SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities Transcription

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**Introduction**

Everybody welcome to the introductory lectures for youth engagement on 2030 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. Today the topic the speakers what the topic will be SDG 11 and the speaker will be Mr. Yves Zimmermann.

**Speaker**

It is our great pleasure to welcome Yves to this lecture series because he is not only a thinker with a strong link blend toward philosophy but he's also a practitioner.

He has been the project manager for many years. He's a specialist in governance and also because he has served in the Parliament and so he knows the parliamentarian, the whole political and policy making process. He joined in 2008 the Eurometropole of Strasbourg and he structured a participatory democracy of proximity for the city and set up a Council of Social and Solidarity Economy, both are very significant development and I'm sure you will get sort of a glimpse of what is these two things all about. In 2016, he was given the responsibility of steering Strasbourg's application for the title of European Green Capital, he experimented with new levers for ecological transformation through systemic approaches for air quality control, different urban projects such as transportation and also housing also redevelopment of certain areas of the city and of course food supply and food chain is also a very important urban topic. The whole approach is in view of align the development of Strasbourg with the 2030 Agenda and the related Sustainable Development Goals. Currently he's preparing the first French Voluntary Local Review for 2023 and it is a process of taking the full agenda and to look at the implementation and progress made from a local perspective. So with that said we welcome Yves to give today's presentation.

For the your welcome words very friendly thank you.

**Eurometropole of Strasbourg**

Well let me sort of give a little bit of a hint of the talk that the Yves will be giving today, we mentioned today's topic is about SDG 11, it stands for making cities and human settlements meaning smaller communities or rural areas more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, it is a very big agenda and specifically before we go into today's presentation and lecture I will ask Yves to say a few words about Strasbourg and what does that mean to be Eurometropole.

Thank you Lichia, I will give you a short presentation of Strasbourg as you can see Strasbourg is a medium-sized town located at the French German border well known for good reasons and bad reasons the war between Germany for example.

But also because of his heritage with the very magnificent Cathedral from the medieval times also now since 1949 hosting the European Parliament, European Institution for Weather Council of Europe the European Parliament is a seat of a European Institution. And you see also a new bridge between France and Germany which is dedicated to the tram, the both cities French and German cities are linked with this great mobility infrastructure. This is what we are doing working better and better with our neighbors to be a labor testing ground territory for European integration.

Yeah it is a great to hear about this sort of a cross-border collaboration and co-development and I think this is we need to see this more and more because the borders cannot block the air pollution, the smog and the trend, the mobility of people so it is very natural that at the sort of at the field level or on the ground level that the collaboration across borders are happening and do we anticipate to learn more from Strasbourg of your experience.

Yes.

**Q1a**

And today let me sort of erase my first question, could you just tell us **why SDG 11 is important for our future development.**

Yes, SDG 11 just I have to say first that we have to remember that SDGs are the result of the meeting of two global policies processes one environmental with the Earth's Summit and the other social issues based on the Millennium Development goals which are essentially dedicated or aimed for developing countries of the South.

Secondly SDGs are the result of a fragile diplomatic balance, several sensitive issues like governance or peace security issues climate or inequalities have been the subject of long debates romantic debates. Some of the SDGs are the results this from specific initiatives and this is the case of the SDG 11 for sustainable cities which is the result of a large campaign driven by UCLG to promote a specific goal dedicated to cities.

**SDGs and 2030 Agenda: a new global paradigm**

So this should have been the picture to explain the both dynamics for to build this set of 17 goals Sustainable Development Goals.

**Cities are key for sustainability**

And this SDG number 11 is about making cities and human settlement inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, this means that today more than the half of the world's population live in cities by 2050 an estimated 7 to 10 people will likely live in urban areas as you can see cities are the place of 80% of global GDP so even the city occupies just three percent of the earth's land, cities are accounting for about 70 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, this is very a huge questions. Also consuming 60 to 80 percent of energy of global consumption. So yes urban scale is a very key issue for a sustainable future.

