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Italy and food poverty
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ITALY AND FOOD IMPOVERISHMENT

- Poverty and Impoverishment

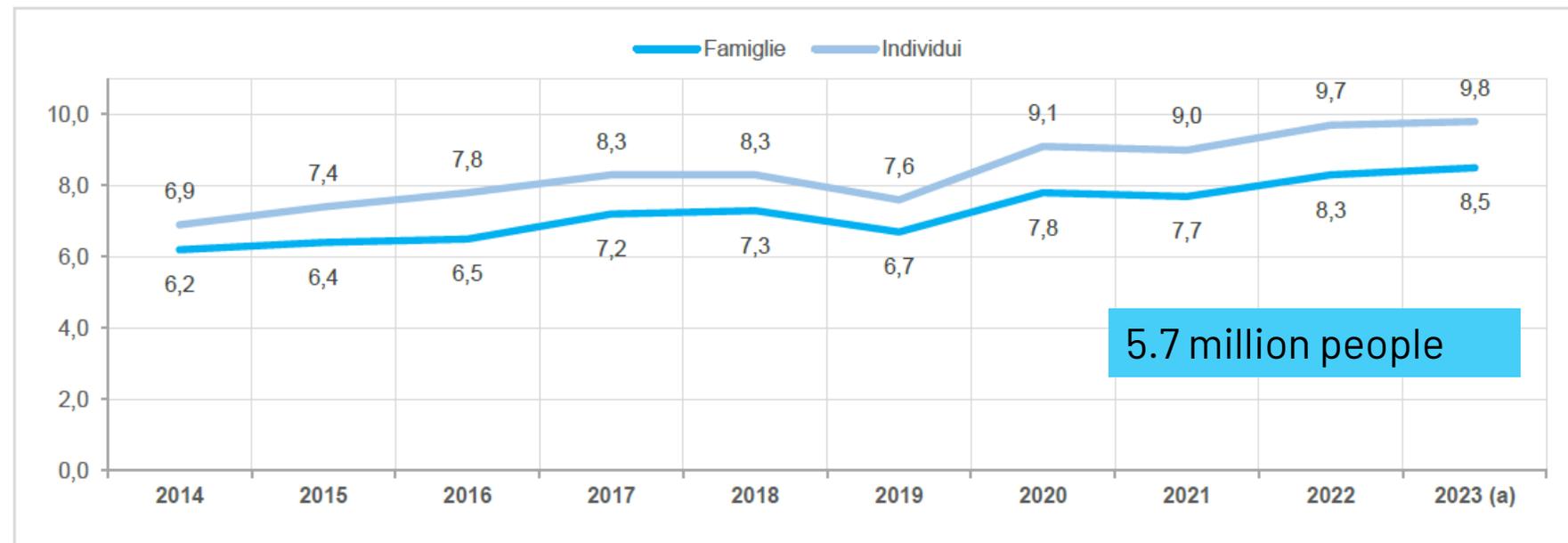


Poverty

Steady growth of economic poverty



FIGURA 2. INCIDENZA DI POVERTÀ ASSOLUTA FAMILIARE E INDIVIDUALE. Anni 2014-2023 (a), valori percentuali



(a) Per l'anno 2023, stime preliminari.

Fonte: Istat, Indagine sulle spese per consumi delle famiglie

MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONDITION, WHICH DOES NOT ONLY CONCERN INCOME BUT ALSO ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Educational poverty: affects 1.3 million children, limiting their future opportunities

Urban and rural poverty: rural areas lack access to services, while cities suffer from the high living cost and social inequality

Social poverty: lack of access to social networks and opportunities to participate in society

Gender poverty: women pensions are on average 27% lower than men and women face greater difficulties accessing the labor market

Food poverty (Food insecurity):
Inability of people to meet their nutritional needs due to inadequate access to food

THE CAUSES OF POVERTY IN ITALY

- **In-work poverty:** undeclared work, low wages and precarious contracts
- **Low pensions:** 58% of pensions are below € 1,000 per month
- **Immigration and integration difficulties:** absolute poverty in 30.8% of families with foreign members
- **Single-parent households:** 11.7% of single-parent families are in absolute poverty, with a prevalence of single mothers
- **Economic and social crises:** pandemic, inflation and geopolitical conflicts
- **Young people and low levels of education:** low employment rate
- **Difficulties for small farmers:** who face low agricultural products prices but high input costs in the production
- **Addictions (gambling, alcohol, drugs):** reduce available income
- **Insufficient public policies:** temporary and non-structural measures

Economic poverty
=
Food poverty

Being poor does not only mean having fewer resources, but also becoming poorer in the way you eat.

