



AFRICA SNAPSHOT:

Stakeholder engagement around the SDGs during the COVID-19 pandemic

This paper presents some key findings from a **survey** addressing the current and future impacts of COVID-19 on stakeholder engagement and partnerships for implementation, follow up and review of the SDGs. The main report - which assesses data at a global level - is available [here](#) and an Executive Summary highlighting key themes and findings can be found [here](#).

This additional data summary presents a snapshot of **perceptions from approximately 100 African stakeholders**¹ who responded to the survey, providing insights from across the region on four key findings in the report.² The largest single group of African respondents to the survey were from civil society organisations and NGOs but a wide range of stakeholders, including the private sector, academia, national, regional and local governments also responded.

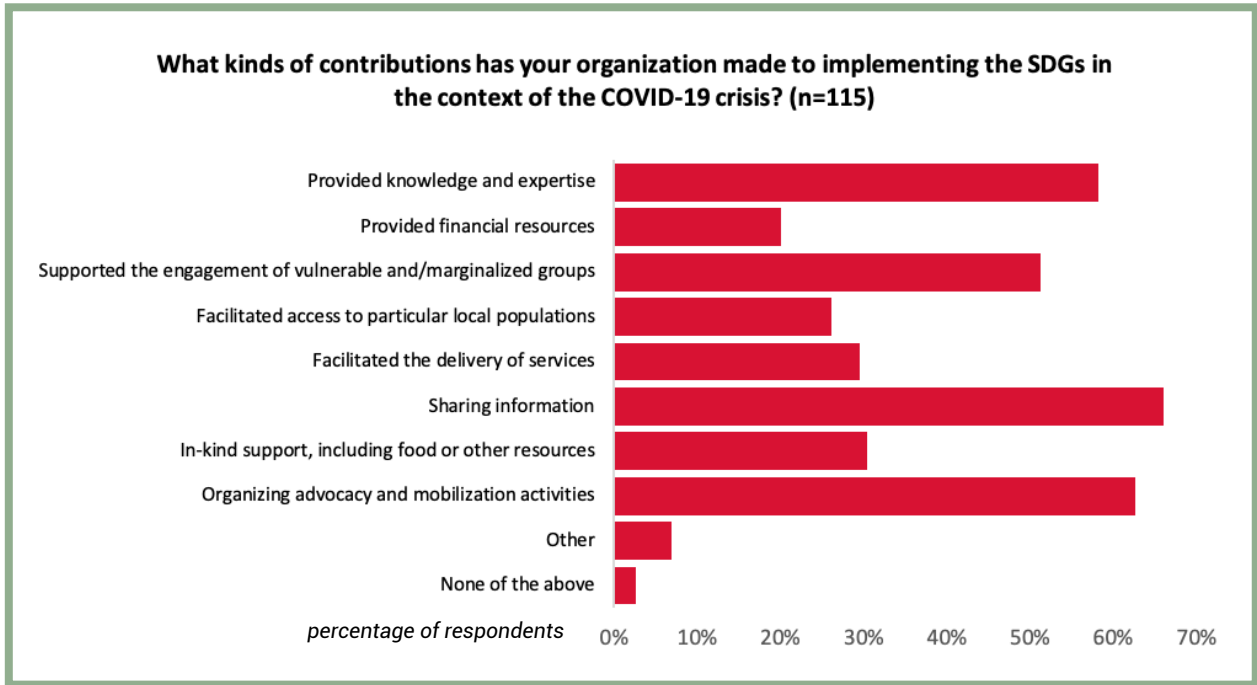
The survey was commissioned by UN DESA and supported through a grant from the European Commission. This regional summary for Africa has been developed in partnership between UN DESA and a research team from Newcastle University in the UK, with financial support from the University.³

Key Messages

(1) Stakeholders are making important and diverse contributions, and creating new partnerships, to advance the SDGs in Africa in the context of the pandemic.

