THE GLOBAL GOAL OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT: LOCALIZATION, ROLES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

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Overview

1. Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a global programme of action signed in September 2015 by the governments of the 193 member countries of the United Nations and represents the continuation of the commitments made by the international community in 2000, i.e. at the time of the signing of the so-called "Millennium Declaration." With the signing of the Declaration, UN member states formally committed themselves to achieving, by 2015, eight global goals, in turn made up of specific sub-targets:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger in the world;
2. Achieve universal primary education;
3. Promote gender equality and empower women;
4. Reduce child mortality;
5. Improve maternal health;
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
7. Ensure environmental sustainability;
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

In 2015, with the signing of the 2030 Agenda, 17 new goals are identified, which if to be achieved, will require all nations to contribute in a consistent and coordinated way, promoting prosperity whilst also protecting the planet. The goals recognize that ending poverty must necessarily be accompanied by economic growth strategies and address a range of social needs such as education, health, social protection, employment opportunities and, at the same time, address climate change and environmental protection issues. According to former UN Secretary Ban Ki-moon, the Sustainable Development Goals represent "a to-do list for people and the planet, and a blueprint for success."

The 2030 Agenda consists of 17 goals for sustainable development (the so-called Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs) organized into subgoals for a total of 169 targets. Successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires a major multilateral effort within the United Nations and concrete support for an international order based on the defense of universal values, the promotion of common public goods and benefits for all. The European Union has embraced this vision and has committed itself to achieving sustainable development, namely a development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the rights of future generations: a dignified life for all within the limits of the planet and that reconciles economic efficiency, social inclusion and environmental liability.

The Sustainable Development Goals are articulated as follows:

1. Eradicate poverty in all its forms everywhere;

2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;

3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;

4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;

5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;

6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;

7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;

8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;

9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation;

10. Reduce inequality within and among countries;

11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;

12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;

13. Take urgent measures to combat climate change and its impacts;

14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development;

15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;

16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels;

17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

2. The European commitment to sustainable development

The European Union has translated its support for sustainable development goals into its internal and external policies to the extent that they are included in the priorities of the European Commission and, since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, has made significant progress in contributing to its achievement: from the transition to a low-carbon, neutral, resource-efficient and circular economy to improving the level of security, prosperity, equality and inclusion. Moreover, through the so-called European Consensus, the EU has aligned its approach to international cooperation and development policy with the 2030 Agenda, placing

the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on climate change at the center of its action. The implementation of the Agenda is, today, effectively supported by the formulation of vigorous policies that take into account all possible effects on developing countries in order to promote a concrete synergy between existing policies and minimize inconsistencies.

2.1. Development goal 11 in the European Union

Sustainable Development Goal 11 requires the commitment of the international community to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Before analyzing in detail what are the targets indicated for its achievement, it is useful to offer an overview of the size and relevance that it covers within the European policy. The urban dimension is, in fact, at the heart of European Cohesion Policy which, up to 2020, has allocated more than 100 billion euros to support urban mobility, energy efficiency, urban renewal, research and innovation capacity and regeneration of the most disadvantaged communities, and has been fully included among the priorities of the Union's seventh environmental action program. The commitment made to the EU's urban areas is also confirmed in the European Development Policy aimed at improving living conditions in degraded suburbs, promoting access to water and water systems, urban mobility, energy efficiency, affordable housing and disaster prevention. In addition, several instruments are also in place in relation to neighboring countries, such as the Neighbourhood Policy and the policy for countries soon to join the EU.

2.2. The main European investment policies: the European Regional Policy

The European Regional Policy is intended for all regions and urban areas of the EU and is aimed at creating job opportunities, promoting business competitiveness, economic growth, sustainable development and improving the living conditions of citizens. To achieve these objectives, the EU has allocated approximately one third (355.1 billion euros) in the 2014-2020 period alone. The Regional Policy is implemented through two funds: the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund which, together with the European Social Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime Fund for Fisheries, constitute the so-called Structural and Investment Funds.

The European regional policy generated and still generates high-impact results in various sectors and it has favored the achievement of the objectives of the European policy, acting as its complement in the areas of education, labor, energy, environment, single market, research and innovation. Moreover, the European structural and investment funds contribute directly to

the Commission's Investment Plan for Europe (EC IPE) and priorities by creating the necessary investment framework for the achievement of the Europe 2020 targets aimed at promoting smart, sustainable and inclusive growth within the Union, organized into five targets:

Employment: ensure employment of 75% of citizens between the ages of 20 and 64;
Research and development: ensure investment equal to 3% of the European GDP in the R&D sector;
Climate change and energy: reducing of greenhouse gas to 20% (if not to 30% if the conditions will permit); 20% of energy produced from renewable sources; 20% increase in energy efficiency;
Education: reducing early school leavers share below 10%
Combating poverty: reducing the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million.

In these areas of action, each member state has adopted its own national plans and defined targets to achieve. European regional policy supports European solidarity concentrating its efforts in the most disadvantaged areas in order to give concrete tools to bridge economic, social and territorial inequalities. The key role of the European regional policy became even more evident when the reprogramming of funds and the raising of the co-financing rate allowed countries such as Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal and Romania to mitigate the impact of the 2008 financial crisis, preventing the collapse of the public system in the least developed member countries. Cohesion policy, in addition, represents the catalyst of additional public and private funding, as it requires partial co-financing by member countries and fosters greater confidence on the part of funders.

