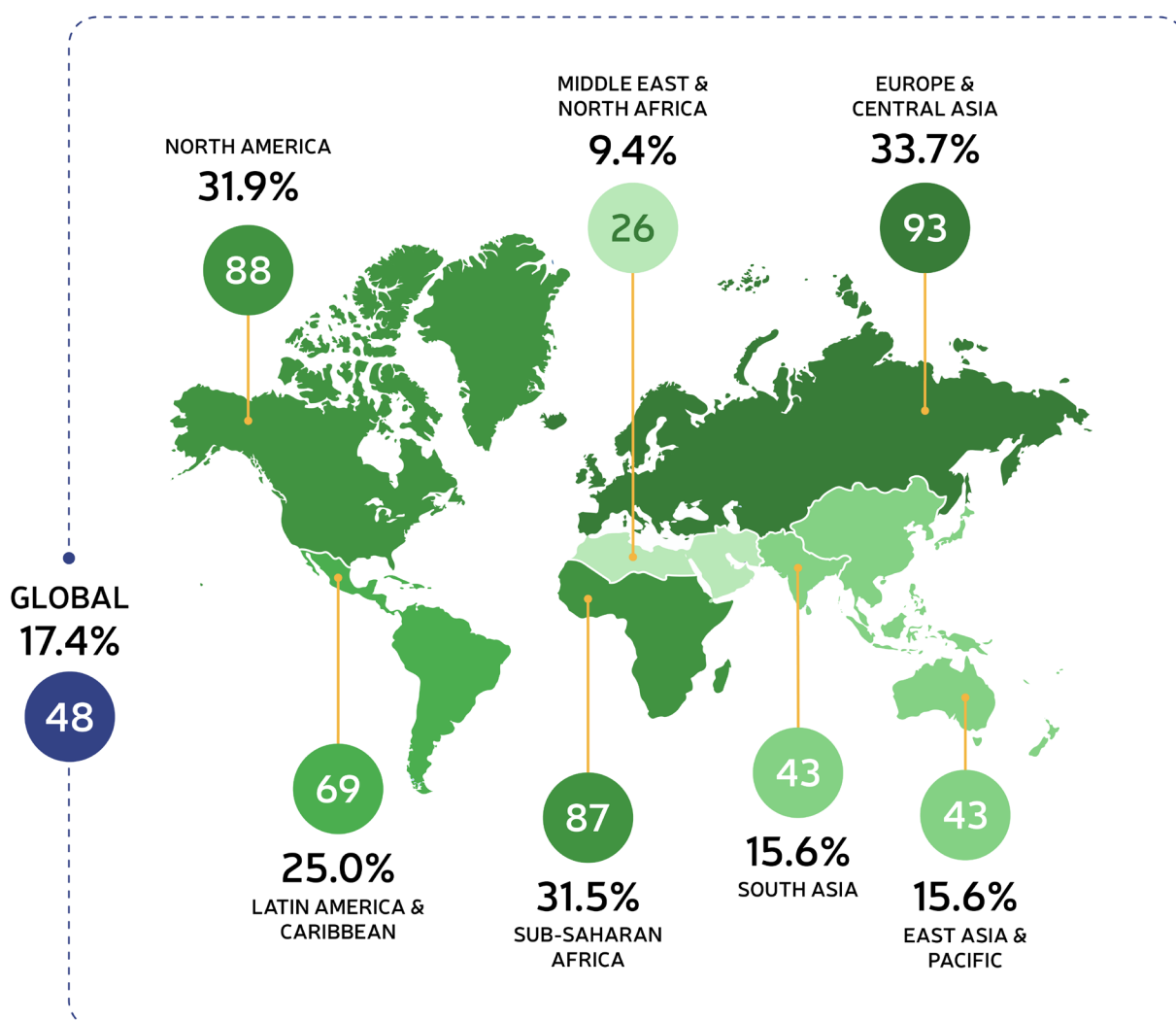


Figure 1: Regions where registered partners work or have impact⁴

² As of March 2021. To access a real-time list of registered partners, please click [here](#).

