

Swati Parashar:

Towards collaborative futures – The need to reconnect in a post-pandemic world



It is about seeing low- and middle-income countries as sites of knowledge, often hidden behind global indicators. Professor Swati Parashar talked about the need to understand the dynamics of and reconnect with the global south as a keynote speaker at Global Sustainable Futures' annual conference 16 November.

“We need to build new collaborations across and ask ourselves if we do enough to include voices”, Prof Parashar said. “People of the global south have their own agency and we need to see that”.

In the post-pandemic world, geographical location has become more important, and the state has come even more in focus. Responses to the pandemic have been very national, rather than based on international collaboration. Nationalism has emerged and captured the interest of people; Prof Parashar argued.

“It’s weird to talk about a post-pandemic world – the impact is going to continue for many years”, she added.

Facilitators and brokers are needed

A specific challenge is the invisibility of contributors to research projects; interpreters, interlocutors, assistants and others who are “co-producers of knowledge” but not mentioned or acknowledged in the final publication. The interaction with local facilitating researchers needs to be part of the discussion.

“We need to set up equal and fair terms of collaboration, and greater ethical screening,” says Prof Parashar. “We need to think about how we can include or compensate local researchers who make our research possible at various locations.”

Building collaboration between researchers, for example, in Gothenburg and partners in low- and middle-income countries will benefit from working with facilitators or brokers, and field sites will not be easily accessible in the future. Global Sustainable Futures, a joint platform for Chalmers and University of Gothenburg for such cooperation, is one such potential partner.