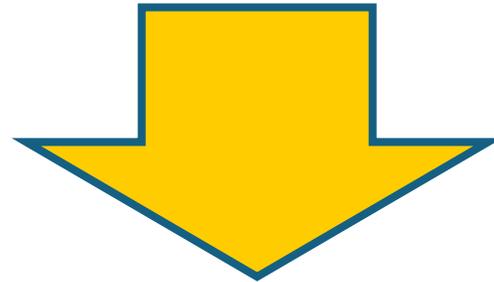
- **Decrease in food spending:** 29.5% of Italian families have reduced food purchases
- **Choosing less nutritious foods:** more refined grains, less meat and fish
- **Decrease in the quality of purchased food:** e.g. products close to expiry (+32%) or with aesthetic defects (+34%)
- **Increased food waste:** Buying cheap, but perishable foods leads to more waste
- **Reduction of consumption outside the home:** -38% for lunches and dinners at restaurants, -31% for takeaway food

Food impoverishment



Food poverty

The state in which people do not meet their nutritional needs due to a lack of physical, economic, or social access to adequate food; it is closely related to economic poverty



THE POOR EAT BADLY, BUT HOW DO THE RICH EAT?

Food impoverishment

unbalanced nutritional condition of a varied and complex nature that leads to negative consequences on health, the environment, the economy

Malnutrition



Includes deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in energy and nutrient intake (WHO)

- Malnutrition: wasting, stunting, and underweight
- Micronutrient malnutrition: excesses or deficiencies of vitamins and minerals
- Overweight and obesity: resulting in diet-related diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer



Insufficient education

Historical lack of nutrition education in schools, despite the country's food and wine richness



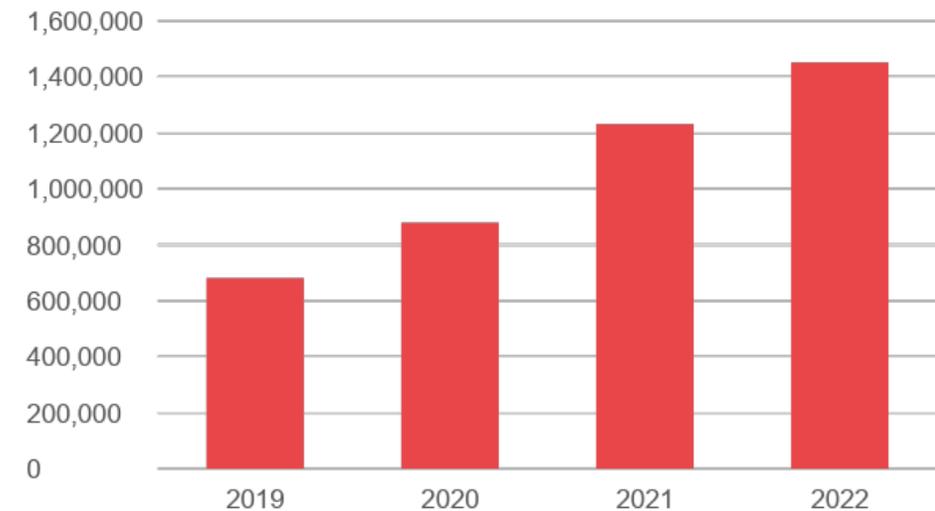
- Consumers **undervalue food** (and therefore is wasted)
- The task of informing consumers: agri-food companies and large-scale retailers, often interested in promoting their own products (potential **conflict of interest**)
- **Consumers fall prey to aggressive marketing** and "fakes"

Eating disorders

Eating Disorders: Anorexia, Bulimia, and Binge Eating lead to an imbalance in the nutritional supply



- Increasing
- Mostly females (90%)*
- 59% aged between 13 and 25*



*Source ISS

Collective catering and vending machines



The quality of meals in school, retirement homes, prisons canteens and soup kitchens is often conditioned by tender specifications with prices that are too low

Low quality/high waste: up to 30% in school canteens
(Source: Unibo)

Vending machines offer high-calorie, low-cost snacks accessible 24 hours a day
Encouragement of excessive consumption, especially in situations of tiredness or stress