**Q1b**

Yeah well never look at the cities from that perspective, indeed city is with highly concentrated population of course also human economic human activities from economic to culture but also the we also noticed as the diversity, the disparity within the city itself in terms of the standard of living the conditions of work. So I think the city is a very complex system that we do not normally sort of look at as a whole but rather looking at in a silo mansion. And I also want to thank you for bringing us back to remember that is a historical route about the SDGs, it is not just by 2015 or certain policy makers wake up and say we're gonna do this 2030 Agenda but it has been 30 years or even longer process of trying to sort of come to an understanding and certain insight to agree that we have to have a solidarity for everyone. So in that context **how are we going to measure progress in terms of implementing SDGs within the urban areas** as you said huge popular world population very little land and also almost no resources **what are the targets and indicators will be used.**

Yes targets, indicators as a framework of a sustainable cities. As you know sustainability lays on three main pillars economy, social and environment. But the new framework of SDG has introduced more likely the 5p that means People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships. So the three pillar with a fourth one which is governance are more found in each goal through its different targets and especially SDG 11 which tends to be inclusive that's maybe social, safe, resilient or sustainable. It's a good example for a balanced combination of the four pillars within the 10 targets and sometimes within each Target.

Okay as you can see the social ones for example, as the first one the housing safe and affordable housing this is a social issue for having a basic service of homes especially for in southern countries, well there’s a lot of upgraded --- so economic targets as you can see the elements C is supporting less developed countries including financial technical assistance in building sustainable and resilience buildings, utilizing local materials. This is an economical local issue.

There are also another one an environment tell which is dedicated to reduce the impact of city by paying special attention to air quality and waste management, this is the 11-6.

So governance also this main forth pillar is included in a SDG 11 through the third one inclusive and sustainable urbanization which aims to build the decision to build the new planning of the city with participatory processes with the citizens I mean this is very very important. So most of them include different aspects in the way they are written for example when you look at the Goal 11 to Target 11-2, it says by 2030 provide access to safe, affordable, accessible, sustainable transport system, this is an infrastructure system with special attention to the needs of tools in vulnerable situations, women, children, person with disabilities and older person, this is a social institute. So sometimes also some targets are including different pillars through problematics, they should consider for example the fifth one significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and decreased their direct economic losses relative to global growth domestic products caused by disaster including water relied, related disaster with a focus on protecting the poor and the people in the vulnerable situation.

So the effect of climate change and disaster that are coming. So this is all fully included in those different targets.

So you have we have to notice also that the UN have this defined the do this target was aspirational and global and each government is setting its own national targets guided, paddle global level of ambition but mostly taking into account the national circumstances and also at local level we must take into account our own circumstances that's why we have created a new Target on the elements not on a transport system but on active mobility. To foster more cycling, use working, this is also infrastructure this is a healthy infrastructure we have to develop.

Oh thank you for you for explaining that how does the larger objectives of the 5 P's of the 2030 Agenda being translated into urban contexts and also help us to see how does the social economic environment and governance connected to each other in realizing SDG 11. It requires not only sort of the policy makers in the cities but also the residents to come together to discuss some of these issues because when you are talking about safe housing and affordable housing, I just sort of the current that some of the earthquake and also the flooding in different countries. Some of the countries suffer from the flooding from last year and yet to be recovered in terms of moving into a more permanent housing. So I think the challenge for the for the city planners and policy makers are great because we are already sort of clearly we can see the disasters getting more and also more severe.

Yes

So I hope we will be able to learn from your experience.

Yeah we are still learning when you are refurbishing a part of the city, the SDGs are very helpful because you have such a checklist of what you have to do the most the as priorities.

**Monitoring an urban project with SDGs**

So I can show you here we have a big refurbishment urban part of the city and we used the SDGs as to evaluate what our ambitions are and what and how our actions plan fit our ambitions. And with the SDG we can show our ambition and where we're lack under some needs especially here when you see the this is a Eco-neighborhood called Danube in Strasbourg which was built through a level of Eco-neighborhood and we see that for example SDG 5 is not considered in this one. SDG which is Gender Equity here yes was missed.

