Multi-stakeholder partnerships for the SDGs

Is the "next generation" fit for purpose (with a specific focus on intergenerational equity)?

ESDN Young Civil Servant Network Vienna, 15 April 2024

Philipp Pattberg

Outline

1. SDGs as transformative policy

2. SD and intergenerational equity

3. MSPs as transformative policy instruments?
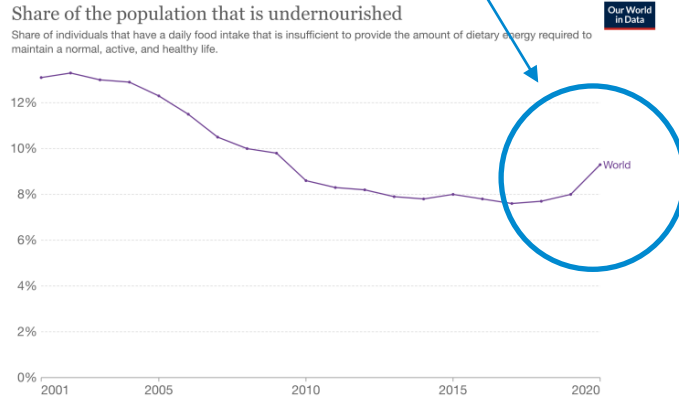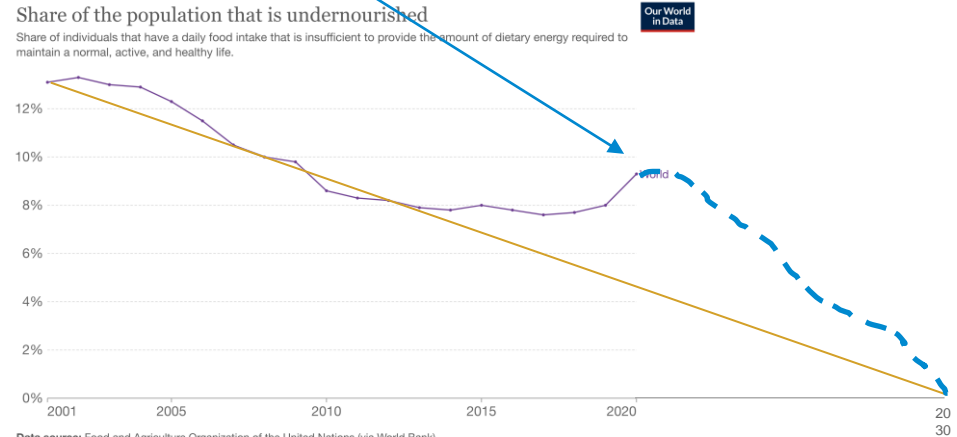
(Sustainability) Transformations

2 ZERO HUNGER

Target 2.1: By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people.

Indicator 2.1.1: Prevalence of undernourishment

Common understanding of (sustainability) transformation:
To shift from an undesirable pattern to a more sustainable one.

Share of the population that is undernourished
Share of individuals that have a daily food intake that is insufficient to provide the amount of dietary energy required to maintain a normal, active, and healthy life.

Data source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (via World Bank)
Note: Countries and regions with rates below 2.5% are coded as "2.5%" in the FAO dataset.
OurWorldInData.org/hunger-and-undernourishment | CC BY

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(Sustainability) Transformations

Formally, there are different foci in the study of sustainability transformations. Some focus on…

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(1)…transformation as the required process

