

Global Partnerships for Sustainable Development in the Post-COVID-19 Era with Emphasis on the Transformations and Challenges of SDG 17

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Abstract: The article explains the roles and evolution of the international alliances to sustainable development, namely post-COVID-19 world. The SDG 17, that defines the role of partnerships to attainment of the goals, is crucial to the general achievement of the SDG framework. The pandemic, however, has changed the paradigm of international collaboration, which brings new opportunities and creates serious challenges. The study examines how international partnerships have changed under the influence of the crisis, and such specific areas as healthcare, climate action, social protection, and economic recovery are considered. It uses qualitative methodology, including policy analysis, case studies, and worldwide reports, which are systems thinking and network governance frameworks to assess how partnerships have altered due to the effects of the pandemic. The findings point out that the pandemic increased the problems of such nature as the lack of financing, geopolitical tensions, and issues of trust in institutions, but it also spurred innovation, especially in digital partnership and climate financing. In addition to this, South-South collaboration and involvement of the private sector have become more mainstream, which has redefined the nature of international cooperation. Conclusively, the paper holds that the world needs to have a resilient, inclusive, and adaptive global partnership in order to achieve the long-term objectives of the 2030 Agenda. Through the opportunities of new trends such as digital transformation and climate financing, partnerships will be more empowered to deal with global challenges and speed up the implementation of SDGs in the post-pandemic world.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals; Global Partnerships; Covid-19 Recovery; SDG 17; International Cooperation; Development Finance; Post-Covid Partnerships.

(Submitted: September 20, 2025; Revised: October 07, 2025; Accepted: November 20, 2025; Published: December 29, 2025)

I. Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of goals that were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 and act as a universal call to action to combat critical issues around the world, such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation. SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals is one such cross-cutting goal, which highlights the importance of promoting global partnerships to meet the whole agenda of SDGs. It acknowledges that the global issues can only be addressed when governments, civil society, businesses, and the private sector collaborate, and therefore it reiterates that cross-cutting cooperation on all levels is crucial to sustainable development (Ranjbari et al., 2021). Global collaborations are necessary in achieving SDGs, mainly because they facilitate the sharing of resources, knowledge exchange, and raising funds towards sustainable projects. Partnerships can be used as a transitional tool to overcome capacity, technological, and financial gaps, particularly in vulnerable countries and communities that lack resources. They may be successful global collaborations that promote innovation, inclusive development, and resilience in the wake of such challenges as climate change and health crises (Raj, 2024). Nevertheless, the COVID-19 outbreak has caused a significant shift in the course of sustainable development, reflecting the weaknesses and the opportunities (Tanabe, 2020; Sreenivasan et al., 2023). The health crisis in the global society shook the economies, increased disparities, and exerted pressure on the already established partnership relations as countries and regions responded differently to the pandemic

(Devi & Srivastava, 2023). Nevertheless, the pandemic also stimulated new types of collaboration, especially those related to such spheres as vaccine distribution, digital transformation, and climate change response. The dynamic nature of this environment highlights the necessity to re-evaluate and alter the global relationships and make sure they are resilient, flexible, and able to address the crises in the future.

Key Objectives

- To investigate the changing role of international partnerships in the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the new world of post-COVID-19, SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).
- To analyze the changes and pressures that have arisen in international partnerships as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including in the field of healthcare, climate response, social protection, and economic recovery.
- To gauge to changes in international partnerships to adjust to the evolving global environment and the opportunities they have opened to innovation, including in digital partnerships and climate financing.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 1 covers the position of global partnerships in attaining sustainable development, with SDG 17 being one of the priorities in a post-COVID world. Section 2 contains the literature review of the effect of COVID-19 on SDG advancement and changing worldwide collaborations. Section 3 gives the theoretical framework based on Systems Thinking and Network Governance to explain the analysis of the global partnerships. Section 4 provides the description of the methodology, data sources, and methods of qualitative analysis. Section 5 talks about the findings of the research on the perspectives of how global partnerships changed during and after the pandemic, particularly in the areas of healthcare, climate action, and economic recovery. Section 6 then wraps up by discussing the future of global partnerships, providing suggestions on how to reach SDGs and cope with such issues as funding gaps, lack of trust, and geopolitical tensions.

II. Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to find out what previous studies have found regarding the topic of global partnerships in promoting sustainable development, with special attention to the effect of COVID-19 on the SDGs. The review is organized based on three main themes: SDGs and Global Partnerships, COVID-19 and SDG Progress, and Post-COVID-19 Development Challenges.

SDG 17, which focuses on the need to make global partnerships, is imperative to the success of all the SDGs. According to (Zyoud, 2022), the partnerships enable the transfer of knowledge, mobilization of resources, and technological innovation, which are critical in the global community to handle complex problems, including poverty, inequality, and climate change (Zyoud, 2022). (Elavarasan et al., 2022) note that multilateral cooperation is crucial in fighting against such problems as climate change and pandemics (Elavarasan et al., 2022; Aysan et al., 2021). According to (Fenner & Cernev, 2021), multilateralism (making decisions together and bearing joint responsibility) is the most critical issue in achieving SDGs (Fenner & Cernev, 2021; Chaudhry & Mittal, 2022).

The pandemic has grossly affected SDG development in most parts of the world, as the economic downturn, the impact on the healthcare system, and growing inequalities have made the fulfillment of primary targets difficult. According to (Shulla et al., 2021), COVID-19 has worsened the susceptibility, especially in low-income countries, stalling the achievement of such goals as poverty reduction (SDG 1) and health and well-being (SDG 3) (Shulla et al., 2021; Mohieldin & Shehata, 2021) highlight the change in the priorities of development to the short-term response to the health care crisis at the expense of long-term targets of sustainability. There has been no specific clarity on other SDGs as well, like clean water (SDG 6) and education (SDG 4) and that is why it is critical to consider resilient healthcare and digital transformation (Mohieldin & Shehata, 2021; Jalali & Rezaie, 2016).

COVID-19 post-recovery is a complex matter, and the inclusion and sustainability of recovery framework are of great essence. According to (Useh, 2021), it is important to address systemic inequalities that have grown throughout the pandemic (Useh, 2021; Santos-Carrillo et al., 2020; Ebekoziem et al., 2023) outline that in certain sectors, such as the construction one, sustainable development will require the joint actions (Ebekoziem et al., 2023). The pandemic has introduced new opportunities in the sphere of collaboration, and (Lopez-Vargas et al., 2021) observe that the SDG 9 (Lopez-Vargas et al., 2021) can be achieved with the help of digital technologies. (Medhekar et al., 2022) also state that international co-operation may assist in recovery efforts in such areas as healthcare, climate change, and sustainable energy (Medhekar et al., 2022; Hörisch, 2021).

Although the available literature offers essential insights into the implications of COVID-19 on the SDG progress, it is evident that specific gaps are present in comprehending the ways through which the global partnership can transform to ensure it can help in improving the post-pandemic developmental issues. The majority of the research work concentrates on the sectoral responses or regional strategies without offering a multi-faceted study of models of global partnerships and their capacity to evolve in the wake of such a crisis. This paper seeks to contribute by envisioning the future of international partnerships in the success of the SDGs on a long-term basis as find ourselves in a post-pandemic world. In particular, it examines how the dynamics of partnerships are changing, the arising opportunities of collaboration, and how the new barriers and opportunities to sustainable development can be conceptualized by the strategies.

III. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks and models would be critical in explaining the dynamics of international alliances with regard to sustainable development, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. To conduct this paper, two principal frameworks will be used in analyzing and interpreting global partnerships to SDGs: Systems Thinking and Network Governance.

Systems Thinking

A systems thinking approach is where global development is a dynamic system that acts as an interdependent system between governments of various actors, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, and the local community in a greater ecosystem. It is a structure that assists in viewing the global partnership as neither one independent object, but one that exists within a complex, dynamic network that has feedback loops, interdependencies, and non-linear relationships. This paper will also address the interrelation between various SDGs by applying systems thinking because a lot of development in one sector tends to affect or require another. Indicatively, the attainment of SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) has a close connection with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and SDG 13 (Climate Action). A systems perspective assists in understanding how the action or disturbance in one of the areas, like the COVID-19 pandemic, can lead to the ripple effect in other SDGs, either supporting or disrupting their development. This strategy will enable to examine the strength of global alliances in crises and their capacity to adapt to meet changing challenges in the world.

