

From stakeholder engagement to the collective-impact approach for sustainability paths in complex problems

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Abstract

Purpose of the paper: Stakeholder engagement is becoming the preferred approach for implementing sustainability paths. However, it is not always sufficient to develop responsible behaviours. Large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination and the commitment of a group of important actors (Kania and Kramer, 2011). Such change can be considered from the perspective of 'collective impact'.

This paper analyses the case of an area named Agro Caleno, which belongs to the territory that has recently been dubbed 'The Land of Fires' in Campania, Italy. A succession of environmental and health crises have afflicted this area for the past eight years, creating serious difficulties for the structural stability of many businesses that produce protected designation of origin (PDO) food items, as well as the entire community.

Methodology: This research uses qualitative analysis. It employs documentary research and a direct survey of the businesses and local municipalities of the case-study area. In particular, this paper addresses the experience of some businesses that are implementing initiatives to adopt collaborative sustainable behaviours.

Findings: This research demonstrates the strong strategic importance of the decision to create a network to address the consequences of the environmental problems faced by businesses in Agro Caleno. However, while it was found that there is a good level of cooperation between business and local institutions, the network has not produced the estimated results.

Practical Implications: To produce consistent and effective results that will solve a complex problem such as environmental pollution, it is not only necessary to create cross-sector public and private partnerships, but also to initiate a systematic approach focused on the relationships between different stakeholders and a progression towards shared goals that maintain the perspective of collective impact.

Limitations: This research did not conduct exhaustive investigation of all categories of stakeholders.

Originality of the paper: This paper provides an in-depth examination of the importance of social capital in creating sustainable business behaviours and proposes the theoretical approach of collective impact for solving complex problems from the perspective of sustainability.

Key words: sustainability; stakeholder engagement; social capital; collective impact; complex problems

1. Introduction

Currently, the relational approach and stakeholder engagement are considered obligatory paths for the implementation of sustainability strategies. Sustainability is a multi-stakeholder concept. Engagement eases the dialogue among the interested parties, and allows movement towards a systematic management of the supply chain that should be based on trust, safety, traceability and strong partnerships with stakeholders—from suppliers to distributors, and to the end customers (Perrini *et al.*, 2006; Russo and Tencati, 2009). Such engagement contributes to accessing the innovative potential that exists within the cooperation (Tencati and Zsolnai, 2009), and increases the value and the quality of processes and outputs (Dallocchio *et al.*, 2010), allowing competitiveness models that are connected to the advantages of differentiation to be sustained (Werther and Chandler, 2005).

Relational approaches are quite clear in their different theoretical guidelines related to sustainability. At the firm level (i.e., corporate social responsibility [CSR]), relational approach refers to the obtained benefits (Orlitzky *et al.*, 2003; Porter and Kramer, 2006; Perrini *et al.*, 2009); at the production-line level, it refers to the management of relationships within the supply chain (Carter and Jennings, 2002; Reuter *et al.*, 2010); at the network and system level (Hemmati, 2002; Zadek, 2006; Caroli and Tantalo, 2011). However, sometimes collaboration among stakeholders is not sufficient to develop the responsible behaviours necessary to obtain the desired results. The literature underlines the importance of wide participation models that must achieve the following:

- 'involve equitable representation of three or more stakeholder groups and their views' (Hemmati, 2002, p. 19);
- be 'based on democratic principles of transparency and participation and aim to develop partnerships and strengthened networks between and among stakeholders' (Hemmati, 2002, p. 19);
- create 'civil society initiated multi-stakeholder arrangements that aim to fulfill a leadership role in the protection of the global commons or the production of global public goods' (Glasbergen, 2010, p. 130).

In some cases, the literature also underlines the need to consider forms of governed cooperation. Such governed cooperation must include the commitment of a group of important actors with different backgrounds that are working together to achieve a common agenda for the development of sustainability projects. As Kania and Kramer (2011, p. 36) state, 'large-scale social change requires a broad cross-sector coordination [...] a commitment by a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem.'

