MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS

IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL INCLUSION

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Role of local authorities in Italy

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The Italian institutional framework on social policies

The Italian institutional framework on social policies

Rather than management by objectives, the institutional framework on social policies is based on legislative measures implemented by subsequent acts and plans
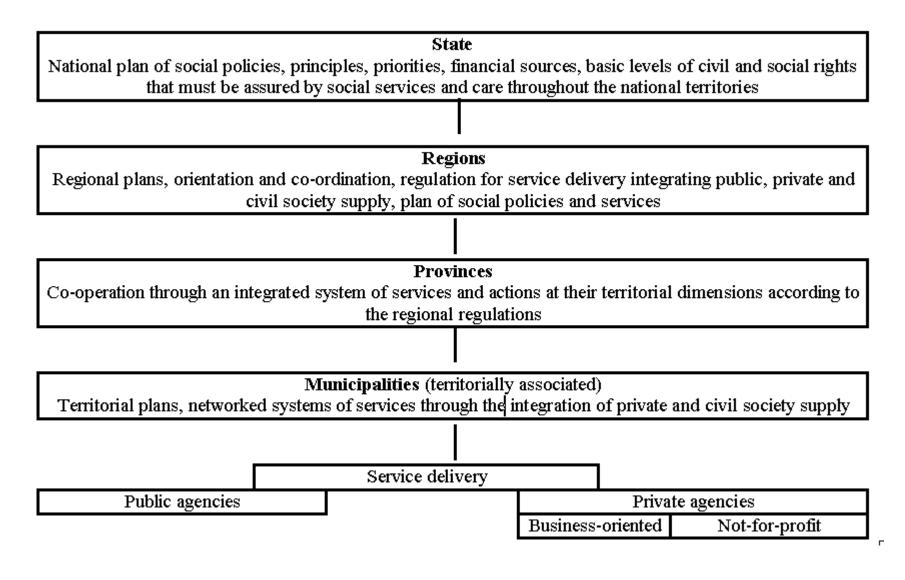
The legislative background is complex, overlapping, redundant and sometimes unclear

In 2000, a national law on social policies (anticipated by regional laws – e.g. Tuscany in 1997) attempted to reorganise fragmented and dispersed measures and mechanisms.

The law was based on:

- a **universal approach** with criteria of **selectivity** according to social needs and conditions

- a functional distinction between "to steer" and "to row" (see the following table)

The Italian institutional framework on social policies

State
National plan of social policies, principles, priorities, financial sources, basic levels of civil and social rights that must be assured by social services and care throughout the national territories

Regions
Regional plans, orientation and co-ordination, regulation for service delivery integrating public, private and civil society supply, plan of social policies and services

Provinces
Co-operation through an integrated system of services and actions at their territorial dimensions according to the regional regulations

Municipalities (territorially associated)
Territorial plans, networked systems of services through the integration of private and civil society supply

Service delivery

Public agencies	Private agencies	
	Business-oriented	Not-for-profit

The Italian institutional structure

A general (and transversal) devolution process begun in 1997, after nearly 140 years of Italian Unity, to modernise the State, the public administration and decision-making process, transferring responsibility to regional and local authorities according to the subsidiarity principles.

Basic changes were introduced in the Constitution (2001):
- the Republic is constituted by Municipalities, Provinces, Metropolitan Cities, Regions and the State; they have their own autonomy within a strategic national coherence also in terms of financial structure – the so called "fiscal federalism" (_vertical subsidiarity, from smaller to larger dimensions_)
- they favour the autonomous initiative of the citizens, both as individuals and in association, to implement activities of a general interest (_horizontal subsidiarity_)
- the State has competence on policy fields of strategic national importance without restraining the autonomy of the other governmental and administrative levels (_integration between top-down and bottom-up approaches through convergent law systems_)
- basic levels of civil and social rights must be assured throughout the national territories (e.g. health, social and education systems and services), supported by a national fund, additional resources and actions from the part of the State in favour of territories less favoured (_equity between territories and individuals_)

The Italian institutional structure

The **social inclusion** policy fields reserved to the State legislation authority are: immigration; identification of nationally basic levels of civil and social rights; general norms on education; social security.

Education, labour protection and security are policy fields of dual legislation of the State and the Regions.

All the other competences regarding social inclusion policy fields belong to the regional and local authorities.

The process concerning the reform of the Italian Constitution is still open and new changes are going to be enforced by the Parliament with the risk of a new tendency towards centralisation and a reduction of the subsidiarity spirit aimed at a multi-level governance based on the territorial dimension of issues and interests.
In any case, <u>full responsibility and authority on social policies are confirmed to belong to the local and regional authorities</u>.