(2)…transformation as the end point
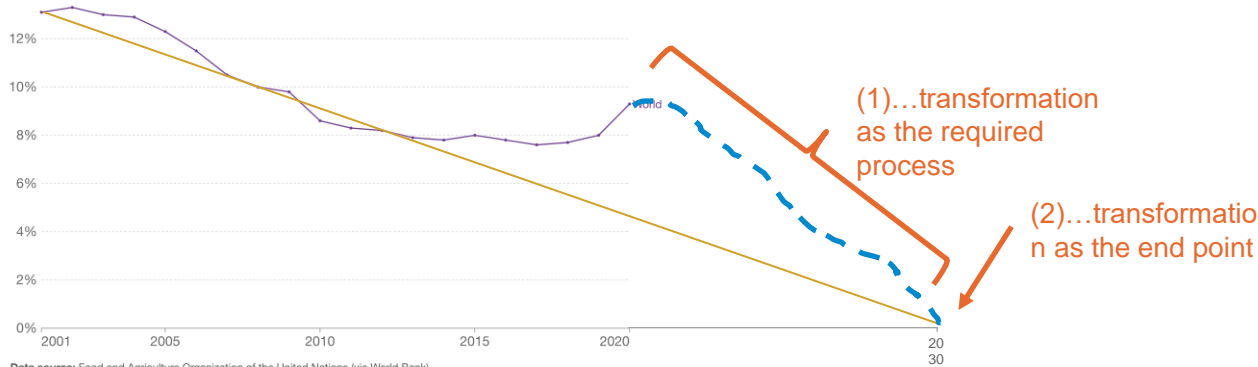
(3) …transformation as the governance quality needed ("transformative approaches")

(4) …the different conceptual *types* of transformations

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Some examples in the literature

(1) Transformation as process
- Sachs et. al. (2019) Six Transformations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Identify six transformations "as modular building-blocks of SDG achievement".

(2) Transformation as the end point
- Global Sustainable Development Report (2019) Identifies entry points and levers to achieve "transformations for sustainable development"

(3) Transformation as a governance quality
- Elder & King (2018). Realising the Transformative Potential of the SDGs. Focus (for example) on "transformative policy approaches"
- Leventon et al. (2021). Leverage points for sustainability transformations: nine guiding questions for sustainability science and practice. Suggests that transformative interventions must focus on leverage points.

(4) Varieties of transformation
- Scoones et al. (2015) The Politics of Green Transformations. Distinguishes between *technocratic*, *marketized*, *state-led*, and *citizen-led* transformations.
- Pender (2023). From partial to integrated perspectives: How understanding worldviews can expand our capacity for transformative climate governance. Distinguishes between *conformist, expert, achiever, pluralist* and *strategist* worldviews towards transformations.

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Intergenerational equity and SD

- Intergenerational equity in the context of SD refers to the principle that present generations should not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and enjoy a similar quality of life. It emphasizes fairness and justice across different generations, acknowledging that actions taken today to address for example climate change can have profound and lasting impacts on the well-being and opportunities of future generations.

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Intergenerational equity and the SDGs

- No explicit mention of IE in the 2030 Development Agenda adopted by the UN in 2015. There is however a general acknowledgment that **"We will implement the Agenda for the full benefit of all, for today's generation and future generations".**

- Furthermore, reference to equity is explicit only as **intragenerational equity**, for example in reference to "equitable access to education" (SDG 4.1), "universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water" (SDG 6.1), a "world with an equitable multilateral trading system" (SDG 17.10).

- However, the relevance of incorporating future generations, and thereby achieving intergenerational equity, is acknowledged in the preparation process for the 2024 UN Summit of the Future.

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# The promise of multi-stakeholder partnerships for the SDGs

- Filling a functional gap in global governance

- Potential for being transformative (as a governance quality)

- A 'next generation' of MSPs to achieve the SDGs that could generate transformations

- But…critical perspectives suggest risks for power problems, green washing, and lacklustre track-record

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Is the new generation of MSPs fit for purpose (and does take intergenerational equity into account)?

Criteria to assess intergenerational equity and MSPs

- Do MSPs address social metabolism and overconsumption?

- Do MSPs include explicit mechanisms for representing future generations?

- Are MSPs short or long-term?

