Sustainable Human Development

A New Territorial and People-Centred Perspective

Mario Biggeri and Andrea Ferrannini

Prologue by Giacomo Beccattini, Emeritus Professor, University of Florence

Mario Biggeri is Associate Professor in Development Economics at the Department of Economics and Management of the University of Florence, Italy, and Scientific Director of ARCO Lab (Action Research for CO-development). He has conducted research for a number of international organizations on capability approach, international cooperation, impact evaluation, local development, well-being of children and persons with disabilities. He is Fellow of the Human Development and Capability Association (HDCA) and scholar of the “Florence school” on Local Development.

Andrea Ferrannini is Coordinator of the Strategic Unit on Local Development of ARCO Lab (Action Research for CO-development), PIN S.c.r.l., University of Florence, Italy. He has been working in several countries such as the Dominican Republic, Uganda, Ethiopia, Albania and Serbia, acquiring expertise on local development processes, human development and participatory methods.

‘The book’s perspective is especially relevant, as the world cogitates about the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals agenda, because in the next few decades the synergies between local development and human development will become more salient than ever before.’

- Santosh Mehrotra, Institute of Applied Manpower Research, Government of India

‘This book is a timely and innovative contribution to bridging the gap between the capability and local development literatures. The authors develop a powerful conceptual framework that is likely to become an essential starting point for policymakers and those committed to promoting sustainable human development within and across regions.’

- David A. Clark, University of Cambridge, UK

‘A comprehensive analysis of the conditions for, and the contribution of actors to, sustainable human development at the local level. An important contribution to overcoming the traditional barriers between the social sciences in order to enrich Amartya Sen’s capability approach.’

- Franco Volpi, University of Florence, Italy

About the book

Today, the global debate on development is at a crucial turning point. Discussions on post-2015 processes with the UN, as well as on the reform of the EU Cohesion Policy, interact with a heterogeneous combination of diffused global instability and social unrest, long- standing recessions and extraordinary growth processes, together with increasing concentration of economic activity, wealth and power. Within this scenario, the authors stress the importance of dealing with economic competitiveness, social inclusion, environmental protection and poverty reduction at the local level, recognizing the interplay between the evolution of local development systems and the expansion of individual and collective capabilities. Blending Amartya Sen's people-centred and opportunity-oriented Capability Approach with the literature on place-based local development processes, this book helps in understanding multidimensional paths of local change within a Sustainable Human Development perspective and analysing what means are available to enable human flourishing.
About the chapter on Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs)

Throughout the book, a clear emphasis is placed on the importance of mechanisms of local “conscious governance” to effectively spur dynamic processes of Sustainable Human Development. A full chapter of this book is dedicated to analyse Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs), regarded as relevant organizational and institutional tools for territorial economic development and supported by international and European networks, such as International Links and Services for LEDAs (ILS LEDA) and EURADA.

The primary rationale for the selection of this case study is its international recognition features (Clark et al., 2010), which is crucially related to the main economic elements of the SHD perspective at the local level. In addition, the wider relevance and global spread of LEDAs’ functions and actions (recognized by the UN, OECD, EU and other international organizations) and their relevant role for LED within the operational approach of the UNDP ART Framework Programs also reinforce the importance of analysing this case study. The analysis is also aided by several field studies on LEDAs conducted by the book’s authors in different countries (e.g. Albania, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Indonesia, Morocco and Serbia).

The main objective of this chapter is to analyse the role of LEDAs within Local Development Systems (LDSs), by discussing how these agencies tailor appropriate functions and organizational arrangements to the local context, together with their flexibility and dynamic capacities to learn, re-invent tasks and tools and evolve along with the territory (Canzanelli, 2010). In particular, the extent to which these agencies act as “meta-organizers” and “animators” of territorial LED processes by blending, aligning and gardening (Belussi et al., 2006; von Tunzelmann, 2009; Ferrannini and Canzanelli, 2013) is disentangled. Overall, this chapter argues that LEDAs can act as enabling factors of local economic and social development, influencing the transformation of opportunities into achieved functionings of LDSs.