alda

EUROPEAN GLOSSARY

Pills on the most vivid topics
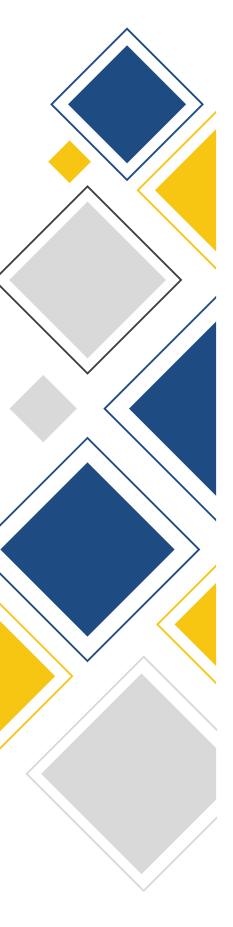**at the European level**

Abstract in English

This document contains an overview of some key terms in European trends, focusing on those that are reflected in the daily work of ALDA.

The selected terms address the most prominent and debated topics in Europe regarding Local Democracy, such as Bottom-Up Approach, Common Goods, Fragile Contexts, Multi-Stakeholder Approach, Community Resilience, Subsidiarity, and Public-Private Partnership. These terms have been examined in order to provide a key to interpretation and understanding that is easily accessible, even to non-experts.

The document aims to be a starting point, far from being an exhaustive guide, but rather a continuous updating and enrichment of the contents and key words to be integrated, in light of the ongoing evolution of the European debate and international contributions on the selected concepts.

The common thread of each concept is to highlight the value in the processes of strengthening democracy at the local level and improving spaces for inclusion and citizen participation in a current era marked by challenges and critical issues at various levels. For this reason, each term is addressed by briefly explaining its meaning, how it can contribute to fostering democratic spaces, some examples at the European level, and the ALDA contribution in its strategic and daily action.

Abstract in French

Ce document contient un aperçu de certains termes clés des tendances européennes, en mettant l'accent sur ceux qui se reflètent dans le travail quotidien de l'ALDA.

Les termes sélectionnés abordent les sujets les plus marquants et débattus en Europe concernant la démocratie locale, tels que l'approche ascendante, les biens communs, les contextes fragiles, l'approche multi-acteurs, la résilience communautaire, la subsidiarité et le partenariat public-privé. Ces termes ont été examinés afin de fournir une clé d'interprétation et de compréhension facilement accessible, même pour les non-spécialistes.

Le document se veut un point de départ, loin d'être un guide exhaustif, mais plutôt une mise à jour et un enrichissement continus des contenus et des mots-clés à intégrer, à la lumière de l'évolution constante du débat européen et des contributions internationales sur les concepts sélectionnés.

Le fil conducteur de chaque concept est de mettre en lumière la valeur des processus de renforcement de la démocratie au niveau local et d'amélioration des espaces d'inclusion et de participation citoyenne dans une époque marquée par des défis et des enjeux critiques à divers niveaux. Pour cette raison, chaque terme est abordé en expliquant brièvement sa signification, la manière dont il peut contribuer à favoriser des espaces démocratiques, quelques exemples au niveau européen, ainsi que la contribution de l'ALDA dans son action stratégique et quotidienne.
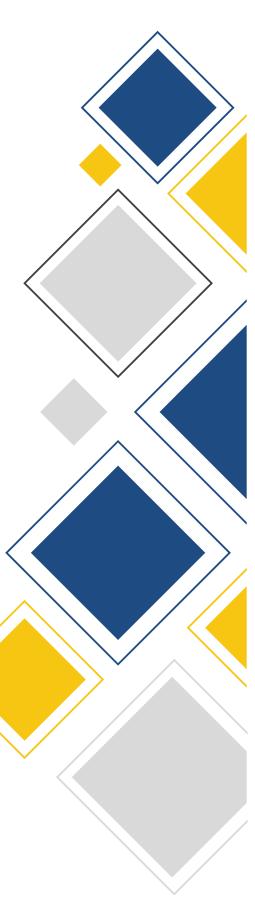
Abstract in Italian

Questo documento contiene una panoramica di alcuni termini chiave nel dibattito politico europeo, concentrandosi su quei termini che si riflettono nel lavoro quotidiano di ALDA.

I termini selezionati affrontano i temi più rilevanti e dibattuti in Europa riguardanti la Democrazia Locale, come l'Approccio Bottom-Up, i Beni Comuni, i Contesti Fragili, l'Approccio Multi-Stakeholder, la Resilienza Comunitaria, la Sussidiarietà e il Partenariato Pubblico-Privato. Questi termini sono stati esaminati per fornire una chiave di interpretazione e comprensione facilmente accessibile anche ai non esperti.