3. The Regional Operational Plan (ROP) of the Emilia Romagna Region

The programme is aimed at supporting innovation through an improvement of the regional research and development system, contributes to the Europe 2020 targets for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and promotes public investments in research and development consistent with RIS3, the Smart Specialisation Policy defined at the regional level. In addition, the programme contributes to the improvement of the region's energy efficiency and to a greater diversification of business competitiveness. The programme focuses on three main priorities:

Strengthen technological research, development and innovation (70.2 million, 29.2% of total resources);

Promote the competitiveness of SMEs (60.2 million, 25% of total resources);
Increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy in companies to support the transition to a low carbon economy (52 million, 21.7% of total resources).

These objectives should generate a number of results listed as follows:

Increase in the number of enterprises involved in research and development from 29.35 to 35%;
Decrease in energy consumption resulting from production processes by 20% for industrial-type companies and 25% for service companies;
Creation of new SMEs and strengthening and development of the existing network through advanced IT tools.

4. 2030 Agenda: Goal 11

The 2030 Agenda and its implementation are therefore part of a more complex engagement of the EU and individual member states to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive development. In this context, actions undertaken at regional and municipal level are particularly relevant. Goal 11, in fact, is explicitly dedicated to cities and it aims at making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, durable and sustainable. The achievement of goal 11 is, as for all the others, bound to the achievement of individual targets:

By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums;
By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons;
By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlements planning and management in all countries;
Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage;
By 2030, significantly reduce the numbers of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and the people in vulnerable situations;
By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying

special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management;

By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities;

Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning;

By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels;

Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials.

The importance given to cities is therefore recognized as fundamental both at international and European level and plays a central role in the transition towards sustainable development. In this regard, the greatest challenges cities face concern traffic, lack of funding to provide basic services, shortage of adequate housing, infrastructure degradation. These challenges call for an improvement in the use of resources and concrete actions aimed at reducing pollution and poverty, as well as ensuring access to basic services, energy and transports. The relevance of cities and the need to provide standards and action level programmes comes from the fact that today half of humanity lives in cities and this figure is meant to grow by about 10% by 2030, with significant increases especially in so-called developing countries, whose population is increasingly concentrated in slums. In addition, despite occupying only 3% of the earth's surface, cities are responsible for between 60 and 80% of global energy consumption and 75% of carbon emissions, as well as increasing pressure in terms of freshwater and sewage supplies, thus posing inevitable environmental and public health challenges.

5. Localization of Goal 11

The 2030 Agenda of the United Nations represents a collective process addressed to all actors engaged in sustainable development. In particular, global cities tried to emphasize their role of laboratories where the greatest challenges of globalization take shape and, for the first time, they are openly recognized as having the possibility to define a global political structure to address the main challenges of the planet. Since 2012 and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development UNCSD (also known as Rio +20) cities have used their international networks to demonstrate their desire to contribute to the definition of a universal agenda to

face the challenges related to urbanization processes. They did so through collaboration and through the global consultation process for the localization of the future agenda, which has led to the definition of a specific goal concerning cities. The campaign was conceived and implemented in the context of an alliance that involved all the stakeholders, in which cities, civil society, academics, UN agencies, and several national governments participated and allowed for a gradual raising of awareness about the importance of localizing the global agenda. According to Agustí Fernández de Losada, Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Global Cities Programme at CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs) for cities to become the core of the 2030 Agenda implementation process, resources and appropriate skills are needed. Despite the commitment and efforts made by cities all over the world, resources are often limited and metropolitan areas often find themselves in challenging conditions when trying to align development strategies with the SDGs. The alignment with the 2030 Agenda, in fact, represents a structure based on common challenges and provides transformative principles that can be used to improve local decision-making processes. Regardless of the area of intervention (climate change, migrations, global health, etc) cities must rethink their modus operandi and abandon a concept of administrative separation. This will take them towards more holistic integrated approaches to development through a commitment to collaborative governance, partnership between public and private sector, performance measurement and accountability. This process can be fostered by citizenship united in a collective effort and by building alliances between cities guided by common political guidelines.

6. Localizing the 2030 Agenda in Italy

Since 2017, Italy has implemented the 2030 Agenda including adopting a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) based on an integrated development model and the involvement of key stakeholders. For the National Strategy to be effective, however, it must be integrated at the local and community level following three main content areas or principles:
1) Positioning with respect to the Sustainable Development Goals, i.e. the reference context of action;
2) Identification of strengths and weaknesses from which to establish achievable objectives;
3) The involvement of all stakeholders.
These principles are essential to the process of localizing the SDGs and prove necessary in the Italian context, characterized by a fragmented and diversified social, economic, cultural and territorial social fabric. The localization of the SDGs can follow a cycle similar to project management founded on the analysis of the context, strengths and weaknesses, stakeholder mapping, design and conception of the intervention, its implementation, and monitoring and

evaluation. In order to proceed with the localization of the 2030 Agenda a clearly defined starting point is required, what can be defined as the local "state of the art", verifiable and reliable indicators and a plan for sustainable development at the regional level, monitoring of its implementation and assessment of its impact on a regular basis, and the active involvement of stakeholders. This involvement process is of crucial importance as the local dimension becomes the catalyst for sustainability.

