Going local to leave no one behind: The role of sub-national data

22 March 2023 • Halle 7, Basel and Online

Setting the scene

Time to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is running out. As we pass the halfway mark, significant action and quality data are needed to ensure that we "leave no one behind". While progress is being made in some places, multiple crises are derailing hard-won gains in education, food security, gender equality and poverty reduction, especially in fragile contexts. Emerging conflicts are creating additional humanitarian needs and, in the case of the Russian-led war against Ukraine, posing a threat to global food security. At the same time, climate change continues to be a strong risk multiplier, increasing the frequency of natural disasters and heightening food and livelihood insecurity for hundreds of millions of people.

We need to radically rethink the way we approach these challenges. New technologies, a broader range of actors working in the data space and increasingly innovative data collection methodologies are helping us reach a new level of localisation in terms of the data that can drive our decision-making. For example, by combining GPS data with public health records and analyses of traffic patterns, we can gain insights into village level reactions to pandemics like COVID-19. Through mobile phone applications, we can help smallholder farmers to access accurate predictive information on soil, crop and climate data, and connect them to buyers. The potential impact of these data on the welfare of communities are even more significant during humanitarian and other crises where timeliness is of the essence to ensuring lifesaving support to affected and vulnerable communities.

Yet while many countries are making strides in local data, others are falling behind. Issues of data governance and privacy concerns lead to mistrust when it comes to data access. Coordination problems prevent local data from efficiently being incorporated into larger models. On issues like climate change, this prevents us from fully understanding the implications of aggregate local effects.

Moreover, data and statistics face a significant and growing funding shortfall. According to PARIS21's estimates, funding for data and statistics fell by 18% in 2020, the largest drop since the start of the SDG era in 2015. Both domestic and international funding commitments are far below the level that they need to be to achieve the SDGs, and growing data needs have failed to translate into larger budgets.

Yet new mechanisms like the Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data and the Global Data Facility represent a renewed momentum on mobilising funding for data and statistics. In particular, the Clearinghouse offers unprecedented opportunity to make financing for development data more efficient by ensuring that financial flows are aligned with the priorities of aid recipients.

In the context of local data, both scaling up and smarter financing are key. Investing in local data systems will help countries develop policies and programmes that support the needs of diverse populations. Moreover, it will help during times of crisis by ensuring that measures are effective and appropriate.

Objective of the meeting

Building on PARIS21's commitment to harnessing the transformative potential of data, the 2023 PARIS21 Spring Meetings seek to unpack these issues, to understand how and where sub-national and local data are bringing transformative change and to identify financing solutions to issues of data localisation. In partnership with the Swiss Federal Statistical Office's 'Unlocking the Power of Data' initiative and the Canton of Basel-Stadt, the conference will feature a series of in-person events that bring together policy makers, national and local statistical offices, private sector representatives, foundations, international organisations, civil society, and academia.

The event will culminate in a call to action to leverage the potential of local data to address global challenges.

Agenda (all times in CET)

Session 1, 9:30-11:00

THE MANY GUISES OF SUB-NATIONAL AND LOCAL DATA: HOW TO IDENTIFY, SOURCE AND USE IT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

What does local data entail? What is the nature of different categories of local data (local, hyper-local, small, big, citizen-generated, etc)? How do these sets of data – with their inherent differences in nature, methodology and collection – overlap or complement each other?

How can local data be leveraged to tackle complex policy challenges and advance the SDGs, in particular to reach the most fragile and marginalised populations and ensure that we "leave no one behind"?

By interrogating the boundaries and purposes of local data, the first session paves the road for a more in-depth discussion on the use of local data for development.

TIME	ITEM	INVITED SPEAKERS
9:30-9:40	Welcoming remarks and presentation of the conference	Nicole Ruder, Assistant Director General, Ambassador, Head of Multilateral Affairs and NGO Division, Swiss Development Cooperation Agency Johannes Jütting, Executive Head, PARIS21
9:40-9:50	Setting the scene "Tackling the complex challenges of today through local data – what role can national and local statistical offices play?"	Georges-Simon Ulrich, Director General, Swiss Federal Statistical Office
9:50-10:00	Keynote address	Ann Aerts, M.D., Head of the Novartis Foundation

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Time	Item	Invited speakers
10:00-10:45	Panel discussion "In search of coherence: Building bridges and bridging gaps between local data sources" ▪ What does the term "local data" encompass, and who are the producers and users of local data? ▪ Why does local data matter to policy making in cities and urban areas? ▪ What are the main methodological, technical, and ethical challenges to bridging the production and use of local data in all its forms?	Yusuf Murangwa, Director General, National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda Adrian Lovett, CEO, Development Initiatives Claudia Baranzelli, Policy Analyst, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities Economic Analysis, OECD Elena Proden, Specialist, Strategic Implementation of the 2030 Agenda Unit, UNITAR's Division for Satellite Analysis and Applied Research Moderator: Petra Keller Gueguen, Head, Staff Division, Swiss Federal Statistical Office
10:45-11:00	Audience Q&A	

Coffee & Networking Break – 11:00-11:30

Session 2, 11:30-12:40

SUB-NATIONAL DATA TO THE RESCUE: THE ROLE OF LOCAL DATA IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSES
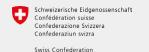
How does local data shape humanitarian responses? What are the direct benefits of local data on communities? How are local data gaps affecting the effectiveness of humanitarian responses on the ground?

