



Women and Covid19: How the Italian Government Task Force Fostered Gender Equity

E. Camussi^{1*}, R. Rella¹, P. Grigis¹, C. Sassi¹ and C. Annovazzi^{1,2}

¹Department of Psychology, University of Milano-Bicocca, Milan, Italy, ²Department of Human and Social Sciences, University of Valle d'Aosta, Aosta, Italy

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*Correspondence:

E. Camussi
elisabetta.camussi@unimib.it

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Over the last decades, the social context has been characterized by uncertainty, complexity, and inequalities, with significant impacts on people, groups, and communities. Covid-19 Pandemic has accentuated social discriminations, as inequalities affecting women (World Health Organization, 2018), with repercussions on general income, health, education (Office for National Statistics, 2021) that have been exhausting people, the economic system, and the welfare state (Antonicelli et al., 2020). To cope with these difficulties, on april 10, 2020 the Italian Prime Minister appointed a Task Force of 17 experts with scientific and applicative skills in social and economic fields. Within a short time, the Task Force aimed at identifying practical solutions priming the relaunch of the country. Given the women's central role in the country's social and economic development, in the final version of the Task Force plan, Gender Equality was indicated as the third—strategic and innovative—axis, together with Digitization and Green Economy. Its rationale was to promote gender equality in every action, with an allocation of dedicated economic resources. Specifically, the Task Force's Working Group named "Individuals, Families, and Society" proposed specific initiatives aimed at recognizing and bridging the gender gaps in the various areas, and measures to support vulnerable people. This contribution will focus on the central role that the Task Force has played in encouraging systematic attention to women, considering their needs and the social-economic impacts on their choices and well-being. It will illustrate the Task Force's internal dynamics (there were four women out of 17 people, then increased), the process of inclusion of different perspectives, both gender and multidisciplinary, and the practices suggested for the post-pandemic rebuilding. The final goal will be to show the inability to promote innovation, resilience and sustainability, without working with and for the community. As shown by the Italian Task Force, an innovative change must consider a multiplicity of perspectives that reflects the complexity of reality, even in the political and decision-making debate. Therefore, it's central to build multidisciplinary teams that include various professionals from the social sectors, as Social Psychology, Sociology, Pedagogy, Political Philosophy, Demography, and Social Statistics, both women and men.

Keywords: women, Covid-19, task force, gender equity, welfare, social sustaibility

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, the social context has been characterized by conditions of uncertainty and complexity. Moreover, the presence of multiple inequalities has had significant impacts on the well-being of individuals, groups, and communities. Issues such as poverty, social barriers, significant competitiveness and precariousness are constantly being experienced (Di Maggio et al., 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic has contributed to accentuate these dimensions of mutability, nonlinearity and instability, even more increasing the sense of uncertainty, anomie and apprehension (Dryhurst et al., 2020). The Covid-19 emergency has therefore disrupted the entire country, leading both to a significant overload of the social and health system and drastic changes in individual and collective lifestyles, exhausting individuals and their families, the economy, the labor market and the welfare state (Antoncelli et al., 2020). All of this has inevitably led to a series of psychological and social consequences that have further pressured and distressed people, especially the frail ones, including women (Women ONU, 2020; Office for National Statistics, 2021). Although from a medical point of view women turn out to be affected less than men (Wenham et al., 2020), from a psychosocial point of view, as happened with previous health and economic crises (Rubery and Rafferty, 2013), the consequences of the Pandemic have fallen drastically on them. The reasons for this are multiple.

From a strictly statistical point of view, women are in a higher percentage among those who work within the health and care sector, one of the most exposed to the virus. Of the approximately 49 million people employed in the health and social welfare services sector, about 76% are women, 66% in the Italian context. Women also make up two-thirds of the healthcare workforce worldwide, and although globally they are underrepresented among physicians, dentists, and pharmacists, as well as in senior or leadership positions in healthcare (Downs et al., 2014), they make up about 85% of nurses and midwives (Boniol et al., 2019).