So but after this evaluation they choose to dedicate a new school for a French feminist and activist Suraj vernix so but even SDG 6 on water wasn't really taken into account even though as you can see it's nearby a former basin of both facilities. The water is there so but after that they decide to try to just connect rainfalls.

**Q2**

I was just reflecting on your chart and of course you mentioned very strongly or clearly the governance dimension and I look at SDG 17 that is about partnership and the 16 is about in many ways is specifically about governance. So putting the different interests of the people living in the same territory **what you consider or experience as the key challenges in implementing the SDG not only 11 but all the related interpretation to happen in cities.**

So it's a very positive approach for SDGs identifying some synergies, some difficulty oppositions and you have to make trade-offs that make compromises and this is a very interesting thing with the cities you have to consider all things and find your priorities.

**Finding the right balance between the functionalities**

Here you have a view of Strasbourg and its Cathedral is Medieval Center which was classified in 1989 as UNESCO world heritage. And by this globalization recognition we saw that the Cathedral, the stones of the cathedral which are a sand pink sandstones should have been pink but they were black fully black. So due to air pollution due to car traffic and activities most of the activities so the politicians that during this times asks themselves what about our lungs if the stones are so black our lungs must be also this so this was a starting point.

I'm laughing because I was thinking we are super human beings so our lungs are always red.

Yeah probably we are resilient, we are we can heal ourselves but it's just to avoid air pollution. Air pollution is very very a crucial question of urban areas. So they decided to build a new infrastructure of trump the election came this year and there was a fight a politician fight between a metro underground and a tram solution over on the field on the ground. So tram won the election but still they have to convince the population especially the shopkeepers in the center of Cathedral.

**Dealing with attractiveness: vs mobility, public spaces, air quality and health**

So they choose to show in which way this infrastructure will transform the city. And here you have this communication with 200 cars, three buses and one tram model. (yeah) Yes so you can see that this is real change of the shape of the street of the use of the street and yes they had to cut the car flows through the center and they decided to dedicate the city center near the Cathedral just for not but with some remaining roads for to get in but not to cross the city center. To get in and to get out with booming yes.

So that's that was very useful to explain to the people what's with the to the shopkeepers especially because they said we have to keep parking to let the people come to the city center to our shops for the trade and the attractiveness.

**Public spaces as living areas: Strasburg, first commercial zone**

So here this is now in our days the main place in the city center called the “Place Kléber” and you can see people having a leisure, having shopping and coexisting with this infrastructure of the tram yeah is going quite slowly through the city center

and the shops are still there and even more. But today our city center is the biggest commercial zone in whole France out of Paris. Paris is a special one. But a city center is very attractive is very diverse, it's very really great place to come for (pandemic in their life) only for shopping.

Yes so this is very interesting because you can see here we are attackting different kind of the targets of the elements SDG mobility, air quality, cultural heritage, public spaces and but also SDG 8 economical development or tourism or also so most important infrastructure like the Palace of Justice have been maintained in the city center because it's still accessible and practical for the lawyers to have their practitioner office in the city center so that's very interesting.

Yeah it's a very interesting and very important example because I can recall many of the cities that into in the past considered to be great cities but the city centers basically have been hollowed out being left empty and it becomes sort of a collection center of homeless or other human misery and including San Francisco if I may say so.

I think this is offers a great lesson to think about how to create synergies between different needs, (yeah) different functionalities as you just recorded.

**Public spaces as living spaces**

Yeah another consequences can be also you can green your city when you have space enough, this was a formal a bus station main bus station for tourist cars and this was really transformed for being a green natural place with people, with playgrounds for kids, interest to walk by also for tourists you have a scripture that explains the city plant and now it's very a cool refreshing part of the of the city. So you can build through this refurbishment you can build a greener city also.

