

Call for Papers Welfare e Ergonomia 1/2025

Social agriculture between new and old social work practices, theoretical perspectives and policy innovations.

edited by

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Social agriculture is regarded as an area of potential innovation, although its first realities in Europe can be traced back to the early 19th century. Let us recall some emblematic examples: the rural community of Geel in Belgium, the agricultural colony of Ferrand in France and the York retreat in the United Kingdom. We can, however, trace the first organised and recognisable experiences of social agriculture in Italy, in the 1970s, within the social cooperatives context. These were the years in which many recovery communities for drug addicts and other experiences related to the field of mental health were born, promoting the combination of manual agricultural work and rehabilitation. In this history, public policies sprouted within the agricultural policy sector. In Italy, Law 141/2015 makes a great effort to delineate the field of action of social agriculture, making it one of the possible declinations of the multifunctionality of farms: in order to guarantee an economically sustainable income, these are supported to diversify their activities fostering actions to promote agritourism, educational farms and social agriculture. Di Iacovo and O' Connor (2009) state that, through the correct use of the land resource, the relationship between agriculture and society is redefined in a positive sense, thus consolidating and promoting community ties and cohesion in the territories.

There are three levels of interest in the call. The first one refers to the collaboration between sectors (public, private and social private) and between professions (farmers, social, educational and health service operators) and to the effects on the welfare system in general and on the care system in particular; the second one refers to the tools and working practices adopted, with particular attention to the personalisation of the interventions and their flexibility according to the needs expressed by the people involved; finally, the third one aims to shed light on the prospects for the persons participation into the labour market within the framework of rehabilitation projects, with a view to work orientation and learning actions for young adults.

Despite the above, social agriculture is still little practised, little recognised or, perhaps, little known in Italy. Over the years, individual experiences have been mapped and valorised, but the potential of social agriculture struggles to flourish. The National Plan for Recovery and Resilience, with its focus on the One Health perspective, centred on the integration of environmental, human and animal well-being, outlines a fruitful space for its operation, but forgets to mention it explicitly.

Therefore, starting from the hypothesis that the relationship between the agricultural and social dimensions can be very heterogeneous - not only across different national contexts, but also within the same national and local levels - we aim to analyse related practices, interventions and policies, also through the valorisation of shared writing practices between researchers and practitioners, starting from:

- case studies in local (fragile areas, inland areas, coastal areas, metropolitan cities), national and international contexts, capable of producing critical reflections that highlight the challenges in implementing social agriculture, through a multidisciplinary perspective (sociology, economics, professional social service, training sciences, rural development);
- the study of policies and their effects, with a specific focus on national and regional regulatory contexts and practices that connect certain emerging themes such as innovation processes in the primary sector and the differentiation of agricultural activities, energy transition, the return of young people to agricultural activities, attention to wellbeing and the environment in a One Health perspective, highlighting innovative practices in the field of social agriculture in the context of territorial differences;
- analysis of the results of social research evaluating social farming experiences as a device for processes of rehabilitation and social participation of people in disadvantaged situations, but also for the promotion of community activities and social cohesion.

Potential authors for this issue of Welfare & Ergonomics are invited to submit an abstract of approximately 3000 characters by 25 September 2024. And, if accepted, by 20 January 2025 the contribution in full form according to the following breakdown:

- Theoretical contributions (subject to peer review) of no more than 25,000 characters (including spaces);

- Empirical research (subject to peer review) of no more than 25,000 characters (including spaces).

For the purposes of the evaluation, the abstract should consist of:

- Introduction to the topic addressed;
- Scientific framework within which to place the contribution, reconstruction of the national and international debate;
- Methodological framework adopted and hypotheses formulated;
- Most important and innovative results;
- Essential bibliographical references.

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After the communication of acceptance of the proposals by the Editor of the Journal, it will be necessary for the Authors to register online on the OJS platform of the publisher FrancoAngeli: https://ojs.francoangeli.it/_ojs/index.php/we/user/register.

Once registration is complete, the authors will be able to upload the article by clicking on the 'Make a new proposal' link available in the Dashboard. Proposers will be notified if the essay proposal is not relevant to the topics of the Journal.

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