From an economic perspective, we also note that globally, 84% of working women aged 15–64 are employed in the services most affected by the Covid-19 crisis, such as those related to the most stereotypically female occupations. About 47% of employment in the air transport sector is covered by women—38.3% in Italy (EUROSTAT, 2020). Globally, 53% of the workforce in restaurant services and 60% in hotel services are represented by women (International Labour Organization, 2020). In Italy, 49.5% of restaurants are registered and managed by women, 48.9% of bars, and 0.9% of canteens and catering. 52% of all the workers in the restaurant industry are women, considering about 625,000 female workers (Federazione Italiana Pubblici Esercizi, 2019). Both in Italy and worldwide, more than 64% of the retail sector workers are women (Ministry of Economic Development, 2017). Also, over 30% of women in the EU work part-time and are primarily employed in the informal economy, characterized by fewer labor rights and less health protection. Moreover, as previous financial crises, such as the one in 2008, have shown, an

improvement in women's economic conditions cannot be expected, even in recovery phases, unless ad hoc policies are implemented. During the recovery period in 2008, only male employment improved (Périer, 2018).

In addition, women are also much more likely than men to work part-time to take care of children and relatives and, during the lockdown, they often had to combine working from home with childcare (Power, 2020). The data show that women are the most significant contributors to unpaid work at home. Across the OECD, women spend two more hours a day on unpaid work than men (OECD Gender Data Portal), while in Italy, where stereotypes related to gender roles are still very present, in couples with children the difference reaches 4 h and 12 min (ISTAT, 2018). Much of women's unpaid work time is devoted to childcare (OECD Time Use database), although many OECD data show that employed women are 50% more likely than employed men to regularly care for adult relatives who are ill, disabled, or elderly. The presence of Covid-19 and the lockdown periods have expanded these burdens. On the one hand, the increase in time spent at home has raised the amount of time spent on household work, including cooking and cleaning (Barber and Kim, 2021). On the other hand, the widespread closure of schools and childcare facilities has expanded the amount of time that women have spent caring for children, many of them being forced to take on a supervisory role during homeschooling (Fortier, 2020; Power, 2020).

Finally, the pandemic has led to more cases of violence against women, due to greater unemployment and precariousness, resulting in less independence and autonomy of women, less social interaction, and the tensions deriving from forced cohabitation and the closure of schools. Gender-based violence, often committed by men, is deeply connected to the presence of gender stereotypes and patriarchal masculinity, which emphasize and convey how men should have control over women. As the crisis and uncertainty at the individual and family levels develop, perpetrators of violence may strengthen their desire to reassert control and express their frustrations through more episodes of violence (Angelucci and Heath, 2020). Also, women often had to remain locked in the house with those who acted violently against them (Du, 2020; Abuhammad, 2021), limiting their ability to seek help.

The effect of all these psychological, social, economic and individual factors is a substantial decrease in women's freedom and autonomy, followed, from an economic point of view, by an increased level of female poverty. Even before the Pandemic, women's incomes were, on average, lower than men's (OECD, 2021), and their poverty rates were, in fact, higher. In 2016, for example, on average, across the OECD 15.7% of older women were in relative income poverty, compared to 10.3% of older men (OECD, 2021). Nevertheless, in the midst of all this, data from the 2008 financial crisis and the 2014–2015 Ebola outbreak-related crisis show inadequate public policies to support women during these critical periods. For these reasons, academic research has consistently emphasized the importance of policy actors to bring a more focused look to gender disparities during such health crises (Davies and Bennett, 2016).

