

## **Building resilient community. How to localise Sustainable Development Goals and green transition.**

The green transformation of local communities is a difficult task, requiring the involvement of various actors, the resources of development policies. At the same time, the whole process is organised by the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are supposed to set goals and directions for development activities. An important element of consideration here is the question of scaling up activities. Indeed, a key question concerns the threads of transferring top-down designed goals, policies and tools to the local level. In this article, I will outline the key factors that can foster or inhibit green transformation processes in local communities.

The first, essential element of the story is an attempt to define the breakthrough associated with the emergence of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework. This concept epitomise a political dedication to confronting the urgent, environmental and social challenges while ensuring an affluent and just future for all. Global climate change, rapid industrialisation, migration flows, unstable democratical processes lay foundation of new, global concept which leads to the collaborative endeavours of societies, public bodies, enterprises and individuals striving to foster a sustainable and resilient world. The notion of sustainable development gained prominence in the latter part of the 20th century, notably with the release of the Brundtland Report in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development. Coined within the report, sustainable development was defined as "development that fulfils the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." This seminal document laid the groundwork for incorporating environmental, social, and economic considerations into development strategies. Political development of the concept is The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations in September 2015. The Agenda comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which address a wide range of interconnected social, economic, and environmental challenges.

Figure: sustainable development goals



Source: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

These goals are integrated into the global, national and local policies. At the same time those are not a separated goals but interconnected frameworks of collective actions, tools and challenges. Broad and ambitious, those goals to fulfil need to:

- Be integrated into the development plans and actions, educational and research activities, but also everyday practices of citizens. Those goals should be embedded into the core of the variable realities of local communities.
- Facilitating multi-stakeholder partnerships. SDGs demands collaboration between different actors. Governments, local governments, NGOs, academia business but also informal groups have responsibilities, expertises and resources to act together and build the coalitions. Fostering dialogue, trust, support, networks are essential points for management of sustainable development goals.
- Monitoring and reporting progress: building monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track progress towards the SDGs. Those tools should allow to identify directions of actions, challenges, and influence decision-making. This process should involved Responsible Research Innovation approach. Data, tools,

and knowledge should be open to all stakeholders. Procedures should consider participatory approaches to monitoring.

- Promoting innovation and best practices: exchange of innovation and good example that interplays with the idea of SDGs. Promotion should lead to the adoption of sustainable practices, tools, and policies. This may include supporting new approaches and scaling up successful initiatives.
- Advocating for change: formal and informal networks of activists and actors involved in the SDG implementations are needed. Structural barriers and obstacles should be addressed. Stakeholders cannot be shy to engage with policymakers and political coalitions which merge local, regional and global actors. This can cause the mainstreaming of sustainable actions .

Achieving the SDGs is a demanding process which underline the need of change across sectors and societies, causing innovative approaches, partnerships, and practices. In doing so, the SDG frameworks do not operate in a social vacuum but have a concrete impact on local, rural, and urban local communities. Ultimately, the aim is to build resilient communities able to cope with external shocks.

Figure: resilient community



Source: [www.build-resilience.org](http://www.build-resilience.org)

Communities have been described by concepts such as sensitivity to external stimuli, the ability to cope with difficult situations, plasticity to return to a pre-crisis state. It describes the ability to draw on internal resources, the ability to mobilise, the ability to manage a crisis and one's own actions. In this sense, resilience, like sustainable development, is linked to concepts of governance, and has political potential by emphasising the importance of mechanisms for organising community action. An important feature here is the proactive nature of a community understood in this way, for which the ability to start innovations and sustain alternative practices to reach new solutions to problems becomes important and resourcefulness itself is actively produced by the actors involved, thus becoming a precursor of potential change. Understood in this way, resourcefulness is a feature, a variable that allows the community to act.

In summary, it is possible to identify two basic characteristics of a community that make up its resilience.

- (Resilience: understood reactively, as the ability of a rural community to cope with external stressors. It is the ability to return to a pre-crisis state caused, for example, by waves of migration or natural disasters.
- Resourcefulness: slightly changing the original assumptions, we assume it refers to the rural community's ability to plan, manage action, implement new, innovative solutions and processes. It is the community's ability to start and sustain social change ahead of potential risks.

In doing so, resilience is more technocratic. It is dependent on the framework within which a rural community operates. The economic situation, natural resources, quality of governance or human capital determine the ability of a rural community to recover. Resourcefulness appears to be more dependent on the social capital, relationship networks, knowledge and skills resources that characterise an area. This causes the concept to be highly correlated with bottom-up development concepts, as it determines the ability of a community to implement actions.