Il documento si propone come un punto di partenza, lontano dall'essere una guida esaustiva, ma piuttosto un continuo aggiornamento e arricchimento dei contenuti e delle parole chiave da integrare, alla luce dell'evoluzione continua del dibattito europeo e dei contributi internazionali sui concetti selezionati.

Il filo conduttore di ogni concetto è quello di evidenziare il valore nei processi di rafforzamento della democrazia a livello locale e di miglioramento degli spazi di inclusione e partecipazione dei cittadini in un'epoca segnata da sfide e criticità a vari livelli. Per questo motivo, ogni termine viene affrontato spiegandone brevemente il significato, il modo in cui può contribuire a promuovere spazi democratici, alcuni esempi a livello europeo e il contributo di ALDA nella sua azione strategica e quotidiana.

Table of Contents

Bottom-Up Approach

The Bottom-Up Approach is a participatory methodology that prioritises grassroots involvement and local decision-making in the governance process. This strategy is distinguished by its focus on involving people and communities locally so they can participate in the creation and execution of laws that have an immediate impact on their daily lives. Although "bottom up", "participatory", "local democracy", "concerted management" and other such approaches are not exact equivalents, they are all variants of a local concertation approach and of a collective process whereby a local community can take charge of the future of its own area. It is an approach that allows the local community and local players to express their views and to help define the development course for their area in line with their own views, expectations and plans.

This approach encourages community members to actively participate in defining their surroundings and futures by fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility.

How it is relevant

The Bottom-Up Approach serves as a capable device for engaging communities, advancing majority rule engagement, and tending to social imbalances. By including citizens within the decision-making process, this approach makes a difference to guarantee that differing voices are listened to, especially those from underestimated bunches in the event that impartial representation is guaranteed. For occasion, participatory budgeting activities, such as those executed in Porto Alegre, Brazil (broadly considered to be the greatest and most effective utilize of participatory budgeting anyplace within the world), permit inhabitants to specifically impact how open stores are distributed, driving to more impartial dispersion of assets and made strides open administrations.

Besides, the Bottom-Up Approach is especially critical within the setting of expanding social and political challenges, such as economic disparities and disenfranchisement. By cultivating local engagement, iit can help to rebuild trust in democratic institutions and encourage civic responsibility. The unmistakable impact of this approach is clear in communities where inhabitants have effectively pushed for a better framework, social administrations, and natural securities, subsequently improving their quality of life..

Main Characteristics

Key highlights of the Bottom-Up Approach incorporate decentralisation, community-driven forms, and versatility to nearby needs. Decentralisation permits decision-making control to be disseminated among local actors instead of concentrated in central authorities. This move empowers communities to tailor arrangements to their particular settings, guaranteeing that arrangements are important and viable.

Community-driven processes are central to this approach, as they encourage collaboration among inhabitants, neighborhood associations, and government substances.

However, the Bottom-Up Approach isn't without its challenges. Resource restrictions can prevent the capacity of communities to engage successfully, whereas coordination challenges may emerge when different stakeholders are included. Moreover, resistance from central authorities can weaken local activities, especially when they see grassroots developments as a danger to their control.

Comparison with the Top-Down Approach

The Bottom-Up Approach is the opposite of the Top-Down Approach, which is characterised by hierarchical decision-making processes where decisions and policies are imposed from higher authorities with little or no consultations with local stakeholders. Within the Top-Down model, power dynamics regularly support those in authority, creating a divide between policymakers and the communities they serve. This may result in decisions that fail to address the real needs of citizens.

The Bottom-Up Approach, instead, encourages a more comprehensive decision-making process that starts from the community needs.

For instance, within the case of urban regeneration projects where a Bottom-Up Approach is adopted, inhabitants are engaged to shape their neighborhoods through direct involvement in planning and funding decisions. This has led to more effective results compared to conventional top-down urban development strategies, which regularly confront criticism for being out of touch with local needs. However, the bottom-up approach cannot be applied (nor is it applicable) systematically to all places in all circumstances, depending on the specific cultural and specific context and in line with the principle of subsidiarity.

ALDA Contribution within the Conference on the Future of Europe

The Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE) embodied a bottom-up approach that prioritised citizen engagement and participation in shaping the future of the European Union. This innovative framework encouraged individuals from diverse backgrounds to voice their opinions, ensuring that the democratic process was inclusive and representative of all European citizens. By fostering dialogue between citizens, local authorities, and civil society organisations, the CoFoE created a platform for collaborative decision-making that reflected the needs and aspirations of communities across Europe.

ALDA played a pivotal role in this process by actively engaging its network of Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs) and civil society organisations.

Through various initiatives, ALDA organised events, workshops, and consultations that encouraged citizens to participate in discussions and share their views on key issues. The organisation facilitated thematic discussions that allowed participants to explore specific topics, such as climate change, digital transformation, and social justice, drawing on local experiences and insights. This participatory model not only empowered citizens but also enhanced the effectiveness of policy-making by integrating grassroots perspectives into the European agenda.

