

**Sapienza post-2015 Agenda  
for International Development  
Cooperation**



**SAPIENZA**  
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

WORK IN PROGRESS



## Sapienza University of Rome

### Sapienza post-2015 Agenda for International Development Cooperation

#### 1. Introduction

After more than two years of negotiations, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda has been approved at the UN summit meeting of world leaders on Sep. 25-27, 2015. The Agenda's 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and 169 targets cover a wide range of social, political and economic issues linked to sustainable development, including inequality, poverty, hunger, gender equality, industrialization, cities, full employment, human rights, quality education, climate change and sustainable energy for all. The new agenda defined by the SDGs is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity, seeking to strengthen peace and secure our planet for present and future generations.

The European Union, as the biggest aid donor in the world, has declared the 2015 the European Year of Development (EYD2015) with the aim of stimulating the responsibility and the participation of European citizens in implementing development cooperation initiatives and policies.

The Agenda for International Development Cooperation represents the contribution of Sapienza to the post-2015 SDGs and to the European Year of Development.

#### 2. The "Sapienza Agenda"

There are four main reasons why Sapienza University intends to strengthen its engagement in international development cooperation and adopt an Agenda inclusive of commitments and activities to help achieve the SDGs.

The first reason comes from the tragic events occurred recently in many cities: the threat of terrorism. Development cooperation can become a powerful tool to defeat violence and other attacks to civil society as long as its aim is to establish relationships that can bring together teachers and students from different cultures, religions and social conditions in a joint program of sharing studies, learning and teaching processes, strengthening specialization and exchange of experience between realities that are very different from each other.

The new SDGs force us to work, alongside with traditional priorities such as health, food security, nutrition, end poverty and hunger, inequalities reduction, towards "more peaceful, better governed and inclusive societies". The role of universities is to educate and train young students to become the driving actors of society, the intellectual, scientific and political leaders who can promote in their countries the transition to a more sustainable development. Cooperation among universities offers a powerful opportunity to exploit the



energy and knowledge of young people towards all aspects of sustainable development, enabling them to participate more actively in the promotion of the changes needed to build more inclusive and less isolated societies.

The second reason is linked to the role that Sapienza, as a leading training and research institution in Europe, plays in promoting education and implementing courses on development cooperation. In the last eight years, after the approval by the Sapienza's Senate of the *Charter of Principles for International Development Cooperation* (30 January 2007) and the Sapienza International Conference on Development (21 June 2012), the participation of our academics and researchers in joint cooperation agreements and projects with the universities and research institutions of developing countries has increased, despite the reduced availability of financial resources, both at the domestic and international levels. Sapienza also detected a growing interest of students in academic programs aimed at broadening their knowledge on development and underdevelopment processes, understanding the analytical tools and the policies that can support development in fragile and vulnerable countries, analyzing institutional performance in the evaluation of national and local government capacity building. The Sapienza Agenda for International Development Cooperation intends to move forward in this direction, enhancing the experience gained in many disciplines and in various social, rural and urban contexts, promoting new areas of intervention and new interdisciplinary learning approaches, targeting more directly our cooperation initiatives to the SDGs approved by the United Nations.

The new SDGs represent a fundamental step towards a "collective journey requiring that no one is left behind". Universities are where science is taught, disseminated, elaborated, where solutions to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development can be found and formulated in target-related areas covering a whole range of disciplines (from engineering to social sciences, from medicine to the human sciences), where basic research can be developed and driven in a free scientific environment protected from external and internal interferences.

The third reason is linked to the Sapienza's aim to promote qualified education processes and research activities that can multiply opportunities for foreign students to work in our Departments, attend our classes and laboratories, establish fruitful relations with students of Italian nationality, learning new approaches, as well as new applications, to decision-making processes and impact assessments of the SDGs. The establishment of wider scientific collaboration between our University and its students with the Universities and students of low- and middle- income countries also contributes to a further strengthening of the effectiveness of our training development cooperation programs. The experience of hundreds of projects implemented in different areas and countries shows that cooperation activities play an important role non only in increasing the awareness and capacity of the beneficiaries of the projects (students, teachers, civil servants, public and private



administrators, institutions, enterprises etc.) to face the challenges imposed by sustainable development goals, but also in modifying the concept and tools of learning and research activities. In one word, development cooperation helps both actors of projects achieve a reciprocal understanding of each other's needs as well as the need to adapt scientific approaches to local cultural, social and economic environments. "Cooperation learning" is a way to increase the impact of development projects and programs, to better define the measurability of goals and targets, to strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration, to modify and innovate tools and learning methodologies suited to local needs. Sapienza will continue paying a strong attention to the learning aspects of cooperation in planning its future development cooperation activities.

The fourth reason motivating the "Sapienza Agenda" is linked to the attention given by the new SDGs and associated targets to global partnership. SDG 17 makes specific reference to the means required for the implementation and the revitalization of global partnerships for development. This is one of the most challenging goals because it refers to the necessity of strengthening the process of empowerment of the developing countries, helping them become the "driving" actors in the implementation of the SDGs. The evidence of the concentration, in many least-developed countries, of wealth and income in a restricted number of people, the negative impacts of trade and financial liberalization and the failure of the initiatives approved by international organizations (Rome 2003, Paris declaration 2005, Accra Agenda for Action 2008, Busan 2011 and Mexico City 2014) to increase the effectiveness, ownership and accountability of foreign aid, implies a huge amount of work to be produced and organized by a joint collaboration, a global partnership, between the research centers of both partners. What Universities can do is to help the institutions and administrations involved in cooperation programs to better identify their priorities and targets, to implement coherent policies in terms of coordination and alignment of the initiatives to local development strategies, to support partners in their negotiations with national authorities, to strengthen development capacity with the help of monitoring and evaluating methodologies.

The Sapienza Agenda for International Cooperation calls all Universities to work together for a joint project sharing these values, aimed at increasing partnership with and among students and training institutions of developing countries, and showing that the most powerful tool to fight isolation, terrorism, racism and violence is educating people at all levels and in all places.

### 3. The Sapienza University of Rome Commitments

Sapienza University of Rome, being aware of the crucial contribution that the Universities can offer in the implementation of the post-2015 SDGs and to the European Year of Development and in the dissemination of a culture of development cooperation based on solidarity, respect of human and civil rights, the preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity,



partnership and education, has agreed on the following commitments:

- to allocate a percentage of the University budget to development cooperation activities;
- to invite all the Academia staff to consider the SDGs in their research and teaching activities;
- to engage and make the Sapienza students more active in implementing development cooperation initiatives
- to establish, within a short period of time, a network of "SDGs European Universities" ready to sign these commitments;
- to establish, through the Universities network, a calendar of annual meetings to exchange experiences and to follow the progress of the development cooperation initiatives between North-South Universities;
- to engage the civil society organizations, and their partners throughout the world, in a more comprehensive and extended dialogue on global development.