THE ITALIAN EXPERTS TASK FORCE FOR RECONSTRUCTION: INTERNAL GROUP DYNAMICS AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS THROUGH GENDER EQUITY LENSES

Italian Government's Response to Covid-19 Pandemic Socio-Economic Crisis: Experts' Task Force for Reconstruction

On Friday, April 10, 2020, Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte appointed a special Task Force consisting of 17 experts in social and economic fields to cope with the pandemic emergency. Professor Elisabetta Camussi was the only psychologist among the group: her extensive competence in Social Psychology would allow taking people properly into account as well as the effects of economic choices on individual lives. Professor Camussi has been working for many years on research, interventions, and design of services in community social psychology, gender differences, and equal opportunities, at university and the Italian Register of Psychologists.

With the insurgence of the outbreak, it was as if the time for thought and planning had disappeared, dominated by urgency and ceaseless decisions: the PM's choice to set up a task force of specialists aimed at designing a rapid and comprehensive plan to cope with the effects of the Pandemic was considered, therefore, an effective and strategic decision. It was not a trivial choice: 17 experts being asked to prepare a "catalogue" of solutions (the Colao Plan, named after the head of the task force Vittorio Colao; Comitato di esperti in materia economica e sociale, 2020), and not a mere diagnosis of problems, to be submitted within 2 months to the Italian Government. The 17 members, with different expertise and background, had to become acquainted on the job and through online meetings, with no room for 'team building' or other preliminary activities. It was a demanding and very challenging experience: it required mediation skills, openness to an interdisciplinary perspective, and a great cognitive and emotional investment.

Furthermore, technical and disciplinary social skills were under-represented compared to legal and economic ones. The gender imbalance was also evident, as there were only four women in the team out of 17 members. This imbalance quickly attracted the attention of various movements and organizations for gender equality, and in particular of "Dateci voce" (give us a voice), a movement born after a petition to PM Conte to ask for greater participation of women in the various committees and teams set up to deal with the Pandemic, signed in a few days by many thousands of women. As a result of this social pressure, the task force was then increased by five additional members, all women, and the same happened for the Technical Scientific Committee (the top medical board in charge of health care strategies at national level), up to that point made up of men only. With the entry of the new colleagues, the numerical balance and the overall capabilities of the Task Force changed positively, but the integration process was not easy. Indeed, the original group had already been fully operative 7 days a week for about a month and had already left behind the first difficult phase of

settling the respective positions. Luckily, the newcomers were very conscious of this fact and entered the group with great helpfulness and a spirit of collaboration.

For those reasons, it is essential that gender balancing within decision-making bodies and government commissions become a widespread and systematic practice to be applied *ex-ante*. On the other hand, it would be trivial and unrealistic to claim that the composition of a group like this could be done simply by applying, *a priori*, a single criterion—for example, selecting top hierarchical positions—without asking to which extent this group could be truly representative, given the inequalities that mark contemporaneity (above all gender inequality). In short, the result would be the opposite of the concept of "giving equal opportunities". Moreover, since women are more than half of the human population, gender balancing in the work groups assures a more inclusive management not only of gender issues, but also of all kinds of differences and inequalities (matters to which women, due to their millennial experience in caring, are necessarily closer).

An important consequence of these considerations was the decision, not immediately shared by all the components of the Task Force, to include Gender Equality among the strategic axes of the final version of the Colao Plan, together with Digitization and Green Economy. This implies to make specific efforts and systematically pay attention (*ex-ante* and *ex-post*) to gender equality in every choice, action or decision of the Government, devoting dedicated economic resources. By doing so, social innovation is considered to be as fundamental as technological innovation for the revitalization of the country and the Recovery Plan. The concept is confirmed by the "happiness rate" (an EU indicator about well-being and quality of life in daily life), which is higher in all the European countries where gender equality has long been achieved.