The Italian institutional framework on social policies

Two elements play a key role making it possible the interrelated system to work:

1) Financing provided by the National Fund for Social Policies (NFSP)
- between 2003 and 2004
    - decrease in resources without any mandatory destination
    - increase in resources for specific measures (e.g. children nursery)

Even though Regions have an overall autonomy and responsibility on how to utilise the resources, several issues remain undefined, e.g. anti-drug fund separated from NFSP and attributed to the national government, the renewed attempt of the State to maintain a role in determining a mandatory destination of resources (allowances for family, disable people, architectural barriers, services for children)

2) definition of the basic levels of civil and social rights to be assured by social services and care throughout the national territories
- only very recently the Ministry of Welfare elaborated a starting document for confrontation with the Regions based on general criteria (services should be linked to specific needs and to different conditions of life, cannot be standardised but customised)

Financing social policies

Of course, Regions and local authorities have other resources to comply with the multi-dimensional phenomenon of poverty and social exclusion,
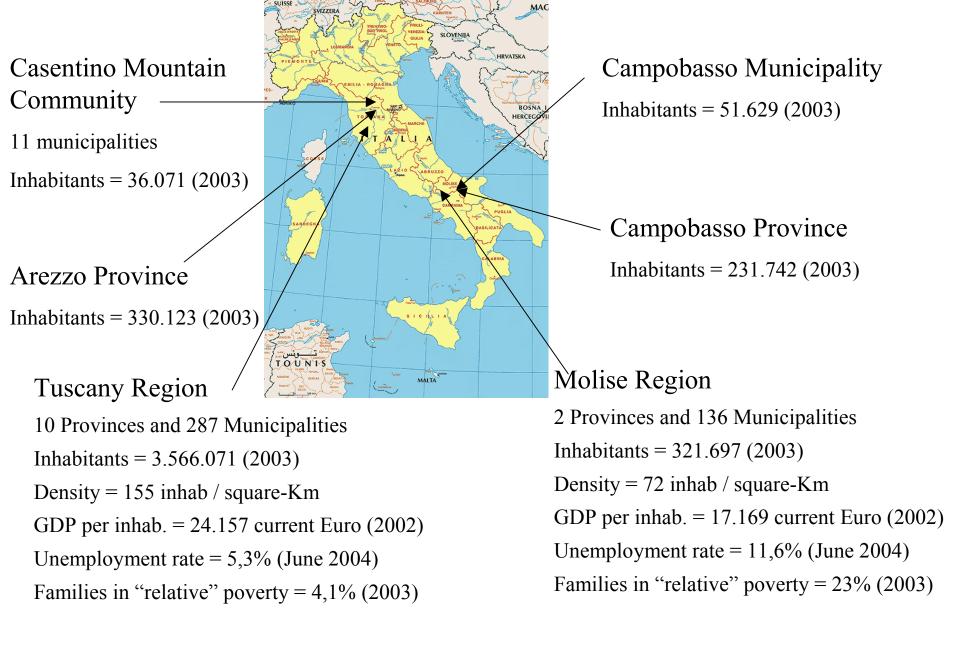
but these resources have been reduced by the cuts initiated in the national financial law (yearly budget) of the last three years (2004, 2003 and 2002) and envisaged in 2005

The regional and local experiences

Five different case studies:

- different historical backgrounds, decision-making processes and programming procedures, geographical and demographic dimensions, economic, social and employment conditions

In two institutionally interrelated geographical areas: Tuscany and Molise

Casentino Mountain Community

11 municipalities

Inhabitants = 36.071 (2003)

Arezzo Province

Inhabitants = 330.123 (2003)

Campobasso Municipality

Inhabitants = 51.629 (2003)

Campobasso Province

Inhabitants = 231.742 (2003)

Tuscany Region

10 Provinces and 287 Municipalities

Inhabitants = 3.566.071 (2003)

Density = 155 inhab / square-Km

GDP per inhab. = 24.157 current Euro (2002)

Unemployment rate = 5,3% (June 2004)

Families in "relative" poverty = 4,1% (2003)

Molise Region

2 Provinces and 136 Municipalities

Inhabitants = 321.697 (2003)

Density = 72 inhab / square-Km

GDP per inhab. = 17.169 current Euro (2002)

Unemployment rate = 11,6% (June 2004)

Families in "relative" poverty = 23% (2003)

The six key priorities outlined by the Commission for the period 2003-2005

Active labour market policies and measures, including a better integration with social protection and lifelong learning, to meet the needs of those who are most distant from the labour market