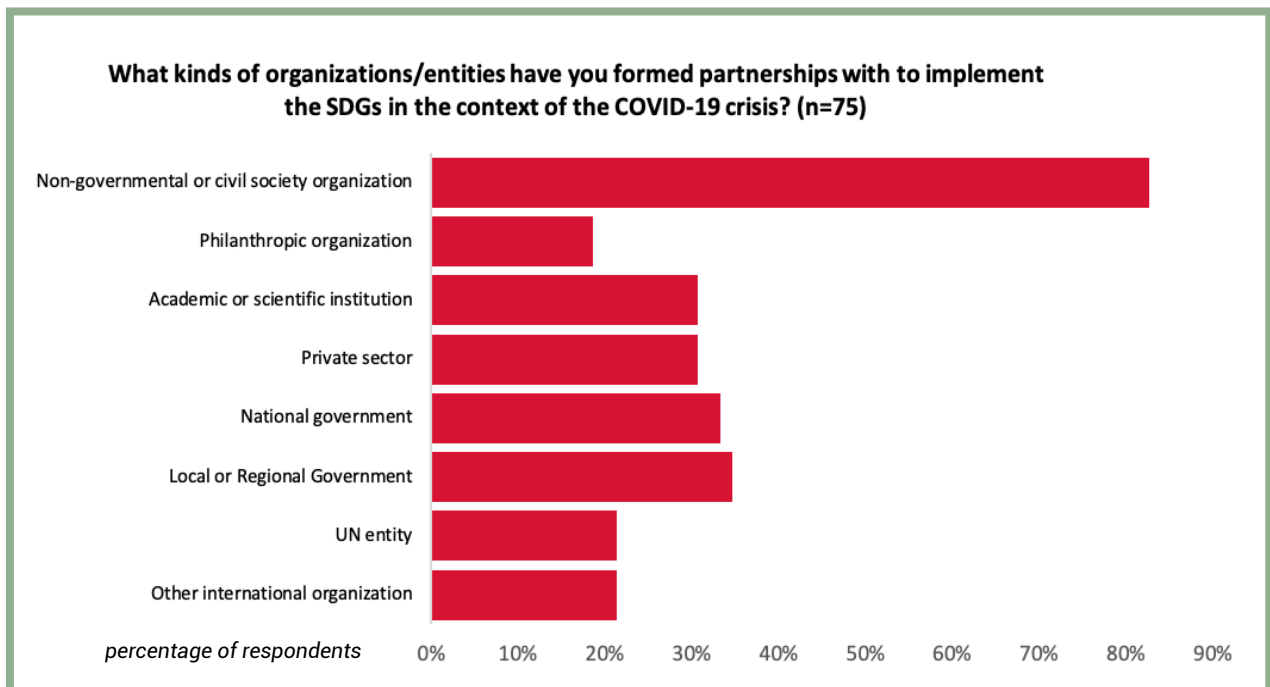
As Figure 1 below shows, the most common contributions of stakeholder respondents were in sharing information (**66% of 115 respondents**), organising advocacy and mobilisation activities (**63%**), and contributing knowledge and expertise (**58%**). Stakeholders also perceive a key role as supporting the engagement of vulnerable and marginalised groups (**by 51% of respondents**).

Figure 1



Stakeholders were also asked who they have **partnered with in implementation of the SDGs during the pandemic**. The results are presented in Figure 2 below. As with the global-level results on the same question, it is clear that NGOs and CSOs are key to the partnership landscape (**identified by 82% of 75 respondents**), with local and regional governments also a significant partner (**35% of respondents**). All sectors are to some extent involved in these partnerships: each is identified as a partner by at least **19%** of respondents.