Moreover, ALDA's commitment to fostering partnerships between local authorities and civil society organisations exemplified the essence of the CoFoE's bottom-up approach.

By coordinating efforts among various stakeholders, ALDA ensured that local voices were heard and that their contributions were valued in the broader European context.

The organisation also provided training and resources to enhance the capacity of local actors, further promoting good governance and citizen participation.

ALDA helped in strengthening the connection between the EU and its citizens, ensuring that the future of Europe was built on a foundation of inclusivity, transparency, and shared responsibility. Ultimately, the CoFoE, supported by ALDA's initiatives, served as a catalyst for a more participative and sustainable European Union, where every voice mattered.

Examples in Europe

The participatory budgeting initiative of the Paris Region is an effective example of Bottom-Up approach implementation. Citizens are invited to propose and vote on projects that will be financed by the Region's budget. This activity has expanded civic engagement and driven the implementation of projects closer to the needs of different communities.

In Spain, the "Civic Crowdfunding" movement engages citizens in financing community projects through small contributions. This model has financed so far a variety of different activities, from social events to public space advancements, illustrating the potential of grassroots funding instruments.

At a glance

The Bottom-Up Approach represents a significant shift in governance, emphasising the importance of local participation and community empowerment. While it offers numerous benefits, such as enhanced democratic engagement and the potential to address social inequalities, it also faces challenges, including ensuring equitable representation and securing necessary resources. The balance between grassroots flexibility and policy coherence is crucial for the success of this approach.

As societies grapple with pressing issues such as climate change, economic disparity, and social justice, the Bottom-Up Approach holds promise for fostering resilient communities and responsive governance in Europe and beyond. Its future potential lies in its ability to adapt to the evolving needs of citizens while maintaining a commitment to inclusivity and collaboration.

Common Goods

Common goods are resources shared by a community. These resources are characterised by their non-excludability and rivalrous consumption: while individuals cannot effectively be excluded from using the resource, one person's use diminishes the availability of the resource for others.

They encompass a wide range of resources: material and immaterial resources conceived as a common heritage for local communities, natural ones like fisheries, forests, and water systems, and cultural and social goods such as public spaces and community knowledge.

Common good's core principles focus on grassroots participation and local decision-making. Communities may be capable of self-organising and managing their own resources sustainably based on an endogenous knowledge and know-how.

How it is relevant

Common goods foster grassroots involvement, empowering communities to take care of their resources understood as collective heritage, from which develop and shape democratic engagement and social cohesion.

Shared management of common resources can lead to more equitable development processes and a stronger sense of ownership: local knowledge and collective action can be prioritised, and communities can develop solutions tailored to their own contexts and needs.

The impact of common goods on everyday life is crucial, and can lead to improved fair access to and management of local resources, enhanced community resilience, and a greater sense of agency among individuals.

Main Characteristics

The approach to common goods is defined by several key characteristics.

1. Promotion of collective management. Community members actively participate in decision-making processes concerning the use and preservation of shared resources. This is exemplified by the work of the American political scientist Elinor Ostrom, who identified key principles for the successful governance of common goods, such as clearly defined boundaries, collective-choice arrangements, and effective monitoring systems. Toni Negri and Michael Hardt's concept of Commons also includes the social capacity to create collective immaterial wealth, that set of knowledge, languages and skills deriving from human interaction.

2. The relationship between common goods and their communities. A fundamental premise of the Commons lies in the dynamic relationship between the resource and the community theoretically entrusted with its management. The construction of collective solidarity networks for the governance of common goods plays a vital role in the effort to rebuild a social fabric that has been progressively eroded by competitive market logic. In this perspective, the community must not be idealised as an ethnically or culturally homogeneous entity. Rather, it should be reimagined as an open, relational space capable of embracing otherness and accommodating the inherent potential for conflict.

3. Neither public nor private. The governance and ownership of common goods represent two distinct but interrelated components that stand as alternatives to traditional public or private frameworks. In the case of collective management, a degree of autonomy from state control is asserted, recognising the community's capacity for self-governance and self-regulation. This process outlines a reconfiguration of administrative power, one that transcends rigid institutional boundaries.

Challenges in implementing common goods are both practical and structural. Resource constraints can place significant pressure on communities' ability to manage their common goods effectively. Coordination difficulties often emerge when multiple stakeholders are involved. Additionally, resistance from centralised authorities can undermine local initiatives. These challenges call for a careful balance between grassroots flexibility and the need for coherent policy frameworks capable of supporting and enhancing local governance.