7. Sustainable development in Italy

Besides receiving recent international efforts in the area of sustainable development, such as the Pact of Amsterdam, Urban Agenda for the EU, the UN Habitat III Conference of Quito, ending with the New Urban Agenda and the publication of the Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor 2017 by the EU Commission Joint Research Centre, Italy has arranged its own national operational plan: the National Operational Programme "Metropolitan cities 2014-2020", complemented by the "Plan for Southern Italy" signed by the cities of Naples, Bari, Reggio Calabria, Messina, Catania, Palermo and Cagliari, with an "Institutional Development Contract" with Taranto and agreements with Milan, Florence, Genoa and Venice. Despite the efforts made since 2014, the latest Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASVIS) report indicates that regarding Goal 11, despite a positive trend of development in the last three years, the situation is worse than that recorded in 2010: most strikingly there is a clear gap between northern and southern regions, with most negative figures found in Campania, Calabria and Sicily. Some resources have been allocated at the national level by the 2019 Finance Act for sustainable development, for example increasing electric and bicycle mobility and green endowment of cities. Further, the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the government and the Conference of Regions that establishes an "Action Plan for the Improvement of Air Quality" and fiscal measures to encourage urban rehabilitation included in the Degree Growth is very positive. However, despite these, ASVIS continues to emphasize the urgency of the adoption, in a definitive way, of a National Urban Agenda for Sustainable Development. Furthermore, it is considered necessary that the Italian State provides itself with:

- A national plan for sustainable mobility;
- Inclusion in the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) of a deadline for the purchase of internal combustion cars, in the wake of similar provisions by other European states;
- A national plan on the circular economy;
- A law for the containment of new land development and the definition of an action

plan across the state, regions and municipalities that defines its terms and monitors its implementation;

- An intervention plan on the peripheries of urban areas and on the housing needs of the weakest groups.

On the basis of the needs expressed and the favorable willingness of the government to commit to the realization of an urban agenda for sustainable development, ASVIS has declined the actions at urban level, on the basis of the following individual objectives:

- Health and well-being: implementation of essential levels of care (LEA) and performance (LEP) and encouraging local road safety projects to reduce territorial health inequalities;
- Education: increase investment in universities and research centres to enhance their role as promoters of urban area development; promote services for students, teachers and researchers. The measures are intended to reduce the gap between the centre-north and the south of the country;
- Gender equality: support municipalities in the development of childcare services;
- Water and sanitation: approval of the bill "Public and Participatory Management of the Integral Water Cycle" and extension to all cities of the "Charter for the Right to Water"; promotion of campaigns in the territories to reduce the use of plastic bottles and disposable plastic;
- Employment: encourage the creation of places for the development of economic and cultural activities in disused industrial sites;
- Digital transition: encourage projects for the transitions of cities towards "smart city" models and promote the implementation of the Digital Growth Strategy 2014-2020 and the Ultra-Wideband Plan;
- Housing policies: implementation of an intervention plan on the suburbs and on the housing needs of the most disadvantaged groups in the medium term, through continuous forms of financing and the identification of priority areas of intervention (e.g. "Bandi periferie"), according to the conclusions of the House Committee of Inquiry approved in December 2017;
- Urban mobility: adopt the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) and insert a deadline for the purchase of internal combustion cars;
- Soil loss: approve the law for the containment of soil consumption and define an action plan between the State, regions and municipalities to identify the limits and define methods for monitoring and control;
- Separate collection: adopt a national plan on the circular economy in order to prevent the production of waste through the strengthening of the measures provided for in the National Waste Prevention Programme and the revision of the

waste pricing system to encourage good behaviour.

8. International and Italian Good Practices

Five years after the United Nations endorsed the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, governments, UN bodies, international and regional authorities and stakeholders began to collect information to assess progress. This was in order to evaluate which actions have been carried out, how and how much they have contributed to the achievement of the goals and what impact they have made based on concrete evidence. In addition, the information collected represents a fundamental contribution to the identification and dissemination of good practices and to their possible replication in other territories. To this end, UN DESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs) launched a call for good practices, success stories and lessons learned by national governments and all stakeholders active in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, selecting and collecting a database of over 500 good practices. Below, we have selected some related to Goal 11.

8.1. Localization of Goal 11: New York and the Voluntary Local Review

According to the words of Penny Abeyawardena, Office of International Affairs of New York City, the role of cities is evolving to adapt to new realities, and metropolitan areas are coming together to address common challenges such as climate change, immigration or the more recent health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The role played by the Mayor's Office for International Affairs of New York is to connect local initiatives to global efforts. After the ratification of the SDGs by the United Nations, the Office has mapped out common features with OneNYC, the city's sustainable development plan, and created Global Vision/Urban Action, a platform dedicated to global goals tracking methodologies. The presence in the city of New York of 193 permanent diplomatic missions, 116 consulates and more than 70 commercial missions (the city hosts the largest diplomatic corps in the world), made it possible to enjoy a very solid international expertise and fostered an unprecedented exchange of ideas and experiences, but the city contribution was not limited to this. Every year, in fact, UN member states share progress made in the field of SDGs through the so-called Voluntary National Reviews. Despite the lack of such a commitment from the United States at the federal level, the city of New York decided to share collected data with the rest of the world and launch the Voluntary Local Review initiative, establishing itself as the first city to present it at the July 2018 Forum. In the months that followed, it collaborated with other cities that wanted to engage in

