



**2011 ISFOL CONFERENCE *RECOGNIZING THE MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY: HOW RESEARCH CAN SUPPORT INCLUSION POLICIES***

**ROME, 22 -23 MAY 2012**

**PROTOMOTECA ROOM – CAMPIDOGLIO – 1, CAMPIDOGLIO SQUARE**

**CONCEPT NOTE**

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**CONCEPT NOTE**

The interaction between public research bodies and local government authorities does not occur frequently because the research priorities often don't fit with the policy agenda. The purpose of the conference is to foster the synergy between research interests and local government needs in order to face complex phenomenon like poverty and social inclusion.

Through this conference and according to his institutional mission, ISFOL aims to broaden the debate and raise awareness of those issues:

1. describing the evolution of multidimensional measures of poverty and their translation into policy decisions;
2. presenting and comparing local, national and international experiences in terms of well-being and deprivation measure;
3. presenting an original model of multidimensional analysis of poverty.

For three years ISFOL has been studying poverty and well-being from a multidimensional perspective within the theoretical framework of the Capability Approach proposed by A.K. Sen.

The aim of this research project, funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and run in close coordination with local governments, is to develop and test a model of multidimensional analysis of poverty and a specific measurement indicator which considers a set of broad dimensions of life of individuals. Such model of analysis, called MACaD (Multidimensional Analysis of Capability Deprivation), focus on the measurement of the degree of individual capabilities, thus the real freedom for the individual to choose among a set of various doings and beings (functionings). Poverty is thus understood as deprivation in terms of capabilities.

The starting point of our reflection is the representation of inequality and poverty as a complex phenomenon, dependent on many factors and not reducible to descriptive and explanatory diagrams of monistic type. Deprivation can not be regarded only as a function of income and has to be analyzed in relation to other aspects of human life.

With reference to this perspective, our work pays particular attention to the real power of agency available to individuals, i.e. the degree of freedom and responsibility that an individual has to act for the realization of his life plan, in a framework of justice and equity. The focus is therefore the lack of equality in the availability of what Sen calls 'fundamental capabilities'.

The research project was based on primary data collection and developed in two main phases.

The first phase was experimental, in order to test the explanatory potential of the model, its internal coherence and the effectiveness of the questionnaire used for the data collection. As a matter of fact a survey was conducted in six local social planning area placed in the South of Italy, by the direct administration of the questionnaire to a population of 523 individuals (half of the sample were social services users). The results of this pilot project were presented at the OECD conference "New Directions in Welfare" (Paris, July 2011) and at the Conference of the Human Development and Capability Association, held in September 2011 in The Hague.

The second phase, run according a Memorandum of Understanding with the Municipality of Rome 13, has further developed the model's theoretical components and the statistical analysis, making the research project more useful for local social services management. A survey therefore took

place in order to administer a renewed version of the questionnaire to people in charge of the municipal social services, classified as follows:

- Elderly people attending community center;
- Disabled people receiving home care;
- Minors in home care or foster care (adults interviewed as reference for this target);
- Citizens using social services during the period 1 September 2011 - 29 February 2012.

The data collection, closed at the beginning of march, provided 570 valid questionnaires. Some results of the survey will be provided within the conference in order to outline possible useful effects of the research that can affect policy decision making process at local level: first, the improvement of the evaluation skills available for local policies. This effect is even more clear if the application of the analysis model is developed in a longitudinal perspective, with periodic administrations of the questionnaire to the same panel of the population; second, the possibility of comparing the sample distribution for each life dimension (which allows to obtain valuable information with reference to the allocation of financial resources); finally, the possibility of using an index which take into consideration material deprivation variables and functioning variables of the population.

The conference is organized in four main sessions: the first session is devoted to the analysis of key issues concerning the measurement of poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon; the second session deals with some local experiences of poverty measurement; the third session explores some international experience; the fourth one, finally, focuses on the relationship between poverty and wellbeing in some national surveys at european and international level. The speakers include the presence of international experts such as Anthony Atkinson, Sabina Alkire, Andrew Clark, Francois Bourguignon and national experts such as Andrea Brandolini, Enrico Giovannini, Adolfo Morrone and Matilde Callari Galli.