

# THE CULTURE OF DIFFERENCES FOR COEXISTENCE AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

On September 10, a seminar titled “*The Culture of Differences for Coexistence and Territorial Development*” took place in the KIP Pavilion at Expo 2015.

The Post 2015 Development Agenda of the United Nations, which will be approved by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, calls for a new “global” culture of coexistence. This requires a profound transformation of the existing relations between different countries and cultures, starting from local territories and the women and men who live there. Starting from a local level permits us to value women’s practices so as to transform the exclusion of their “sexual difference” and subjectivity into a possibility of sustainable development for all.

This seminar was an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between the objectives proposed by the United Nations concerning gender equality and women’s empowerment, and women’s actual practices in their territories. It also intended to define forms of collaboration between these practices and the KIP International School for the implementation of the Post 2015 Development Agenda of the United Nations, and to discuss innovative mechanisms for financing and networking them, such as the constitution of a *World Cooperation System for Territorial Development* proposed by the KIP International School.

The first session, moderated by Rita Cassisi of the KIP International School, introduced the context of the debate on the relationship between territorial development and women’s practices in their territories. Luciano Carrino, president of the KIP International School and Bianca Pomeranzi, an expert of the UN Convention against Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) intervened in this session.

The second session was moderated by Francesca Zajczyk, delegated by the mayor of the City of Milan for Equal Opportunities. Laura Marchetti from the University of Foggia, Sandra Bonfiglioli from the Politecnico University of Milan and Arianna Censi, Councilor of the City of Milan explored women’s practices to preserve collective public spaces, to manage urban areas and for the participatory



governance of their territories, through mechanisms such as gender budgeting and auditing and women's safety audits.

In the third session, reflections centered on local and global policies to support territorial development and on the proposal from the KIP International School to create an international cooperation system for supporting territorial partnerships. Adriana Maestro from *Mediterraneo Sociale* moderated the session with contributions by Eliana Haberkon FAO member of the UN team for Expo, Daniela Ducato, entrepreneur and spokesperson of innovation of the Italian Pavilion, and Marco Battini, commissioner for equal opportunity representing the Municipality of Novellara.

These different contributions and ensuing discussion were rich in reflections on how to conceive and live the culture of differences, development, territory, and partnerships. They highlighted practices that show how women transform the use of time and space in a city, using a territorial approach, and the significant experience of the municipalities of the Province of Milan related to gender budgeting and auditing. And they illustrated practices of conservation and enhancement of local know-how and the creation of new enterprises with a highly innovative character.

Several speakers emphasized the idea of development not as a vertical process or as mere economic growth, but as a process through which communities organize to respond to their needs for human relations, habitat, services, work and care, mobility, preservation of public places, safety and welfare. In this perspective, a local territory cannot be understood only as a geographical space, but as a living configuration, a network of relationships and actors, a place where people live and work, interact with the surrounding natural and productive resources, tangible and intangible goods and heritages, organizations and institutions. Finally, in discussing cooperation and partnerships, the participants underlined the need to establish horizontal exchanges and dialogue based on knowledge and respect of each other's specific context, on issues of common interest and with all the time that such processes require.

During the workshop, participants substantially shared the fundamental ideas behind the proposal to create an international cooperation system for territorial development, underlying that starting from a local level permits us to value women's practices so as to transform the exclusion of their "sexual difference" and subjectivity into a possibility of sustainable development for the entire society.

The Seminar was an opportunity to involve some of the women who are leading actors in the development of their territories in the initiative promoted by the KIP International School and to invite them to take part in the international group that will be constituted on 24 October in the KIP Pavilion.