this sense and, during the 2019 General Assembly launched the NYC Declaration on the Voluntary Local Review based on three commitments: identifying alignment elements between existing strategies and the SDGs; creation of at least one stakeholders forum for sharing experiences, good practices and information collected within the framework of the SGDs; and submission of a voluntary local review to the UN during the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. One of the main features of the Declaration is the emphasis on the use of existing resources to foster participation, regardless the region size. Helsinki, for example, was the first to join, promoting the creation of a multidisciplinary research group to compare its city development strategy with the SDGs. Based on the research results, the city identified the primary education and the public library system as fields of implementation and in 2019 presented its first report at the institutional level. Freetown in Sierra Leone launched in 2019 Transform freedom, a plan aimed at promoting socio-economic and environmental issues and is, at the moment, in the phase of mapping synergies between its targets and the SDGs. These processes allow not only to present a report, but above all give the possibility to city leaders to exchange good practices internationally and to generate concrete change for their constituents. The possibilities offered by producing such a report are almost endless and could be of great importance even during the current phase of health and economic crisis, as the tool is based on the exchange of experiences and good practices and allows for the application of measures that have proven to be most effective in solving a given problem and adapting them to the local context. Ultimately, it is a sort of common language for local authorities to identify solutions to problems and accelerate the impact on communities.

8.2. European Commission's "Circular Economy Action Plan"

The concept of circular economy is complex and its implementation can only be completed in the long term. For these reasons, in 2015 the European Commission launched a single strategy aimed at encouraging labor markets, growth and investment while respecting the Union's environment and natural capital. The Circular Economy Action Plan includes 54 actions covering the entire material and product cycle, from production to consumption, from waste management to the secondary market for raw materials. The objective that the Commission had set itself with the realization of this project was to accelerate the European transition towards a circular economy, in order to make Europe an international model rejecting the traditional and outdated consumerist one. To this end, the Commission embarked on a participatory process based on the conviction that the circular economy can only be adopted when public administrations, the business community and civil society work together, creating a broad coalition that serves as a tool for stakeholder engagement from the earliest stages of the action plan. Further it was intended not to limit the action plan to single policies, but rather

to expand the principles underlying the circular economy to different implementation areas, according to a defined line of priorities. This approach is also followed internally through the support of inter-departmental cooperation to achieve greater participation and staff coordination. One of the essential and unique features of the project is the combination of legislative, financial and support initiatives, aimed at increasing stakeholder engagement and encouraging investment. In this way, the Commission intends to give authorities and stakeholders the possibility to accelerate the transition towards the circular economy, fostering job growth, innovation, a competitive advantage for European businesses and environmental protection both within and beyond Europe's borders. In order to achieve these goals the Commission set up a network that involves economic actors, local authorities and civil society. In addition, in cooperation with the European Economic and Social Committee, it launched the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform and its dedicated website, an open virtual space where interested parties can disseminate experiences, good practices, commitments and strategies. Legislative initiatives, on the other hand, are adopted with the support of the European Parliament and the Council. Instead, the administrations of the Member States are involved through initiatives aimed at deepening knowledge and exchanging good practices at the political level. Among the most important activities, the Commission has adopted: the revision of waste legislation to strengthen Europe's leading role in recycling of materials; the first European strategy on plastics and follow-up measures to reduce negative effects arising from the use of disposable plastic items; the proposal for the revision of fertilizer legislation; guidelines on industrial CO_2 emissions, construction recycling and demolition waste, fight against unfair commercial practices. And again, adoption of the Green Public Procurement or the Eco design Working Plan 2016-2019; adoption of a monitoring system (Circular Economy Monitoring Framework) to measure the progress made at the European and national level and to enable policy makers to identify good practices and areas to prioritize for further actions to achieve, in the long term, the transition towards the circular economy.

The Commission's initiative has certainly helped to detach the idea that economic growth must necessarily be associated with the exploitation of resources and to increase the adoption of circular economy practices by stakeholders, including SMEs, the productivity of resources used, the rate of exploitation of "circular" materials, and the normalization of the concept of circular economy among the civilian population. The results also concerned the job market, with the creation of new opportunities and the development of new businesses in the sector, as well as new business models and the creation of new markets both in Europe and in the rest of the world. From a political point of view, the action plan has allowed the creation of a framework of common and consistent production and consumption rules among member states. This helped in creating a real standard which contributed to change not only in the perception of the circular economy by public administrations, but also by the business community, now more

aware of environmental issues.

From an investment perspective, it is noteworthy that the Commission's availability of programs specifically designed to foster research and innovation (such as Horizon2020) facilitated the achievement of the action program objectives. The greatest challenges concerned the creation of new sources of funding and the ability of public and private entities to prepare and develop investment projects capable of fostering the transition to the circular economy. At the same time, it was necessary to ensure the horizontality of cooperation between the different components at the political level, in order to avoid the sectorization of interventions. The Commission's action plan has had several advantages, the most notable of which is surely that it brought a complex concept like the circular economy into the spotlight and normalized it within political and economic debate. Furthermore, the proposed structural model, based on the horizontal cooperation of different policy sectors and on the active participation of stakeholders can be easily replicated at the institutional level, starting from the awareness that:

- The concept of circular economy is complex, and its implementation requires a common and coherent strategy;
- The benefits of making the circular economy concept a political priority are both short and long-term. The services in the field of environmental protection, entrepreneurship, research, international cooperation, along with many others, make a key contribution in the process of normalizing the concept within and outside of institutions;
- Circular change is faster when economic and civil society actors are directly involved. Effective policy in this sector needs the support of companies and civil society to maximize benefits for the environment and the economy.

