

Case Study // Round Table SDG 11: Promoting resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements: intersectoral cooperation and evidence-based policies

#weResilient: A local governance and accountability model for territorial and community resilience

Potenza, Basilicata, Italy

Levels: subnational and local

SDG addressed

As described hereafter, the case study refers to a global comprehensive policy-making strategy aimed at implementing **regional (wide-area social-economic) development** built on territorial/urban sustainability and safety. The outlining and implementation of the whole strategic process is performed by coordinating cities and municipalities (100 as for the Province of Potenza) with a regional and wide area vision and approach. For this reasons, due to the peculiarity of the territorial development policy-making strategy and to the strict interrelation existing among the SDGs, almost all of them are addressed, both directly and indirectly, as an integrated and comprehensive policy. For convenience, only the main SDGs directly addressed are listed hereafter:

Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Summary

Capitalizing its best governance practices of the last decade, the Province of Potenza outlined the #weResilient strategy for pursuing **territorial development** through a structural combination of environmental sustainability, territorial safety and climate change contrasting policies.

In 2013 a milestone has for the strategy has been achieved: delivering to the community an important tool for guiding and addressing the provincial territorial governance, the Provincial Territorial Coordination Master Plan (TCP), that represents a "structural" tool for analyzing needs and driving local governments' choices with a "wide-area" development point of view.

The outlined strategy meets with an intuition: making Advocacy towards municipalities, relevant stakeholders, major groups and communities for implementing local development policies by integrating them with DRR and territorial and communities Resilience to disasters.

The strategic implementation path consists in both an urban planning coordination activity and in an "awareness-rising" action with a supportive and subsidiary process addressed mainly to municipalities and communities.

Situation

The Italian territory is largely characterized by all major natural hazards and related risks, whose potential impacts on communities reveal very serious in case of disaster. For this reason, risk reduction policies and actions to prevent disasters must be improved and governed at all institutional levels, in order to meet the basic need for public and private safety and to build on any kind of development.

The territory of the Province of Potenza (a Italian Local Authority of super-municipal and sub-regional level), made up of 100 small-sized municipalities, is exposed to natural and man-made risks that resulted in disasters with heavy losses in the recent and ancient history.

Below a brief description of the Province of Potenza compared to the rest of Italy. The Province of Potenza has been disadvantaged by its geology and morphology that has made difficult the construction and the maintenance of strategic infrastructures for a long time.

By the way, a change of trend is currently in place: since 2001 its income per capita (among the regions of the Italian South and Islands) is the highest after Abruzzo, Sardinia and Molise Regions.

The agricultural sector is still a mainstay of the provincial economy. The industry of the Province is based on small and medium-sized enterprises: they are specialized in food productions, in the production of artificial fibers and processing of non-metallic minerals. The construction (in 1993) of a FIAT automotive factory has opened new good economic prospects.

The Province is rich in hydrocarbons, particularly oil, in the Agri river valley, where the largest oil field in continental Europe is located.

It has an important environmental heritage, both naturalistic both historical-cultural: the Province hosts on its territory several protected areas, including two national parks (Pollino and Agri Valley), two regional parks (Gallipoli Cognato – Piccole Dolomiti Lucane and Vulture) and several natural reserves.

Regarding the territorial safety (including climate changes), the disasters that struck the provincial territory during the centuries and the new threats deriving from climate changes contributed to form a solid basis on which building a renovated community sensitivity and awareness.

The Province of Potenza is playing a coordinating role in a large area composed of 100 small and very small municipalities, through a complex action tending to the outlining/implementation of a useful governance strategy aimed at achieving a proper social-economic development with a wide-area vision and approach.

PROVINCE OF POTENZA

AREA: 6.500 sqkm

POPULATION: 378.000 inh

POP. DENSITY: 60 inh/sqkm

MUNICIPALITIES: 100

CAPITAL CITY: Potenza (67.000 inh)

Strategy

For #weResilient outlining and implementation, the Province of Potenza set-up a permanent Local Platform aimed at engaging Municipalities, institutions/authorities, stakeholders, major and social groups, communities and citizens in translating the strategy into concrete actions.

The strategy has accountability as an integral aspect. By networking with municipalities, relevant stakeholders and major groups, and also for monitoring the effectiveness of the whole action, the Province of Potenza is adopting a wider accountability system including, but going far beyond, the mere financial one.

One of the main aspects of the implemented accountability system is the knowledge acquisition and sharing. During the years, lot of work has been done - for example - in multi-hazard risks and disaster risk assessment. All the information produced and/or collected by other parties have been cataloged, elaborated for scenarios building, mapping and consultation purposes and provided for wide dissemination and public access even with open sourced IT tools.

