



Associazione
I Sud del Mondo ETS

The project “Community Bonds and Networks for Local Development: Territorial Resilience in Southern Italy” - ABSTRACT

The work of drafting the project begins with a preliminary section aimed at analyzing the migration phenomenon in its complexity by examining its motivations and historical aspects up to the present day. This includes a focus on the gradual evolutions that have influenced the causes of migration and its main characters. The project continues by outlining the numerical and statistical data in our possession, offering a brief comparative overview between the United States and Italy. This aligns with the scientific, educational, and outreach goals of the association “I Sud del Mondo,” which, as a third-sector organization, aims to encourage and support the promotion of “social enterprises” within the framework of resilience.

In this context, we refer to “territorial resilience,” where the concept of resilience, linked to the importance of the territory, is increasingly emerging in discussions on the innovation of intervention models for territorial development. The term "resilience" relates to the necessary shift in approach to continue ensuring sustainability in light of the environmental, economic, and social changes that have impacted and continue to impact the living conditions of local communities.

The project, which is strongly supported, aims to engage with local communities and Italians abroad to address emerging problems and needs. Specifically, it seeks to give new visibility to southern realities that, with their rich historical traditions, can thrive through the voices and involvement of those who have left Southern Italy to emigrate abroad, gaining a cultural, social, and professional background that is now of great utility.

The aim is primarily to highlight the differences between countries of origin and destination and to identify, through structured network systems, social hubs characterized by “Antenne” (Italians from Southern Italy who are actively engaged in the development of the foreign host nation) and “Country Ambassadors” (successful Italians worldwide who are natives of the South). These Italian emigrants can be involved and consulted in relation to different sectors (healthcare, commerce, culture, entrepreneurship, tourism) based on their experiences abroad, including the sacrifices made, impacts on the territory, and practical results in the country of destination, fostering cultural exchange and open-mindedness.



With its bilateral approach, the goal is to address what does not function adequately in the country of origin, with particular attention to the southern regions of Italy, which can potentially improve their conditions through the application of better practices from foreign countries. These practices could be adapted according to the social needs identified through a contextual analysis of the territory, which is necessary to define the fields of intervention. Through the Country Ambassadors, the project ensures that the host country recognizes, appreciates, and values local cultures, productions, and traditions that are at risk of disappearing due to globalization.

The need to leave a trace of a past rich in traditions and cultures drives the effort to showcase the potential, territorial identity, and roots of the countries, peoples, and histories. This also involves the valuable participation of those who, although outside of Italy, can contribute to “reviving” local traditions and “growing” in terms of adaptation and improvement through their knowledge, experiences, and sectoral skills.

Specifically, we intend to actively promote enhancement through training courses, exchange of experiences and best practices, research of ideas, and support by awarding prizes to a selection of Italians who, with their proactive attitude and diligence, have made a lasting impact not only within the local Italian community but also, and especially, within the American community.

The fields of intervention are varied, ranging from the cultural sector, artisanal and manufacturing (tailoring, leatherworking, musical bands, etc.), arts and performing traditions (theater companies, musical bands, etc.), to the agri-food industry and tourism, which is a cornerstone of the “Bel Paese.” This involves activities that engage both public and private operators in sectors such as ecomuseums, wineries, castles, and folkloric events.

The need to protect cultural identity through the rediscovery of local traditions has been a focus of attention for scholars, public administrators, and territorial marketing experts due to the potential of “roots tourism.” The project aims to showcase and rediscover the cultural origins of Italians living abroad. The initiative is directed at those who want to explore the places of their ancestors, immerse themselves in local culture, visit the towns connected to their families, and, in some cases, reconstruct significant family events.

The project, therefore, seeks to promote the process of cultural and social revitalization of the territory, which has recently taken on new dimensions thanks to the support of specific local policies: initiatives aimed not only at protecting the natural and built environment but especially at rediscovering and preserving everything that constitutes the “cultural landscape” of a region or



area—from agricultural and artisanal techniques to gastronomy and folklore. It also involves enriching local economic development and policies in Southern Italy by incorporating the best foreign practices.

All this is done with a perspective of synergy and bilateral cooperation, avoiding phenomena of overlap and conflict. For this reason, the study of foreign experiences will surely contribute to increasing the knowledge base.