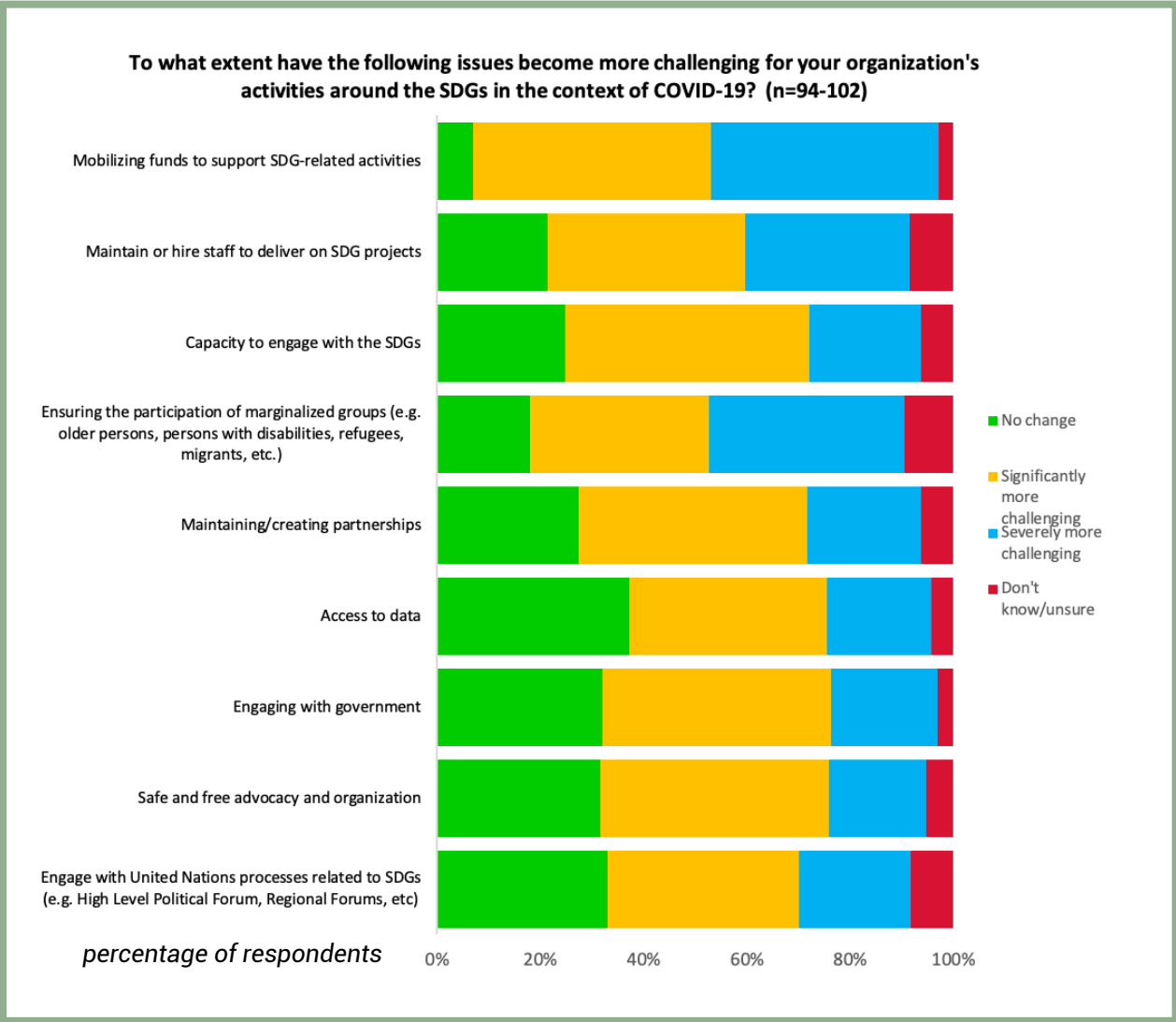
Figure 2



(2) COVID-19 has posed severe challenges for stakeholder organisations in Africa.

The most severe challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic has been to funding, according to stakeholder respondents – with **45%** of 102 respondents perceiving this as becoming ‘severely more challenging’. But all the challenges are regarded as significant and severe – including the effect on the engagement of marginalised and vulnerable groups (72% ‘severe’ or ‘significant’), and stakeholder engagement with government (65%). 52% of stakeholder respondents regard the COVID-19 pandemic as posing a significant challenge to safe space for advocacy and organisation. As with the results at the global level, these challenges threaten to undermine the capacity of stakeholder to make the important contributions identified above.