³ The 4th Annual Partner Survey was administered via SurveyMonkey in English, French, and Spanish across February and March 2021. A total of 130 partners participated providing reflections on their experience during 2020. The 25% response rate calculation is based on number of respondents versus number of surveys opened. This is different from the proxy measure used in previous years of respondents to registered partners (47.3%) to account for non-registered partners and multiple respondents from a single organization.

⁴ Partners working in multiple regions are listed as working in each region, therefore percentages do not add up to 100%. Regions are classified according to the World Bank (<https://data.worldbank.org/country>) with the addition of the 'Global' category to indicate partners who have a significant worldwide influence and footprint.

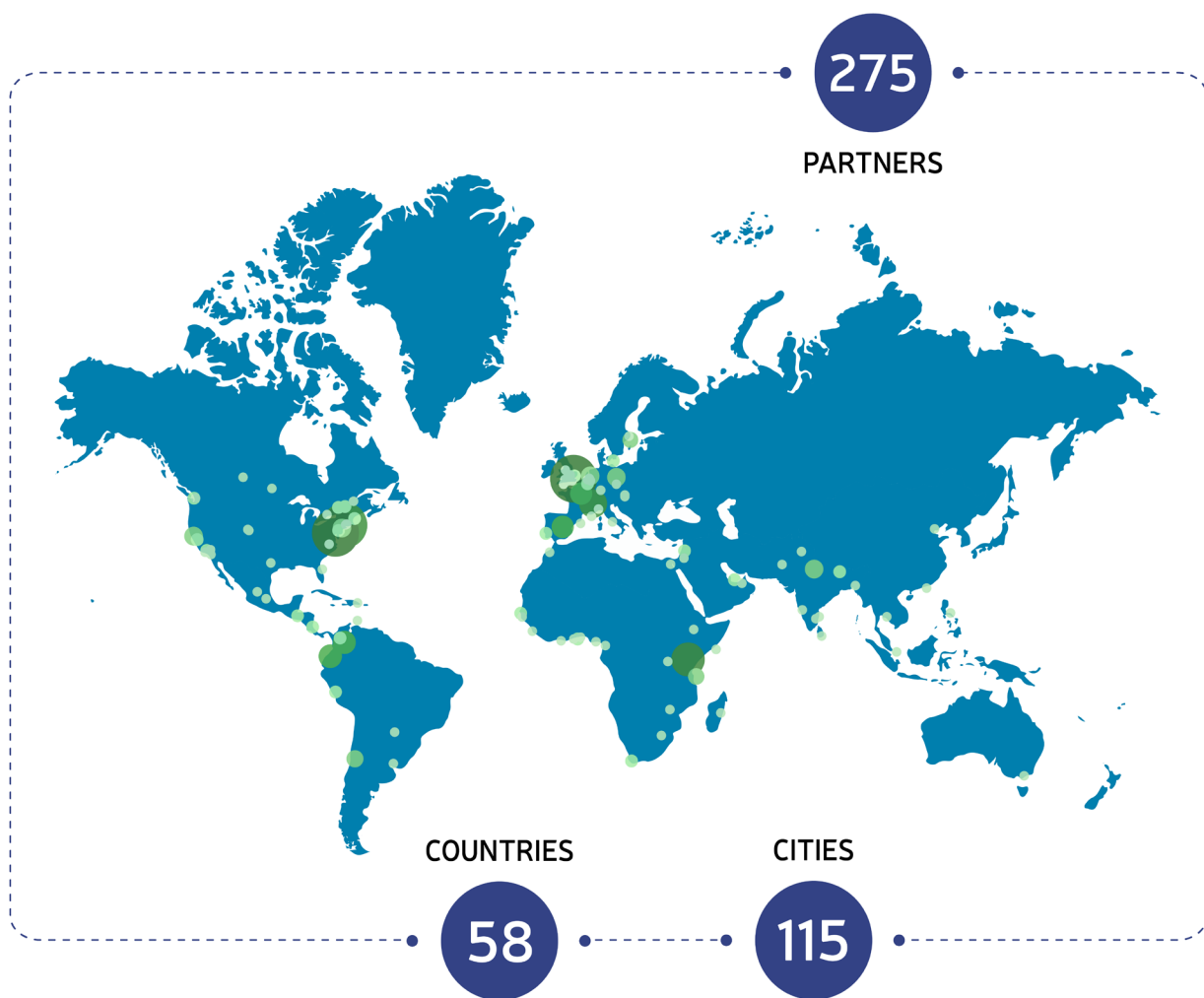


Figure 2: Map of registered partners' headquarters.

Stakeholder Type	Partner Survey	Registered
Government	43%	10%
NGO/CSO	28%	32%
Academia/Research	13%	21%
Multilateral	10%	9%
For-profit	6%	23%
Media	0%	1%
Donor/Foundation	0%	4%

Table 1: Registered partners and partner survey respondents by stakeholder type

Our partners find value in being a part of the network, with 84% of respondents satisfied with their engagement with the Global Partnership. Partners feel the network is responsive to their needs:

77% of respondents feel that their organization's voice is heard within the network.

There is a strong sense of belonging:

83% feel a sense of pride when thinking about their organization's membership in the network

