

Social Sustainability for Inner Areas

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Sustainability

Sustainability is defined by analyzing its three pillars:

1. the environment (*environmental sustainability*);
2. the economy (*economic sustainability*);
3. and society (*social sustainability*).

Social Sustainability

The UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 stressed the importance of integrating environmental and social concerns into all development processes to achieve socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic growth.

(Sachs, 2014)

Social Sustainability

Social sustainability concerns:

Equity, Empowerment, Accessibility, Participation,
Sharing, Cultural Identity, Institutional Stability.

Social Sustainability

It also includes:

persons (women and men), communities and cultures, biodiversity, and agrifood economies. Sociology and other social sciences attach great importance to the generation of equality dynamics (of gender, social class, ethnicity, and country).

Social Sustainability

One of the reasons for the current sustainability crisis lies, first of all, in the practices of environmental exploitation, but also economic and social exploitation. Social exploitation practices focus on the exploitation and consequent depletion of human and social capital networks.

Social Sustainability in Italy's Inner Areas

Territorial disparities, not only within the EU and between EU countries and the rest of the world but also within each EU Member State, put the future of the continent at risk. Access to fundamental social and health services, jobs and business opportunities, and infrastructure (transport, broadband, etc.) is unequally distributed among the population.

(Policy Department A, 2020, p. 14)

Social Sustainability in Italy's Inner Areas

Remote, rural, and deprived regions are left behind, with a consistent proportion of their children, working age and elderly people not accessing the essential services that ensure a decent quality of life and acceptable health conditions.

(Policy Department A, 2020, p. 14)

Social Sustainability in Italy's Inner Areas

In many European Regions there is a gap between the development dynamics of urban formations and the progressive depopulation and abandonment of marginalized areas.

The most of these areas are Inner Areas.

Social Sustainability in Italy's Inner Areas

In Italy, more than half of the national territory (52.7%)
is Inner Areas.

More than 4,000 municipalities (48.5%)
and more 13 million people live in these areas.

Social Sustainability in Italy's Inner Areas

Almost half of the Inner Areas are mountainous (1,874 municipalities, parious to 48.9%), followed by municipalities in hilly areas (1,625 municipalities, 42.4%). Overall 84.5% of municipalities included in Inner Areas are far from coastal areas.

Social Sustainability in Italy's Inner Areas

Inner Areas are composed of municipalities 82.1% of which are no more than 5,000 residents and another 10% which are no more than 10,000 inhabitants.

Social Sustainability in Italy's Inner Areas

The characteristics of Inner Areas are the lack or scarcity of three public services:

1. *School* with a full range of secondary education (High School);
2. *Health Services* (at least one-grade first emergency care hospital);
3. At least one *silver-category railway station* (medium systems).

Social Sustainability in Italy's Inner Areas

When the three essential citizenship services are inadequate in Inner Areas, these areas become unbearable.

Social Sustainability in Italy's Inner Areas

Few sociological data:

- from 2006 to 2023 the number of Italians working and living abroad increased from 3.1 to 6.1 million;
- 45.9% are of Southern Regions origin;
- 23.2% are 35-49 years old, 21.7% 18-34 years old, 19.5% 50-64 years old; 14.6% are minors;
- women are 45.1% of the total;
- 69% have at least a high school diploma.

Social Sustainability in Italy's Inner Areas

Few sociological data:

Between 2002 and 2022, just under 330,000 young graduates aged 25-39 moved from the Inner Areas to the center areas, while just 45,000 moved abroad.

In the same period, 198,000 young graduates from the Centers Areas and 17,000 from Abroad returned to the Inner Areas.

(Istat, 2024, 7)

Social Sustainability in Italy's Inner Areas

Few sociological data:

It follows that the loss of human capital in the Inner Areas is equal to 132,000 young qualified resources in favor of the center areas, and 28,000 in favor of foreign Countries.

Overall, the disadvantage for the Inner Areas is equal to 160.000 young graduates.

(Istat, 2024, 7)

The contents of the development strategy for Inner Areas

Citizenship Services:
Education –
Health - Mobility

Local Development Projects
Environmental Sustainability -
Valorization of Cultural Heritage – Energy
Renewable – Know-how and Craftsmanship

Growth and Development
Increased employment population and use of
territorial capital - Increased income, social
cohesion, maintaining historic and artistic capital

How to Act for Inner Areas

The local development interventions in the 124 selected project areas (1,904 municipalities; 4,570,731 inhabitants) are financed by European Community funds (especially Social Cohesion funds) and Internal funds (Parliament and Regional Councils).

How to Act for Inner Areas

Priority was given to the following areas of intervention:
protection of the territory, enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage sustainable assets and tourism, agricultural activities and production, renewable energy supply chains and energy saving, craftsmanship, and local knowledge.

How to Act for Inner Areas

Furthermore, additional interventions aimed at redevelopment are financed from other funds for essential health, education and vocational training, and mobility services.

How to Act for Inner Areas

It is believed that the outcomes of these project categories really can promote growth and trigger economic development, generating a trajectory of 'sustainable' development.

How to Act for Inner Areas

However, as already noted, these projects can be successful if the territories – working alongside the various government departments – can ensure the satisfaction of the pre-conditions requisite for development (health, education and vocational training, mobility).

How to Act for Inner Areas

When a large proportion of the population has problems finding: 1) schools in which the levels of education and teacher quality are equivalent to those guaranteed in larger urban centers; 2) hospitals capable of guaranteeing essential health services (first aid; emergency; birthing; transfusions); 3) adequate internal and external mobility systems, a *vicious circle of marginality* is triggered, in which demographic hemorrhage follows a process of continual reduction of these services, precluding the usefulness of any sort of development intervention.

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THANK YOU FOR HOSPITALITY

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