

# Sustainable Development Goals partnerships may perpetuate inequalities between countries

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Partnerships between organizations that support the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) may

perpetuate inequalities in resources between high and low-income countries according to new research. The findings are published in *Scientific Reports*.

The SDGs promote social and economic development and environmental sustainability. Partnerships involving public and private sector organizations between and within countries can support SDG implementation by facilitating expertise and resource sharing. Prior to this study, it was unclear which countries are involved in these partnerships and which goals they support.

Malgorzata Blicharska and colleagues analyzed data on 2,876 partnerships, involving organizations from 195 countries, registered on the UN's SDG Partnerships Platform—a global database of partnerships and the SDGs they support—in July 2019. The researchers found that 60% of the countries involved in SDG partnerships were high or upper-[middle-income countries](#), while 24% were lower-middle-[income countries](#) and 16% were low-income countries. On average, each low-income country was involved in 18 partnerships, while each high income country was involved in 34 partnerships and each upper-middle and lower-middle income country was involved in 30 partnerships. Of partnerships involving organizations from more than one country, 55% were between organizations from low or middle-income countries, 10% involved only organizations from [high-income countries](#), and 35% were between organizations from high and low or middle-income countries.

The researchers also found that the focus of partnerships was associated with the income of the countries involved. The percentage of partnerships focusing on SDGs aiming to reduce poverty and hunger and improve health, wellbeing, and gender equality decreased as the income of the countries involved increased. As a result, lower-income countries may not benefit from the resources and expertise of higher-income countries when implementing these goals.

The authors suggest that the unequal distribution of SDG partnerships globally may perpetuate existing inequalities in resources between higher and lower-income countries and that inequalities in [partnership](#) establishment and implementation need to be addressed for the SDGs to be achieved. They recommend that funders should support organizations in low-income [countries](#) and encourage partnerships between organizations in high and [low-income countries](#) in order to promote sustainable development worldwide.

**More information:** Malgorzata Blicharska, SDG partnerships may perpetuate the global North–South divide, *Scientific Reports* (2021). DOI: [10.1038/s41598-021-01534-6](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-01534-6). [www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-01534-6](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-01534-6)

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