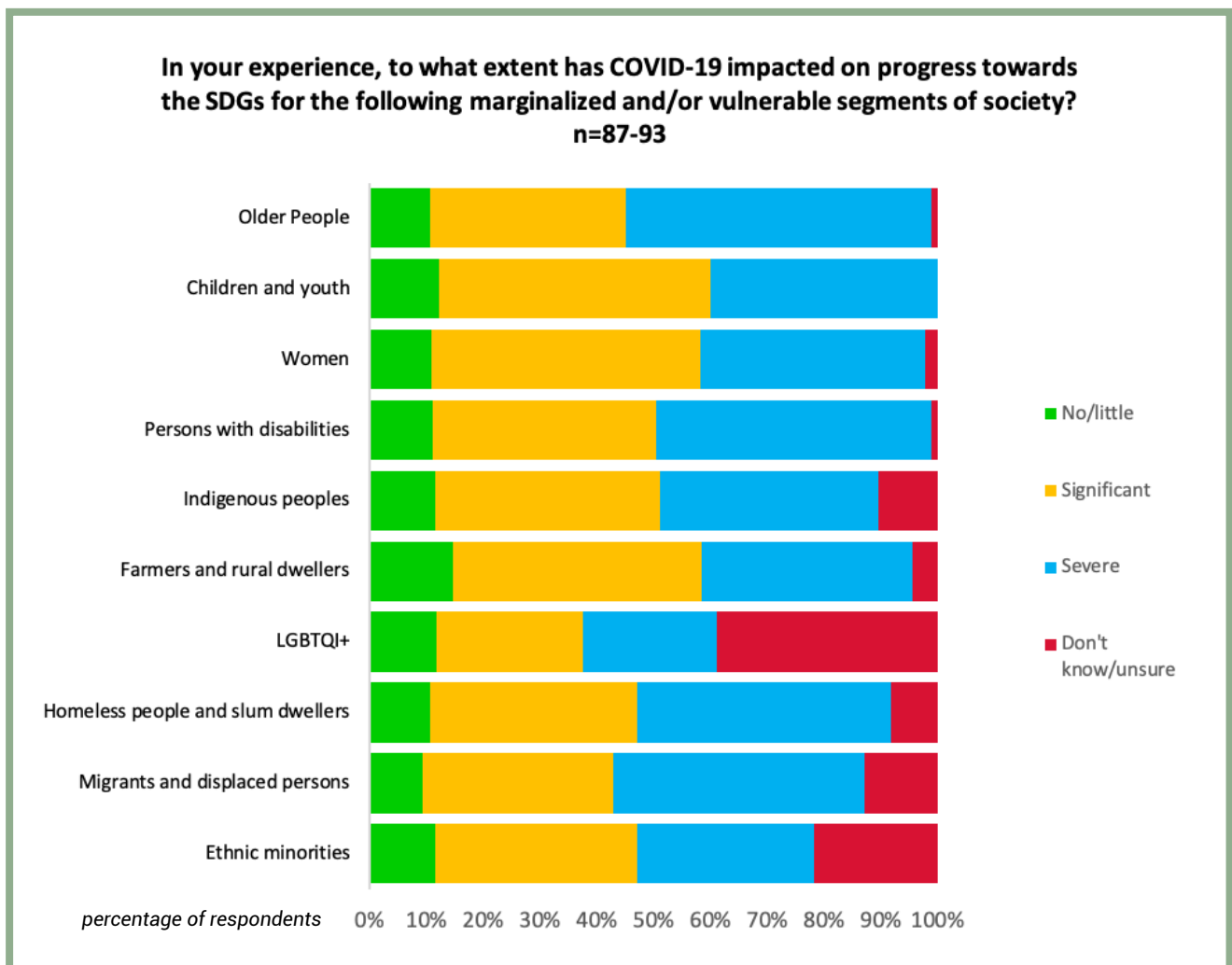
Figure 3



(3) COVID-19 threatens progress on SDGs for vulnerable and marginalised groups across Africa.

Respondents were asked about the effects of COVID-19 on progress towards the SDGs for vulnerable and marginalised groups. Older people (54% of 93 respondents) and persons with disabilities (48%) were most widely perceived as 'severely affected'. However, respondents identified 'significant' and 'severe' impacts across all vulnerable and marginalised groups (see figure 4 below), including women (86% 'severe' and 'significant' combined), children and youth (also 86%), the homeless and slum dwellers (81%), and migrants and displaced persons (78%).