Network Governance

Network governance theory is especially applicable to the issues of how global partners operate in the increasingly globalized world. It pays attention to collaborative, decentralized orders with regard to which different actors regulate and fulfill shared interests. Global partnerships can be understood in the network governance theory as a network of various stakeholders, all of whom bring resources, expertise, or influence in common directions. These government structures are fluid, multi-level, and not necessarily hierarchical and may entail alliances between governments, international organizations, the private sector, and civil society.

Using this framework, the current understanding of the organization, management, and coordination of partnerships during a post-pandemic world will be achieved. In particular, it will be applied to study the

dynamics of coalitions and multi-stakeholder collaborations established in order to tackle such challenges as healthcare recovery, action on climate, and economic recovery. Network governance may also be helpful in comprehending the impact of power relations, trust, and the institutional structures on the effectiveness and accountability of the global collaboration towards the realization of the SDGs. Combined, systems thinking and network governance offer a powerful theoretical approach to the analysis of the dynamic nature of global alliances towards sustainable development and can be used to evaluate how they have been able to respond to emerging issues, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

IV. Methodology

The approach to the research will be a combination of conceptual frameworks and qualitative analysis to understand the role of global partnership in the realization of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the post-COVID-19 world. Since the proposed research is aimed at getting acquainted with the complex systems and multilateral relations, the review-based method is used, and emphasis is also placed on the synthesis of the information from a range of sources devoted to the subject of global cooperation, SDG development, and post-pandemic rehabilitation. It is more qualitative as it is based on comparative analysis to examine available literature on the consequences of COVID-19 on SDGs and global partnerships. It will entail the synthesis of an enormous scope of theoretical literature, policy reports, and case studies, exploring the development of international alliances in the pandemic and its perspectives. This will aim to contrast the results of other sources and sectors (e.g., health, climate, education) in order to determine how they are connected, and what the challenges and opportunities of post-pandemic collaborations are. Since this study aims to develop a theoretical framework based on the idea of global partnerships, the review-based approach will be complemented by the process of policy analysis in order to determine how global actors adapted and responded to SDG implementation following the pandemic. It will enable an in-depth examination of the various policy mechanisms, stakeholder politics, and changes in the strategies of development cooperation.

