

Stakeholder Roundtable
A Just Transition in Italy
22 September 2023 – Fondazione Feltrinelli, Milano

**Sustainable Welfare &
Eco-Social Policy Network**



REPORT (EN)

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Background and motivation: The last fifteen years have witnessed the first developments in the literature on the social risks of environmental origin (e.g. energy poverty, labour market restructuring, environmental disasters, etc.) and on the role of welfare states, social policies and social work in the ecological crisis and in the green transition. Field research has revealed multiple difficulties in social-ecological transition processes, mainly due to the complexity of the problems to be addressed and the lack of integrated governance models. These difficulties may appear even more insurmountable in the Italian context and especially in some vulnerable territories of the peninsula, where the prospects for a just transition now seem far from being realised. Nevertheless, many experiences have emerged, based on initiatives of local actors, networks and productive sectors, aimed at promoting sustainability and environmental and social justice. These experiences should be given more attention as they represent virtuous examples for building sustainable welfare in Italy.

CHALLENGES

- **Ecological paradox of welfare:** the growing demand for social protection might be accompanied by an increase in the ecological footprint of welfare, due to the dependence on unlimited economic growth and on market mechanisms of welfare capitalist systems to ensure social protection.
- **Increasing social risks of environmental origin:** like elsewhere, also in Italy the ecological crisis and the green transition will have significant consequences on employment (especially in the most energy-intensive sectors), on existing inequalities (e.g. increasing income, energy, and infrastructural poverty), as well as on displacement and migration processes.
- **Difficult coordination and integration between environmental and social policies** at the administrative and institutional level due to entrenched organizational separations, sectoral competences, intergenerational conflicts, difficult representation of the population groups most exposed to eco-social risks and difficult multi-level integration between European-national and local policies. Actions need to be quicker and more systematic.

BEST PRACTICES

- **Education and outreach:** institutions and civil society organisations promote various educational projects in schools to foster the development of environmental skills and knowledge, which are currently severely lacking.
- **Eco-social policies at local level:** municipalities (often in partnership with one another) and civil society organisations, promote various local eco-social policies, often by using European funds. These include energy communities, civil economy districts, mobility policies (e.g. subsidies for the use of public transport), circular economy projects, and sustainable tourism.
- **Experiences of participatory democracy:** practices such as citizens' climate assemblies, awareness-raising activities or participatory budgets foster the involvement of citizens and informal networks in decision-making processes, making the green transition a truly democratic process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **More welfare state to cope with new risks:** there is a need to increase social expenditure and strengthen public interventions to cope with the new risks related to climate change and the green transition, taking into consideration the contexts of intervention.
- **Ecological rethinking of the welfare state:** this includes: reducing the ecological footprint of the welfare state; questioning its dependence on economic growth; favouring fairer redistribution; embracing an eco-feminist perspective focused on needs and care; and tackling the welfare-work relationship. This latter point can be achieved, for example, through a change in the organization of work and working hours, as well as by linking activation policies to participatory processes.
- **Eco-social work:** in addition to public policies, civil society and the private sector can play a fundamental role in the construction of sustainable welfare, for example by promoting eco-social work, which supports the resilience of territories and the participation especially of young people.

- **Democratic participation, knowledge and information sharing by citizens regarding just transition policies**, which are currently scarce at the national and European levels. These policies receive a greater recognition and appreciation at the local level, but they are sometimes contested. There needs to be more dialogue also with social actors and academia.

- **Prevalence of symbolic policies and greenwashing**: despite the extensive debate in Italy and Europe, there is still a clear discrepancy between narratives and facts in the just transition, both in the private sector and in public policymaking.

- **Lack of an eco-feminist perspective**.

- **Alliances**: various attempts to create coalitions in support of a just transition can be observed in Italy, from those promoted by institutions (e.g. in the framework of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development), to joint mobilisations of trade unions and ecological movements.

- **Governance and widespread involvement**: it is necessary to foster the creation of more robust governance models and the consolidation of broad coalitions between social groups, political actors, institutions and citizens. This is key to accompany the process of change, to foster co-production practices and shared monitoring, to prevent/address the conflicts inherent in the green transition, and, ultimately, to build a sustainable welfare.

USEFUL LINKS

- <http://www.abitipuliti.org/report/2022-report-il-salario-dignitoso-e-un-diritto-universale/>
- <https://asud.net/progetto/cer-tosa-community-for-energy-torignattara-sustainability-action/>
- <https://asud.net/progetto/sentinelle-climatiche/>
- <https://asud.net/risorsa/persecuzioni-climatiche/>
- <https://asud.net/ultima/frenare-lemergenza-climatica-partendo-dalle-scuole-con-i-patti-territoriali-si-puo/>
- <https://economiecircolare.com/>
- <https://fondazionefeltrinelli.it/schede/il-trilemma-dei-sindacati/>
- <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/born-climate-crisis-why-we-must-act-now-secure-childrens-rights/>
- <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/falling-short-addressing-the-climate-finance-gap-for-children/report>
- <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/generation-hope-2-4-billion-reasons-to-end-the-global-climate-and-inequality-crisis/>
- <https://sustainabilityishuman.avanzi.org/>
- https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/Comunication_ASEC_05.08.2023_redacted.pdf
- https://www.academia.edu/77145457/Per_una_critica_ecologico_politica_al_Pnrr
- <https://www.chiara.eco/>
- <https://www.comune.bologna.it/partecipa/percorsi/assemblea-cittadina-per-il-clima>
- <https://www.ilponterivista.com/shop/prodotto/il-ponte-numero-1-2022/>
- <https://www.mase.gov.it/pagina/strategia-nazionale-lo-sviluppo-sostenibile>
- <https://www.oecd.org/gov/pcsd/public-governance-sdgs/policy-coherence-for-sustainable-development-mainstreaming-the-sdgs-in-italian-decision-making.htm>
- https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/italy-s-national-action-plan-for-policy-coherence-for-sustainable-development_54226722-en
- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/360065058_Per_una_critica_ecologico-politica_al_Pnrr
- https://www.savethechildren.it/sites/default/files/files/Ambiente_e_Clima.pdf

LIST OF PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

- A Sud Onlus
- CGIL
- CISL
- Comune di Bologna - Fondazione Innovazione Urbana
- Comune di Lecco
- FAIR Coop. Soc.
- Fondazione Feltrinelli
- Fridays for Future
- Legambiente
- Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Sicurezza Energetica
- Save the Children
- SciencesPo Paris
- Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia
- Università di Milano
- Università di Padova
- Università di Pisa

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