Inevitably in 2020, modes of engagement were primarily digital (Figure 3). As a connector and catalyzer, our convenings were primarily in-person before 2020—from small group partnership meetings to larger peer exchanges and high-level advocacy events. Despite the substantial pivot and connectivity challenges, 78% of survey respondents reported moderate or strong engagement with the network in 2020, representing a 6% increase from 2019. The Global Partnership Secretariat has leveraged media and digital communications to advocate for data for development and share stories from our network. Our newsletter audience continues to grow, with subscribers increasing by a third across 2020. Throughout 2020, the Global Partnership has been cited and covered in 80 media articles. Similarly, our social media activities across Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Facebook yielded more than 50,000 audience engagements⁵.

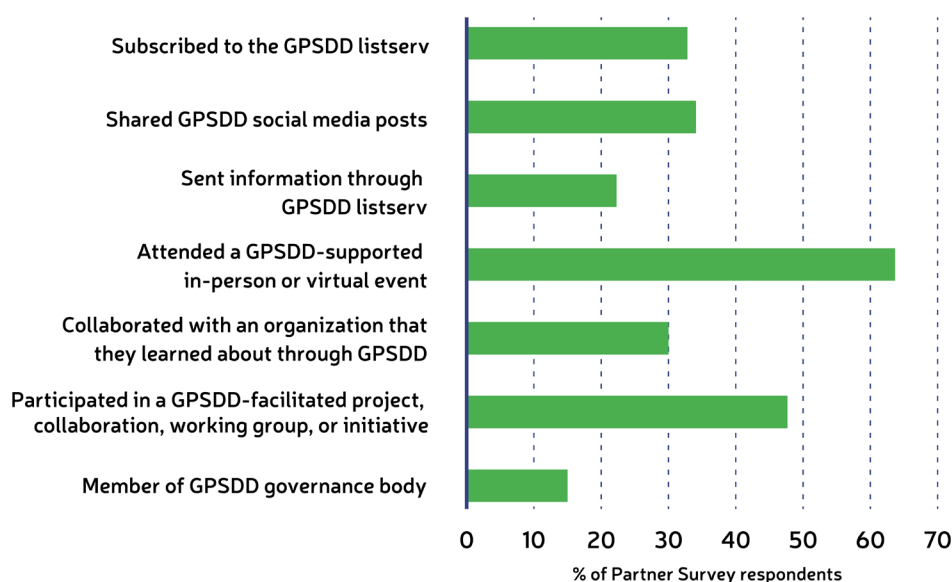


Figure 3: How partners engaged with the Global Partnership in 2020

Partners have a variety of priorities for their engagement with the Global Partnership and often multiple or layered purposes (Figure 4). Learning, knowledge sharing, and country-level engagement are the top priorities for more than half of partners. Policy dialogue, advocacy for prioritizing data, and network interaction are the top priorities for the rest of the partners. This highlights the diversity of partners within the network and the value they get from engaging with each other across priorities for collective benefit.