More specifically, the work group "Individuals, families, and society" coordinated by Professor Camussi within the Task Force, identified and proposed a set of initiatives to promote gender equality. These actions aimed to recognize and bridge the gender gap in the various areas (labor, civil rights, social participation, work/life balance, protection against violence, welfare and services, education and training) through nationwide programs. Inequalities between women and men have always been enormous in the Italian context. It has one of the lowest equity indexes in the whole of Europe (World Economic Forum, 2021). In Italy, the gender gap has undoubtedly been made more dramatic and evident by the Pandemic and the post-pandemic as happened elsewhere (ISTAT, 2020), but in this country, the problem has never been openly addressed in the previous 30 years. This is a major cultural issue for the future of Italy, where so far, there does not seem to be enough courage to face it as a whole, and individual or sectoral projects are preferred. No need to say that even in the case of well-structured actions, their overall effect on society is necessarily quite limited.

In this regard, it may be helpful to answer some simple questions: 1. Why more than 50% of Italian women of working age do not have a job? 2. Why only 23% of newborn babies find a place in a public or private nursery? 3. Why young women continue to choose, on average, tertiary training courses

in traditionally female fields where job opportunities are fewer and the wages are lower? 4. Why in Italy (but not in other European countries) the life/work balance and caring workload (minors, elderly, disabled, and frail people) still is almost exclusively borne by women? (ISTAT, 2020; EUROSTAT, 2020). The answers to these questions would necessarily require the definition of measures at the level of national policies for the reshaping of the entire context in terms of social justice, to foster the expression of individual freedom not subordinating it to gender (Annovazzi et al., 2018; Consiglio Nazionale Ordine degli Psicologi—Commissione Pari Opportunità, 2019).

Concerning these problems, the social scientists (most of them women) of the Task Force produced specific solutions focused on people's immediate needs and fostering equity and social justice. At the same time, they also widely supported the interdisciplinary approach that the work groups of the task force devoted to specific sectors (Education, Research and Training, Infrastructures, Companies, Public Administrations, etc.). Finally, they played the role of Advisors for the rest of the task force, ensuring that some strategic topics, such as Gender Equity or the Rights of people with disabilities, were mainstream issues. The outcome of this complex team-work was remarkable, since the individual contributions of the experts became part of a multifaceted and comprehensive strategic vision able to keep together the many aspects needed to foster real sustainability.

This is a vital approach, especially in the present time. In strategic plans such as EUROPE 2030, environmental and economic sustainability objectives are so closely entangled with social sustainability that one aspect cannot be separated from the other (as indeed it should be). The Task Force's document "Initiatives to Relaunch—Italy 2020–2022", in line with Goal #5 of the Agenda 2030 (United Nations, 2015), considers gender equity as a mandatory lens through which reality should be observed, interpreted and managed. Change, innovation, resilience and sustainability cannot be fostered without working with and for people, paying attention to the impact of the choices on social groups and individuals, and recognizing the different social identities and obstacles. That means leaving the "single thought" mindset through a multiplicity of looks that bring the complexity of reality back in the political debate and decision-making process, that is what the focus on gender equality tries to do. Therefore, equity and inclusion should become a starting point to increase the chance of designing anything (services, products, policies, laws) in a more socially sustainable way, reducing inequalities and activating existing resources.

The Task Force's Initiatives and Proposals: An Unprecedented Occasion to Foster Gender Equity and Social Sustainability in Italy

The Task Force's group dynamics described how gender issues are transversal and have both horizontal and vertical relevance (European Commission, 2020). The Task Force has the undeniable merit of posing gender equity at the forefront of the National Political Agenda. For the first time in Italian recent

political history, gender equity has been rendered one of the priority axes of development to be followed, not just for ethical reasons but as a mandatory way to overcome Covid-19's social crisis.

