

## **Pandemics and the politics of knowledge**

*Panel session at the event [Pathways to sustainability: knowledge, politics and power](#)  
8 December 2021 at 13.00-15.00 UTC*

**Speakers:** Hayley MacGregor, Melissa Parker, Gustavo Mattes, Grace Akello, Melissa Leach

The COVID-19 pandemic has renewed debate about the interface between 'science' and public policy. Whilst the balance of disciplinary expertise requested has tended to the side of epidemiology, social scientists have also joined national or international scientific advisory groups.

This session will involve social scientists who have participated in such committees in different contexts, inviting their reflections on how the politics of knowledge has manifested in this engagement.

The session aims to surface questions about power and voice within and across academic disciplines and beyond, asking whose knowledge and experience have been shared and heard in these spaces. We will reflect on the implications of experience gained over the pandemic and ask if social scientists might participate in policy spaces whilst also maintaining a critical stance and challenging power relations and the terms of engagement.

### **Speakers**

Chair: **Hayley MacGregor**, Institute of Development Studies

Panellists:

- **Melissa Parker**, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)
- **Gustavo Mattes**, Fiocruz Brazil
- **Grace Akello**, Gulu University, Uganda

Discussant: **Melissa Leach**, Director, Institute of Development Studies