Examples in Europe

One notable example of this approach is the "Big Local" initiative in the United Kingdom, which empowers residents in 150 areas to take charge of local development projects. This initiative has led to increased civic engagement and has enabled communities to address specific local needs, such as improving public spaces and enhancing social services.

In Italy, the "Beni Comuni" movement has emerged, advocating for the recognition and management of common goods such as public parks and cultural heritage sites. This movement has successfully mobilised citizens to reclaim and manage these resources, demonstrating the potential of common goods to foster community resilience and cultural preservation.

At a glance

The significance of common goods lies in their potential to transform governance by promoting grassroots participation and empowering communities. While the approach offers numerous benefits, including enhanced civic engagement and tailored solutions to local challenges, it also faces critical obstacles. Ensuring equitable representation, securing the necessary resources, and developing organisational skills are essential for the success of common goods initiatives. Furthermore, striking a balance between grassroots flexibility and policy coherence remains a complex task.

As we face pressing issues such as climate change, social inequality, and political disengagement, the role of common goods in European governance becomes increasingly relevant. By fostering collaborative management and local decision-making, common goods can contribute to more sustainable and equitable outcomes, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for citizens and communities. The future potential of common goods lies in their ability to adapt to changing circumstances while remaining rooted in the principles of collective action and community empowerment.

Fragile contexts and Civic Space Challenges:

Strategies for Inclusive Governance

In geopolitics, "fragile contexts" refer to the unstable and often volatile interactions within fragile states, which are characterized by political instability, weak governance, and socio-economic vulnerabilities. These contexts arise when internal and external actors compete for control, influence, and resources in environments where the state's authority is undermined. The term also applies to civic space in fragile contexts, where instability and conflict damage democratic processes and citizen participation. In these environments, inclusive governance becomes a key challenge as local populations, especially marginalised groups, struggle for their voices to be heard in political and social spheres.

Main Characteristics

Fragile states exhibit several features that contribute to the emergence of fragile contexts. These include:

1.   Political Instability: Fragile states often face weak governance structures, resulting in power vacuums that insurgent groups, non-state actors, or rival factions may exploit. Political instability leads to violent conflicts and competition for power.

2.   Weak Institutions: A lack of effective institutions, compounded by corruption and nepotism, hampers governance and service delivery, further eroding public trust. This, in turn, drives citizens to rely on informal networks or militias, complicating governance.

3. Resource Competition: The scarcity of vital resources, such as land, water, or minerals, often fuels competition and conflict, particularly in regions facing demographic pressure or environmental degradation.

4. External Influences: Fragile states are frequently the site of intervention by global and regional powers, driven by strategic, economic, or humanitarian concerns. However, external intervention can sometimes exacerbate local tensions and destabilize fragile governance structures.

Fragile Contexts and ALDA's efforts

In fragile contexts, ALDA's strategic efforts aim to support resilient local democratic communities by fostering dialogue and collaboration between civil society and local institutions.

Rather than focusing on regime change, ALDA adopts a pragmatic and solution-oriented approach to strengthen democratic practices and promote inclusive governance. This strategy helps local actors — especially youth and women — stand resilient in shaping their futures.

Strategies for Civic Engagement and Resilience

ALDA employs a multi-faceted approach to strengthen local democratic resilience in fragile contexts:

1. Empowering Citizens:
Raising awareness about civic rights and democratic participation.
Encouraging marginalised groups, such as youth and women, to participate actively in governance processes.

2. Engaging Local Authorities:
Facilitating collaboration between citizens and local decision-makers to foster trust and inclusive governance.
Promoting solution-driven dialogue on community challenges such as education, environment, and cultural development.

3. Supporting Community-Led Initiatives:
Implementing regranting schemes for youth and women's groups to enable

them to work with local governments.
Examples include managing schools, addressing environmental issues, promoting cultural heritage, and fostering youth innovation.

4. Capacity-Building and Mentorship:
Strengthening the capacities of local governments, civil society organisations, and youth leaders through training, workshops, and peer-to-peer exchanges.
Establishing mentorship programmes to guide grassroots organisations and emerging leaders.

5. Conflict-Sensitive Approaches:
Ensuring safety for local partners by organising stakeholder meetings outside the country when necessary.
Adopting case-by-case strategies to navigate risks in conflict-prone environments.

Focus on Youth and Women: WYDE Civic Engagement Project

Under the WYDE Civic Engagement project, funded by the EU, ALDA promotes youth participation in democratic processes across 21 Sub-Saharan African countries. Through its regranting scheme, WYDE enables youth civil society organisations (CSOs) to implement local initiatives that foster civic engagement and democracy.

Key Components:

1. Capacity Building: Organising training programmes on democratic governance, conflict resolution, and leadership.

2. Mentorship and Peer Learning: Connecting young leaders with experienced practitioners and fostering collaboration among youth organisations.

