

Territorial Well-being Sustainability and Food Issue

The request for Sustainable Well-being, in the current Global Society, is by now strongly felt. The presence of new impulses towards sustainability, understood as responsible guidelines, both on a top down and on a bottom up level, is favoring a process of change, albeit slowly. The latter represents the drive that is capable of directing the Planet towards a new model of Development. However, the pursuit of Sustainable Well-being in the current Global Society appears to be strongly compromised by the multiple challenges that sustainability faces. In fact, this virtuous cycle, which is able to project the Planet into its *own sustainable path*, passes through the resolution of a number of critical issues. This statement is based on the idea that among the many problems that exist, the system has to deal with three in particular. Overcoming poverty, the search for Integrated Well-being, and the growth of Knowledge constitute three functional crucial actions towards the pursuit of Well-being Sustainability.

We must, therefore, ask ourselves what are the potentially impacting scenarios today regarding what was just stated. There are, of course, clear indications that show a Society System that is nearing a turning point. It is no coincidence that the affirmation of a Global Agenda on Sustainable Development - Agenda 2030 - as were the latest opportunities for international debate at Expo Milano 2015, Cop 21, and Cop 22 - testifies to the presence of favorable institutional scenarios. The last vertices are proof of a trend that is increasingly branching out, since it is as an expression of strategies marked by the Well-being Sustainability.

In this context, territorial systems play a crucial role. The central role of territories in seeking Global Sustainability is now widely recognized. From here, so that each territorial system can contribute to the pursuit of the sustainable Well-being of the Society, the territories must create a *sustainability project*. This project cannot fail to take into account the interconnections between well-being and environment, health, and the volume of financial resources dedicated to these topics, as well as to other aspects of the welfare state.

In fact, territories should become a sort of *laboratory*, where tried and true sustainable strategies should be applied, therefore favoring those decision-making processes that are compatible with emerging institutional scenarios. In building their own Sustainability project, they must deal with and hopefully overcome numerous issues. It is, therefore, important to specify

how among the various emergencies that a given territorial system has to deal with, there is the Food Issue.

To further clarify what was affirmed, the central role of Food should be discussed under the perspective of an integrated approach towards well-being. According to this interpretation, the food system is highly interconnected with all areas of the same, such as: health, milieu, environment, employment, mobility, and leisure, where interconnection should be seen as an impact. In this sense, the impact of food on the dimensions of Sustainability - environmental, social, and economic - generate a complex of heterogeneous instances in the territory that are defined here as Food Issue.

The elements that are the foundation of the Food Issue are: Access to Food, Food Safety, Nutrition and Food Quality. The first point in question, relevant to the Access to Food topic, is certainly linked to poverty, in terms of the factor that determines the possibility to be able to have access to food or not. The second element analyzed refers to the concept of Food Safety, understood as the consumption of hygienically safe food, free of substances that are harmful to one's health. To this regard, it should be pointed out how the risk that the protection of intellectual property rights in new fields of innovation, for example agro-bio-technologies, can affect the accessibility to and the availability of a large number of agricultural products, thus prejudicing Food Safety. The topic of Food Quality obviously involves a concept of quality, capable of going *beyond* the market vision of Food, projecting the sector towards the current demand for Food Sustainability. The topic of Nutrition is the last characteristic facet of the Food Issue. In this case, we are referring to well-balanced foods that are required for daily energy needs.

From the above analysis, the outcome is that each of these issues within territorial Food Systems determines multiple emergencies that, put together, give life to Food Issue. This question, in turn, puts the pursuit of sustainable well-being in the territories at risk.

The proposed argument is based on the idea that the Food Issue can be "solved" by fighting different forms of food poverty, emphasizing the central role of Food with respect to issues of Quality of Life and promoting a Culture of Food Sustainability. However, the conceptual system aimed at an internal analysis of the Food Issue is not enough. There must be a specific institutional framework within which to place the entire issue. It, therefore, becomes essential to replace the Food Issue in a new idea of European integration that is more sustainable for all.

What was affirmed above shows that the *Food System* should adopt new paradigms related to Food production and consumption of goods and

services, able to determine its own sustainability. In this sense, strategies of production and consumption that are functional for the model of sustainable agriculture represent efficient responses. To this respect, in order to set forth in this direction, innovative solutions must be planned developed, and increased. Therefore, focus should be put on a series of high impact levers for the model proposed. Energy efficiency, biotechnology, labeling, and bio-dynamics, which perfectly respond to the search for Food System Sustainability throughout the various territories.

In this issue, the *Journal of Studies on Sustainability* wanted to address these topics in several articles, deeming essential issues, so that Food Issue may not constitute a limit towards the pursuit of Well-being Sustainability in territories.