

This Issue entitled “New approaches and methods to preserve and enhance Long-Distance Walking (and Cycling) Routes” has been conceived as a result of the 4th International Conference *SSPCR - Smart and Sustainable Planning for Cities and Regions 2022* for collecting a series of current research and practical applications performed by academics, young researchers and local associations on the challenges of long-distance walking routes as drivers for regional development from a variety of perspectives.

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Cover image: "Making Pathways", by Gloria Toma

Foreword by Editors

Giulia Motta Zanin* and Daniele Vettorato**

This Issue of *Plurimondi Journal* entitled “New approaches and methods to preserve and enhance long-distance walking (and cycling) routes” has been conceived as a result of the 4th International Conference SSPCR - Smart and Sustainable Planning for Cities and Regions 2022 for collecting a series of current research and practical applications performed by academics, young researchers and local associations on the challenges of long-distance walking (and cycling) routes – LDW(C)R as drivers for regional development from a variety of perspectives.

The interest in preserving and enhancing long-distance walking (and cycling) routes has increased in the last few years in Europe and around the World. LDW(C)R are increasingly important not only as tourism infrastructures and attractions, according to mainstream territorial development narratives, but also for their historical, cultural, environmental and socio-economic intrinsic values. In fact, the affordances and attractiveness of such routes may emphasize different dimensions: i) the spiritual one of following an ancient pilgrimage trail, ii) the environmental one of walking through nature or iii) the cultural one of rediscovering historical and cultural values of heritage

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routes. LDW(C)R, thus, may also pivot around literary or gastronomic themes, thus intersecting common cultural tourism topics. Indeed, along these routes, local, national and transnational policies are under implementation, aiming at supporting heritage-based local development strategies of lesser-known, isolated and remote regions. LDW(C)R makes it possible to involve these places in a network that can help them overcome marginalization and the difficulties they encounter in valorizing their tangible and intangible resources. Therefore, preserving and enhancing LDW(C)R become an interesting entry point for a place-making strategy, where innovative eco-slow speed, multi-actor and inter-scalar approaches and methods can be tested.

Among this framework, authors have been asked to base their contributions on some key concepts:

- Innovative methods and solutions to plan and map LDW(C)R;
- Engagement of local communities for the preservation and enhancement of LDW(C)R;
- Touristic models based on LDW(C)R for a sustainable region development;
- Landscape ecology as an approach for interpreting the territory;
- Historical elements to rediscover LDW(C)R;
- Enhancement of the intangible heritage linked to the cultural values of the paths;
- Experiences of integrated and intermodal mobility for the promotion of trans-frontier connections hinged on LDW(C)R;
- The role of LDWR and experiential tourism for the revitalization of marginal regions.

The present issue of *Plurimondi* begins with an insightful contribution given by Maurizio Tira, who has been asked to introduce this Issue due to his long-lasting experience on the topic of Long-distance walking (and cycling) routes.

Following the introduction, seven papers create this issue.

The first contribution by *Bruzzone, Ariani, Motta Zanin and Monnecef* presents and discusses opportunities and criticalities of Long-distance walking routes (LDWR) as tools for local development, through the experience of the potential revaluation of the historic route known by the name “Via Egnatia”. With the final aim of suggesting approaches and guidelines to foster the positive externalities of slow and sustainable tourism on LDWR, the authors analyze the case study proposing discussion points on i) the historic, cultural and geographical significance of the Via Egnatia; ii) the fragmented state of recognition and preservation of the route; iii) the development prospects of the route and the potential for the tourism economy of the territories crossed and iv) the results of the fieldwork conducted by the Cultural Association FuoriVia.

Going ahead, the second contribution presented by *Toma* explores walks and cycle paths by studying slow travel lines as possible tools for urban and territorial regeneration. In particular, the contribution starts by defining concepts and aspects of regeneration, slow travel and slow lines and ends by analyzing the case study of the Via Francigena and the Apulian Aqueduct cycle path in Italy and proposing possible design solutions for urban regeneration.

The third paper presented by *Incarnato*, focuses on a practical experience of studying, rediscovering and reopening an ancient coastal walking route along the southern coast of the Campania Region in Italy by outlining a sustainable way of development in a region that is becoming depopulated.

Another perspective of the role of long-distance walking routes is given by *Melilli*, who investigate the potential of Walking Tourism in fostering post-experience Environmentally Responsible Behaviors. Specifically, the author analyzes the case study of the Via Francigena in Italy through the qualitative and quantitative data from 140 surveys. Finally, the paper provides suggestions for policy makers, associations, tourism providers and academia to

increase tourists' perceived value and satisfaction.

The fifth contribution by *Rovigatti, Simionato and Di Bartolomeo*, focus the attention to the “*tratturi*” (transhumance routes), as one of the oldest and most well-known territorial networks in Italy even if today they are generally used for improper uses with respect to their original functions. Starting with the research question “Can the ‘*tratturi*’ still find today a sense and an economic, cultural and social function starting from their recognition as territorial common asset, even beyond the rhetoric of conservation and memory, and of the so-called tourists ‘enhancement?’”, the authors discuss the results of the workshop “Looking for Tratturo” held by the University of Pescara in collaboration with some foreign universities.

Another contribution dealing with the subject of transhumance routes is presented by *Milano*, which aims at analyzing the opportunities that the ancient transhumance routes provide for slow tourism in the Apulia Region, highlighting their values as possible long-distance walking or cycling routes, and their unique assets.

Finally, *Tedesco* investigates the role of long distance walking routes as both a territorial infrastructure and an emerging bottom-up land use practice. The contribution highlights the relevant role that emerging bottom-up land use practice can play in the process of innovating territorial planning instruments as well as the idea and objectives of the planning process itself, by exploring the existing literature and by describing a real experience carried out in the urban context of the city of Bari in Apulia Region (Southern Italy).