



Local Governments as Drivers for Change – Localizing the SDGs implementation through the LED approach – The Eastern Partnership (EaP) experience

Workshop - 15 October 2015 (12:30-13:30)

Sala degli Svizzeri (Piazzetta Reale)- Turin

Minutes

Mrs Antonella Valmorbida, Secretary General of ALDA

Presentation of the workshop, the approach and the main objectives, including:

- reflect on the environment in which Local Authorities work in the Eastern Partnership area, examine & exchange on the opportunities and limits of LAs when working at local level on the implementation of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)
- showcase the LADDER approach: how can local development, through the empowerment of Local Authorities (LAs) & Civil Society as actors for change support and reinforce the engagement of citizens, the sense of ownership within their community to participate and engage in local life, raising their awareness on daily tasks and actions that need to be understood within a wider dimension, linked to a global perspective
- share & disseminate the concept of people-led and people-focused initiatives and programmes, enhancing their engagement and raising their awareness
- exchange & discuss the concept of the multi-stakeholder approach for development, promoting the involvement of LAs, CSOs and examine the links with the “quadruple helix”, a concept used under the World LED Forum (involvement of public, private, academia & civil society)

Following the presentation of the approach of the workshop, the floor was given to the speakers for short interventions:

Ms Alessandra Roccasalvo, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Kosovo

Mrs Roccasalvo focused her intervention on the role of LAs, bringing the experience from UNDP Kosovo, a region outside the EaP area, but with similar challenges and more importantly, with a similar approach for development as the one in EaP countries, namely localization of SDGs, local action for local development, including transparent local governance through a multi-stakeholder approach (“quadruple helix”). Mrs Roccasalvo then presented some concrete examples of local



innovative actions for job creation, youth empowerment, citizen's involvement and engagement of LAs & CSOs, working together for local issues that have a global dimension (migration, unemployment and youth engagement, public private cooperation, role of businesses, etc.)

In the case of Kosovo, generating a strong willingness from Municipalities to invest at local development has become a very strong component of the action of UNDP, a dimension that has considerable possibilities & opportunities for empowering LAs to work in the implementation of the SDGs at the very local level (job creation, subsidizing jobs and youth empowerment)

There are several examples of their activity in Kosovo: the creation of a *Territorial Employment Pact* (TEP) with a concrete plan of action, improvement of communication between actors and commitment due to visible results. This bottom up approach has an added value because of the involvement of a variety of stakeholders in issues at local level. In addition, they have also introduced Local Action Groups (LAG's) which have resulted in an excellent entry points overall regarding sustainability issues. Finally, she talked about the new concept of Social Entrepreneurship, which has been proven advantageous. All of these actions have result in 12000 direct beneficiaries and awareness rising.

Mr Paolo Giaccaria, University of Turin, Professor

Mr Giaccaria addressed the participants of the workshop with going to the concept of Local Economic Development (LED), touching upon the implementation of the SDGs at the local level (concept of localization). According to Mr Giaccaria, the LED approach for development has two characteristics: firstly, it relies on localized resources & forms of capital, which brings up *the concept of place* (the local). Place refers to cohesion that encompasses the stratification of resources, of different layers & features that make up the notion. Secondly, local development should be activated by local actors, where there is circularity between activation of resources and benefits. This is the *concept of territory*, an active space of agency, where different actors interact and develop their projects. As such, the very notion of territory entails the interplay of different (micro)powers.

A tension between 'place' and 'territory' is unescapable, as the interaction between the two concepts is required to avoid the 'local trap', that is the acritical assumption that the 'local' is inherently good and righteous, often as opposed to the 'global' of flows and eradication. Mr Giaccaria then continued by addressing the concept of community and its boundaries, the links between democracy & participation at local level as well as the interaction between the LED approach and the importance of the role of Local Governments in ensuring the implementation of the SDGs at local level.

Following the intervention of Mr Giaccaria, the moderator highlighted the Eastern Partnership framework (EU policy, overall objective, overview of the current state of play etc) before giving the floor to the next speaker.