This paper analyses the possibility of implementing governed collaboration to manage a complex sustainability problem and to adopt a process that could lead to the development of initiatives that benefit all involved parties and work for the common good. The problem analysed in this paper is the pollution of Agro Caleno, an area that belongs to the territory recently termed 'The Land of Fires' in Campania, Italy. In Agro Caleno, environmental and health crises have created serious difficulties

for the production of protected designation of origin (PDO) food items and the entire community. Although there was a good level of cooperation among firms and local institutions, in the early years of the crisis (2008-2009), the network did not yield the results it estimated. In addition, national and regional initiatives in Italy that were designed to address the new environmental emergency appeared disjointed and were not shared by economic operators. This led to consideration of the viability of creating governed collaboration for managing the complex problems in a sustainable manner.

The first part of this paper examines the concepts of engagement and social capital, considering social capital in relation to creating sustainable behaviour and the collective-impact approach for managing complex sustainability problems. A model for a sustainable local system is presented in this part. The second part presents the empirical research, discussion and conclusions of this paper.

2. Interaction, stakeholder engagement and social capital: a focus on SMEs

Since its philosophical origins, the concept of a relationship has been defined through the idea of 'interaction', and it has been clear that through experience, observation and inference, individuals and cultures gain increasingly greater knowledge. Various disciplines have examined the manner in which knowledge is transmitted from one person to the other and the *theory of the spread*, of the anthropological mould, and the *social-learning theory* of Bandura (1977) mark the transition from the behaviourist approach to the concept of cognitivism. In the context of management studies, the stakeholder theory is the principal that represents the company in its relational identity (Freeman, 1984; Freeman *et al.*, 2004). The stakeholder-theory approach emphasises the need in business management to respect different interests of stakeholders. Such consideration is expected to allow the company to find compatibility among economic objectives, and will allow it to maximise the return and satisfaction for shareholders and stakeholders. The later theory of stakeholder engagement asserts a core value, which is the position of responsibility required of firms and stakeholders to engage in the sharing of information, construction of a dialogue and an ongoing commitment to solve problems together (Svendsen and Laberge, 2005).

Since Barnes's (1954) study, the concept of the network has explained the ties between different actors. This concept has been thoroughly analysed through consideration of structural analysis, exchange and relation theories, as well as social-capital studies (Coleman, 1990). Burt (2000, p. 282) states that networks 'have been identified as an important source of social capital'. The concept of the social capital is defined as 'connections among individuals-to social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them' (Putnam, 2000, p. 19). This concept has captured the interest of economists (e.g., Woolcock and Narayan, 2000), sociologists (e.g., Coleman, 1988) and political scientists (e.g., Ostrom, 1994), and in management

studies, it is considered a strategic asset (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; Adler and Kwon, 2002). Social capital in a company are one of its most important assets. Burt (2000, p. 283) argues that social capital 'is the final arbiter of competitive success for entrepreneurs'. Spence *et al.*, (2003, p. 17) also state that social capital 'can be considered to be the product of co-operation between various institutions, networks and business partners [and it] 'is found to be influenced by context and, in particular, institutional arrangements'.

The relationship between networks, social capital and the common good is also important. Meister and Lueth (2001, p. 94) state that investing in social capital should become a corporate strategy 'since it is in the interest of business to take its role in society seriously and engage in developing a society in which gains of co-operation will increase. Investment in social capital thus could be seen as a major contribution to the common good'. Spence and Schmidpeter (2003, p. 94) also state that 'business organisations need to engage in the development of the society in which they want to do business, since business is influenced by the society in which it operates'.

Interactions, networks and social capital are even more important in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). In such enterprises, relational identity becomes a distinctive feature (Birley, 1985), and is a driver for developing strategic paths that are based on the ability to weave both internal and external informal relationships through participation in a network (Marchini, 1995).

In SMEs, it is essential to build and to manage relationships in harmony with business partners, both with other economic actors (e.g., suppliers, other companies or sellers) and consumers. The relationship must be built with the partners. Given that SMEs have fewer resources with which to convince their stakeholders, they have fewer tools with which to 'impose' a business relationship. The ability of SMEs to develop harmonic and trustful relationships with stakeholders is considered the basis of their long-term performance (Spence *et al.*, 2003). The relationships built with other small enterprises are also very important for SMEs to be able to survive tough competition (Spence *et al.*, 2001). When such relationships are created with stakeholders, businesses have the potential to compensate for their lack of size and the loss of economy of scale that is often characteristic of SMEs. Goffee and Scase (1995, p. 18) note that the 'mutually beneficial support and benefits may take the form of a broader range of products and services to customers, faster and more flexible response times and the purchase of materials and services in an informal, ad hoc way without undue bureaucratic constraints'.