⁵ Audience engagements is a cumulative count of Twitter engagements (total interactions with a tweet, mentions, new followers), YouTube views, LinkedIn new followers, new Facebook followers and engaged users.

87% of respondents feel empowered to connect and collaborate with other organizations in the network.

“ [The Global Partnership] connected us to new partners and opened up new opportunities for participation, which in turn led to further new connections. ”

- CSO partner, 2021 Partner Survey

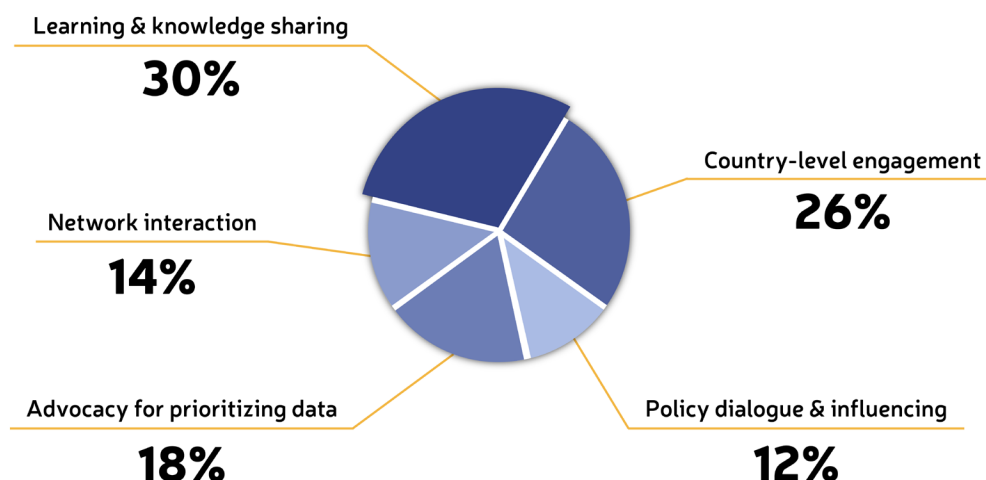


Figure 4: Why partners engage with the Global Partnership

What We Have Achieved Together

Through engaging with our network, partners have increased their knowledge and awareness around a range of data challenges. These include the impacts of COVID-19; opportunities for engagement; alternative data, tools, and methods; good practices and guidance materials; and peer experiences. They have also implemented multi-stakeholder collaborations, showcased and amplified outputs, improved technical skills and data production and analysis, developed organizational actions plans and agendas, and strengthened data sharing commitments across institutions.

Forty-five percent of respondents have achieved something they could not have done alone. Almost half of respondents have accessed or used timely data because of Global Partnership engagement.

“ We were able to apply the knowledge acquired to improve the rapid data collection to address the situation of the most disadvantaged persons with disabilities who were seriously affected by the pandemic. ”

~Government ministry partner, 2021 Partner Survey

Country Engagement and Support

Throughout 2020, we supported the access or use of **40 countries** in a variety of ways.

Responding to COVID-19

In April 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we launched the [Data for a Resilient Africa initiative](#) in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Through this initiative, we engaged with UN Resident Coordinators to scale outreach to 54 countries. Throughout 2020, we supported partnerships between governments, stakeholders in need of timely data and insights, and data and technology providers:



35

partnerships brokered



18

countries with partnerships brokered



26

partnerships delivering impact towards the SDGs

Examples of results include developing COVID-19 data hubs and dashboards in [Ghana](#) and [Nigeria](#), and the rapid collection of agriculture data to feed into a [digital national food balance sheet](#) that was built to address food security concerns in Kenya.