Sustainable development goals and the concept of community resilience work together. The former defines the political, overall framework and goals for transformation. The latter points to specific mechanisms, tools to implement them at the level of communities in order to strengthen their capacity to act. One key question that arises here is their localisation. I.e. how these two concepts can be transferred to the level of local communities in order to support their change processes. By the localisation we understand defining, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving global, national and subnational sustainable development goals and targets (UNDP 2014). It includes mechanisms, tools, innovations, platforms and processes to effectively translate the development agenda into results at the local level. More importantly, it will enable local communities and community-based organisations to hold governments publicly accountable for the progress made relative to the achievement of the SDGs and to build resilient local community. As essential as the process of localisation is, we should underline some difficulties and challenges to those processes:

- SDGs and to some extent resilience frameworks are global in nature. Translation of goals and actions from broad, political strategies and visions into the everyday of the local communities is needed.
- Much of the work on SDGs, resilience and green transition has been undertaken in isolation from the daily realities of urban local government. lack of a clear national policy framework, guidance or priority setting for the localisation.
- Challenges of raising awareness of the importance of local SDG initiatives and of funding such initiatives.

The processes of green transformation, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and building resilient communities, place new demands on those involved. The institutions, the people, the actions in their favour, need to bring together knowledge of global policies, the ability to use the tools available. They should also be adapted to local specificities. Localisation processes are difficult, as they require the transformation of universal frameworks to fit the specifics and the strengths and weaknesses of a community. At the same time, the process can follow:

- **Assessment and Prioritisation:** begin by conducting a thorough assessment of local needs, priorities, and existing initiatives. Essential is which goals are most relevant and pressing for the relevant local community. Engagement with stakeholders, including local governments, businesses, civil society organisations and academia, is key to the recognition of needed actions and resources.
- **Customisation and Adaptation:** tailor the actions and tools to align with local contexts, and specificity of the local community. This may involve setting specific goals, practices, used tools and adaptation of communication channels and language to resonate with local frames. Political, environmental, cultural and socio-economic factors into the implementation process.
- **Partnership and collaboration:** partnerships and collaboration to use resources, expertise, and networks for collective action is needed. It is essential to engage with local governments, businesses, NGOs, community groups, and other stakeholders to co-create and implement initiatives that address issues and build a common understanding of relevant actions.

- Capacity Building and Empowerment: activities should be focused on capacity building of local institutions, organisations, and individuals to effectively implement progress towards the SDGs. Training, technical assistance, and resources are key to empower stakeholders to take ownership of the SDGs and drive change within their communities.
- Integration and Mainstreaming: Integration of the green transition, sustainable goals and the resilience improvement into local development plans, policies, and decision-making processes across sectors is needed. Key sectors such as education, health, environment, infrastructure, and economic development should be embedded and connected to maximise the coherence of policies and result of actions.
- Monitoring: strategy of evaluation should be established. Tools should allow to track and monitor changes and challenges. At the same time it should be flexible enough to adjust and allows to take part.
- Communication and Awareness: Raise awareness and mobilise support for the localised SDGs through effective communication and advocacy efforts. Use multiple channels and platforms to engage with diverse audiences, share success stories, and galvanise action towards achieving the goals.
- Innovation and Learning: innovation and experimentation to find creative solutions to local challenges and speed up progress towards the SDGs should be supported. Tools for local, lifelong learning and adaptation by sharing knowledge, best practices and co-experimentation should be foster.
- Incorporate methods to strengthen future-oriented reflexivity in policy design and implementation, to accentuate the concrete implications for local communities.
- Local context should take into consideration. Shape of the community, tradition of – community involvement, governance models apply to the social change.
- Integrated governance approach that facilitates partnerships and dialogues between different levels of government, across sectors and with different groups in society is needed.

- Monitoring and reporting are seen to challenge on the local level. Visualisation of impact on the community, data flow, two-way channels of communication can influence the community transition process.

Last but not least, some guideline to the green transition and implementation of both sustainable development goals and resilient communities can be made.

- **VISION:** Build the common vision, joint narratives about the goals.
- **DIAGNOSIS:** Focus on proper identifications of goals and resources. Be flexible.
- **TECHNOLOGY:** Don't be too technocratic. Technical fixes are a support, but not the solutions themselves. Focus on communication, animation, local activation.
- **SILOS:** Go beyond the silos of thinking, and silos of actions. Green transition demands to connect policies, institutions, people and actions.
- **NETWORKS:** Build the local network of relevant actors, leave the space open for the new ones.
- **EXPERTS:** Don't underestimate public actors. They have got the skills, knowledge and experience which you can use. Green transition, building resilient community and implementing sustainable development goals is a complex process which needs expertises and support from public bodies.
- **WORLD:** Go beyond community, join other networks and alliances. Be political in a constructive sense. Solitude is not a way to start the green transition. Go beyond your community, seek friends.
- **PROCESS:** Bring your attention into the process too. Actions are relevant, but should be inscribed into the social process of change. If you want to go beyond a one stand project than you have to establish the new process in your community. That is your final goal.