As such, networks can be considered multi-faceted constructions that contribute to allowing business and society to attain different goals (Spence and Schmidpeter, 2003). Networks and norms of reciprocity are productive and important elements for businesses that generate mutual gains of cooperation (Habisch, 1999). As Putman (1993, p. 167) states, trust, norms and networks are 'features of social organization [...] that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions'.

3. Social capital for sustainable paths. The necessity of governed relations: the collective-impact approach

Alessandra De Chiara
From stakeholder engagement
to the collective-impact
approach for sustainability
paths in complex problems

Social capital can support a specific reciprocity and mobilise solidarity, and may originate from a need to react to (negative) external forces (Putnam, 2000). As such, social capital has some important aspects related to business ethics. It highlights the manner in which business is performed, dealing with issues such as transparency, honesty, cooperation, trust, community investment, organisational citizenship and goodwill. The adoption of ethical behaviour in business allows the construction of 'a set of durable relationships, it consents to strengthen the relational nature of a firm and to empower it in a virtuous cycle: CSR generates assets of social capital and social capital leads to CSR' (De Chiara, 2012b, p. 146).

Social capital 'is a potentially critical aspect for small business life' (Spence *et al.*, 2003, p. 18), that is, for SMEs. Joseph (2000) found that SMEs play an important role in economic regional development through engagement and civic issues. As such, it can be considered that 'the management of social capital is a crucial aspect for long-term performance, while CSR strategy or CSR tools can improve and enounce the relational nature of SME and strengthen its social capital' (De Chiara, 2012, p. 146). This concept is often addressed in the literature (e.g., Spence *et al.*, 2003; Perrini, 2006).

Social capital is an interactive concept, above all in SMEs. SMEs are not 'microcosms', but principally exist because of a constant and essential exchange with their economic and social environment. All companies have the capacity to exploit the relational, social and cultural fabric of their places of production. They have the important role of using their relationships and their social capital to create a 'unique' network because it is abounding with cultural traditions and expertise in each different territory. Similarly, local institutions have an equally important role of balancing the differences of all the actors of the network so that the network constitutes an effective resource for local development. The engagement of local institutions is essential because 'local solutions of civic-engagement and self-regulation are playing an increasing role in guaranteeing successful interaction in everyday-life' (Spence and Schmidpeter, 2003, p. 96). Therefore, the work of institutions must function alongside the work of the companies who are connecting with other economic actors and with institutions to benefit from their social capital. The institutions aim to develop policies and services for companies, to value the networks, and territory's aptitudes and inclinations (Iannone, 2007; Barile *et al.*, 2013), as well as to create the conditions so that even the small-sized companies can increase their contribution to the common good (Bennett, 1999).

In addition, companies cannot implement sustainability paths alone. It is necessary to consolidate relationships between companies and local systems, connecting the company and the local environment (Iannone, 2007; Pilotti *et al.*, 2013).

As stated, sustainability is an opportunity to build collaborative interactions and partnerships between public and private actors. However, collaborative interactions are not always sufficient. As underlined in the collective-impact perspective, 'large-scale social change requires a broad

cross-sector coordination’ and a commitment by ‘a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda to solve a specific social problem’ (Kania and Kramer, 2011, p. 36). This perspective stresses that the different types of traditional collaborations, such as the funder collaborative, public-private partnerships, multi-stakeholder initiatives and social sector networks organisations, have failed in the attempt to solve complex social problems. The collective-impact approach refers to a type of collaboration that solicits a separate organisation (or organisations) with a specific sets of staff skills, shared tools and a structured process to create a common agenda (see Table 1).

Tab. 1: Five conditions of collective success

Common Agenda	All participants have a shared vision of change, including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed actions
Shared Measurement	Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures that efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	Participants’ activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action
Continuous Communication	Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives and create common motivation
Backbone Support	Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organisation (or organisations) with a specific set of staff skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organisations and agencies

Source: adapted from Kania and Kramer (2011)

Members’ behaviour is fundamental in the collective-impact approach. Kania and Kramer (2011, p. 39) state that the success of this approach ‘is not merely a matter of encouraging more collaboration or public-private partnerships. It requires a systemic approach to social impact that focuses on the relationships between organizations and the progress toward shared objectives’ and add that the ‘expectation that collaboration can occur without a supporting infrastructure is one of the most frequent reasons why it fails’ (Kania and Kramer, 2011, p. 41).