In this contribution will be described the highlights of a whole range of actions explained and suggested by the Committee of experts. The proposals advanced by the Task Force in the "Colao Plan" (Comitato di esperti in materia economica e sociale, 2020 https://www.governo.it/sites/new.governo.it/files/comitato_rapporto.pdf) are contained in 102 Forms. The "Individuals, Families and Society" Group, cited in the previous paragraph, edited the ones from 88 to 102. These proposals will be more extensively described in this paragraph. Gender Equity promotion is specifically addressed by the Forms 94 to 98, while the others pertain extended areas of intervention linked with social inclusion and justice, mandatory to foster Gender Equity as well. More specifically, Forms from 88 to 90 pertain the strengthening of an inclusive and proximity territorial welfare to promote individual resilience and social cohesion; Forms from 91 to 93 regard support and inclusion of fragile people; Forms from 99 to 102 deal with the promotion of resources and opportunities for children, teenagers, and young people.

Stemming from the broad relevance given to Gender Equity, the Task Force's sub-group dealing with "Individuals and Families" proposed a whole range of measures (Forms 94–98) to tackle gender inequalities. A transversal proposal recommends adopting the Gender Impact Evaluation—GIE—(Form 96) as a method of planning and analyzing any legislative, regulatory and political initiative. The positive expected development of this measure is the subsequent extension of the GIE index also to the private sector, for the definition and implementation of company policies.

Concerning the actions directly aimed at promoting gender equality, the Committee of Experts on Economic and Social Issues focused on enhancing women's resources by proposing interventions in four main areas. The first area aims at combating gender stereotypes. As previously discussed, Italy is characterized by low investment in policies to promote gender equality in education (Eurydice (European Education and Culture Executive Agency), 2010; 2020). This has severe repercussions in terms of gender conditioning on the educational trajectories and, consequently, on the employment opportunities for girls and young women (Biemmi, 2020; Fabrizio et al., 2021). The intervention proposed by the Committee envisages diversified actions at cultural level to foster the elimination of the obstacles to the full and free expression of women in terms of training and careers. Major educational initiatives are suggested, involving primary and secondary schools, to facilitate girls' approach to STEM subjects and young people's education in the conscious use of social media as a preventive form of contrasting digital violence. At the same time, the production, for the general public, of audiovisual content that presents a non-stereotypical image of gender is encouraged, together with financial education, promotion of female professional sport, and public awareness raising activities. These initiatives aim to reduce gender stereotyping by presenting counter/non-stereotypical role models. Inspiring new career trajectories, they help releasing

young people from socially and historically predetermined representations in terms of gender, ensuring a greater propensity for self-determination (Olsson and Martiny, 2018).

The second area focuses on giving support to female employment. To address the several critical issues that hinder women's access, retention, recognition and equity in the world of work, the Committee designed wide-ranging initiatives capable of functioning on multiple action levels. Firstly, adopting a system of measures to limit exits from the labour market for family reasons and increase entries through new jobs. Secondly, actions have been designed to encourage gender quotas, to guarantee equal access to managerial roles in the private sector, public administration, and political and administrative contexts. At the same time, it will also be necessary to promote transparency on employment and salary levels. The aim is to reduce the impact of the glass ceiling effect (Töpfer, 2017) and the gender pay gap phenomenon, as well as ensure a more balanced gender representation within the entire labor sector. Third, to support women in work-related maternity management (Rossin-Slater, 2018), the adoption of a more efficient maternity benefits system was also proposed, including 60% compensation and forms of public support to incentivize the use of parental leave, also for fathers. Moreover, provision has been made to strengthen employment in sectors with high female intensity, such as social assistance, health, and early childhood education services. This set of actions will help Italy aligning with the most advanced European countries.

The third area, closely associated with the second, refers to work-life balance and parenthood support. The Covid-19 Pandemic has contributed to further aggravate the situation related to the caring workload of families and, in particular, of women. Due to the emergency, the time dedicated to caregiving by Italian women increased, with consequent repercussions on the work-life balance (Del Boca et al., 2020). In response, the Committee prepared a national plan to extend the offer of public and private quality nurseries up to 60% of the newborns, in order to strengthen the well-being of parents and promote equality in the education of children. In addition, a profound review and simplification of the current system of support for families for the cost of children is envisaged, with the introduction of a single allowance to replace any other tax deduction. This contribution, which varies according to family income, must be guaranteed for each dependent child up to the age of majority. Finally, the figure of the work-life balancer is established: a professional who deals with the definition of personalized work-life balance projects in both public and private organizations.