“ The Global Partnership helped us to connect with GRID3 and ESRI within the ArcGIS online data hub to support COVID-19 response. ”

- Government National Statistical Office (NSO) partner, 2021 Partner Survey

“ The networks and exchange that were activated were very useful to know how the National Statistical Offices around the world face the effects of the pandemic. ”

- Government NSO partner, 2021 Partner Survey

In addition to brokering data partnerships and convening peer exchanges, the Global Partnership facilitated technical trainings and workshops in five countries across 135 participants. These included sessions on using earth observation data for environmental indicators, water management tools and methods, poverty estimation, and urban data methodologies.

“ The training was a unique opportunity because it not only allows access to data and information, but also the technological infrastructure for the processing of this data. ”

- NSO representative in Global Partnership-facilitated training

Data for Now



The [Data for Now initiative](#) was launched in September 2019 by the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the World Bank Group, and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD).

The initiative presented progress made at the sidelines of the United Nations Statistics Commission in February 2021. A recording of the event can be found [here](#).

Activities to-date include the convening of multiple partners at the intersection of data, research, and governance for various capacity strengthening and technical support activities to meet the objectives identified by country partners:



Establishing a country governance framework for improving land use and general statistics using high-resolution satellite imagery in Rwanda.



Developing a report on an inventory of data and tools in the cadastral sector in Senegal that will contribute towards the strengthening of the cadastral ecosystem through digitizing the urban and rural cadastre, ensuring more effective land control, and improving access to land ownership.



Measuring multidimensional poverty in Colombia's Pacific region. Colombia's National Administrative Department of Statistics applied methodologies learned through Data for Now capacity development workshops on the collection of multidimensional poverty indicators, through earth observations and alternative data sources.

“ [The Global Partnership] has strengthened our national collaboration with organizations responsible for the collection of data and producers of statistics. ”

- Government ministry partner, 2021 Partner Survey

The core partners of Data for Now are now working on a strategy for the next phase of the initiative, with the aim of scaling to work with more countries and partners.

Policy and Advocacy Agenda

Throughout 2020, we have raised the profile of inclusive and disaggregated data, data interoperability, administrative data, privately-held data, and citizen-generated data through dialogues, knowledge generation, and technical guidance.

Inclusive Data Charter

The [Inclusive Data Charter](#) (IDC) supports governments, CSOs, and multilaterals (Graph 3) to strengthen inclusive and equitable data systems across a range of topics, including intersectionality, disability, migratory status, and education. The IDC now has 23 champions of different sectors with wide-ranging focus areas, as outlined in Figures 5 and 6. Five new champions joined in 2020, including the Institute for Global Homelessness, the Government of Peru, Equal Rights Trust, UN Women, and Cabo Verde.