By taking a closer look at concrete challenges encountered in humanitarian policy making, and examples of where on-the-ground local data has been effectively leveraged, the second session will provide a deeper understanding of the nature of local data in the face of complex policy challenges.

TIME	ITEM	INVITED SPEAKERS
11:30-11:40	Keynote address	Sarah Telford, Chief of Data Services at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Lead for the OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data

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11:40-12:25	Panel discussion "Leveraging local data for humanitarian crisis response: Balancing open data sharing with the imperative to protect vulnerable populations" - Who is using local data to face local humanitarian challenges and how? How is this evolving amidst a data revolution and how are new actors getting involved? What data gaps persist at the local level to efficiently tackle humanitarian issues and leave no one behind, and how can the international community help close these gaps? - How can we empower affected communities with data? - What are the key ethical issues surrounding more open, widespread sharing of humanitarian data, and how can the imperative of protection of personal data be balanced with the necessity of better caring for vulnerable populations during a humanitarian crisis?	Nadja Braun Binder, Professor, University of Basel Björn Gillsäter, Head, UNHCR-World Bank Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement Lizzie Chikoti, Chief Statistician, National Statistical Office of Malawi Jean-Luc Bernasconi, Member of the Board of Directors, Head of the Foundations and Quality Division, Swiss Development Cooperation Agency Moderator: François Fonteneau, Deputy Head, PARIS21
12:25-12:40	Audience Q&A	

Lunch break, 12:40-14:00

Session 3, 14:00-15:30

LOCAL DATA FOR GLOBAL CHANGE: THE CASE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The third session will examine the application of local data in the field of climate change. It will explore questions such as:

How can local data be used in the day-to-day fight against climate change? What are the data and what are tools can be used by local communities to adapt to the climate crisis? What are the gaps and challenges still to be overcome to reach the necessary local data?

TIME	ITEM	INVITED SPEAKERS
14:00-14:10	Keynote address	Beat Jans, President of the Government of the Canton of Basel-Stadt, Switzerland

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14:10-14:20	Presentation	Mike Taylor, Secretariat Director, International Land Coalition
14:20-15:05	Panel discussion "Local data at the frontlines of the climate crisis" - What is the latest local data telling us about the state of the frontlines of climate change? - How is local data informing climate change policies and programmes of countries at the forefront of the climate crisis? - What are the challenges in accessing and using local data for decision makers? In particular: how can local data produced and/or curated by the private sector be leveraged for the shaping of climate action? - How can we spur cross-fertilisation between the global north and global south in the use of local data for better climate action? And between public sector, private sector and civil society?	Anna Williams, Google Solutions Lead, Google Environmental Insights Explorer Clea Kaske-Kuck, Director for Policy, Advocacy and Member Mobilization, World Business Council for Sustainable Development Darlene Haylock, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate of Belize Yusuf Murangwa, Director General, National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda Moderator: Élisa Narminio, Policy Analyst, PARIS21
15:05-15:15	Presentation "Towards more coordinated climate action at the local level: introducing the Climate Change Data Ecosystem (CCDE)"	Johannes Jütting, Executive Head, PARIS21
15:15-15:30	Audience Q&A	

Coffee & Networking Break – 15:30-16:00

Session 4, 16:00-17:30

SMARTER FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT DATA: NEW HORIZONS FOR DATA PARTNERSHIPS

Recognising that public entities and private actors are producers, users and funders of local data, the final panel session will reflect on the engagement of the various actors involved in local data ecosystems. Departing from private monetisation models of data, the session will be devolved to reflecting on partnerships for data as a public good.

At a strategic level, the session will probe into challenges surrounding methodology, systems, trust, and privacy. At an operational level, it will discuss concrete opportunities for public-private financing of development data.

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16:00-16:05	Introductory remarks	Håvard Nygård, Deputy Director General, Director of Knowledge, Norad
16:05-16:15	Keynote address	Juan M, Lavista Ferres, VP, Chief Data Scientist and Director of the AI For Good Lab, Microsoft
16:15-17:00	Panel discussion "Putting local data at the heart of the SDGs – how can new partnerships, including with the private sector, accelerate progress?" - How can countries spur domestic resource mobilisation at all levels? - What role can the private sector play in financing local data? - How can we strengthen trust in data amidst a widening playing field? - How can we better coordinate our efforts and strengthen data governance?	Malehloa Celina Molato, Director General, Bureau of Statistics of Lesotho Emmanuel Letouzé, Director and Co-Founder, Data-Pop Alliance Laura McGorman, Director, Data for Good, Meta Moderator: Sasha Ramirez-Hughes, Communications & Partnerships Manager, PARIS21
17:00-17:20	Audience Q&A	
17:20-17:30	Closing remarks	Georges-Simon Ulrich, Director General, Swiss Federal Statistical Office and Johannes Jütting, Executive Head, PARIS21

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