The fourth area intervenes in support of women victims of violence. With the advent of Covid-19, there have been more cases of domestic violence and women seeking assistance (Lundin et al., 2020), making it clear that it is necessary to actively work on prevention and intervention policies, coordinating national, regional, and local projects (Bellizzi et al., 2020). The Committee prepared integrated measures for the empowerment and support of women in order to help them overcome the practical constraints that are often an integral part in exposure to violence (Pomicino et al., 2019). First and

foremost, the actions include direct financial support, in the form of emergency funds, for women preparing a pathway out of violence, since the financial aspect is often the first factor that prevents the exit from a potentially dangerous condition (Women Economic Independence and Growth Opportunity Report, 2017). In addition, there is the provision of incentives for companies that hire women who undertake a path of reception and protection at Anti-Violence Centers, also with the aim of creating a collaborative network of companies against gender violence and favoring the comparative development of corporate policies. The same goal also motivates the establishment and strengthening of integrated interinstitutional programs that involve health companies, social services, law enforcement agencies, schools and anti-violence centers. To this end, it is essential to strengthen the anti-violence centers, both in terms of capillarity and impact, on the basis of the specific territorial and emerging needs. Finally, to ensure continuous monitoring of the phenomenon of gender-based violence, the experts recommended the obligation for the national statistical institute to conduct a survey every 4 years that provides updated and constant estimates.

The four areas described so far render well a concept fostered by the fifth Goal of the Agenda 2030 and primarily focalized into the Task Force's document. Gender and inclusion are a clear choice as a pillar for the relaunch. They are not to be considered a possible fortunate outcome of the measures adopted to overcome the heaviest crisis the world has been facing since WW2. If Covid-19 has just single merit, it has acted like a catalyst or a contrast liquid. It has dramatized and made more evident and no more ignorable or delayable, ever-present and transversal issues such as the daily inequalities experienced by women. Nevertheless, the neologism "she-cession" is becoming more and more diffuse. Therefore, as intersectional feminism states (Crenshaw, 1989; Costanza-Chock, 2018), the fight against women's inequalities experienced by more than half the world's entire population may become a virtuous process, guiding towards a more inclusive society for everyone. The intersectional feminist approach means that it is necessary to consider several categories of analysis such as gender, race, and sexuality together (Desmond-Harris 2017), considering the interaction of multiple inequalities. Intersectionality is a requirement for societal change (Lawrence, 2017). Indeed, governments should focus on solidarity and coalition building, rejecting the idea that actions are exclusively focused on gender dichotomies. Governance must recognize the importance of focusing on who carries the burden of gender and incorporates multiple identities. When the benefits of a gender sensitive approach are shared with multiple socio-demographic characteristics in an intersectional perspective, the unity of humanity will increase, and the inclusive agenda for change will advance.

Using this observation lens, the Task Force's group "Individuals and Society" proposed actions to foster equity and inclusion on an intersectional and transversal level, starting from the peculiarities of the Italian territory (Forms 88–90). Italy, indeed, has a very high level of territorial differentiation with its 7.904 towns, with different identities and resources. To foster Gender Equity in this context is

necessary to work on a wide socio-political level, such as Welfare policies.