3. Advocacy Campaigns: Raising awareness about the importance of youth participation in governance.

4. Workshops and Seminars: Educating stakeholders about challenges and opportunities for democratic resilience.

These activities create resilient networks of youth and women who contribute to local solutions and inclusive governance.

A key aspect of ALDA's work is providing Financial Support to Third Parties to local NGOs, particularly those with less experience, to open up new spaces for civic engagement. These efforts focus on fostering democratic resilience without imposing external political values, respecting local contexts and empowering people to choose the kind of governance that fits their needs.

At a glance

Fragile contexts in geopolitics and civic space challenges in fragile contexts are deeply intertwined. Both are shaped by instability, weak institutions, and external intervention, creating significant barriers to inclusive governance. ALDA's strategies highlight the importance of local ownership in democratic processes, ensuring that citizens—especially marginalised groups—have the opportunity to shape their political future. Through empowerment, education, and strategic partnerships, ALDA fosters democratic resilience in fragile states, helping to create spaces for dialogue and inclusive governance. A more comprehensive outline of ALDA's strategy for Local Democratic Resilience in fragile states will be presented in a position paper later in 2025

Multi-Stakeholder Approach

The Multi-Stakeholder Approach is a collaborative framework that involves a diverse range of actors—such as governments, businesses, civil society organisations, and local communities—in the decision-making process. This approach is grounded in the principles of inclusivity, shared responsibility, and collective action. At its core, it seeks to foster collaboration among stakeholders who may have differing interests, perspectives, and resources framing a common vision to pursue. Key elements of this approach include dialogue, consensus-building, and the establishment of partnerships that enable stakeholders to find collective solutions for identified problems. By integrating various viewpoints, the Multi-Stakeholder Approach aims to create more comprehensive and effective solutions to complex issues.

How it is relevant

The relevance of the Multi-Stakeholder Approach is crucial in addressing global challenges at local level, such as sustainable development, climate change, and human rights. These issues often transcend administrative borders and require coordinated efforts from multiple sectors. This approach promotes inclusivity and transparency, ensuring that all voices are heard and considered in the decision-making process. This collective action is essential in today's interconnected world, where the impacts of local decisions can have far-reaching consequences.

For instance, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) exemplify the Multi-Stakeholder Approach's significance. The SDGs encourage collaboration among governments, private sector entities, and civil society to achieve sustainable outcomes. SDGs are based on four key words: planet, people, prosperity, and partnership. The latter highlights the centrality of wide multilevel cooperation networks in achieving the goals, fostering the capacity to tackle and solve global issues synergistically.

Main Characteristics

The Multi-Stakeholder Approach emphasises broad stakeholder engagement, ensuring that diverse groups are included in discussions and decision-making processes. This engagement fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among stakeholders. Secondly, it focuses on consensus-building, where stakeholders negotiate to find common ground and develop mutually beneficial solutions. This process often requires balancing different interests and priorities, which can be challenging.

Attention is paid to stakeholder analysis, stakeholder participation and coalition building. Stakeholder analysis relates to different ways of identifying and understanding the stakeholder setting. This analysis involves identification, assessment, categorization and modelling stakeholder interaction. Stakeholder participation and coalition building involves development and starting a multi-stakeholder process, organizing a stakeholder engagement and setting-up meetings. Specific attention is paid to coalition building, as this type of engagement 'co-deciding' is particularly appropriate in local processes. A range of frameworks and tools may support multi-stakeholder approaches.

For example, the European Union's Water Framework Directive (WFD) exemplifies the Multi-Stakeholders Approach's characteristics. The WFD involves various stakeholders, including local authorities, environmental groups, and industry representatives, in the management of water resources. Through collaborative planning and decision-making, stakeholders have worked together to improve water quality across Europe.

However, the Multi-Stakeholders Approach is not without its challenges. Managing conflicting interests can be difficult, particularly when stakeholders have deeply rooted and/or power positions. Additionally, ensuring equitable participation is crucial; some stakeholders may have more resources or influence, potentially moving the process in their favour.

ALDA contribution to the topic: Local Democracy Agencies (LDA)

Most of ALDA's and the Local Democracy Agencies' work exemplifies the

Multi-Stakeholder Approach through an innovative and successful method of multilateral decentralised cooperation. This involves partnerships between Local Authorities and Non-Governmental Organisations, creating synergies and ensuring the achievement of common goals. These partnerships emphasize mutual benefit, a participative and long-term approach, and enhanced effectiveness for both communities. By adopting a multilateral approach, initiatives benefit from greater sustainability and multicultural inputs.