8.3. Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals in Flanders: a pilot project

Local governments play a crucial role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda considering the fact that achieving 65% of the subgoals included in the 17 macro SDGs requires the active involvement of local and regional public actors. However, the task is not easy to accomplish given the enormous geographic, cultural and financial differences, as well as the different challenges, budget and competencies that characterize individual institutions. To this end, the Association of Flemish Towns and Municipalities (Vereniging van Vlaamse Steden en Gemeenten VVSG) launched, during the period 2017-2019, a pilot project to initiate the localization of the 2030 Agenda goals in 20 municipalities. The main objective of the project is to design a coherent policy for the implementation of the SDGs in as many urban centres as possible. This makes it possible to embed the very concept of sustainable development within

local urban policy and provides the basis for the different entities involved to make a concrete contribution to the 2030 Agenda. The project is divided into three directions: awareness, lines and political guidelines, whose interaction promotes sustainable development locally and according to models of active grassroots participation. An important push for the exchange of good practices and programming was represented by the 2018 municipal elections, which enabled the organization of several meetings, not only to collect materials and experiences in the 20 cities involved in the project, but also to develop new instruments and draw up recommendations to incorporate in future city programs. Activities with urban public communities and political actors involved in the elections were then accompanied by outreach materials, disseminated through the official channels available (SDGs website, conferences, workshops) to Flemish local governments and translated into English to reach international audiences. In the run-up to the elections, the targets of the project's actions were the political parties and candidates in order to encourage them to include sustainable city development in their programs. After the election, project actions were targeted at elected politicians, councillors, and city consultants. Among the major difficulties encountered in carrying out the actions, the need to provide "live" recommendations, without having the possibility to validate the contribution in a too accurate way. To this extent, providing policymakers with documents that were considered in progress and providing for constant updates was an efficient and effective way to deliver data and good practices from other contexts in real time. A precise and accurate system of indicators made it possible to identify the practices that are most consistent with the city's objectives in a transparent and reliable manner, so as to ensure coherence between the actions undertaken and the SDGs. Given the fragmentation of the Flemish political and institutional system, cooperation and coordination between the different bodies was ensured by placing the actions in the framework of the national context through constant dialogue, identification of common goals, assignment of responsibility for each actor involved and alignment of the selected strategies. The importance of including the SDGs in the political agenda of local authorities and city administrations was to lay the foundations for coherent long-term planning. Thus, to embark on a structural path towards the sustainable growth of urban areas and a review of their mission, a vision in the areas of strategic planning, political strategy, organizational structure and communication is needed. The Flemish project in particular offers several insights for the implementation of a path easily adaptable to other contexts, which aims to bring to the attention of political and government forces needs related to the very life of their communities in terms of sustainable urban development. Moreover, the methodology can also be applied to other realities that intend to undertake a similar path, such as schools or private companies. From a strategic perspective, local and city authorities represent the actors closest to the citizenry, so that they are in an ideal position to translate the contents of the 2030 Agenda into concrete actions that respond to real needs. Localization and projects with local involvement provide regional and local authorities with the necessary tools

to set up concrete actions on the ground.

8.4. Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals in the context of climate change in Barcelona

The Environmental Department of Barcelona Provincial Council supports metropolitan cities in their journey towards sustainability since 1981. To achieve the SDGs set by the 2030 Agenda, the Council created ad hoc technical and economic support for cities to localize interventions related to climate change. This linked the Covenant of Mayors as well as the work done on Agenda 21 with the SDG goals and the 2030 Agenda. The peculiarity of this project is that it addresses the localization of the SDGs from the climate change perspective, so it considers each support line (mobility in the case of goal 11) as part of a system in which every contribution is functional in mitigating climate change. In practical terms, this meant concrete support provided to municipalities in sustainable activities necessary for alignment with Agenda 21 and in the elaboration of strategic plans for the SDGs, the elaboration and adoption of a periodic monitoring and evaluation system and related indicators, and the development of an adequate communication plan. These actions allowed the creation a model replicable by any municipality involved in the Agenda 2030. The Catalan Department (DIBA) therefore became the promoter of a project which involved 311 municipalities in the province of Barcelona, who along with residents had been identified as the direct beneficiaries of the action. In addition, in its role of donor, DIBA also provides technical and financial support to cities interested in the localization of the SDGs. The main objectives of the project promoted by DIBA are to improve the quality of life of citizens living in the province of Barcelona, to instigate progress and to ensure territorial balance through coordinated strategies uniformly applied throughout the territory. One of the main strategies adopted is the commitment to a better future, of which the 2030 Agenda is, in itself, a promoter. In order to implement it locally and in urban areas, DIBA established the following procedure: a) the municipalities contact DIBA and fill an application form asking for the support; b) DIBA scores the applications of municipalities following several parameters, for example if the municipality had developed other projects related to SDGs; c) when the support is given to the municipality, the Department proceeds with the diagnosis of the "state of art" of the strategic plan adopted by the individual municipalities selected, to verify how effectively these are aligned with the 2030 Agenda goals, and gives them effective tools to provide for more structured coordination, to fill any gaps or divergences. Based on the information provided, the municipality will decide which objective to focus on, depending on its strategies. The activities selected and designed will then be subjected to checks and periodic evaluations based on specific indicators that take into consideration the level of knowledge acquired by the population on sustainable development and the state of progress in this sense. The results of

the project are still partial, unsurprisingly considering that the project is still in its initial phase. However, the main impact of the process undertaken is the creation of a new line of support for the cities committed to implementing the SDGS such as the creation of common goals at different levels of governance, greater awareness of sustainable goals to be achieved by local entities, greater active involvement, and concrete improvement in the development of multi-level governance models.