Welfare 2.0 is a framework to redesign welfare concept. It suggests the valorization of local realities, resources and associations to foster a less delegating and more proactive welfare model (Pasi and Misuraca, 2020). Stemming from this perspective, the Task Force proposed the strengthening of an inclusive and proximity territorial welfare to promote individual resilience and social cohesion. As Messia and Venturelli declare, local communities should not be intended just as fortresses that protect cultures and values. They should be competent communities that can decompose the uncertainties of the complexity and reconstitute self-confidence, reciprocity and a sense of belonging (Messia and Venturelli, 2015). More concretely, the Group proposed proximity multiservice garrisons into the most crucial towns and metropolitan areas to foster social cohesion, especially into peripheries. The function of these realities would be the interception of psychosocial needs, both from families and individuals, and especially from members of minority and emarginated groups. These physical and virtual places could guide their users through the fruition of existing local services in the most personalized way. They could pay special attention to families and individuals' psychological needs directly impacted by Covid-19, reducing depressive syndromes and related sanitary and social costs. As a complement to public services, the Committee suggested valorizing local voluntary and active citizenship organizations. Therefore, it could be possible to valorize local resources to respond to emerging unmet and not ordinary needs, overcome frailties and difficulties, and foster collective well-being.

The Committee powerfully depicted a further preeminent direction in the inclusion and support of people with frailties and rendered vulnerable by the Covid-19 Pandemic (Forms 91–93). As mentioned in this paper's introduction, many data show how the Pandemic exacerbated any previous condition of poverty, discrimination, and unbalance, with the most challenging consequences for people with disabilities and illnesses, older people, frail people, and minors. As depicted by Nota and Soresi, in line with all the latest scientific literature in positive social psychology, a fundamental condition for well-being is a necessary and sufficient level of autonomy and independence. Feeling to be dependent, during any daily activities, by the continuous presence of a familiar caregiver, lowers self-esteem and self-efficacy. It may lead to loss of meaning in life and progressive depressive symptoms (Nakamura et al., 2017). A person's identity in these conditions, with a lack of proper interventions, may more easily fold and become more and more congruent with the frailty condition itself (disability, dependence, poverty, etc.). This vicious process could shrink the possibility for people to open to what life has to offer *despite* the frailties and difficulties (Nencini, 2010). In line with these assumptions, the Task Force's dedicated Group proposed designing individualized therapeutic-rehabilitative pathways to respond to frail and vulnerable people's health and independence needs. In delivering these individualized social and health projects, a central role should be played by the Local Services for Mental Health and Pathological

Dependences. With a dedicated plan to train specialized operators, these services would foster the resilience and social inclusion of the population, allowing, in any community, to create and develop an efficient social network to address psychosocial needs. Regarding people with disabilities, in line with the previous scientific premises, the Task Force dedicated peculiar attention to labor policies for people with disabilities. The policies already present in Italy lack diffusion and clarity (Nota and Soresi, 2017). Therefore, the Committee proposed a careful systematization of these policies, with the suggestion of new actions to foster social inclusion and the institution of a specific Register for tutors to sustain the work of people with disabilities and a periodic unified report on workers with and without disabilities.

Another preeminent field of intervention strongly suggested by the task force (Forms 99–102) regards a systematic promotion of resources and opportunities for children, teenagers, and young people. We outlined in the introduction that one of the most devastating consequences of the Covid-19 Pandemic is a twofold impact on children and young people: on the one hand, the economic crisis has lowered and worsened the conditions of poor and middle-class families, causing difficulties even in food supply, basic needs, and the instruments to access to the online scholastic initiatives (Distance Learning) (Alleanza Italiana per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile (ASviS), 2020). On the other hand, the ever-diffused uncertainty brought out by the pandemics on a global level, combined with the complexity of an everchanging world characterized by globalization and liquidity, has blurred and reduced the ability to think, reflect and design the future (Ceruti and Lazzarini, 2020; Wen et al., 2020). Therefore, the Task Force proposed a wide range of solutions to contrast these problems and guarantee a decent subsistence level for the younger population. In particular, it proposed the creation of a found to contrast alimentary poverty for minors. Through the already diffused educational refectory system, and increasing the free food offer in nursery, primary and secondary schools, the Institution could guarantee the right to a healthy diet. Moreover, the task force proposed establishing a specific program designed to contrast poorness, especially for children from 0 to 6 years of age. As the European Parliament and the European Commission depicted (EUROSTAT, 2020), contrasting poorness in the early years of life is a fundamental and necessary duty of any European Nation. Finally, the Group proposed the extension of Civil Service, increasing the number of participants and orienting its actions. On the one hand, to reduce the digital divide of children and the poorest families and, on the other hand, to help and assist older people and people with disabilities valorizing the young human capital present on the territory.