While not all social problems demand a solution using the collective-impact approach, ‘adaptive problems’ (i.e., complex problems) such as environmental pollution, and social welfare cannot be solved by one company alone.

4. Local system social responsibility

Complex problems require engagement on a local level because economic competitiveness and social compatibility-or social welfare and economic prosperity-are pairs that benefit from a relationship of mutual conditioning, which is a reciprocal exchange between economy and society and that has a very special significance when the economic system is comprised of small businesses.

If the link between social welfare and economic prosperity is broken, or does not develop in a virtuous manner, wider engagement may become necessary. All stakeholders must participate and play an active role. The engagement of stakeholders is a process that should lead to sharing objectives and actions with the ultimate aim of stimulating the regeneration of local-system resources and restoring a virtuous cycle in which the local system acts as an active determinant in the creation of competitive advantage.

A network that combines skills, expertise and coordinates these towards the common good will ensure the following characteristics:

- integration of functions, structures and processes;
- distribution of responsibilities and the circulation of information among partners;
- adaptation to the environment, social environment and economic and productive fabric.

These circumstances become possible by using the stakeholder's social capital and the relationships of reciprocity and trust that this creates.

If the goal is not only to consolidate the pair formed by economic and social competitiveness, but also to act in a responsible manner, the burden this places on a single actor is, to say the least, untenable, and the participation of more individuals with specific roles becomes almost obligatory.

The links between social capital, corporate responsibility, stakeholders' responsibility and competitiveness of the productive systems reflect the Italian and European perspective in their promotion of the themes of sustainability. This perspective emphasises specialisation in the territory and the quality of the processes and products as elements of competitiveness that must align with sustainable development. In addition, this perspective identifies in SMEs a point of reference for achieving a competitive local economy.

System social responsibility is a manner in which to define the behaviour model of a local system that should be followed to behave in a responsible manner, that is, in accordance with the principles of environmental sustainability and respect for human rights.

If the local territory suffers an environmental crisis or social hardship, the bond of mutual reciprocity between economic competitiveness and social welfare is broken, and a single actor can do little to mend it. The depletion of an area's value, which worsens the quality of life of its people, tarnishes its image and affects local productive activities, can be managed only through a model of responsible behaviour that must be adequately covered by a reorganised plan involving all stakeholders.

The reconciliation between various stakeholders that is meant to 'repair' economic and social competitiveness can be achieved through the

collective-impact approach, which is desirable in the presence of complex problems, and when there is an atmosphere of disappointment in local institutions (Hanleybrown *et al.*, 2011). The literature provides several examples of initiatives that have been activated through the collective-impact approach (Hanleybrown *et al.*, 2011; Kania and Kramer, 2011). For example, the Elizabeth River Project (1993), which was a mission to clean up the Elizabeth River in southeastern Virginia, which for decades had been a dumping ground for industrial waste; and the Shape Up Somerville campaign (2002-2005), which was a project aimed to fight childhood obesity in Somerville, Massachusetts.

The model in Table 2 considers the perspective of collective impact, beginning with the identification of certain preconditions to connect to the identification of the relevant components (conditions) and the work steps required for the implementation of the collective-impact approach.

Tab. 2: Preconditions, components and phase of the collective-impact approach

Preconditions	Components for Success (Conditions)	Phases of Collective Impact		
		PHASE I Initiate Action	PHASE II Organise for Impact	PHASE III Sustain Action and Impact
Influential Champion (Or small group of champions) that commands the respect necessary to bring chief-executive-officer-level cross-sector leaders together	Governance and Infrastructure Backbone support	Identify champions and form cross-sector group	Create infrastructure (backbone and processes)	Facilitate and refine
Financial Resources These must be able to last for at least two to three years. Supporting and mobilising other resources to pay for the needed infrastructure and planning processes	Strategic Planning Creation of a common agenda and mutually reinforcing activities	Map the landscape and use data to make case	Create common agenda (goals and strategy)	Support implementation (alignment to goals and strategies)
Urgency for Change It must be asked whether a crisis has created a breaking point that is sufficient to convince people that an entirely new approach is needed	Community Involvement This requires continual communication	Facilitate community outreach	Engage community and build public will	Continue engagement and conduct advocacy
	Evaluation and Improvement This denotes a shared measurement	Analyse baseline data to identify key issues and gaps	Establish shared metrics (i.e., indicators, measurement, and approach)	Collect, track, and report progress (process to learn and improve)

Source: adapted from Hanleybrown *et al.* (2011).

