

3.1 SDG Indicator Framework: Counting the trees, missing the forest

global agreements and measures to curb tax evasion and illicit financial flows.

Target 17.3, to “mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources” is to be measured only by “foreign direct investments as % of total FDI + ODA” and “additional volume of remittances (USD)/GDP.” These indicators might artificially inflate the accounted contribution of developed countries. On the one hand the OECD itself recognizes that “microeconomic or macroeconomic impacts of remittances are controversial and the extent to which these flows contribute to development is still not clear.”⁹ On the other hand not every FDI contributes

to development and if capital inflow weights positively in the balance of payments, it is the net balance what counts and thus outflows (profits, royalties, illicit financial flows, etc.) should not be ignored.

Moreover, an indicator on the percentage of tax paid by multinational corporations within host countries, suggested by civil society, was not adopted in the final framework.

The main point of Target 17.6 is to “enhance cooperation and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing,” not only through existing mechanisms but also through “a global technology facilitation mechanism.” The proposed indicator, rather than assessing whether or not these procedures and mechanisms have been set up, measures “access to the WIPO Patent Database and

⁹ OECD DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (2013), para. 24.

Beyond GDP in Italy

In February 2015 a group of Parliament members presented a bill entitled “Provisions for the use of well-being indicators in public policy-making.” The objective, according to the introduction, is “introducing indicators of well-being, environmental sustainability, gender equality and social quality with means provided for by national law in the elaboration, adoption and assessment of public policies, so that they can be effective in improving welfare conditions for the country as a whole.”

This proposal takes one step further the work on alternative indicators to GDP. Italy’s “Equitable and Sustainable Well-being”, or *Benessere Equo e Sostenibile* (BES)

in Italian, was adopted in 2013. The analytical framework was used to extend the analysis to the provincial and municipal levels, and the BES is now the reference measuring Italian well-being at all levels, for policy-makers, scholars as well as for civil society. The process of selection and refinement has led to a set of tested indicators on the basis of which synthetic indices have also been proposed to facilitate effective communication of results.

Synthetic indexes are computed for health, education and training, cultural participation, employment, quality of employment, economic hardship, income and inequality, social relations, security, homicides and subjec-

tive well-being. Thus, it is possible to assess the impact of the recent economic crisis on all of these dimensions of wellbeing in Italy, indicating that all have shown some deterioration. The level of income and employment decreased as expected, yet a more intense impact is shown for other linked phenomena such as the rise of small-scale criminality and the fall of cultural activities, demonstrating the way in which the crisis has had a negative impact not only on the economic life but also on the social fabric of Italy.

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