

## ASviS Foundations Working Group – Position Paper

### Introduction

The cross-cutting Working Group of Foundations within the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS), which counts 36 organizations, was created with the aim of strengthening the sharing of common knowledge on the role of the Italian Foundations in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs). Although characterized by multiple identities and different priorities, it is important for all to recognize the interconnections between the root causes of the challenges that their communities of reference are facing and the challenges on a global level. The Working Group offers the space to start this conversation and this first Position Paper is the first product of these reflections.

Foundations, in Italy as elsewhere, are characterized by missions, resources - financial and otherwise - and forms of governance and operating models that are often very diversified. This reality is also reflected within the ASviS context, in the Foundations Working Group. The document, therefore, does not search to mediate between diversities, but enhances them, thus restoring the commitment that these organizations express in a convergent way towards the achievement of the SDGs; moreover, it recalls elements and characteristics related to the actions of the Foundations and provides, in relation to priority issues, examples of contribution that the Foundations themselves can make - also by making proposals to the Italian Government.

The aim is to enrich the reflections promoted by the various stakeholders during the G20 under the Italian Presidency, bringing, in synergy with the Foundations Platform F20 network, the voice of the Foundations and hoping that this work can contribute to carrying out actions that are concrete, effective, and virtuous.

### Executive summary

In Italy, the 2030 Agenda is gradually growing in importance in the planning of foundations, placing the SDGs as an "Ordering principle of their activities". This process continues despite the pandemic, which has forced most of the Foundations to reshape their activities: in fact, even at an international level, philanthropic associations and collaborative networks play an important role in the achievement of the Goals, as they promote specific training and information activities, the circularity of good practices, the exchange of experiences and they facilitate collaborations between the different actors. This is particularly relevant at the territorial level, where foundations favor the strengthening of the social fabric, entrepreneurial and cultural heritage of the territory, increasing the resilience of local communities and their capacity for innovation. Also, thanks to their research activities and the connections they can promote at national and transnational level, the Foundations play a leading role in advocacy projects for the territory, in the empowerment of third sector entities and communities and in investing with impact sustainable on the territory.

Foundations, with their autonomy, flexibility, long-term investor vision, play a crucial role in the promotion and protection of the well-being of the individual in all its forms, investing more in the "social" aspects of the 2030 Agenda: eliminate hunger and poverty, fight discrimination, promote dignity, equality, and equal

opportunities for all members of society. In particular, the pandemic has revealed serious shortcomings relating to crucial issues, on which the Foundations can play an important role:

- on the issue of gender equality, a paradigm shift is necessary that promotes a gender vision and participation of women at all levels, including in leadership positions, both through targeted programs and actions towards the outside, also by proposing a reflection internal to the foundations themselves, to guarantee the correct application of the criteria of parity.
- Regarding the right to quality education, which can continue at all ages, it is important to start from educating communities and from the fight against educational poverty, to promote a school system inclusive and functional, to promote aware and informed citizens. Also, it is important to offer young people those skills useful for a constant access to the labor market, also in collaboration with the business world.
- To address the criticalities of the health system, aggravated by demographic trends which lead to the progressive aging of the population, it is necessary to start an articulated review of policies aimed, in the first place, to integrate the different actors in an effective and efficient way in a logic of public-private partnerships, using all the tools made available by digital innovation, favoring connections and integrations.
- Regarding people who find themselves living in conditions of fragility, it is necessary to overcome the logic of mere assistance, building people's skills, training, and supporting them.
- To give answers to the housing problems that concern not a small segment of the population, there has been a growth, also thanks to the system of Foundations, of experiments and experiences, both private and public-private concerning models of social housing, co-housing, smart housing, which not only increase the offer of residential solutions, but also strengthen the individual skills of those in difficulty and the social cohesion of communities.
- Inclusion policies must aim at creating fair opportunities for every person, especially in young people with a migratory background, through policies and investments that involve them more directly.
- To address economic inequalities and opportunities and risks arising from social fragmentation and exclusion, Foundations can assist in the design of public policies aimed at countering the causes, promoting education, insertion in the world of work and supporting rehabilitation paths.
- Also on the environmental aspects, foundations they can play a key role, for example promoting awareness-raising activities and activating local promotion projects and experiences of virtuous behavior in territorial communities, as well as scientific research and outreach. In addition, the strong roots of the foundations in a territory, makes them acts as key stakeholders to promote its integrity and sustainability, implementing projects and collaborations to fight degradation and erosion and protect biodiversity, both animal and vegetable.
- The design of the cities of the future will have to change, considering climate change, the relevance of which will become increasingly unavoidable for any process of decision-making, with reference to urban redesign in a more resilient and sustainable way.

- Finally, to bridge the digital divide, particularly pronounced in Italy, literacy processes of social groups further away from innovation processes will be necessary, while promoting the transition of public administration services, to make them more efficient and effective.

To achieve the ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda, in addition to the actions described in this document, Foundations promote collaborations and networking, forming and strategic partnerships of like-minded associations.

The Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS) was established on February 3rd, 2016, upon the initiative of the Unipolis Foundation and the University of Rome “Tor Vergata”. Its aim is to raise the awareness of the Italian society, economic stakeholders, and institutions about the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to mobilize them to pursue the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Alliance already brings together more than 300 member organizations among the most important civil society institutions and networks, such as: associations representing social partners (businesses, trade unions and third sector associations); networks of civil society associations pursuing specific Goals (health, education, employment, environment quality, gender equality, etc.); associations of local public administrations; public and private universities and research centers; associations of stakeholders working in the fields of culture and information; foundations and networks of foundations; Italian organizations that are members of international networks dealing with the SDGs.

Thanks to its website ([www.asvis.it](http://www.asvis.it)), the weekly newsletters and other mailings on specific topics provide thousands of readers and users with a continuous flow of information on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Italy and worldwide, as well as on the results of ongoing research on issues related to the SDGs.

The Sustainable Development Festival organized by ASviS represents one of the most important activities to raise the awareness about the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in Italy ([festivalsvilupposostenibile.it](http://festivalsvilupposostenibile.it)).