Mrs Olena Masluykivska, Expert of the Ukrainian School of Political studies, Associate Professor of University of Kiev

Mrs Masluykivska presented the situation of Ukraine with regards to the position of Local Governments, their role & their capacities to take action for development, raising the awareness & engaging citizens in local actions with regards to challenges with a global dimension.

In addition, she referred to the three components that allow LAs create the enabling environment for development at local level and engagement of citizens, namely: i/ the empowerment of LAs through decentralization for the implementation of SDGs at local level. Among the highlights of examples she mentioned, she referred to the ‘social lift’ that is now occurring in the country, that is the regained interest of citizens in local & national political issues, being more and more willing to participate and follow the evolutions; ii/ the capacity development of LAs and their representatives, including capacity building and trainings with regards to implementation, communication & management skills; iii/ education & awareness of citizens on issues that affect the community, both issues that are exclusively locally-oriented but also those that have a wider (global) dimension. The more educated & aware citizens there are, the better the democracy and trust of citizens towards institutions & political figures will be, since citizens are empowered and in a position to analyze and develop a critical thinking with regards to global issues.

Mrs Nino Tvaltvadze, Executive Director, Local Democracy Agency Georgia (LDA Georgia)

LDA Georgia is a member of the network of ALDA which works at strengthening local democracy & citizens’ participation for development through a unique approach involving international & local partners.

The role of Local Governments in LED has taken shape in different ways. Since the independence of Georgia some reforms have been made in 2014 towards decentralization and a Local Self-Government Code was adopted to empower LG’s, delegating and giving them their own powers. They have several new competencies such as registration of homeless or adaptation of environment for people with disabilities. Nevertheless, funds are limited and their actions must be reinforced financially by their Central Governments. Furthermore, councils have an enormous influence regarding business investment and their development.

As for the SDG some actions have been taken: for every mayor, there will be a single consultative council including CS, business, local citizens etc. Also, every mayor has to have a consultant on gender issues.

The speaker gave some examples of other LDA projects like *Georgian Diaspora for Developments in Kutaisi* and *The cooperation of LG and NGOs in building a sustainable platform for cooperation*. A development plan is being elaborated for Kutaisi city with the proposals of citizens and the opinions of NGOs and Academia. Overall, they want to create sustainable mechanisms for cooperation that



will bring later on economic development to the country.

Mr Fabio Masini, Secretary general, Italian Council of the European Movement - Professor, University of Roma Tre

Even though development is related to economic growth, its meaning should not be reduced to it. What's more, it could at some point clash with it.

The case of Italy as a centralized mechanism is represented using the image of a cathedral in the desert, meaning that such a bureaucrat system is inoperative. The bottom up approach was emphasized, starting from the local level towards the top of the hierarchy; it supposed a change on the perspective on development that occurred in the 90's. However, it sometimes has brought problems as provinces weren't able to collect ideas, to trust building or to share risks. Anyway having local committees, he affirmed, is still a good thing.

Mr Masini mentions several paths for local development: capital investments, revenues of local authorities, administrative resources (such as capacity to undertake contracts) or public-private cooperation. For example, enterprises should be oriented to enhance social welfare such as sustainable production and LA have power to attract private capitals on local projects.

The current structure has challenges such as the big centralization (supported by the EU) but there are also new tools such as a 2014 EU Communication "*A Stronger Role of the Private Sector in Achieving Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in Developing Countries*" that can help to shift from theory to practice.

Following the intervention of Mr Masini, there were several Interventions from the floor, regarding role of LAs in Moldova and the environment they are working in within the EaP countries (during which the main limitations of actions of LAs were mentioned, including the revenues of LAs, Capital investments & the administrative resources (capacity to undertake contracts)). Another short intervention was addressed to the Ukrainian speaker with regards to the situation in Ukraine for LAs, while another one highlighted the capacities of LAs to act as multipliers at local level, starting from very concrete examples.

*** *End of the workshop* ***