Another fundamental component is the social accountability. In the Resilience implementation path performed so far, most of the efforts have been devoted to setting-up a complex system of progressive social involvement having the main purpose of entrusting and engaging social groups and citizen in the institutional policy-making regarding territorial and urban sustainable and resilient development. For reaching this goal, many actions have been launched and performed so far including:

- setting-up of “permanent platform” with major groups for discussing problems and possible solution to be adopted;
- setting-up of IT communication tools for providing wide evidence of the actions performed and the progresses made;
- organization and implementation of specific capacity building activities, mostly addressed to institutional actors but with the enlargement also to civil society representatives;
- implementation of specific awareness-raising and information campaign;
- co-working with NGOs, Civil Society Associations, volunteering and social groups for applying to dedicated financing programs, such as the Regional, National and EU programs;
- raising the support (not only financial) by the private sector, by means of specific engagement programs and initiatives;
- setting-up of processes of progressive confidence/trust building, outlined and calibrated on the specific and contingent needs of the different social components and on reciprocal co operation and assistance.

Another fundamental aspect of the Strategy is the political and public accountability.

For reaching this goal, many actions have been launched and performed so far including the setting-up of a permanent network with all the municipalities and of a set of activities similar to those related to civil society but more politically and institutionally addressed.

Also in this case, the setting-up of processes of progressive confidence/trust building, outlined and calibrated on the specific and contingent features of the different political/public actors and on reciprocal cooperation and assistance complete the action.

Results and impact

#weResilient main achievements and results:

- Promoting comprehensive Resilience across the provincial territory, the Province of Potenza was declared a World Role Model for Inclusive Resilience and Territorial Safety by UNISDR
- Engaging local communities and indigenous culture in Resilience implementation, the Province of Potenza was declared a Community Champion for Disaster Risk Reduction under the “Knowledge for Life” theme by UNISDR in IDDR2015
- Permanent networking with Cities, stakeholders and major groups for a comprehensive sustainable territorial development
- Performing supportive actions to Cities with a subsidiary and wide-area approach
- Performing programmes and actions for including communities and people in relevant institutional decision making processes, building capacities, developing capabilities, raising awareness, increasing political will and public support in local disaster risk reduction
- Building local to trans-national partnerships for sharing cooperation and best practices exchanges
- Contributing to implementing Local Government Self Assessments in all 100 Cities for measuring city-level and territorial resilience in a coordinated way
- Contributing to the finalization of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-30, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement
- Producing a strategy and work programme to which all stakeholders and relevant key-actors agree and which effectively implement the TCP, the UNISDR’s ten essentials, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-30, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement
- Working on different and multidisciplinary applications that help in transforming “words into actions”, so in implementing policies step-by-step

Challenges and lessons learned

| Challenges encountered | Lessons learned (on which building on progresses) |
|--|---|
| Low Public support – Political will Some problems in the dialogue with and within stakeholders Small-sized Municipalities Urban structure unfit to cope with Disasters and Climate Changes injuries High urban and Communities sprawl Resources | Act on a “structural” channel: Land-Use and Government Policy Coordination Engage/Involve Provide Support/Cooperation Entrust/Empower and facilitate dialogues with stakeholders Build partnerships/share experiences Attract Private Business: PPP/PPPP |

| | |
|---|---|
| Skills and capacities | Engage Civil Society in Decision Making |
| Community engagement in Decision Making | Enhance capacities |
| Public Awareness | Enhance Public awareness |

Potential for replication

Although the regulation contexts and the framework on urban planning has different among different Countries and Regions, the experience can be exported for implementation elsewhere due to its methodological character and approach. In fact, in close connection with the various regulation contexts in the fields of land use and urban planning, civil protection and risk prevention, it is always possible to include in the planning instruments special sections about DRR and resilience, providing a regional/local government with a coordination action over the urban territorial policy-making.

In the end, for the implementation are necessary only few 'easy to be found things': a public Authority with a close and consolidated in time relationship with its communities, a shared vision, a bottom-up approach that can provide communities with ownership for following-up the action over time.

Contact

Name: Alessandro Attolico

Role: Executive Director of Territorial Planning, Environment and Civil Protection Dept. and Advocate of the UNISDR "Making Cities Resilient" global Campaign

Organisation: Province of Potenza Local Authority, Italy

Contacts: alessandro.attolico@provinciapotenza.it

Web: www.provincia.potenza.it

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/provpzresilient> - Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/provpzresilient>