Second hallenge because this was the first challenge to try to find the right balance between the different functionalities of the of the city. The second challenge is dealing with we have a lot of housing demand when you have attractiveness, we have a lot of people joining coming into the city for jobs or for security or for education for health.

But in 2008 the new elected Mayor choose to stop urban's pro because she was going to grow wider and wider eating the space of agricultural field and that had to stop. And it choose to build on the city a more complexity that needs to be probably a little more higher but also build and here we had as you can see the map under this large part of the city was a formal port facilities with lots of big buildings that were refurbished that is 250 hectares of both facilities transformed into a more really herbal urban part more with housing. Houses, offices, schools, shelter for elder people, services infrastructure of mobility as you can see on the picture over so tram line an extension of the tram rank comes through all these empty space before even any new construction. And through this line we urbanized screw a bubble of urbanization at a different trams stations first and here you can see this part is now has a lot changed but is no more the city next to the German part, next to Germany.

So this is now a new part of the city with so we have to find this rail balance between gray constructions buildings and green infrastructure.

**Connecting green and blue infrastructure**

And the way we deal with this challenge building more green is by connecting the green and the blue infrastructure we had from the South and the North we have two big natural forests. As you can see very preserved with a (very beautiful) a very high quality of what you do that diversity and connecting these 2 forests through this refurbishment area, through the board facility remaining, port facilities gives us the way of greening. This part of a formal port and to preserve biodiversity by building corridors green corridors from the North to the South. And even from through inside the cities through the blue reverses of the blue infrastructure reverse scandals as you can see here also dedicated to a leisure and sports facilities.

So this connection between green and gray was feasible through this refurbishment initiatives in and by stopping the urbans part so fight finding the right balance is very demanding (yeah a lot of work) a lot of the work yes.

**Q3**

And that's right you gave us two very good examples so **if you have chance do it again what would you do differently or what would you repeat?**

**Natural urban parks for citizens participation**

We are still working on the best way of building the city and the last initiative we took is trying to build a city with this great balance between gray and green and this is what we call Natural Urban Parks. We have the first one as you can see with the wheel of SDG in the west part of the city. And the second one at the Roberto which is a more recent project, Natural Urban Parks are aware of finding the right balance with the participation of citizens. The citizens are fully empowered to decide what part of the city they want to evolve, what part of the cities they want to keep greener or to transform and the natural urban pact is in their hands.

City, the city is only dedicating a part of its budget a certain kind of expertise. Experts are helping the citizens to decide to operate some projects. Here you can see you we have in the Natural Urban Park refurbishment of a school extension and the whole surroundings were also reoperated with shared gardens, forested hills for example and a green theater for permanent permaculture garden, family gardens so that this was decided by the by the citizens. And the citizens also look into their heritage and cultural heritage and also patrimonial natural heritage so they have really a cultural approach of their neighborhood. And yes they have an action plan dedicated from 2019 to 2023 for this year, fully structured through the SDG framework.

**A systemic green belt for adaptation and resilience**

So and after this the new elected team has decided to build on this experience and to rethink the green belt, we had a mystery called “Green Belt” around the city and the green belt a little bit sometimes forgotten by other municipalities that they have authorized some buildings moral buildings for example the European part for the European institution have been built on the green belt so it was not so no it's not strength. And our new green belt has been extended and the SDG approach on systemic approach has brought to have this green belt as an adaptation belt for a bioclimatic build for adaptation for climate change. And through this having food activities, farmers, family gardens yes also leisure build activities for sports, for cycling, for resting promenade also and patrimonial heritage belt and educational brand so this systemic approach has the impact of maintaining a really and a growing efficient green belt for adaptation of the city. So this systemic approach is very important now to build a new approach which is at human scale, a city should be not inter structure economical activities that should respond answers and needs of the people and this is what we are doing through this approach with the green belt. Yes just so.

I interrupt briefly here, it's great to see that the different this systemic approach to Green Belt is being adopted and without asking for proof I think it definitely impacted the quality of life of people living in this area. However I just wonder since it does I was looking trying to look at this so how much land I remember seeing before, I was just wonder in terms of employment transfer trend in a sort of transforming urban area that offers commercial services and other things livelihood into more green, more environmental friendly, leisure friendly. How does that show up in terms of employment, does that continue to contribute to the economic side of the city?