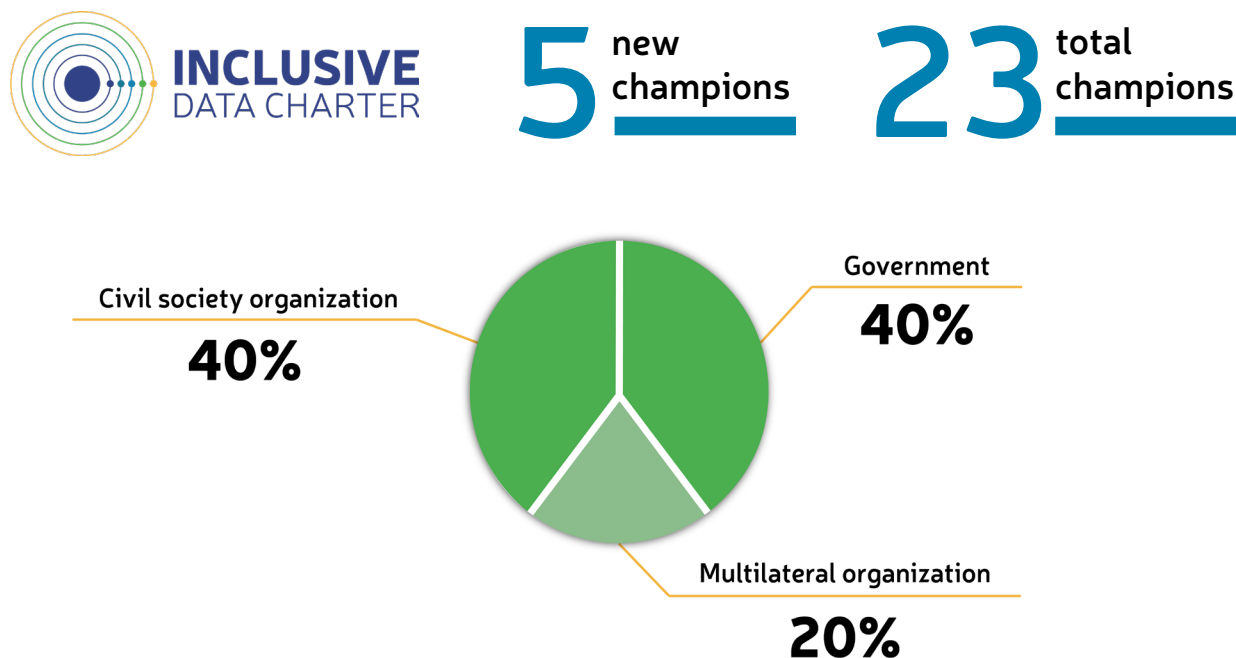


Figure 5: IDC champions by stakeholder type

The [IDC Two-Year Report](#) highlights how champions have been supported to prioritize inclusive data, share knowledge, and foster dialogue. In particular it notes champions' progress on their action plans and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

