

SIDE EVENTS SUMMARIES

TWO PAGES MAXIMUM

Summary of Side Event:

Shift the Power for Post-COVID SDG Progress

31 January 2023, 8:15-9:30am

Background on the event (one paragraph)

Our event explored how local ecosystems of development actors 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 was 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. The recording is available at <https://mclld.org/2023/01/31/ecosoc-shift-the-power-for-post-covid-sdg-progress/>

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- Supply lines were disrupted and that generated distrust.
- Large organisations with multiple sign-ups were unable to transfer resources to the communities
- Covid required each actor (civil society, local government, humanitarian responders) to grant more autonomous decision making power to communities.
- Covid required actors to integrate digital technology into processes in order to communicate and coordinate activities.
- Covid provided an opportunity to reduce the amount of data demanded by donors, much of which was not really necessary for continuous improvement in any case.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- Trust community members. They are best at identifying the most vulnerable households.
- Governments should build much simpler mechanisms for resource transfers.
- Put local communities in the driver's seat of all activities from the beginning – what do they need from their own perspective in terms of resources, skills and data?
- Ensure local government budgets are flexible and can adjust to changing needs of communities – “peer participatory budgeting”
- Be sure that communities have trained volunteers in place who work in alignment with local governments, community health volunteers.
- Use existing and popular social media (WhatsApp).