The LDAs' partnerships operate through two main lines of action:

1. Territorial-based approach, involving all actors within the concerned communities based on a geographic framework.

2. Thematic networking, focused on addressing specific, commonly agreed issues that connect different local communities.

Through this approach, Local Democracy Agencies aim to promote good local governance, strengthen citizen participation, enhance capacity building at the local level, and foster intercultural dialogue, thereby illustrating the core principles of the Multi-Stakeholder Approach.

At a glance

The Multi-Stakeholder Approach is a vital framework for addressing contemporary global challenges. Its potential lies in fostering collaboration among diverse actors, promoting inclusivity, and enhancing transparency in decision-making processes. However, the approach also faces limitations, such as the difficulty of balancing competing interests and ensuring equitable participation. Effective coordination and a commitment to shared goals are essential for this approach to succeed.

As the world continues to face pressing issues, the Multi-Stakeholder Approach will play an increasingly important role in shaping future governance and facilitating collective action for sustainable development

Community Resilience

Community resilience refers to the capacity of a community to adapt to, recover from, and thrive in the face of challenges such as natural disasters, economic shocks, social disruptions, or impactful unexpected events.This concept is rooted in the understanding that communities are not merely passive victims of crises; rather, they possess inherent strengths that can be mobilised to navigate adversity. Core principles of community resilience include social cohesion, resourcefulness, and collective action. Social cohesion fosters trust and collaboration among community members, enabling them to work together effectively during crises. Resourcefulness reflects the ability to utilise available resources creatively and efficiently, while collective action underscores the importance of community engagement in decision-making processes. Together, these principles create a robust framework for resilience, allowing communities to not only withstand shocks but also emerge stronger.

How it is relevant

Community resilience has become increasingly important in a contest of growing global challenges, including climate change, pandemics, and economic instability. As these issues escalate, the ability of communities to build resilience can significantly mitigate the impacts of crises, promote social well-being, and reduce inequalities.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many communities demonstrated resilience by mobilising local resources, supporting vulnerable populations, and fostering mutual aid networks. Such initiatives addressed immediate needs and strengthened social ties, illustrating the dual benefits of resilience-building. Furthermore, resilient communities are better positioned to adapt to future challenges, making resilience a cornerstone of sustainable development and social stability. The ability to recover from setbacks and maintain functionality is essential for fostering long-term community health and prosperity.

Main Characteristics

Key features of community resilience include social capital, local leadership, strong networks, and adaptability. Social capital refers to the relationships and networks that facilitate cooperation among community members. High levels of social capital enable communities to mobilise quickly in response to crises, as seen in the aftermath of natural disasters where neighbours come together to support one another. Local leadership is crucial for guiding collective efforts and ensuring that diverse voices are heard in the decision-making process. Strong networks, both formal and informal, enhance information sharing and resource allocation, while adaptability allows communities to modify their strategies in response to changing circumstances.

A key part of the Community Resilience framework is the concept of collective intelligence. This can be defined as a process where the knowledge, skills, and experiences of individuals are synthesized and transformed into a shared understanding that is greater than the sum of its parts. This construction of knowledge occurs through collaboration, dialogue, and mutual learning among community members, leading to innovative solutions and enhanced problem-solving capabilities. This collective intelligence is essential for fostering resilience, as it enables communities to leverage their diverse perspectives and resources effectively.

Comparison with Other Approaches

Community resilience differs significantly from individual resilience and national-level resilience. While individual resilience focuses on personal preparedness and coping strategies, community resilience emphasises collective action and interdependence. This communal approach recognises that individuals are embedded within social networks that influence their ability to respond to crises. In contrast, national-level resilience often involves top-down interventions that may overlook local contexts and needs.

Fostering resilience at the community level offers several advantages, including enhanced local knowledge and tailored responses to specific

challenges. However, it also presents limitations, such as the potential for unequal power dynamics within communities and the risk of excluding marginalised groups from decision-making processes. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that resilience-building efforts are inclusive and equitable.

ALDA contribution to the topic: SPUR projec

Social PostCovid19 Urban Revitalisation (SPUR) project focuses on revitalising urban areas in the post-COVID context. ALDA's methodology is centred on promoting active civil participation and empowering local communities. By organising workshops, training sessions, and focus groups, ALDA encourages citizens to engage in meaningful dialogues about their needs and aspirations. This participatory approach not only helps identify local challenges but also fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members, which is essential for building resilience.

The SPUR project places a strong emphasis on engaging vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, young people, and migrants, ensuring that their voices are heard in the decision-making processes. A key element of the project is the implementation of local consultations, which involve community members sharing their insights through questionnaires and discussions. This process helps create a nuanced understanding of local issues, allowing for tailored responses that reflect the specific needs of the community.

In addition, the SPUR project fosters a culture of social interaction and connection by organising events that bring together diverse groups, promoting intergenerational solidarity and social cohesion. For instance, focus groups in municipalities like Cinisello Balsamo and Legnano revealed how shared experiences during the pandemic led to a greater appreciation for free time and outdoor activities, as well as new forms of socialisation such as virtual gatherings. This demonstrates how the project not only strengthens social ties but also contributes to long-term resilience by encouraging community members to support each other.