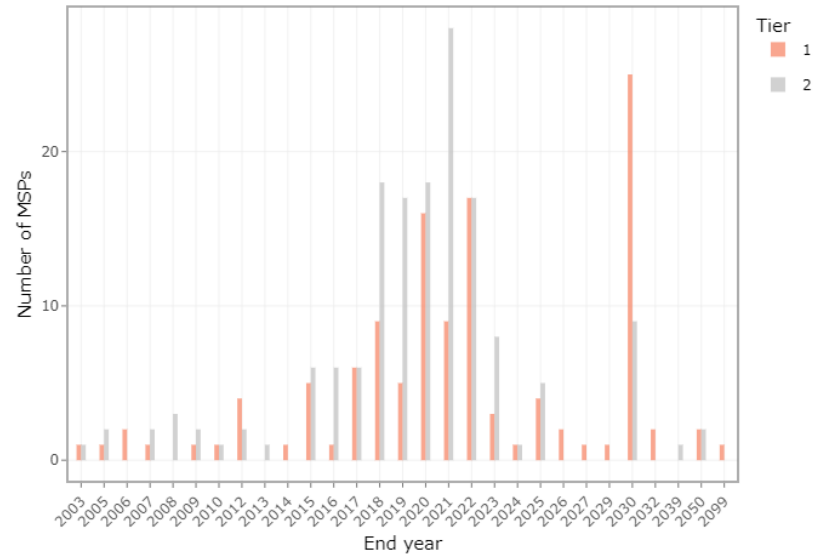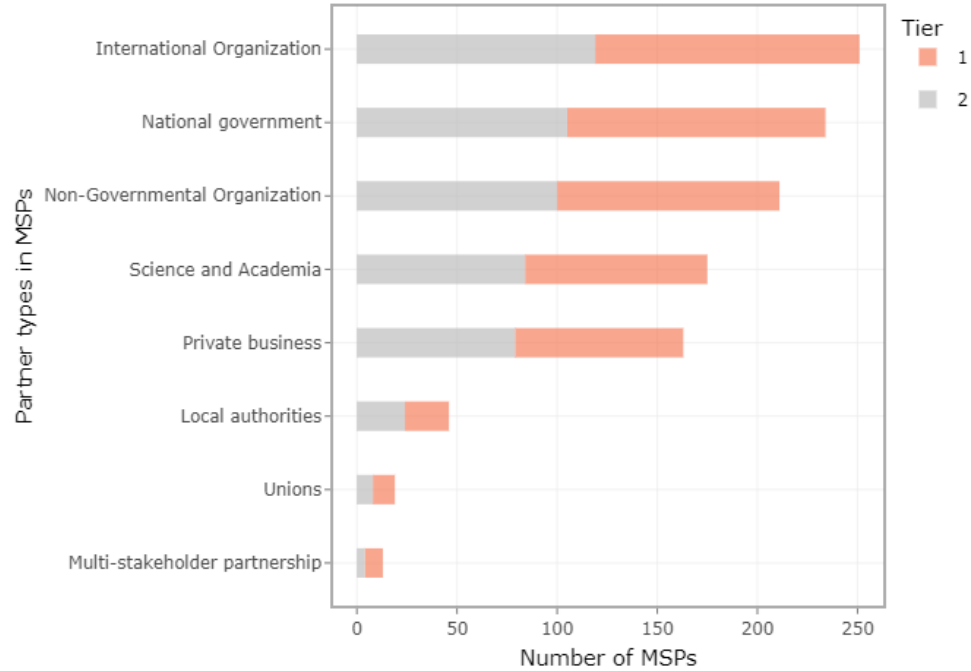- Do MSPs focus on key environmental challenges?

