

16th Session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA)

24 to 28 April 2017

Written Statement by IBREA Foundation

Agenda item 3: Ensuring effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through leadership, action and means, (a) understanding the needs of local authorities and communities and supporting and equipping them for the implementation of the SDGs.

AGENDA ITEM: “Understanding the needs of local authorities and communities and supporting and equipping them for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals”

IBREA FOUNDATION welcomes the 16th Session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration and its efforts to support the work of ECOSOC related to the development of public administration and governance among the Member States in connection with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

IBREA FOUNDATION has worked with Member States to provide brain-based holistic education to a wide variety of groups. Among the beneficiaries of our program, are public officials and staff of public administration as well as civil society at the national, regional and local levels.

From our experience in working with local authorities and communities, we would like to provide the following recommendations, which we hope can be useful in helping the implementation of the SDGs at the local level.

Awareness-raising:

Local authorities and communities should be made aware of their importance and value in the global picture. Often times, people working at the local level are detached from the global agenda. They feel as if it is not related to them. But in reality, anything that takes place at the local level is going to impact the world at large. So the local and global agendas should not be seen as separate ones, but rather integrated, and support one another.

SDGs education and suggesting implementation methods:

From what we have seen, first of all, they are not familiar with the SDGs. So efforts can be made to provide them with basic education about the SDGs. Local authorities and communities should also be given opportunities to be part of the global level activities and discussions, such as participating in UN conferences. Once they are familiar with the SDGs, they will be more able to connect their own policies and actions to the SDGs agenda. In this regard, we would also recommend efforts on the part of the UN, its Member States, as well as NGOs to provide local authorities and communities with specific opportunities, ways, ideas and methods in which they can do that, including the replication of identified “best practices” in other local communities having similar challenges.

Understanding their needs and obstacles:

To help local authorities and communities raise their awareness and action related to the SDGs, we do need to understand their needs first, as suggested by this agenda item. To understand their needs, we must find the way to connect with their realities and challenges. This can only be done through directly working with them. NGOs become key in this process. They are the ones working on the ground with the people at the local level, and can help inform the government and the UN about their needs, and what are the obstacles preventing them from effectively contributing to the SDGs. This information can help the UN and Member States decide what areas need more focus and what needs to be prioritized.

Responsibility and accountability:

Local authorities and communities can be supported in the ways mentioned above. At the same time, they should be educated to take responsibility for their own actions. Education on leadership, management, problem-solving, among others, would be a valuable asset for this. For accountability purposes, we also need to work on setting up effective evaluation mechanisms a local level that allow us to track progress in what regards SDGs' implementation.

Sustainability:

To create sustainable impact at the local level, there needs to be active involvement by all the members of the community. The work of implementing the SDGs cannot be left alone at the hands of local public authorities. All other sectors of the society (schools, churches, NGOs, local media, local private sector etc.) should be engaged in one way or another for results to have a lasting impact. When all actors are involved, there is a collective sense of motivation and commitment that generates structural change.

IBREA FOUNDATION appreciates the opportunity to express these opinions and recommendations which stem from direct experience. Thank you for considering them.