This model is designed to work as an inspiration to stakeholders to guide the manner in which they should act when they are on tarnished territories that have lost their competitive function for local companies. This model matches the following assumptions (conditions):

a) the ‘quality’ of a sociocultural context is a primary factor that can lead

- to fearful differentials of competitiveness and represents an expression of the cultural identity of a country or systems (Vaccà, 1993);
- b) the territory can turn from a fertile basin rich in resources and expertise into an enemy, and make a negative contribution that will affect the competitive advantage of firms located in that territory.

5. Empirical research: tarnished territories and experiences in ‘the land of fires’

The empirical research presented in this paper begins with the examination of the results collected in an earlier work (De Chiara, 2012a), which considered the territory as a fundamental factor in the competitiveness of SMEs that produce dairy products, particularly the buffalo businesses located in the territory of Agro Caleno in the Caserta province of Campania, Italy. In the dairy buffalo industry, the territory in which the business operates is a primary resource; it creates differentials of competitiveness, and is therefore a crucial factor representing the expression of the cultural identity of the territory (condition a above). Unfortunately, in recent years, this territory has suffered a number of environmental and health crises. As such, this territory, which began as a natural ally for business (a fertile basin rich in resources and expertise), became an enemy for the businesses located in the territory (condition b above).

After the waste emergency and the dioxin crisis of 2008-2009, and the current crisis that led to the territory being referred to as ‘The Land of Fires’,¹ it was immediately clear to businesses in the territory that acting responsibly would mean adopting a burden that would be extremely difficult if not impossible for a single actor to manage. As such, the only realistic form of responsibility needed to be built within the supply chain (i.e., the network), particularly by involving local institutions. Therefore, a group of businesses (Auriemma Srl, Agricola Casearia Lupara, Buffalo Soc. Coop. a r.l., Ditta Giuseppe Liccardo, Ditta Antonio Cimmino) promoted the idea of ‘a plan of conservation and development of the regional landscape of the Agro Caleno area’ to be submitted for examination and approval by the local institutions. With the support of many business leaders and local agricultural industries, these businesses have gained the approval of many municipalities in the area and have obtained the commitment local governments to address industrial development of the area, with particular consideration of activities that are compatible with agriculture and in accordance with guidelines of the Campania Region’s Plans of Territorial and Rural development (PTR) .

The empirical research was conducted as a qualitative analysis (Yin, 1984), employing documentary research that analysed the official national and local deeds (published until April 2014) and direct interviews with businesses, promoters of the plan for Agro Caleno, and local municipalities (Pignataro Maggiore, Castel Volturno and Caserta).

The survey followed three research steps:

¹ The environmental crisis associated with the pollution caused by illegal activities of waste disposal led to the territory being dubbed ‘The Land of Fires’, referring to the fires that are lit outside the mounds of waste.

1. analysis of the progress of the state of implementation of the 'plan of conservation and development of the regional landscape of the Agro Caleno area';
2. analysis of industry associations' initiatives and of national and regional plans about the new environmental and health emergency;
3. analysis of firms' and municipalities' opinions on these initiatives.

5.1 Implementation of the plan of conservation and development of the area of Agro Caleno: the memorandum of understanding

In 2011, following the idea of creating the plan of conservation and territorial development for Agro Caleno, the document *Memorandum of Understanding for the Enhancement of Lower Agro Caleno South Volturno Garigliano and the Water-front of Caserta Province (Protocollo d'intesa per la valorizzazione dell'Agro Caleno-basso Volturno-sud Garigliano e del Water-front della provincia di Caserta)* was created and published (Buondonno, 2011).

The protocol describes the characteristics and purposes of the interventions (see Table 3). These are primarily aimed 'at the economic growth of the area, together with social progress and enhancement of cultural heritage', which are not considered secondary factors in the development of a territory. The area is considered to have not only 'a strong agricultural business', but also 'a history of events and human settlements' that have left a rich cultural heritage (Buondonno, 2011). Three directions are identified:

1. an environmental objective, which provides a set of interventions aimed at removing risk factors for health, and ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the 'green heart' of the Campania Felix;
2. a historical objective related to preserving the strong identity of the area;
3. a community objective, which seeks the implementation of measures that can foster the growth of urban values for a better quality of life.