Yeah yes for sure because the economy should be transformed also and to be more that is a key lessons learned from the COVID’s period after this politicians came out with a food strategy we need to be more self-sufficient for food. Because we have not spaced enough to feed all our people that is true but we cannot be too much dependent on infrastructure for supplying the stores to bring the necessary food. We should also be more resilient by changing the way we eat, to eat safer, better eating that means to produce biological products that mean it's a crucial need because we have a high rate of obesity for example we have a 90 percent of young people at the age of 11 being overweight (yes) so that's a problem.

So after the COVID period we started to build a new strategy on food with the myelin urban policy part and this is through SDG indicators also. And trying to foster more local production and local distribution so this green belt is helping to set some new young farmers to be able to have their own yes. And promoting also family gardens that we have 4848 family gardens, it's a huge part of the city. And we want to give more room for families to have their own garden, family garden or shell gardens or collective gardens difference a few but just help people feed themselves in this approach. So this is also directly connected to the food strategy to promote farmers but also to promote cooperative to distribute this food supply or cooperative to transform vegetables for example by doing some boxes or there's a lot of activities that can be imagined for food. People will ever especially in transport we have a great gastronomy here history.

**Q4**

Of course the SDGs we're trying to facilitate the arrival of a more sustainable future and it's very much connected to the future generations and the young people so I wonder I know **what do you suggest for young people to do so that they can also participate and contribute to the achievement of the SDG goals in the cities or in the settlements or communities they live from.**

Yeah that's a really good question because cities were spawned especially by for jobs, cities are the gathering of economic activities and people who want to have a job, safer job than what they have at in the countryside as farmers sometimes with bad years, with the lack of water or life was really a difficult for people to live in rural areas. So when manufacturers offers new jobs with regular repayment so the city grow the city has grown. So yes this is very important when you think for youth.

**Young people: building a new narrative**

This the first thing it's the first message I will give to young people, their responsibility is for us to choose a job that makes sense, not being trader or banker or something a sailor for a bad stuff I don't know but they must for the future to be sustainable we must have a shift of ideology. We must rethink the essential the priorities we are working for.

So second I would say cooperation and non-competition, cities are gathering a lot of people and so they gather also social difficulties, refugees, deprived people, minorities

so they are the place of inequalities cities the difficulties come to the cities. So cooperation is needed to overcome these difficulties and not to compete with each other, this is the second message for the for young in cities.

And just not to be anxious, every single choice you make is can be an action. You don't have to expect the big change, the big day and big revolution you have just to be like Mohandas Gandhi said “you must be the change you want to see” so every choice is a possibility to make change.

And do not harm, this is the main or “Leave No One Behind” is the motto of the SDGs so you must be careful not to neither society is a nor the nature we have to be more and more accountable for what we are doing so do not help. And last one I would say slow down, cities are always more rapid, more active than rural areas so it's a place of overflow of abundance of infinite possibilities of consuming existence or money. This is to be reconsidered in order to identify what is this essential and what is not in our life, the coming is it's a covered pandemic also showed and enlightened this in perspective and showed that our relation to time has to be reconsidered that's what you make when you choose to travel by train and not by air flight, it's you allow yourself time to live and to travel so it's a way for slowing down.

Here you have the picture, this is a Natural Urban Park, it's not natural, it's not the countryside, it's inside the city. So you can slow down your lives inside of a city.

This is very thought provoking, I was just thinking that to implement SDGs requires a change of mentality a change of way of looking at life and differentiate what's important and what is just superficial. And thank you very much for reminding us using Strasbourg as example and sharing your personal experience. And also guide the young people not about specific activities they need to do but to remind all of us that every choice is an action in itself and so let's try to be the change we want to see. So with that note I want to thank you for joining us and appreciate your contribution very much.