

FOOD & CITIES

THE ROLE OF CITIES FOR ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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The Role of Cities for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals



This publication was prepared by a joint team of the Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition Foundation (BCFN) and the Milan Food Policy Office under the framework of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact MUFPP

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4.5 ITALY - The Italian Network of Researchers on Local Food Policies

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Many Italian cities have begun to develop urban food policies. Some of them started working in this direction before the Expo and the launch of the MUFPP (e.g. Pisa), while other cities were inspired by the Expo and its legacy (e.g. Milan and Turin). The number of Italian cities signing up to the MUFPP is growing and 20 of the 179 signatory cities are now Italian. Beyond these 20 signatories, many other Italian cities are substantially engaged in this process but are not currently connected to each other through a network, although many of them belong to different international networks, including Healthy Cities or the Eurocities networks, which have specialised groups focused on this issue.

With this in mind, the authors launched the idea of creating a network among the Italian research community which, in recent years, has begun to get involved in this topic, in many different ways: connecting with the local authority of their own city, engaging in national or international projects and joining specialised networks, including the group of academics promoting the Agriculture in an Urbanizing Society Conference, now in its third year, and the Aesop Sustainable Food Planning working group, with the VII International Conference organised in Turin, in October 2015.

The Italian Network of Researchers on Local Food

Policies encompassed a previously existing network focused on Urban Agriculture. The first meeting of the network was held on January 15, 2018 in Rome. More than 40 researchers from different cities, universities and research centres attended this meeting, covering a wide range of different specialisations: agrarian economists; geographers, designers, planners and architects, sociologists, nutritionists and others.

This founding meeting was very fruitful and produced the Network's Manifesto, a document in which the Network's fundamental principles are stated, alongside the cultural identity and background, objectives and common ground among its members. Its draft version has been presented and discussed on several occasions this year and is due to be approved at the next meeting of the Network, scheduled for January 15, 2019 in Florence.

The Italian Network of Researchers on Local Food Policies currently consists of over 150 scholars and practitioners who recognise the central role of food-related practices in the transition processes towards resilient and sustainable cities.

Promoting a sustainable food system at local level means providing healthier food, more liveable urban environments, adequate and fair remuneration for all stakeholders in the food supply chain, while developing a local economy based on new relations

between cities and territories and between farmers and consumers. These positions coincide with the core principles of the Network's Manifesto.

The international debate generally speaks of "urban food" policies, planning or practices. While they are not opposed to this term, Network members have deliberately chosen to use the term "local food policy" to emphasise the local dimension of food-related policies and practices which do not relate exclusively to the "urban" context but embrace the entire spectrum of urban-rural relations. "Local", therefore, expresses the idea that a food system can be regulated at local level, if only partially, given that the territory is not defined a priori but emerges from the implementation of food policies across functional spaces, cultural territories, policy fields and local systems for

collective action around food.

The current mission of the Italian Network of Researchers on Local Food Policies is above all to discuss and inspire, in a situation in which many Italian cities seem to be interested in the topic, but very few are taking concrete steps at least towards coordinating and integrating the many initiatives, projects and policies that a multiplicity of actors, both institutional and non-institutional, are carrying out. Its future actions include research and advocacy within the different disciplinary contexts and territories, to stimulate, support and inform nascent local food policy development processes. At the same time, the Network aims to establish a debate at regional and national level that can encourage regional and national food-related policies.