By empowering communities to take charge of their development, ALDA's contribution through the SPUR project is helping to create more resilient,

inclusive, and cohesive societies. This participatory approach plays a key role in addressing both immediate challenges and long-term needs, ensuring that communities are better equipped to face future crises.

Examples in Europe

Several successful applications of community resilience can be observed across Europe.

1. The Netherlands: In response to rising sea levels and flooding risks, the Dutch community of Rotterdam implemented the "Room for the River" programme. This initiative involved local stakeholders in designing flood management strategies that not only protect the city but also enhance public spaces and biodiversity. The collaborative approach resulted in a more resilient urban environment, demonstrating how community engagement can lead to innovative solutions.

2. Scotland: The "Community Resilience Programme" in Scotland empowers local communities to develop their own resilience plans in response to climate change and other challenges. By providing training and resources, the programme encourages collaboration among community members, local authorities, and emergency services, resulting in tailored strategies that enhance overall resilience.

At a glance

Community resilience is a vital concept that underscores the importance of collective action in navigating challenges. While it holds significant potential for fostering sustainable, equitable, and adaptive societies, it also faces limitations that must be addressed. Ensuring inclusivity, maintaining long-term engagement, and fostering effective coordination among local, national, and international stakeholders are critical for successful resilience-building. Ultimately, by investing in community resilience, societies can better prepare for and respond to future challenges, contributing to a more sustainable and just world.

Subsiaridy

Subsidiarity is a governance principle which asserts that decisions should be made at the most local level possible, by the authority that is closest to the issue at hand, unless a higher level of authority can more effectively address the matter. In the context of European Union (EU) law, subsidiarity is enshrined in the Treaty on European Union, which mandates that the EU should only act when objectives cannot be sufficiently achieved by member states at a local or national level. This principle is crucial for maintaining a balance of power between the EU and its member states, ensuring that governance remains responsive to local needs and contexts.

How it is relevant

Subsidiarity plays a central role in delineating the powers and responsibilities between the EU and its member states, thereby supporting democratic governance and local autonomy. By ensuring that decisions are made at the most appropriate level, subsidiarity fosters more efficient governance, as local authorities are often better positioned to understand and address the specific needs of their communities. For instance, in areas such as education and healthcare, subsidiarity allows local governments to tailor policies that reflect the unique circumstances of their populations, rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all solution from a central authority. This approach not only enhances the effectiveness of policies but also strengthens the legitimacy of governance by involving citizens in decision-making processes.

Main Characteristics

Key features of subsidiarity include decentralisation, the balancing of power, and a recognition of local contexts and needs. The principle requires

a careful assessment of the scale and complexity of issues to determine the most appropriate level of governance. For example, environmental regulations may be more effectively managed at a local level, where specific ecological conditions can be taken into account, rather than through broad national or EU-wide policies. However, challenges arise in determining the correct level of governance, as ambiguities can lead to conflicts between different authorities. The interpretation of subsidiarity can vary, leading to disputes over whether a matter should be handled locally or at a higher level, which can complicate the decision-making process.

Comparison with Other Governance Principles

Subsidiarity stands in contrast to principles such as centralisation and federalism. While centralisation concentrates power within a single authority, often leading to uniform policies that may not account for local differences, federalism divides powers between national and regional governments but may still impose a top-down approach. In contrast, subsidiarity favours local decision-making within a larger political framework, allowing for greater responsiveness to local needs. This decentralised approach can enhance efficiency, as local authorities are typically more attuned to the specific challenges faced by their communities. For instance, in the context of disaster management, local governments can mobilise resources and coordinate responses more swiftly than a central authority, which may be bogged down by bureaucratic processes.

Examples in Europe

An example of subsidiarity in Europe at the local level is the City of Bologna's shared administration model. This approach is rooted in Italy's constitutional principle of horizontal subsidiarity, introduced in the Italian Constitution in 2001 through the article 118, last paragraph: «The State, Regions, Metropolitan Cities, Provinces and Municipalities favor the autonomous initiative of citizens, single or associated, for carrying out activities of general interest, on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity".

In Bologna, the municipality collaborates with local communities to manage urban common goods, such as parks and public spaces. This collaboration is formalized through the Regulation on the <u>Collaboration Between Citizens and the Administration for the Care and Regeneration of Urban Commons (2014)</u>, which introduced the concept of 'collaboration pacts.' These pacts enable residents to actively participate in decision-making processes regarding the use and maintenance of these resources. By empowering citizens, Bologna fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, enhances community engagement, and ensures the sustainable management of local assets.