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78 % are active or concluded
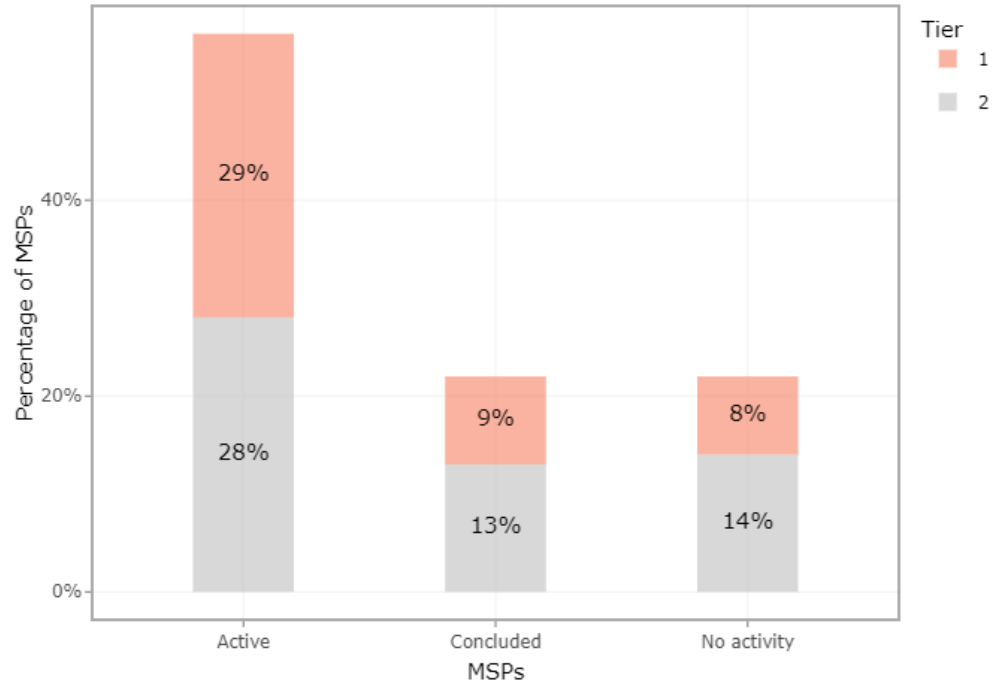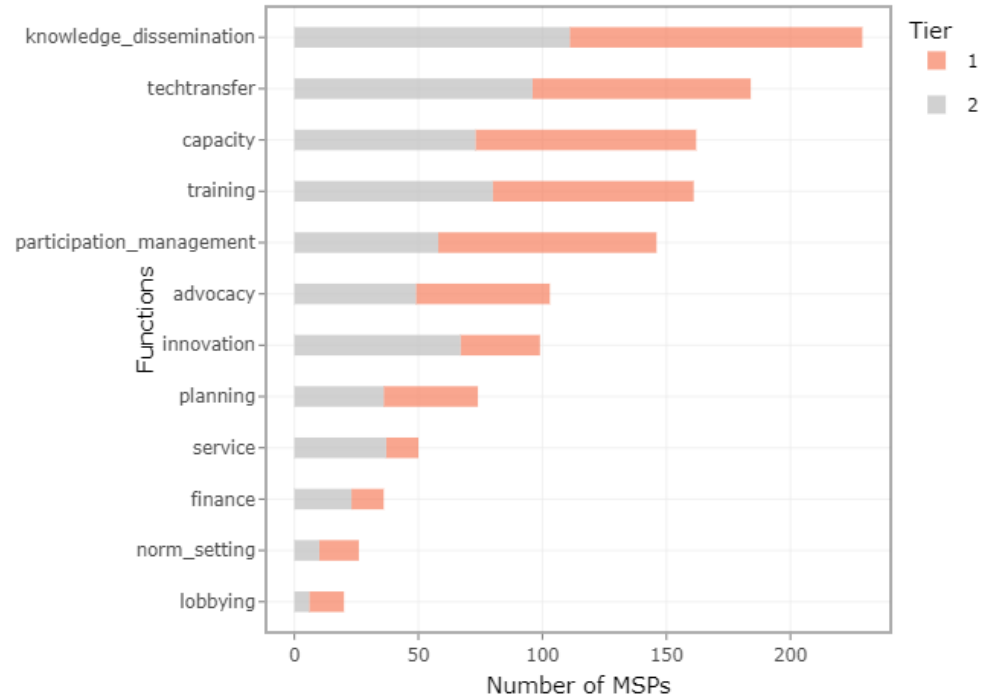
The importance of mega-conferences
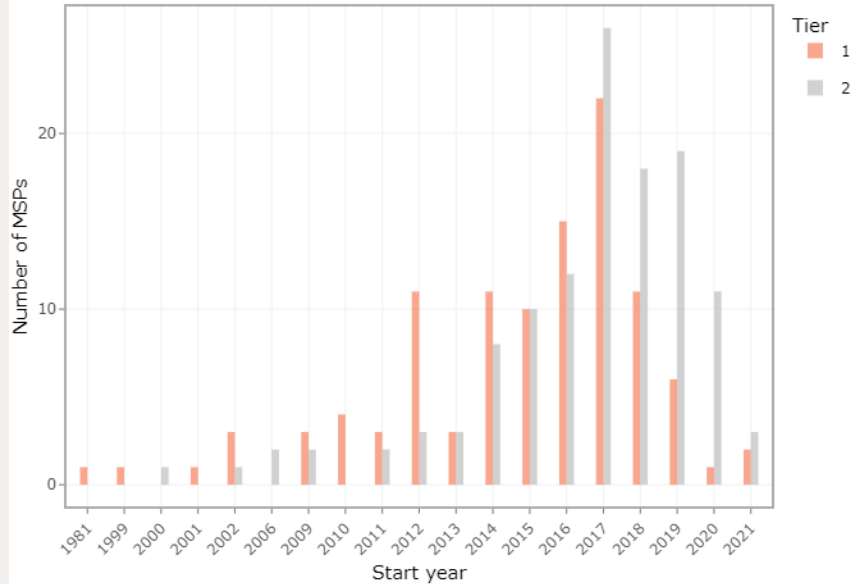
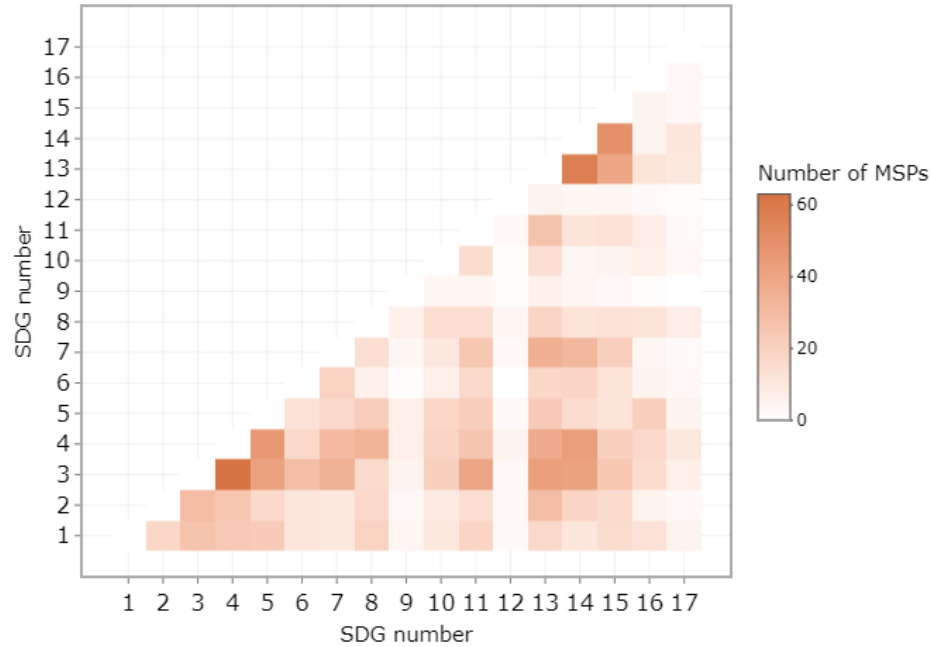*75 % of the MSPs have an end year before 2023*
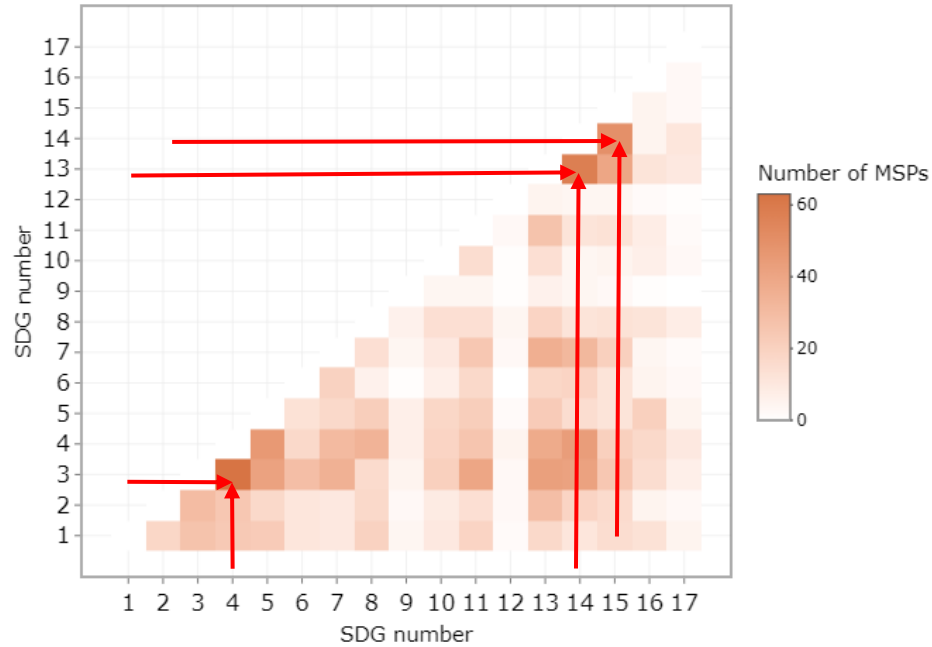
Variation in types of partners
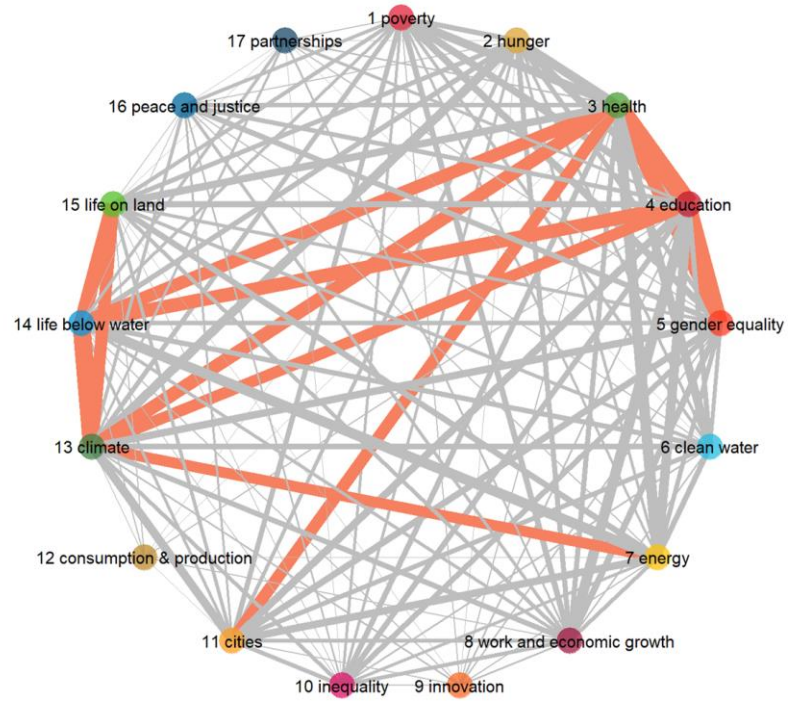
Knowledge-related functions dominate

Connected SDG pairs

Best connected SDGs

Potential synergies

Key messages

- Alarmingly low levels of activity and a high number of time-bound targets that end before 2030.

- International organizations and national government are the main partners in MSPs.

- The most common functions are related to soft governance such as knowledge dissemination and information exchange.

- MSPs mainly connect environmental and social SDGs, notably between climate change, biodiversity, health and education (good for intergenerational equity).

- They are less focused on the economic goals, addressing the drivers of unsustainable behavior (bad for intergenerational equity).

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Tech report homepage

https://owiderberg.github.io/T2030-technical-report-html/

SCAN ME!

Thank you!

Find the report on:
www.transform2030.se / https://owiderberg.github.io/T2030-technical-report-html/

Contact:
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