Local and regional implementation of the SDGs and VLRs: Experience of Italian local and regional governments

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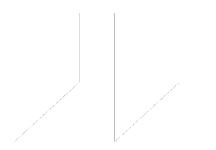
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ARCO
Action Research for CO-development

ARCO is a University centre founded in 2008 at PIN s.c.r.l., Prato (Italy). It offers research, qualified consulting, and training services in social economy, local development, inclusive development, M&E and impact evaluation and circular innovation.

ARCO relies on the expertise of a multidisciplinary team and operates both at national and international level.

ARCO supports the Yunus Social Business Centre University of Florence, the first Italian centre accredited by the Yunus Centre in Dhaka (Bangladesh), founded by the Noble Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus.

01
Social Economy

• Social Reports and Sustainability accounting
• Social Impact Assessment
• Design of corporate social responsibility strategies (CSR)
• Research, consultancy and training in social economy and social business

02
Inclusive Development

• Quantitative and qualitative research on vulnerability, resilience and multidimensional poverty
• Support in the creation of policies concerning groups at risk of marginalization
• Simulation of the impact of policies, programmes and social protection policies
• Elaboration and implementation of Emancipatory Research processes.

03
Local Development

• Support in strategic planning and policy design for sustainable human development
• Territorial and sectoral diagnosis and needs assessment
• Measurement of multidimensional wellbeing and sustainable development
• Creation of ethical and environmental labels

04
Circular Innovation& Sustainable Commodities

• Support for the definition of policies for the circular transition at urban level
• Need analysis and product characterization for the sustainability of supply chains and organizations
• Implementation of innovative procedures and integrated management systems

05
M&E and Impact Evaluation

• Monitoring & Evaluation
• Impact Evaluation
• Design of statistical investigation tools
• Data collection and analysis with qualitative and quantitative methods
• Evaluation of communication and awareness campaign

OUR EXPERIENCE ON SDG LOCALIZATION

- Voluntary Local Review of Florence Metropolitan City

- Metropolitan 2030 Agenda of Florence Metropolitan City

- Benchmarking analysis on designing local strategies for sustainable development

- Multilevel governance for SDG localization (UN-Habitat)

- Guidelines on social economy and cohesion policy for SDG localization (UNDP)

- Evaluation of the UNDP ART Global Initiative (UNDP)

- Review of VLR guidelines and good practices (UN-Habitat)

- Training course on Geopragical Information Systems (GIS) for the 2030 Agenda

- Training course on youth engagement for SDG localization (AICS)

- Elaboration of Italian VLR Guidelines (MASE)

- Voluntary Local Review of Rome Capital Metropolitan City

- VLR purpose
- VLR process
- Political leadership, governance and ownership
- Indicators
- Social inclusion and stakeholder mobilization
- SDG mainstreaming and means of implementation
- VLR output and structure
- Multilevel integration between review processes at national and local level
- Global eco-system supporting VLR processes and SDG localization

VLR Purpose

Voluntary Local Reviews can be considered a process to accelerate SDG localization, leading to the "construction of collective knowledge" through the lens of the SDGs.

→ VLRs emerge as innovative means to analyze and monitor – on a voluntary basis – the efforts, achievements, shortcomings, and strategies of a territory towards the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

→ VLRs as drivers of innovation.

VLR Process

Shift of the VLR from a static written document to a highly engaging, living process that informs actions at the local and national levels and advances efforts to achieve the SDGs

→ Incremental, reiterative, retrofitting and interactive process

Political leadership, governance and ownership

The more the political sphere is in charge of the VLR process, the more it is likely that the VLR will influence strategic planning

→ VLRs based on a multi-level collaborative culture of governance – i.e., whole-of-government and whole-of society approaches – have more chances to obtain effective ownership of the VLR document by local institutions and communities

Indicators

The most accurate view of the SDG performance of a given community at a given time can only be provided by comprehensive and disaggregated data

→ Both local and national governments often face a data availability gap that limits the "knowledge creation process" constituted by VLRs and VNRs.

→ Fundamental constraints for local reporting include disaggregation issues, data availability issues, and the technical and financial costs of data management.

→ Many local and regional governments continue to lack the resources and capabilities necessary to collect disaggregated, trustworthy, and inclusive data

Social inclusion and stakeholder mobilization

Stakeholder involvement is a critical component of the VLR process to understand the difficulties and opportunities faced by local communities and businesses to implement the 2030 Agenda

+ localizing sustainable solutions requires the mobilization of several stakeholders and community organizations.

→ Stakeholder involvement should be guaranteed throughout the design and implementation of the VLR process.

SDG mainstreaming and means of implementation

VLRs are important tools for SDG mainstreaming as they provide the occasion to scan and detail the landscape of existing strategies and plans at the local levels and then compare against the global SDGs and their targets to identify gaps and the areas of change.

→ Since VLRs are an opportunity to review and strengthen policy coherence, it is important that they address the means of implementation of their localization strategy

VLR output and structure

There is not a standard structure or template for VLR documents, but some common building blocks can be identified:

- Overview of the context

- VLR Methodology

- SDG localization process and governance

- Progress made toward all or a selection of SDGs

- Suggestions for further actions

Multilevel integration between review processes at national and local level

VNRs and VLRs naturally complement one another

→ VLRs offer significant contributions to the national review and can nuance the level of SDG accomplishment in a country

→ The integration of VLRs into the VNR process can close the knowledge gap, offer chances to employ more nuanced disaggregated data, and enable practical lessons and good practices that may be scaled up nationally

Global eco-system supporting VLR processes and SDG localization

Array of different inputs to SDG localization: guidebooks, guidelines and publications to support local and regional governments; mechanisms to share good practices and foster peer-to-peer exchange, as well as jointly establishing regional priorities and coherence on goals; jointly raising awareness on the relevance of SDG localization; in-person and virtual training tools and opportunities to foster capacity building.

→ The establishment of a global community of sustainable development actors that learn and grow by sharing their experience and knowledge is one of the achievements of the expanding global ecosystem supporting local reviews of SDG implementation.
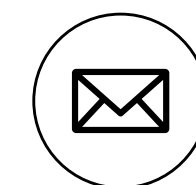
ARCO c/o PIN S.c.r.l
Servizi didattici e scientifici per l'Università di Firenze
Piazza Giovanni Ciardi, 25
59100 Prato (PO) Italy

+ 39 338 5808722

andrea.ferrannini@arcolab.org

arco