Tab. 3: Purposes of the memorandum of understanding for the enhancement of lower Agro Caleno South Volturno Garigliano and the water-front of Caserta Province

Purposes:
Promoting the rational use and the orderly development of urban and suburban territory with the least usage of the soil
Safeguarding the security of human settlements from factors of hydrogeological, seismic and volcanic risk
Protection of the physical and cultural identity of the region through the enhancement of the landscape, environmental historic and cultural resources; the preservation of ecosystems; the upgrading of existing settlements; and the recovery of compromised sites
Improving the health and liveability of towns
Strengthening of local economic development
Protection and development of the agricultural landscape and the related production activities
Protection and development of the sea-ground landscape and of related production and tourist activities

Source: author's processing of Buondonno, 2011.

The local governments' enthusiasm in approving the Memorandum of Understanding was not followed by a concrete process of implementation of actions to achieve the agreed objectives. The sponsoring enterprises deemed the failure to implement the Memorandum of Understanding as further evidence of the inadequacy of the local governments. This research has demonstrated that it is widely acknowledged that the obstacles to the realisation of the Memorandum of Understanding are often associated with the alternation of 'moods' in local governance, which is generated by any change of the municipality's governance and by a lack of awareness of some local authorities of the seriousness of the environmental problems.

Although the path towards the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding has suffered a moment of arrest, through intensive networking activities, the sponsoring enterprises are determined to continue this project. In particular, it is clear that there is an intention to launch a phase of enhancement of the contents of the memorandum through a definition of the programme lines that resulted from the consultation between different and complementary experts.

5.2 The initiatives of industry associations: companies' opinion

The initiatives of industry associations are principally directed to the revival of the supply chain of dairy buffalo products, and seem to underestimate the problems the territory is facing. In fact, after the crisis in 2008, the XIII Agriculture Commission of the Chamber of Deputies was invited to a meeting to discuss the emergency of the dairy buffalo industry. To the works of the commission have participated the concerned municipalities, industrial and agricultural associations belonging to the supply chain of the dairy buffalo products (including the Consortium for the Protection of the Mozzarella di Bufala PDO), and the government of the region of Campania. Subsequently, in 2010, the Guarantee Committee was established to develop a set of proposals intended to ensure the legality of business practices such as statutory changes to the Consortium and a reorganisation of a controls/traceability plan.

Such proposals are in accordance with the actions of Confagricoltura Campania, which promoted a programme to revitalise the supply chain of the dairy buffalo industry with the involvement of all professional agricultural organisations in Campania. The programme, officially approved by Resolution of the Assessor for Agriculture in Campania, reiterated the need for the implementation of a traceability system; the definition of a 'day' auditing, and the traceability of the product at all stages of the supply chain; the reorganisation of the system of control (in order to verify the exclusion of the use of condensed milk, frozen milk or milk from outside the PDO area).

In 2013, the National Federation of Buffalo Products in Confagricoltura was established. The development of this organisation demonstrates the strong participation in initiatives to redevelop the business of dairy buffalo products, and the importance that farmers' organisations attach to the sector ².

² For more details see www.upacaserta.it.

This research demonstrated that this association recognises the importance of implementing socially responsible practices aimed at increasing the confidence of consumers, improving the knowledge of production processes and the traceability of the product. However, the lack of integrated and coordinated management from the main institutions of the implementation of sustainability strategies must be noted.

This research also found that a common opinion of the companies in the area is that Confagricoltura can play a coordinating role by supporting the collaboration between initiatives and among the various interested actors. The economic operators consider this organisation of great importance to the interests of industry, as they believe it can exert the right pressure on local and national institutions. Through Confagricoltura, the economic actors have created specific structures and skills for to define and identify the issues involved in implementing projects.

5.3 National and regional plans: what do companies, local municipalities and the collective think?

A series of interventions on a regional and national level have been issued to address the problems faced in Agro Caleno (see Table 4).