At a glance

In summary, subsidiarity is a vital principle that underpins effective governance by promoting local decision-making and ensuring that authority is exercised at the most appropriate level. While it offers significant advantages, such as enhanced responsiveness and efficiency, challenges remain in its interpretation and application. The potential for conflicts between different levels of governance and the risk of using subsidiarity to justify inaction are critical aspects that must be navigated. As the debate on governance continues to evolve, subsidiarity will likely play an increasingly important role in shaping decision-making processes at both European and global levels, contributing to a deeper understanding of how best to balance local autonomy with broader governance objectives.

Public-Private Partnership (PPP)

A Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is a collaborative agreement between public sector entities, such as government agencies or local authorities, and private sector companies aimed at delivering services or infrastructure projects. This partnership model is characterised by the sharing of risks and resources, where the private sector contributes its expertise, efficiency, and capital to achieve public objectives. In a PPP, the public sector typically retains ownership of the assets, while the private sector is responsible for the design, construction, financing, operation, and maintenance of the project. This integration of private capabilities with public goals is essential for addressing complex societal needs, particularly in the context of limited public funding.

How it is relevant

Public-Private Partnerships have gained prominence in modern governance as a strategic response to the funding and management challenges associated with large-scale public infrastructure projects. With increasing demands for public services and constrained budgets, PPPs offer a viable solution by leveraging private sector investment and operational efficiency. They enable governments to undertake ambitious projects without bearing the full financial burden, thus facilitating the development of critical infrastructure.

Common sectors where PPPs are applied include transportation, healthcare, and urban development. For instance, in transportation, PPPs can facilitate the construction and operation of toll roads, thereby improving connectivity while sharing the financial risks associated with such large investments. In healthcare, PPPs can lead to the establishment of hospitals and clinics, ensuring that public health objectives are met through innovative management practices.

Main Characteristics

The key features of Public-Private Partnerships include risk-sharing, long-term collaboration, financial structuring, and a balance between public oversight and private sector involvement. Risk-sharing is a fundamental aspect, as it allows both parties to distribute the uncertainties associated with project delivery. This collaborative approach fosters a sense of shared responsibility, which can lead to more effective project outcomes.

Long-term collaboration is another defining characteristic of PPPs, often spanning several decades. This duration allows for the establishment of stable relationships between the public and private sectors, facilitating ongoing dialogue and adaptation to changing circumstances. Financial structuring in PPPs is typically complex, involving various funding mechanisms, including equity, debt, and government grants, which are tailored to the specific needs of the project.

Moreover, the balance between public oversight and private sector involvement is crucial. While the private sector brings innovation and efficiency, public authorities must ensure that the partnership aligns with broader societal goals.

Comparison with Other Models

Public-Private Partnerships differ significantly from fully public or fully private models of service delivery. In fully public approaches, the government assumes complete responsibility for project financing, construction, and operation, which can lead to inefficiencies and budgetary constraints. Conversely, fully private models may prioritise profit over public interest, potentially compromising service quality.

The advantages of PPPs lie in their ability to foster innovation and efficiency in project management. By engaging private expertise, governments can benefit from advanced technologies and management practices that may not be available within the public sector. However, potential drawbacks include the risk of profit motives undermining public interest, particularly if contracts are not managed transparently.

Long-term contracts can also pose challenges, as they may become rigid and difficult to amend in response to changing circumstances.

Examples in Europe

Several successful examples of PPPs in Europe highlight their effectiveness in delivering public services.

1. The M6 Toll Road, England: This project was developed as a PPP to alleviate congestion on the M6 motorway. The private consortium financed, constructed, and operates the toll road, which has significantly improved traffic flow. The partnership has allowed for efficient management and maintenance, demonstrating the benefits of private sector involvement in public infrastructure.

2. The Royal Liverpool University Hospital, England: This healthcare facility was built under a PPP model, where a private partner was responsible for the design, construction, and maintenance of the hospital. The project has improved healthcare delivery in the region, showcasing how PPPs can enhance public services while ensuring financial sustainability.

3. The Lisbon Metro, Portugal: The expansion of the Lisbon Metro system involved a PPP that enabled the construction of new lines and stations. The partnership facilitated the integration of private investment, which was crucial for the timely completion of the project, ultimately enhancing public transport accessibility in the city.

At a glance

Public-Private Partnerships represent a significant mechanism for addressing infrastructure needs and enhancing public service delivery. Their potential lies in the ability to combine public objectives with private sector efficiency, fostering innovation and investment. However, it is essential to navigate the challenges associated with these partnerships, such as ensuring equitable access to services and maintaining transparency in contract management. As governments worldwide face pressing infrastructure demands and sustainable development goals, the future of

PPPs will likely involve a careful balancing act between private incentives and the public good, ensuring that these partnerships contribute positively to society.

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