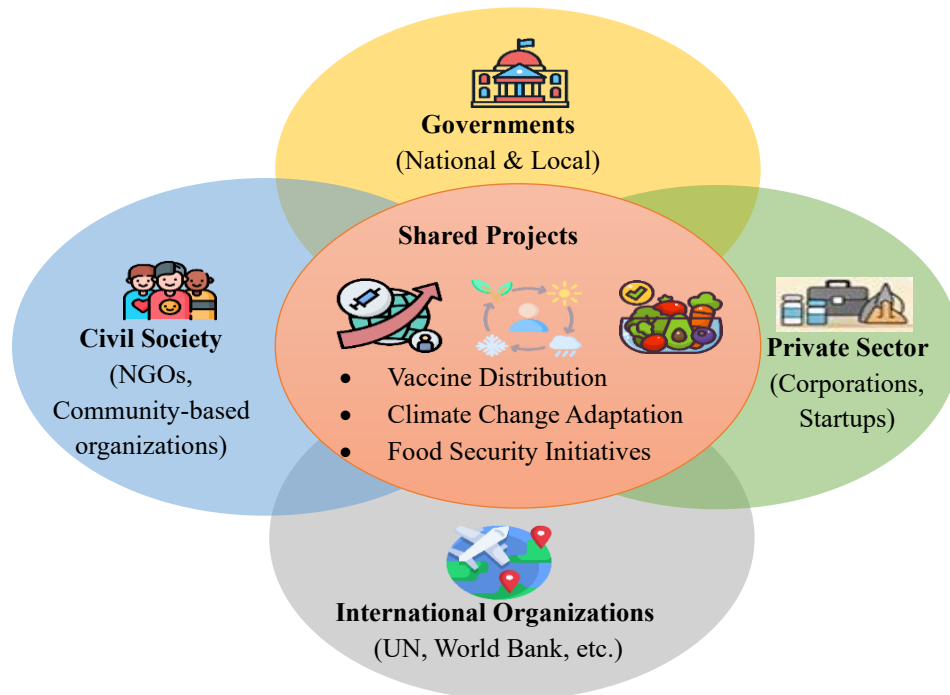


Figure 1: Multi-Stakeholder Coalition Framework for Post-Pandemic Development

Figure 1 shows how the governments, the private sector, civil society, and international organizations take joint ventures in common projects like vaccine distribution, climate change adaptation, and food

security projects. These alliances are essential in attaining such SDG targets as Health (SDG 3), Zero Hunger (SDG 2), and Climate Action (SDG 13). The scheme emphasizes the role of various sectors in recovering the world after the pandemic by engaging in social actions, which makes the development sustainable.

Data Sources

The primary sources of data to be used in this study are:

- **UN Reports and SDG Indices:** These offer government information about the development towards the SDGs and its partnership strategies, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals Progress Report and other reports.
- **Case Studies:** A few case studies of various parts of the world will be employed to examine the practical application of global partnerships in the middle of and the post-COVID-19 pandemic. The case studies will be dedicated to the following areas: healthcare (vaccine distribution), climate action, and SDG financing.
- **Expert Interviews:** Interviews with policy experts, leaders of global partnerships, and stakeholders of international organizations will serve as first-hand information regarding the challenges and opportunities of global partnerships in a post-pandemic environment.
- **Policy Documents:** The discussion of policy documents of the World Bank, OECD, and other multilateral organizations will be an eye-opener to the strategies, frameworks, and advice on how to improve global cooperation in the future.

Analytical Method

The qualitative methods that will be employed to make the analysis are several:

- **Content Analysis:** This will be undertaken through a systematic analysis of policy documents, reports, and case studies in order to identify the major themes, trends, and insights on the topic of global partnerships and SDG progress. The content analysis will assist in defining common trends in the way partnerships have evolved and in what ways they have been the most successful.
- **Thematic Coding:** The literature and case studies will be coded into important themes (resilience, cooperation, adaptation, and sustainability). Using this coding, it will be possible to identify the new trends and challenges associated with the alteration of the global alliances in the post-COVID-19 world.
- **Trend Analysis:** Using SDG indices and data obtained through worldwide reports, the study will be able to follow the trends of SDG development, as well as the partnership strategies. This will be used to identify how partnerships have changed and adjusted to the pandemic and give an idea of what the future direction of SDGs may be in a post-pandemic world.

Altogether, the qualitative review, the policy analysis, and thematic coding will allow obtaining a complete picture of how the pandemic affected global partnerships with sustainable development and how they could be restructured to obtain greater resilience and effectiveness in the future.

V. Results & Discussion

The section explores the development of global partnerships towards sustainable development, its position prior to, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic. It explores the changes in development cooperation, issues of new common work, and new opportunities in the post-pandemic world.

Until the COVID-19 pandemic, the world had been organized mainly through pre-existing frameworks, and many of them are based on creating global partnerships to accomplish the SDGs, including SDG 17. These alliances focused on multilateral collaboration between governments, international bodies, and civil

society. They worked specifically well in marshaling resources and sharing knowledge in such spheres as climate change, global health, and the reduction of poverty. Famous programs such as the Global Fund and education programs of UNICEF have played a significant role in meeting the milestones of SDGs because they allow countries and organisations to share resources and experience.