8.5. The 2030 Agenda in Western Sweden: a collaborative forum for partnerships to implement the goals

For 20 years the GAME network has acted as a neutral arena for the Triple Helix model of innovation in Western Sweden to foster collaboration and innovation in the field of sustainable development. The network's new collaborative forum (Agenda 2030 in Western Sweden) aims to stimulate the creation of partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs with a holistic focus that enables the exchange of good practices and knowledge about the individual goals and their interconnectedness. Therefore, the main objective of the forum is to provide opportunities for actors from different sectors to meet and address issues of common commitment. The forum encourages coordinated actions, in the conviction that working in sectoral silos cannot solve current development challenges but, instead, it is necessary to move from the idea of networking to that of co-creation.

Partnerships formed by representatives of different sectors have proven to be effective since the development of Silicon Valley, where the concept of the Triple Helix model was realized for the first time. However, in the most recent urban social development, we are increasingly witnessing the phenomena of inclusion in the decision-making process of further actors. In short, a Five Helix model is expected, including active citizenship in the decision-making process. These examples have been concretely implemented in Italy, where they have been tested in the city of Bologna, with its Common Goods legislation; and they established international platforms for study and learning.

8.6. Helsinki's participatory model for making cities and human settlements inclusive, resilient and sustainable

Helsinki introduced a new model of participation and interaction about two years ago, through a process of co-definition with citizens and legislative normalization at the administrative level, to make it binding on the entire city organization. The model is based on the knowledge and

expertise of citizens and promotes the involvement of residents and partners in the definition of development, services and city areas; through open and participatory models of interaction. This model proposed by the city of Helsinki aims to guide each worker in reflecting on how they can incorporate participation into their activities. This is based on the understanding that human-centred actions and an open and participatory approach to political decision-making are the engine for developing the human potential of individuals. The active involvement of people is therefore placed at the heart of political action to provide a model city tailored to its citizens. Here, people, actions and meetings are in a condition capable of generating a positive impact on daily life through structuring, digitalization and dialogue. This process is based on the use of the most modern co-definition approaches and is transforming the city into an experimentation and business platform for innovation. The city strategy therefore relies on active involvement and stakeholders' participation and on the interactions between design, digitalization and dialogue, i.e. on the use of digital tools to foster citizen engagement. Besides these elements, Helsinki also aims to use the latest artificial and robotic intelligence to improve city services and to develop city renovations. In order to involve employees and to encourage the participatory process, the city devised an actual "participation game". Through this game, the individual worker can learn how to use participatory methods and structure its own participation by transforming it in concrete actions and projects, how to allocate the assigned budget and how to effectively manage actions. The Helsinki model was able to build an efficient resource for more equal regional development and the funds have been allocated evenly. Furthermore, cooperation with associations and activists ensured that even the least active and represented population groups were able to participate in the city's development process. This also ensured the participation of immigrant groups and, above all, of younger people, supported by the development of a real education in democracy. In addition, the allocated budget also helped to prepare governments to take certain actions and provide clarity for the public regarding the costs of investment. Finally, joint planning made citizens more engaged with their city and common resources, fostered increased social inclusion and a sense of belonging through bottom-up actions.

8.7. The Italian Sustainable Development Festival

The Italian Sustainable Development Festival is an awareness-raising campaign launched by the Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASVIS) in 2017 to promote and spread a culture of sustainability among the Italian society. The festival takes place every year at the end of May and lasts for 17 days i.e. as many days as the SDGs. The festival's primary goal is to raise awareness about the 2030 Agenda. Between 2017 and now, citizen participation and its visibility has increased exponentially. Thus, it became a real catalyst for attention and promoter

of dialogue and change, even at the level of city governance. This is clearly seen with the commitment by 12 metropolitan cities to adopt policies for the SDGs in their administrations. Every year, the Festival involves citizens, organizations of the third sector, institutions and companies in the events under the coordination of the Organizing Secretary (ASVIS). Among the factors that have allowed for the expansion of activities, is a growing mobilization of Italian civil society on the issues of sustainable development in general and the 2030 Agenda in particular. This allowed a change in attitude towards sustainability issues not only by citizens but also by policy makers. The participation of public institutions and the involvement of all stakeholders also provided a favourable ground for the success of the initiative and the creation of new opportunities for those new to the industry. While at a national level the festival represents a unique event, it is also easily replicable even on a more limited basis. Moreover, from an organizational and functional perspective, the ability to gather hundreds of organizations at all levels of Italian society gives the opportunity to favour multi-level actions based on common goals and to develop complementary and coherent strategies.

8.8. Localization of the SDGs in Basilicata

In view of aligning its regional policy with the 2030 Agenda SDGs, and with the National Sustainable Development Strategy, since 2017 Basilicata has undertaken an ad-hoc analysis in collaboration with FEEM (Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei). This led to the identification of regional priorities with the participation of stakeholders and public authorities. The analysis aims at understanding the reference framework and the positioning of Lucania in terms of sustainability. Moreover, it seeks to elaborate a proposal for a local approach to the 2030 Agenda, based on the contribution of stakeholders and the importance of an adequate dissemination strategy. The localization process started with an analysis of the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the territory to assess its positioning with respect to SDGs. The region presents itself as a rural area characterized by a general decrease in population. From an economic perspective, the gross domestic product is better than in other southern regions, but lower compared to the national average: despite an improvement in the employment rate and a consequent improvement in the economic situation of families and greater support for consumers, 21% of the Lucanian population still lives in poverty. As far as the social fabric is concerned, Basilicata ranks among the most successful regions in terms of access and permanence at school. In 2020 it had already reached the 10% schooling target set for 2030. However, serious criticalities remain in terms of quality and innovation, school infrastructure and additional services, to the extent that, alongside Piedmont, it is the region with the lowest percentage of technological equipment in primary schools. Regarding university education, after a peak in enrolment at the University of Basilicata in the 2013-2014 academic