Figure 4

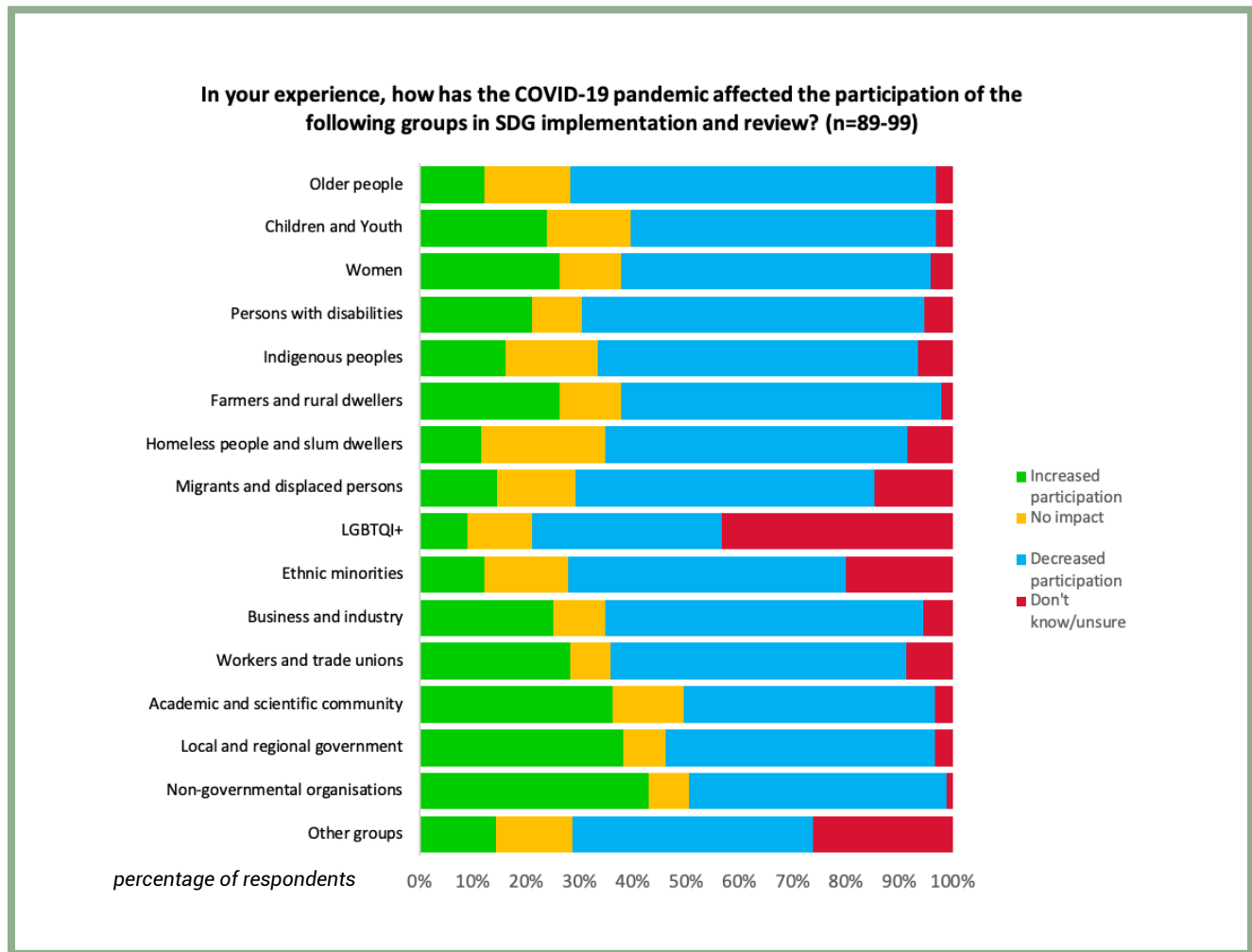


(4) Vulnerable and marginalised groups across Africa risk being 'left behind' by efforts at engagement in the context of COVID-19.

Respondents see COVID-19 as decreasing the engagement of virtually all groups in SDG review and implementation, as shown in figure 5 below. In response to COVID-19, many governments globally have moved to remote and digital forms of engagement and participation. As with the global survey, these changes were perceived by some African stakeholders as increasing the engagement of certain kinds of organisations – reflected in some positive assessments for local and regional governments (**38% of 93 respondents perceived 'increasing' participation**), NGOs (**43% 'positive'**), and the scientific community (**36%**).

However, despite such changes – or perhaps because of those changes to online and distanced engagement – disadvantaged groups' engagement is perceived as 'decreasing' generally – as shown by the much larger blue bars for "decreasing participation" across Figure 5. This is especially so for older people (**68%**) and persons with disabilities (**64%**). The equally negative perceptions of effects on the engagement of business and industry (**60% 'decreasing'**), and workers and trade unions (**55%**) are also of note.

Figure 5



That some groups are perceived as 'left behind' in both progress and participation reinforces the need for meaningful and inclusive approaches to stakeholder engagement. However, African countries' efforts at the most meaningful and inclusive kinds of engagement are perceived as most under threat from the effects of the pandemic – reflecting a similar pattern at global level. The answers to other questions asked in the survey (addressing 18 practices of engagement around implementation and review) provide evidence for this.

In general, stakeholders see the greatest current and potential impacts of COVID-19 as falling on efforts at inclusivity – for example, making resources available to overcome barriers to participation in review (**84% of 90 respondents perceiving 'severe' or 'significant' impacts here**); including 'left behind groups' in review processes (**81% of respondents**) - and on especially meaningful engagement, such as the inclusion of stakeholders in policymaking processes (**82% of respondents**).

Footnotes

¹ Responses were received from stakeholders in: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

² Numbers of respondents vary between questions and choices, as noted below.

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