Table 1: Evolution of Global Partnerships Before, During, and After COVID-19

Stage	Focus Areas	Key Actors Involved	Funding Sources	Challenges Faced
Before COVID-19	Climate change, healthcare, poverty alleviation, and education	UN, OECD, Global South, International Organizations	Government aid, international organizations, Donor contributions	Uneven resource distribution, lack of coordinated efforts
During COVID-19	Health systems, vaccine distribution, and emergency relief	COVAX, WHO, UN, National Governments, Private sector	Emergency funding, Debt relief, Multilateral partnerships	Resource shortages, logistical issues, and unequal vaccine distribution
Post-COVID-19 (Recovery)	Resilience-building, green recovery, sustainable infrastructure	Multilateral institutions, South-South cooperation, Private sector, NGOs	Debt relief, Green climate funding, Private sector investments	Financing gaps, rebuilding trust, geopolitical tensions

Table 1 will give a brief history of how the world has created partnerships in the past, present, and future in terms of changing focus, actors, and sources of funding.

Nevertheless, in the case of the pandemic, the pre-existing partnerships experienced a significant disturbance. It overwhelmed healthcare systems and affected global supply chains, affecting nations with low incomes. This was contributing to more inequalities because certain countries were failing to get basic supplies, such as vaccines, personal protective equipment, and health care assistance. In spite of those issues, a new collaboration was developed, including COVAX, a worldwide project with the purpose of distributing vaccines fairly. Such partnerships highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of international relations, and therefore the importance of agile institutions during times of crises. The post-pandemic world is forcing the world to reestablish confidence in worldwide collaboration, and this has become a priority. Current efforts are aimed at long-term resiliency of the principal sectors, such as healthcare and education, and are directed toward establishing partnerships that would react better to future crises.

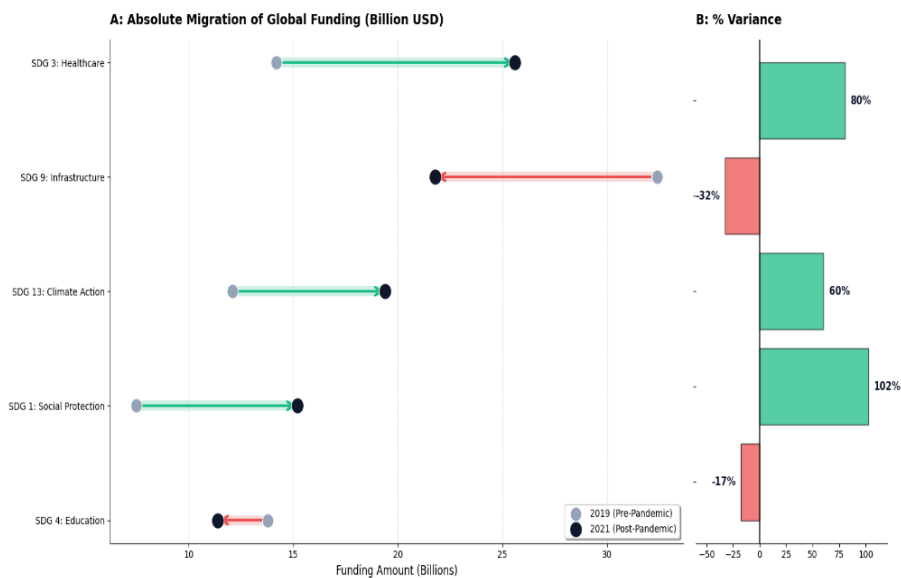


Figure 2: Migration of Global Funding for SDGs Pre- and Post-Pandemic

Figure 2 demonstrates the change in global funding between the main SDGs between 2019 and 2021. It brings out the level of increased funding in relation to Healthcare (SDG 3), Social Protection (SDG 1), and Climate Action (SDG 13), and reduced funding in Education (SDG 4). The arrows indicate the alterations to the funding, and the middle percentage bars indicate the change in financing, either up or down, with a focus on the shift in priorities as a result of the pandemic.