Tab. 4: Principal institutional plans for the environmental emergency in Campania

Plan	Subject
Regional Law No. 20, 9 December 2013	Extraordinary measures for prevention and combating the phenomenon of abandonment and of burning of waste'
'D.L. 10-12-2013 No. 136, converted, with amendments, from art. 1, paragraph 1., L. February 6, 2014	'Urgent measures designed to tackle environmental and industrial emergencies and to facilitate the development of the concerned areas'
Inter-ministerial Commission	'Results of technical research for the mapping of the territories allocated to agriculture in the Campania Region'

Source: author's

However, these plans have not yet been fully approved by businesses, local institutions or the community. This research found that for businesses, the attention of the national and local institutions is focused on the implementation of plans aimed at the reclamation of the territory affected by the crisis. These businesses consider such activities prohibitively expensive and inadequate for the resolution of the matter. Companies argue the need to concentrate the available resources on creating a timely schedule aimed at the redevelopment of the areas of the district, and the creation of quality devices, which are accessible to the public and are able to generate and safeguard the welfare of the community.

Local companies believe it is important to strengthen the action of the network to which they belong through meetings with the

district municipalities and to reaffirm the desire and the need to give life to a redevelopment project that is supported by technical and local administrations.

This research found that the local municipalities consider provincial and regional policies sophisticated procedures. The local institutions were found to believe that the shortage of funds means that neither the transparency, nor the feasibility of the territorial reorganisation is guaranteed. In addition, the research found a lack of effective coordination between the different initiatives, and the interviewees declared that national and regional plans constitute only positive intentions and assumptions of measures.

In an interview published by *La Repubblica*, Roberto Saviano³ described the work of the Inter-ministerial Commission (which was demonstrated in the report entitled *Results of Technical Research for the Mapping of the Territories Allocated to the Agriculture of the Campania Region*) as unsatisfactory (Saviano, 2014). He uses the word ‘minimal’ to describe the operations undertaken by the government, stating that ‘it is clear that the step taken in these first few months of work is only a small initial one to understand what has happened and continues to happen’ (Saviano, 2014). Saviano also states that he considers it ‘essential that the Senate approves as soon as possible the introduction of the crimes against the environment in the penal code’ and suggests other urgent actions to take (i.e., survey and classification of the agricultural areas of the so-called ‘large areas’ and of the areas near waste disposal facilities; analyses of the areas affected by the fires, of the soil fallout of pollutants and analyses of the waters of contaminated groundwater). The government should also deal with the historical observers of ‘The Land of Fires’.

6. Discussion and conclusions

This research demonstrates the strategic importance of the decision to establish a network to manage the consequences created by the environmental issue that have affected the entire area of Agro Caleno. The case-study network provided an appropriate mechanism through which to communicate with the relevant institutions of the area. However, while there has been a good level of cooperation, the network has not produced the estimated results. The businesses operating in the area declare that Confagricoltura Campania represents the ‘real glue’ between the economic operators and the institutions. They believe that Confagricoltura can offer the opportunity to disseminate their needs and provide greater public awareness of the severity of the conditions faced by the dairy buffalo business. These businesses see Confagricoltura as a tool that is able to resume a fruitful dialogue with the local municipalities and define a more structured project to raise awareness on issues related to the land and the environment that involves the local governments.

The results of this research corroborate the hypothesis that in the face of complex problems (e.g., environmental pollution) and the consequent

³ A famous Italian writer who has often addressed the issue of environmental pollution in Campania.

crises faced by businesses that use the land as a productive factor (e.g., the dairy products of the buffalo businesses), it is not sufficient to develop sustainable initiatives and collaborate with the economic actors, the industrial associations and the local authorities. The resolution of these crises requires more than cross-sector public and private partnerships, and the solution of complex problems is not just a matter of encouraging more forms of cooperation between the public and the private sectors. Rather, it is necessary to initiate a systematic approach focused on the relationships between different stakeholders and the progression towards shared goals. In consideration of the case study, this research concludes that if the collective-impact approach is applied, the stakeholders and Confagricoltura could be the 'influential champions'. Applying the collective-impact approach should create a specific organisation, a 'leadership room', which should allow the participation of many different actors, with a specific set of staff skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and to coordinate participating organisations.

The case-study network is at the early stage of fulfilling the conditions of collective-impact approach, and it needs to be further developed. The participants in the network must have a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication and participate in mutually reinforcing activities. The research has demonstrated all stakeholders must favour this approach. They must be aware that they need to change their own behaviour completely to create a solution to the serious problems they face.

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