year, a decline was registered. This was mainly due to a traditional migratory culture to larger centres in the south and central north. To counteract this trend, through a public call, Basilicata launched a process to encourage technology transfer from the research sector to the production one, the T3 innovation. The structure, headquartered in the campus of Macchia Romana and realized in collaboration with national and international partners and the incubator Sviluppo Basilicata S.p.a, represents an important instrument of connection between the business world and research. Finally, from an environmental-energy perspective, the region was already ranked sixth in 2014 with a Global Green Economy Index (GGEI) above the national average and is a good producer of electricity from renewable sources.

These social, demographic, and economic elements represent the starting point of an analysis and planning that takes into consideration, in the wake of the guidelines followed also for the drafting of the National Strategy, the necessary definition of the reference context and the evaluation of the positioning of the area concerned with respect to the SDGs and their targets. Moreover, this analysis must also take into account the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the system to identify priority objectives, and the active involvement of stakeholders according to a model of multidimensional and integrated action. First, in order to establish a line of benchmarking of the Basilicata region, indicators were selected to reflect the output of official statistics (Eurostat and Istat), the significance, materiality and relevance to the targets set by the 2030 Agenda and the National Strategy, as well as regional statistics. Thus, 33 elementary indicators were identified, two for each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Based on these, it was possible to determine the positioning of the region in view of an extensive definition of sustainability that would take into account its environmental, economic and social dimensions. This was in order to provide indications on the state of art and understand what the strengths and weaknesses were, with a view to planning and monitoring the developments achieved. Once the analysis of the context had been finalized, the indicators identified and the study phase of the positioning of the interested area concluded, it was then possible to proceed with the actual localization of the objectives. The localization is an essential element for the realization of paths of sustainable transformation and for the achievement of the SDGs. It takes place through a process of adaptation of the general principles expressed by Agenda 2030 to the local context. The local dimension therefore plays a key role and is based on an analysis of the needs arising from the cultural and identity characteristics of the region, with a view to enhancing and strengthening the processes under way. This process of localization relies on local social, political, and economic features and is implemented through intervention and investment programs in the public policies, governance systems, participatory decision-making processes, and development projects. In this respect, the above-mentioned European funding programmes demonstrate their potential and offer various possibilities for action. Thus, local policy must not erase its programmes, but rather integrate the various investment and spending plans linking them to the priorities of the area.

As far as the methodology is concerned, the project promoted by FEEM followed the guidelines defined in the document Getting Started with the SDGs in Cities, and it was based on a bottom-up approach and on the active involvement of stakeholders in sustainability. Four phases were identified:

- Launching of an inclusive and participatory process to build alliances: identifying all stakeholders, defining ways to engage, raising awareness, strengthening political leadership and the integrated governance model;
- Participatory definition of the local 2030 Agenda and its goals: definition of the governance structure and coordinating commission, baseline, priority objectives and related priorities of local development, recognition of the areas of action and targets of intervention, provision of a multi-year action program, the resources necessary for its implementation and the implementing entities;
- Planning, implementation and monitoring of the local 2030 Agenda and its goals: concrete implementation of the local 2030 Agenda, identification of operational methods for implementing interventions and definition of the monitoring and evaluation plan, identification of good practices, drafting of an implementation plan and definition of the role of stakeholders, definition of financial resources, planning for the search of funds and financing mechanisms, definition of a monitoring plan and related indicators;
- Monitoring the progress of actions and results obtained: regular monitoring of the activities through a reporting system and the realization of open meetings with citizens.

As can be seen from the phases described above, the proposed approach is strongly participatory and bottom-up. It sees its implementation through the inclusive and participatory process, the establishment of local partnerships, the endorsement by institutional actors, the active involvement of local stakeholders, the identification of objectives through a participatory process and the precise identification of roles. Consequently, it is essential to implement three key actions: 1) stakeholders mapping; 2) identifying the governing structure; 3) defining the region's priority targets.

Finally, in order to encourage a broad and generalized change of perspective, it is necessary to engage in a profound dissemination of the culture of sustainability through paths that generate shared values and greater awareness of the issue. It is therefore not only a matter of spreading news, but also of stimulating knowledge, skills and lifestyles based on responsible models of production and consumption and of active and aware citizenship. At the institutional level, it is important to share, capitalize and assimilate the concepts, values and results obtained, to support the development of coherent policies and generalize the new models within civil

society.