Food poverty and food impoverishment two faces of the same coin

**Poverty makes it harder to access nutritious food
but at the same time, our society promotes and normalizes
eating habits that are often unbalanced and harmful**

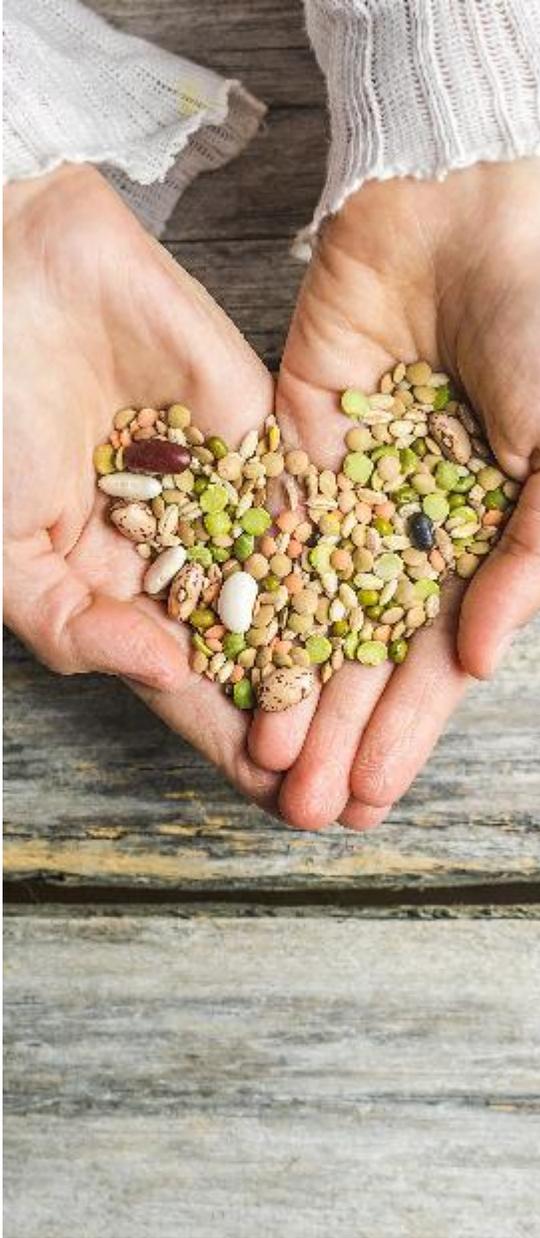
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FOOD INSECURITY

The level of food insecurity and expectations for the future



Food Insecurity in Italy

Waste Watcher International

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) is a FAO indicator that assesses people's access to adequate, nutritious food based on their perceptions and experiences.

Survey method: CAWI on 1,200 Italian adults (Ipsos Access panel; representative by gender, age, geography) and data processed via FAO's online FIES tool.

Past 12 months and projected next 12 months

Future FIES estimated from respondents' perceived likelihood of facing food access difficulties.



13.95

PREVALENCE INDEX
(Moderate + Severe)

JANUARY 2024

10.27

Base: Sample Total - % Values

Food Insecurity Index (PAST: last 12 months)

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

NORTH
-17%

CENTER
+15%

SOUTH
+17%

URBAN AREAS VS RURAL AREAS

CITY
-7%

URBAN/SUBURBAN AREAS
+3%

RURAL AREAS
+23%

SOCIAL CLASS

MEDIUM
-55%

MEDIUM LOW
+7%

POPULAR
+209%

CENTER OR PERIPHERY

CITY CENTER
-20%

SEMI-CENTRAL AREA
+5%

OUTSKIRTS
+16%

ISOLATED AREA
+13%

RIGHT TO FOOD in Italy (Waste Watcher International)



Right to Food: knowledge

When you think about the term "Right to Food," which of the following statements seems correct to you?

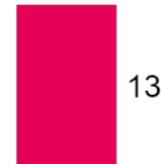
Base: Sample Total - % Values

The right to food is...

The right of every person to have access to sufficient, safe, healthy food, appropriate to their culture and available continuously, without economic or social barriers, respecting the environment and promoting equity.

The right of every person to purchase any food available on the market, regardless of its quality or sustainability.