Figure 3: Emerging Opportunities in Global Partnerships

Figure 3 will compare the flow and attention of the funding and focus of various areas in the global partnerships, where there were traditional engagement baselines and new opportunity areas in the post-pandemic environment. They are Digital and Data, Climate Finance, Health Security, Supply Chain, and Multi-Stakeholder. It is emphasized in the chart that Digital and Data and Climate Finance have become a focus area of growth, with Digital and Data taking 35 % and Climate Finance taking 30 % of the new openings, making them the primary avenues through which global coalitions with high growth potentials are formed. Conversely, in the traditional engagement, the involvement has been more balanced in the sectors, and Health Security and Supply Chain have had relatively less emphasis in the emerging scenario. This image highlights the changing priorities of the digital transformation and climate action in future international collaboration.

The pandemic has radically changed development cooperation, especially regarding the distribution of global funds and the participation of new actors. Prior to the pandemic, OECD countries and multilateral institutions had the power to determine development aid. Nevertheless, the pandemic spurred a change in the direction of green recovery and digital growth, relying on the increasing awareness of the necessity of sustainable and inclusive growth. The post-pandemic period has seen an enhanced focus on debt relief and reorganized financial processes to serve the vulnerable areas, so that the recovery processes become sustainable and fair.

There is also a significant change regarding new actors. There is also the increased collaborative activities between the South-South economies; new economies such as China, India, and Brazil are increasingly contributing towards the less-developed countries by offering financial and technical assistance. This tendency indicates the increased value of regional associations in knowledge and resources exchange, especially in areas such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Also, the private sector has been playing an essential role in addressing the pandemic by offering innovative solutions, such as

healthcare technologies, supply chain management, and digital platforms. This has resulted in an expanded perception of the worth of the cooperation between the government and business to realize SDG objectives (Akomea-Frimpong et al., 2023).

In spite of the advances in cooperation, global partnerships towards sustainable development encounter a number of challenges. The problem of financing is one of the most urgent ones because the pandemic has intensified economic insecurity among low- and middle-income countries, and it isn't easy to access the resources to achieve SDG targets. The magnitude of foreign assistance is not enough to combat international ills such as climate change, medicine, and poverty. One more problem, which should be considered significant, is that the erosion of institutional trust was noted as the pandemic showed the deficit in the global governance and unequal allocation of resources, especially vaccines and medical assistance, and people lacked confidence in multilateral institutions. Geopolitical conflicts, mainly among the dominant states, obstruct collaboration and hamper international endeavors, especially in areas such as climate change.

Nevertheless, there are also a number of opportunities that can be offered in terms of reinforcing global relations in the post-pandemic world. The increased pace of digital transformation can provide a great prospect in data partnership, as countries will be able to resolve the issues of climate change and common health by mutual data and digital platforms. Another opportunity is climate financing integration, since recovery after the pandemic can connect economic recovery to climate resilience. Finally, the notion of multi-stakeholder coalitions between governments, businesses, and civil society has become effective in addressing global issues and will be essential to the accomplishment of SDGs in the future.

VI. Conclusion

This paper has examined the history of global cooperation towards sustainable development, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was discovered that whereas global partnerships had been a focus on multilateral cooperation and mobilization of resources towards SDGs, the pandemic changed the priority, and more focus was made on healthcare, social protection, and climate action. Nevertheless, in spite of the disruptions, new collaborations were formed, such as digital transformation and vaccine distribution, which demonstrate the flexibility and strength of global cooperation during a crisis. From a future perspective, the study highlights that international collaboration should change to respond to the needs of the moment recovery and the long-term sustainable development targets. The world is post-pandemic, and partnerships can be redefined by placing an emphasis on digital and data partnerships, financing climate, and forming coalitions of many stakeholders to achieve the high-level goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Among the essential challenges, there should be issues such as financial gaps, organizational trust, and geopolitical conflicts that should be resolved to provide efficient and inclusive cooperation.

This research reveals the importance of improving innovative collaboration in the realization of SDGs, especially in such areas as health, climate change, and sustainable infrastructure. In the future, additional studies may be conducted with the aim of investigating the role of digital partnerships in promoting SDGs in developing countries, discussing new financial instruments of SDGs, and evaluating the contributions of non-state actors to the establishment of inclusive global alliances. These spheres will be instrumental in bringing about a sustainable and fair international future.

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