8.9. The localization of the 2030 Agenda in the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

The Municipality of Reggio Emilia described, in its Single Programming Document, the connection between the institution's strategic direction with the SDGs for the period 2019-2024. The strategic guidelines of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia's mandate were approved with the resolution no. 64 of July 9, 2019 of the City Council and objectives set by the municipal administration for the period 2019-2024. The strategic guideline identified:

- City of social capital: aims to strengthen an integrated system of services for individuals or families, to promote the development of the barrier-free, participated and inclusive city. It also encompasses policies for urban security and actions to combat crime;
- City of education and knowledge: aims to emphasise the younger generations and promotes culture and creativity through the creation of a wide range of educational and school services. It includes actions to promote sports culture, cultural diversity and equal opportunities;
- City of ecological transition: aims to develop environmental sustainability and mobility through activities and projects to combat air pollution and be in favour of urban green, the improvement of the road network and bicycle mobility, and maintenance of public areas. It includes urban regeneration policies and interventions for the redevelopment of the historic centre and the various neighbourhoods;
- City of attractiveness and internalization: aims to promote distinctive elements of the city and its territory at the European and international level. It includes tourism policies, initiatives of valorisation of the historical centre and tourist-cultural projects;
- City of economy, work and innovation: aims to support work and business through the dissemination of technology information, better infrastructural equipment, services for supporting businesses and especially through the dissemination of skills and digital technologies;
- Innovation in the municipality: aims to improve the efficiency of the administrative machine both internally and towards citizens and businesses through tools and information technology, a better staff organization, greater communication with the city, the enhancement of resources, the rationalization of expenses and the fight against tax evasion.

Each strategic direction was then subdivided into general sub-objectives, which will be achieved through specific actions. According to this framework, each direction constitutes a strategic line of its own and is associated with specific SDGs of the 2030 Agenda. In addition, supporting

indicators have been included in the operational section to represent the link between local and global policy.

The sub-goals can be outlined as follows:

- City of social capital: health and welfare, city without barriers, collaborative city, protection and security.

Actions: social and social-healthcare integration, inclusion and measures against poverty, family policies, social housing, unobstructed services and facilities; neighbourhood as a place of collaborative governance, the urban ecosystem of co-governance; security, legality and urban decorum, policing of the territory, participation and neighbourhood control.

- City of education and knowledge: school and education, youths, creativity and university, culture, knowledge and ideas, sport, rights of people.

Actions: integrative system of 0-6 services, 6-18 education services, interventions and actions to support the school education system; new opportunities for the younger generations, youth creativity; culture as a common and accessible good, places of cultural contamination (libraries, museums, cinemas, theatres); culture of sports practice, redevelopment of sports facilities; equal opportunities, promotion of cultural diversity.

- City of ecological transition: green and resilient city, sustainable agriculture, care of the public city, mobility, land use and urban transformation,

Actions: environmental protection and sustainability, care and enhancement of green areas; agricultural areas and sustainable production; usable and safe public areas (road maintenance, bicycle paths), redevelopment and efficiency of public buildings; plans and projects for sustainable mobility, interventions and infrastructures for mobility; challenge to sustainability and common goods, regeneration and urban projects.

- City of attractiveness and internalization: territorial promotion, internationalization.

Actions: historic centre – attractive and dynamic place, territorial marketing and tourism, international relations and project, the 2030 Agenda and sustainable development.

- City of economy, work and innovation: work, economy, talents and enterprises, smart city and digital transformation.

Actions: infrastructures for economic system development, policies for economic system development; digital infrastructures, digital skills and services.

- Innovation in the municipality: innovation technologies, functioning of the institution; enhancement and rationalization of resources, participating bodies, anti-corruption and

transparency.

Only for strategic direction n.6 and related objectives was it not possible to associate any of the SDG Objectives of the 2030 Agenda, being related to the internal organization of the entity.

9. Conclusions: the role of cities and the health crisis generated by Sars-cov-2

The inclusion of Goal 11 among the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations officially sanctioned the importance of cities in this area on a global level. Today, cities are at a turning point and their role is being challenged by the effects of the pandemic caused by the spread of the Sars-cov-2 virus, which requires coherent management in urban and suburban areas. In fact, the pandemic poses great challenges for global cities, resulting from the perspectives of the economic and health crisis. However, precisely in this context, the SDGs represent common objectives to encourage virtuous processes aimed at social inclusion, fight against inequalities, environmental protection, and improvement of education. Thus, the international community must act consistently at all levels and only then can cities become fundamental actors in the post-covid era, through localization processes and the involvement of communities and their leaders. To this extent, according to Tobia Zevi, researcher and political activist, it is useful to ask ourselves three questions: what impact will the health emergency have on the global urbanisation process? How will the virus affect a polarised population, divided between rich and poor? What is the role of technology in the fight against the virus and for the future of cities? While it is not possible, at present, to determine whether and to what extent the pandemic will bring about a change in the expansion of urban centres (with urban population reaching 70% of the world's population by 2030), it is possible to speculate. For example, an increase in smart working practices could lead to a shift towards less densely populated and healthier areas than cities, leading to a slowdown in urbanisation. In addition, it is possible that there are differences in behaviour between the older population, more inclined to choose healthier places of residence, and the younger population, more inclined towards urban centres. In this case, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda could be accelerated in view of a reduction in mega-cities and a concrete improvement in urban living conditions, which would facilitate the achievement of the SDGs. On the other hand, the inevitable impact on the economy could jeopardize the process undertaken in several cities of the world through the so-called Voluntary Local Review, an effort undertaken to bring the SDGs into cities and to focus on the priorities of urban areas. The initiative has proved to be extremely effective not only for the implementation of concrete policies, but also for the

participation and appropriation of the message by citizens, the so-called "ownership", according to which each of us is responsible for building a sustainable and just world. Much will therefore depend on how resources will be used in the recovery phase. It will not only be necessary to invest, but to examine the living conditions of population groups formally and not formally excluded from society in order to make it more inclusive. Finally, according to Israeli historian Yuval Harari there are two strategic choices to be made during an emergency: national isolationism or international cooperation; electronic surveillance or citizen empowerment. Both issues are closely related to cities and the role that technology will play in the future normalisation of urban life.