

State of the Voluntary Local Reviews 2021: FROM REPORTING TO ACTION

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IGES

Voluntary Local Reviews (2018)



Voluntary Local Reviews (2019)



The VLR Movement in 2020

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The VLR Movement in 2020: A Difficult Year

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- Mandatory lockdowns across the world.
- Countless human losses.
- Widespread use of masks.
- New lifestyles (telework, zoom meetings, zoom parties, zoom weddings...)

Voluntary Local Reviews (2020)



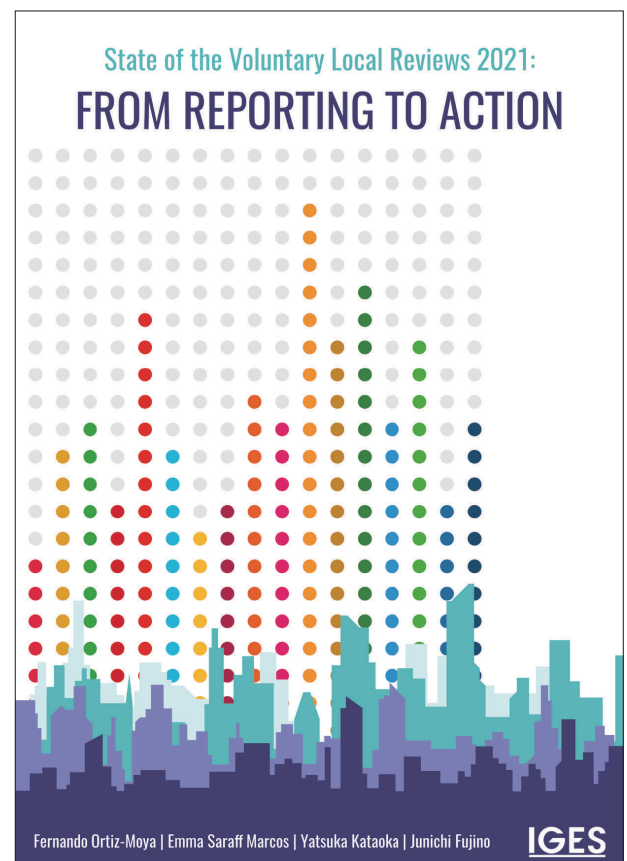
Voluntary Local Reviews (2018-2020)



IGES reflection on the VLR Movement



IGES reflection on the VLR Movement



State of the Voluntary Local Reviews 2021

- Focus on the 23 VLRs published in 2020 (as identified by the authors).
- Analysis across 3 dimensions:
 - SDGs Governance Structure.
 - VNR-VLR integration (focus on Japan and Finland).
 - Posture towards COVID-19.
- Interviews with cities (12 Cities): What can the VLR do for your city?

SDGs Governance Structure

- Cities understand the VLR as a process rather than as a one-time exercise resulting in the production of a report.
- Cities strive to make use of the VLR to advance horizontal coordination across units of government.
- the holistic and integrative approach of VLRs might position them as an ideal instrument for local policymaking to support responses to complex issues, such as planning for a post-COVID-19 world or fighting climate change.

Posture of VLR reports in regard to COVID-19

Barcelona: COVID-19 is explicitly mentioned in Barcelona's analysis of SDGs 1, 3, 4, 8, 11 and 16. Barcelona's VLR includes a dedicated chapter on the impact of the pandemic titled "The 2030 Agenda in the era of COVID-19: Impact and reactions," which covers the challenges that the pandemic posed to the development of the VLR and Barcelona's Recuperation Plan.

Basque Country: The VLR includes concrete actions for pertinent SDGs that were taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Buenos Aires: The VLR includes concrete actions for pertinent SDGs that were taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Espoo: Espoo mentions COVID-19 in the mayor's foreword and in the description of the VLR methodology, noting in particular that the pandemic affected the city's workshops and its stakeholder engagement process.

Ghent: Ghent mentions COVID-19 in connection with SDG 11, chiefly describing the pandemic's impact on the cultural sector and vulnerable communities. Ghent also discusses different initiatives and forms of support aimed at rebuilding post-crisis.

A message from...

... Espoo

A VLR is an attitude on how to approach work on sustainable development, helping cities to be more active in this field while also opening opportunities for peer-learning and networking. A VLR is more useful when it is made to serve the city following the city's internal sustainable development needs and turning the focus into learning rather than simply reporting.

... Ghent

A VLR is a way of thinking. Therefore, cities have to be careful of not making a VLR the end goal but rather a tool. A VLR holds the power to tell stories, which are often a stronger communication tool than statistic reports. Through authentic stories you can communicate more effectively to both, the local and the global community. VLR's touches minds as well as hearts.

... La Paz

The SDGs, both through its indicators and its applied methodologies, have allowed to advance the internal monitoring and the effectiveness of public local policies while at the same time, becoming a compass setting out municipal planning towards 2030.

VNR-VLR Integration

- As a new frontier in both the VNR and the VLR processes, this represents additional challenges for national and subnational levels of government.
- VNR-VLR integration takes many forms.
- While there are promising examples of cooperation between countries and cities, there is limited evidence of significant, long-lasting integration between VNRs and VLRs in the 2020 group.

Conclusions and Way Forward

- Emerging topics:
 - How to promote integration towards better governance? (both horizontal and vertical integration).
 - Review of progress at intermediate scales between the local and the national – or Voluntary Subnational Review (VSR).
 - Peer-to-peer review and learning to achieve a more objective review.



Thank you so much!

You can download the report at:

<https://www.iges.or.jp/en/pub/vlrs-2021/en>

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