Minimum income schemes adequate for those unable to work with a particular attention on the adequacy of pension schemes

Access of the most vulnerable to decent housing, quality health and long term care services, including lifelong learning opportunities and culture

Concerted efforts to prevent early school leaving and to tackle the continuing problem of the transition from school to work

Efforts to end child poverty as a key step to combat the intergenerational inheritance of poverty

Efforts to reduce the levels of poverty and social exclusion and to increase the labour market participation of immigrants and ethnic minorities

The regional, provincial and local contexts seem to have more proactive capacity in Tuscany than in Molise, using strengths to cope with threats and opportunities to reduce weaknesses

Multi-level governance and subsidiarity:
regional, provincial and local contexts

In Tuscany:

- programming methods evolve in a consistent way with the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, but fragmentation and separation between public bodies and departments still exist, especially at a provincial level. At a municipal level, attitudes and organisational behaviours still exist which are orientated towards localism. These do not favour a fruitful collaboration, co-ordination and territorially integrated networks at a inter-municipal dimensions

In Molise:

- the lack of a regional social plan and the uncertain attribution of responsibilities and competences to the public authorities has led to difficulties in creating connection and collaboration between services, practitioners and stakeholders, while regional centralisation constitutes a threat against the creation of shared visions and approaches capable of representing different interests at different territorial dimensions

Tuscany: new welfare governance

The concept of governance adopted by the Region is based on the one expressed in the EU White Paper (2001).
Governance is sustained by a system of interrelationships mainly based on:

- policy and institutional co-ordination (e.g. the Mayors' Conference defines the programme guidelines)
- technical and institutional co-ordination (e.g. local bodies are created to favour co-decision making, programming and management)
- round-tables for joint planning and co-ordinated project elaboration
- one-stop-shop-services for the promotion of citizens' rights
- an integrated system of regional and provincial "observatories" on the social conditions, with common criteria on data-storing, data-collection and indicators for outcomes and performances
- regional technical round-tables to support the creation of local plans, to favour an open exchange of experiences between territories and thematic areas, to monitor and verify the efficiency and efficacy of the local plans

Responsibility and autonomy:

regional, provincial and local contexts

In Tuscany:

- the regional integrated social plan offers flexibility and a wide range of opportunities to decide courses of actions that correspond to local needs, devoting the largest share of financial resources (regional social fund) to municipalities and their aggregated organisms. A main issue regards the identification of tacit needs both in the social and health fields.

In Molise:

- the absence of a decentralised and interconnected system of planning and monitoring, the still centralised decisions at a regional level, do not favour responsibility and autonomy at a local level. At a local level (municipality) the available resources are mainly bound by regional calls concerning individual courses of action. Targets, beneficiaries are the same with respect to those of the past years in order to comply with the need of maintaining the current levels of services' delivery.

Stakeholders' involvement:

regional, provincial and local contexts

Stakeholders' involvement is a key driving force for local plans

Main actors are: associations that represent persons at risk of social exclusion, social volunteer associations, businesses and social co-operatives, workers unions, schools and education institutes, local authorities, business associations, as well as services and agencies that operate in employment, social inclusion and local development

Stakeholders interact and contribute in decision making:

- To enhance problem understanding
Systems of continuous analysis (e.g. observatories on social exclusion and poverty) exist in Tuscany, integrating provincial and regional dimensions.
In Molise the proposal of the regional social plan envisages the creation of a regional social observatory

Stakeholders' involvement:

regional, provincial and local contexts

Stakeholders interact and contribute in decision making:

- To nourish an open collective learning

In Tuscany mutual learning is continuously and openly developed between the local stakeholders involved in plans and projects of social inclusion and poverty reduction.
In Molise a similar process results to be less implemented.

- To promote a client orientation

In Tuscany a monitoring system exists on the satisfaction of the persons and the communities that form the target groups of the social inclusion policies.
In Molise there is no system devoted to monitor customer satisfaction, but some verifications are carried out on the delivery of social services

- To foster a result orientation

In Tuscany a monitoring system regards the actions of social inclusion, considering obtained and expected results, number of beneficiaries, expected and actual expenditures.
In Molise the lack of programming in social policies does not favour a coherent monitoring of results, but some administrative verifications are carried out on the delivery of social services.