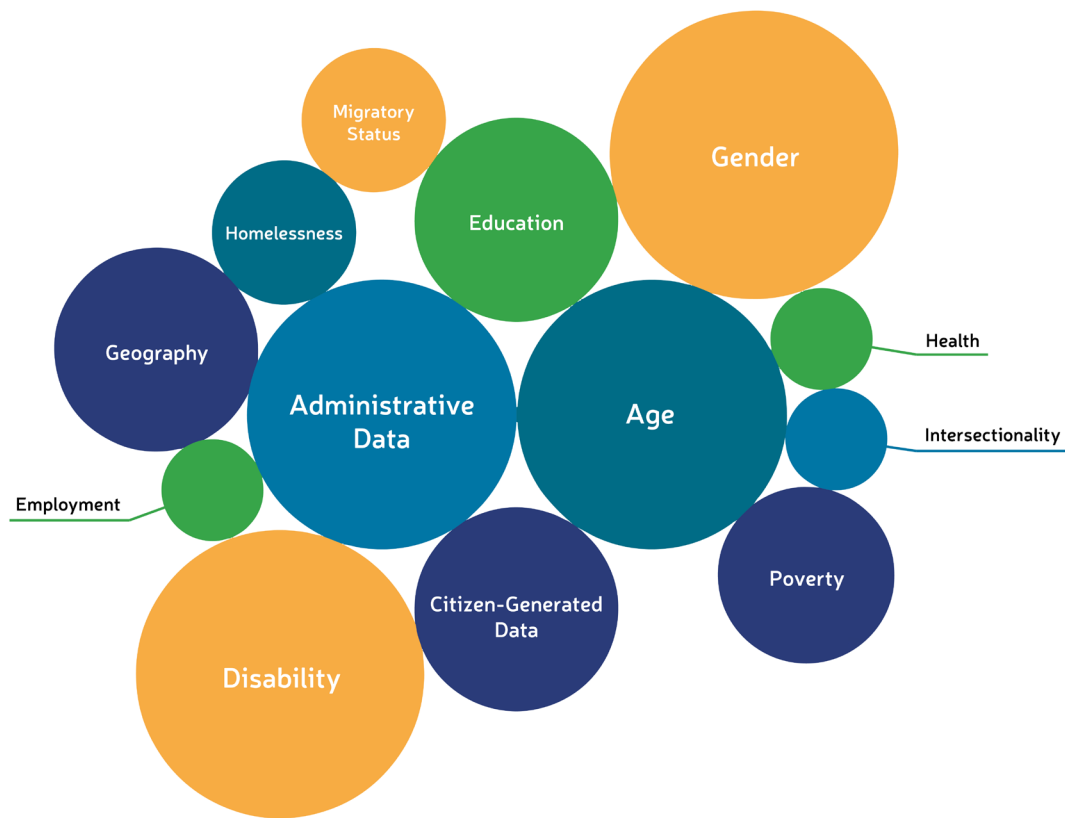


Figure 6: IDC champions' inclusive data focus areas

SDG Data Interoperability Collaborative

The SDG Data Interoperability Collaborative came to a close in 2020. It was established in 2017 between the Global Partnership and UNSD, with the aim of creating a new channel for collaboration between official statistics and new data communities to foster a common understanding of data interoperability.

The Collaborative produced a range of knowledge products:

- [Interoperability: A practitioner's guide to joining up data in the development sector](#)
- [Introduction to the Interoperability Guide](#)
- [The Joined-Up Data Maturity Assessment](#)
- [Connecting Data Communities: Introducing the Joined-Up Maturity Assessment](#)

These products have also been applied at national and program levels. Examples of this include developing the Kenya Health Information Systems Interoperability Framework.

Through institutionalization at the global level, the UN Statistical Commission's Working Group on Open Data will take the Guide and Maturity Assessment tools forward into the next session of the UN Statistical Commission in 2022. The tools will be further incorporated into other work streams across the Global Partnership.

Administrative Data Collaborative

The [Administrative Data Collaborative](#) was established in 2020 and is jointly convened by the Global Partnership and UNSD. The Collaborative brings together over 20 NSOs, and 20 regional bodies, international agencies, and NGOs to share resources, tools, best practices, and experiences.

It aims to strengthen the capacity of countries to use administrative data sources for statistical purposes by creating a platform to share resources, tools, best practices, and experiences. The Collaborative includes technical experts across the globe and draws on the expertise of UN regional and specialized agencies and other organizations and initiatives and has developed an inventory of resources.

“ The joint participation in the Collaborative Working Group has allowed us to make our experience known and also to know the way in which other countries have advanced in the use of administrative records for statistical production. ”
- Government ministry partner, 2021 Partner Survey

Privately-held Data

Adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic, we brought together 32 individuals from 23 organizations including data users, data holders, intermediaries, researchers, advocates, and donors from cross 10 countries to discuss access and use of privately-held data for public good. Through a four-part virtual series, participants shared learnings from current response efforts and identified lessons that might help address the commonly known barriers to public-private data sharing, and pave the way for more scalable, sustainable and responsible private data use in the future. This [report](#) captures the context, approach, themes, key lessons, and recommendations that came out of the series.

Citizen-generated Data

In 2020 we began developing guidelines for civil society organizations in Kenya on producing quality citizen-generated data (CGD), aligning to the quality guidelines of official statistics. As part of this we supported and influenced the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics to develop a quality criteria for citizen generated data in their upcoming Kenya Quality Assurance Framework.

“ The Global Partnership has helped amplify the [importance of] citizen generated data agenda. Confidence in any data takes a long time to build, but particularly for data innovations, and the Global Partnership has played a valuable role in advancing this. ”
- CSO partner, 2021 Partner Survey

Learning and Knowledge Sharing

Two thirds of Partner Survey respondents have used publications, webinars, or technical assistance produced or shared by the Global Partnership. Figure 7 shows the mechanisms that have been most useful for our partners.



Figure 7: Most useful knowledge-sharing mechanisms

Events

Across 2020, we organized 62 events, with more than 3,000 participants. more than 90% of these events were virtual. This included peer exchange sessions, webinars, workshops, and side events covering topics from COVID-19 response efforts, administrative data, CGD, privately-held data, the Data for Now initiative, and the IDC.