The right to receive free food from the state in any economic situation



Right to food: effects of inclusion in the Constitution

In your opinion, if the right to food were explicitly included in the Italian Constitution, which of these effects do you think is most likely?

Base: Sample Total - % Values

If the right to food were explicitly included in the Constitution...

It would lead to a strengthening of support policies for vulnerable sections of the population

26

It would increase citizens' awareness of the importance of the right to food

23

It would encourage the adoption of measures to reduce food waste

19

It could lead to an increase in public spending without concrete results

11

It would have a limited impact, because current policies are already sufficient

6

It would have no concrete effect

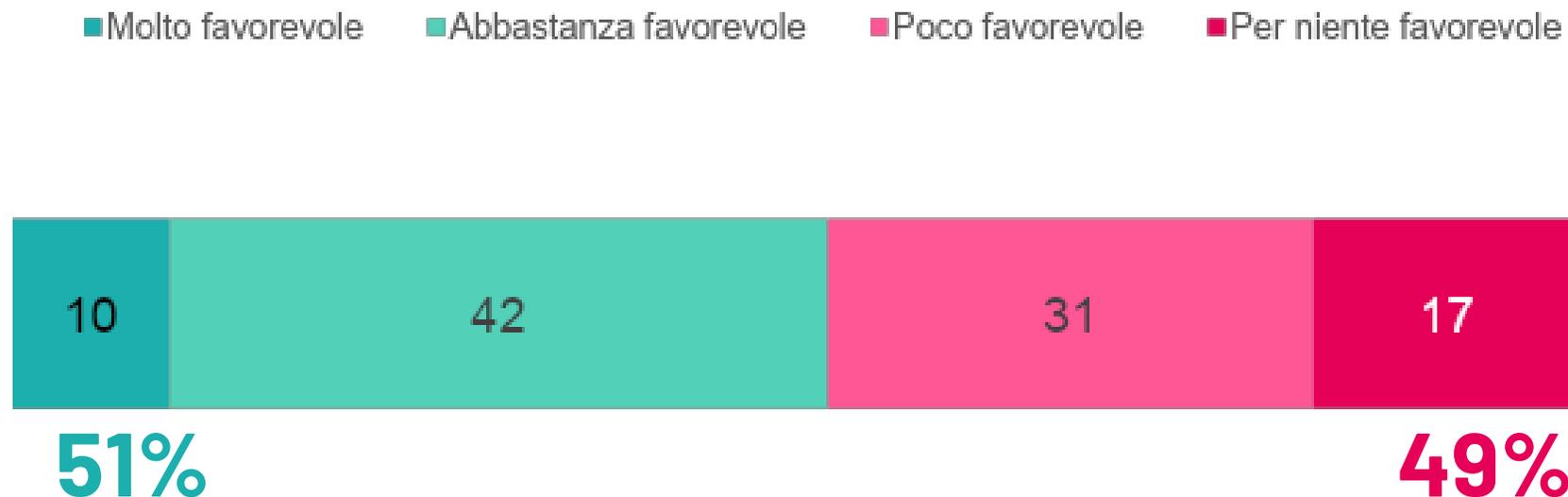
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If protecting the right to food required a tax increase

If protecting the right to food required a tax increase to fund food welfare policies (e.g., government support for food purchases) to support the most vulnerable segments of the population, would you be in favor of it?

Base: Sample Total - % Values

If taxes were to be raised for food rights policies to support the most vulnerable, I would be...



RIGHT TO FOOD and LOCAL FOOD POLICY



IUS CIBI – Food Citizenship Bologna

Ius Cibi is the right to access to quantitatively and qualitatively **adequate, safe** and culturally **appropriate food**, permanently and without restrictions, either directly or through economic means, regardless of socio-economic status or ethnic origin and following criteria of **equity economic** and **environmental sustainability**.

Article 2 of the Municipal Statute: recognition of the Right to Food "Ius Cibi"



Bologna Food Policy



Equitable access to food, thanks to solidarity shops and soup kitchens, and the distribution of surplus food, to ensure support for vulnerable people



Promotion of urban **gardens**, school gardens, and shared agricultural spaces for the community



Short supply chains and zero-mile products: promoting local **farmers' markets** and encouraging local sourcing



Sustainable school canteens: promoting **seasonal**, organic, and local menus, and food education related to meals.



Food education programs and campaigns on health, nutrition, and waste prevention



Reducing food waste through concrete initiatives to make citizens more aware and responsible.