DISCUSSION

Women continue to be outsiders in political, social and economic fields. Currently, the presence of women is far from achieving the gender equity stated in Goal 5 of the Agenda Europe 2030. Thus, it is fundamental to create actions for change, to identify the reasons for such a persistent imbalance and to invest to contrast this condition. Indeed, the widespread absence of women from

social and economic investments is linked to the presence of gender stereotypes, and the organizing and simplifying principles of our multiform and complex society. Although the modalities of manifestation partially change over time, these gender stereotypes are firmly resistant to change. Nevertheless, the stereotypes become more subtle and implicit, continuing to hinder women and men from realizing themselves and their life plans in the social, economic, and political spheres.

For these reasons, gender stereotypes became a central node, which should be systematically addressed at all levels of society, starting with awareness-raising initiatives to highlight problems such as the scarcity of female presence at the highest levels of the economic decision-making process and political and related leadership (Liotard, 2013). The aim will be to make the simplification mechanisms on which stereotypes are based evident, favoring the enhancement of differences within each gender and the parallel rethinking of genders and their relationships (Camussi and Leccardi 2005; Camussi and Annovazzi, 2016). What is proposed is a national plan and action to help people to identify early the impacts that gender affiliation procures in their lives, envisioning strategies for overcoming adverse effects and fostering innovative professional and life constructions (Ribeiro, 2020). The ultimate aim will be to support people, both men and women, in becoming part of every citizen's reality, giving them instruments to use social media correctly and create concrete and possible future paths independently of their gender. In order to achieve these goals, implementations of Lifelong Education Programs—from the kindergarten to the university - and of "Training trainers" programs are needed. With children and youth, teachers, educators, trainers, public and private companies, parents' associations, doctors, social workers, psychologists, counselors, is essential to work on rights' education, supporting a culture of equity and respect, financial education, autonomy, care and proper management of relationships. The idea is that everyone could work as an

equity and gender cultural multiplier. Finally, it is necessary to intervene with those involved in communication, such as communication agencies. The goal is to realize a correct, effective and assertive information and training function on these issues as a whole. Of course, such activities should be accompanied by research processes and systematic monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of programs and measures carried out by universities and public entities.

In conclusion, as the Italian PM's Task Force shows us, it is vital to work with and for people. In order to achieve this goal, the need for multidisciplinary teams is becoming more evident. These should include professionals from the social sectors, such as Social Psychology, Sociology, Pedagogy, Political Philosophy, Demography, and Social Statistics, as well as women and men in political and decision-making roles. Indeed, only with an authentic process of inclusion from a gender and a multidisciplinary perspective will it be possible to build a post-pandemic environment that promotes change, innovation, resilience, sustainability, and equity.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

EC First Author equal contribution with the last Author, Abstract, Paragraph Italian Government's Response to Covid-19 Pandemic Socio-Economic Crisis: Experts' Task Force for Reconstruction, Discussion, Coordination and revision of all the work and the paper RR Second Author, Abstract, Paragraph The Task Force's Initiatives and Proposals: An Unprecedented Occasion to Foster Gender Equity and Social Sustainability in Italy PG Third Author, Paragraph The Task Force's Initiatives and Proposals: An Unprecedented Occasion to Foster Gender Equity and Social Sustainability in Italy CS Fourth Author, Discussion, English revision CA Last Author equal contribution with the first Author, Abstract, Introduction, Discussion, Coordination and revision of all the work and the paper.

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