62 events **3,000** participants

“ [The Global Partnership has] served as a basis for exchanges with allies at the regional level and communicating good practices, lags, information gaps, identifying opportunities for improvement. And, ultimately, to be better prepared when developing a workshop or exchange. ”

- CSO partner, 2021 Partner Survey

We convened 16 peer exchanges with an average of 20 participants. These exchanges focused on data-led responses to COVID-19, including: household surveys in Africa; population-based statistical registers, water information systems, and administrative data for education systems in Latin America; unlocking privately-held data for public good globally; and disability and inclusive data.

In September 2020, we celebrated our fifth anniversary by hosting a virtual [town hall](#) bringing together 186 participants from 44 countries. In addition, we launched our [Five-Year Report](#) highlighting our collective achievements from 2015 to 2020. [A suite of data visualizations](#) were created to illustrate the breadth of our network, the range of collaborations, and the reach of our convenings.



Figure 4: Word cloud collected at the Five-Year Anniversary town hall answering “How would you describe the Global Partnership in one word?”

Knowledge Products

In 2020, we produced or facilitated the production of

75 knowledge products.

These are available on our website and include guidance materials and examples showcasing successes in the form of blogs, reports, use cases, and webinar recordings in multiple languages.

COVID-19 Data Resources Hub

At the beginning of the year, we launched the [COVID-19 Data Resources hub](#), which has since garnered over 10,000 unique visits. The hub brings together wide-ranging knowledge on COVID-19 to inform collective action focusing on data, visualization and maps, calls to action, research and analysis, and tools.

“ I have learnt about so many new interesting programs and innovations around data that I would not have come to know of without the platform. The documentation on data sharing agreements was used by my team as a reference to support the Ministry [...] structure some of their own policy and templates on this. ”

- For-profit partner, 2021 Partner Survey

World Bank World Development Report 2021

Drawing on our broad network and range of experts, in collaboration with the World Bank we hosted two consultation sessions on the [World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives](#) with over 140 participants.

New Knowledge-Sharing Mechanism: Expert Clinics

In early 2021, we piloted a series of three expert clinics. These clinics were designed to explore a specific topic in detail and benefit from the guidance of an expert on how to apply learnings to one's unique context. The sessions focused on mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on civil registration and vital statistics systems in Africa. In total, these clinics brought together 117 participants who highlighted that the sessions were beneficial in designing and rolling out similar projects.

“ The issue of interoperability remains a challenge for our system. The lesson learned from Namibia on the advantages of a single system is a good starting point for advocacy. ”

- NSO representative in GPSDD-facilitated expert dialogue session

Data Innovation Fund

The [Data Innovation Fund](#), which was established in 2016 in partnership with the World Bank closed after the third round. Over the three rounds, the fund received 900 proposals and supported 38 projects with funding ranging between \$25,000 to \$250,000. Projects improved pastoral early warning systems, mapped refugee populations, and helped smallholder farmers respond to climate change.

Looking Ahead

To help us learn from our collective experiences and continue to evolve to be as effective as possible in supporting partners to make an impact in the world, in late 2018 we commissioned an independent evaluation of our work. Throughout 2020, the evaluation, carried out by Itad has gathered information from across our range of partners. We will publish and share the report in mid-2021 and use the recommendations to improve our engagement and impact.

Throughout 2020 we have had the opportunity to reflect on the value of scaling our engagements across our country-focused work, policy and advocacy agenda, and learning and knowledge-sharing activities. Initial findings from our independent evaluation and Partner Survey responses highlight the demand for scale across partners.

Over the next year, we will focus on expanding our country engagement through capacity building partnerships, elevating our advocacy agenda through [The Data Values Project](#), and growing and improving the design of our learning and knowledge-sharing activities.



A woman selling maize to a customer at Wangige Market in Kiambu, Kenya, credit: Elphas Ngugi