More diversity, more unity:

regional, provincial and local contexts

Less in Molise, more in Tuscany:

- Cultural diversities expressed by the most vulnerable (e.g. immigrants, disabled) are utilised as a driving factor to improve social cohesion

- Social diversities in the different local contexts are evaluated and translated into different targets for social inclusion strategies and projects

In Tuscany, diversity is conjugated with equity, solidarity and with regional dimensions, e.g. a recent regional promotes the citizens' access to civil and social rights in small and mountain municipalities. Allowances and incentives are given to municipalities that have less favourable conditions (according to specific indicators to promote) to create children educational services, social services, health emergency services, transport services
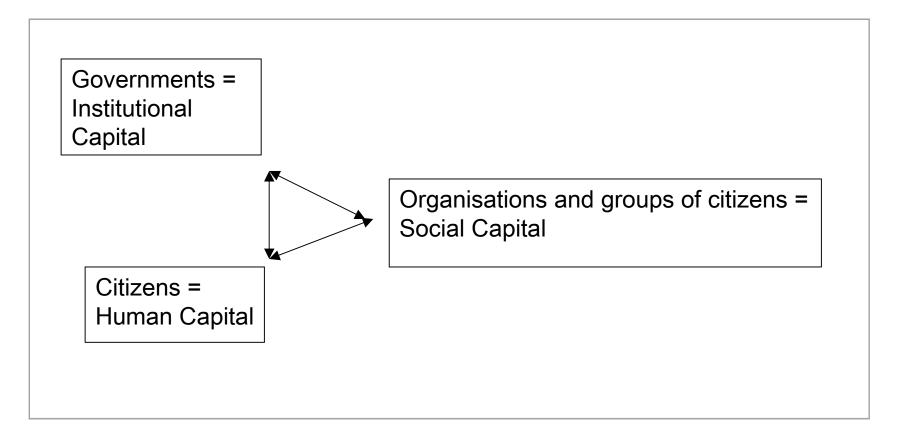
Main conclusions

Conclusions (1)

The enquiry revealed that:

multi-level governance and subsidiarity are clear principles

•***But*** *they need to be enforced by laws and planning systems*

•***In actual fact****, where local governance of welfare policies is elaborated and implemented by means of locally-developed methods and tools that foster subsidiarity (both vertical and horizontal), a favourable environment connects the Institutional Capital (e.g. local governments, authorities and public administrations), the Human Capital (e.g. the citizens and people at risk of poverty and social exclusion) and the Social Capital (e.g. NGOs, volunteer associations of citizens, social partners, etc.)*

Governance is the process in which governments, citizens and their organisations relate with each other to manage their common affairs in order to cope with and solve the problems of their territories.

Governments =
Institutional
Capital

Organisations and groups of citizens =
Social Capital

Citizens =
Human Capital

Conclusions (2)

The enquiry revealed that:

full responsibility and authority belong to local and regional authorities

•***But*** *contradictions exist in the relationships between national, regional and local dimensions (e.g. in the allocation and the use of financial resources and in the identification of basic levels of civil and social rights throughout the nation from the part of the State)*

•***In actual fact****, where institutional arrangements are supported by a programming framework clearly orientated towards the EU strategies, local authorities have more autonomy, the quality of planning is increasing, targeted and effective courses of action move from centralised to participatory decision making at a grassroots level, financing instruments are better developed together with systems to analyse local needs, to monitor results and customer satisfaction*

Tuscany Regional Development Planning according to the EU strategies

a meta-objective ("Vivere bene in Toscana" = to live well in Tuscany) is put in operation through the EU objectives (Lisbon Council)			Regional Development Programme
knowledge society	social cohesion and equal opportunities	innovation and better jobs	Regional integrated - sectoral programmes and pilot projects
following the leading criterion of sustainable development (Gotenborg Council) through			⬍
federalism	Co-operative governance	Co-decision (concertazione, e.g. pacts for local development)	Local development plans and territorially co-ordinated sectoral plans

Conclusions (3)

The enquiry revealed that:

stakeholders' involvement is a key driving force

•***But*** *a limited innovation is demonstrated at a national level, there is still little support from the State to empower local stakeholders and to build their capacity to think globally and to act locally*

•***In actual fact****, more initiatives are promoted by the local stakeholders where their involvement is supported by the utilisation of levers of transformation (e.g. problem understanding, open collective learning, client and result orientation) that develop interaction dynamics*

Conclusions (4)

The enquiry revealed that:

more diversity nourishes more unity

•**But** *the NAP 2003-2005 is not able to capitalise diversities and to act in support of their potential through a coherent national framework; in fact the NAP plays a limited role (as information on national policies) and it is not well known at both the strategic and operational levels in the regional and local territorial areas taken into analysis*

•**In actual fact**, *where paths to develop a European social model are reflected in regional laws and planning, the quality of local plans increases and allows the concerned stakeholders to cope with a wide variety of needs and problems (lack of financial resources included)*