



THE STATE OF FOOD POVERTY IN THE METROPOLITAN CITY OF ROME IN THE ITALIAN CONTEXT

REPORT SUMMARY

2024

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The Italian context

Poverty

Poverty in Italy in 2023 remains a structural problem at 9.8 percent, with marked geographic and social differences. The stable numbers compared to the previous year, in a context of rising inflation and economic difficulties, is itself a warning sign. Conditions for households in the North and those with employees are getting worse, while the South continues to be the hardest hit area. In 2023, families experienced a 1.8 percent reduction in their purchasing power.

Food insecurity and malnutrition

The 5.7% of the Italian population, about 3.4 million people, were moderately or severely food insecure in 2022. Overweight, obesity and diet-related noncommunicable diseases represent issues of major concern: 43.1% of the adult population is overweight, 32.7% of adults aged 18-69 are overweight, and more than 10.4% are obese. In 2023, overweight Italian children account for 19% and those who are obese for 9.8%.

Affordability to a healthy diet

The 6.9% of the Italian population cannot afford a healthy diet. Data collected through our Food Affordability Index (FAI) show that between 2018 and 2023, the current diet has become increasingly unaffordable. The rise in total food prices, which grew by 21% in the same time frame, played a part in this. A worsening is also observed for affordability to a recommended healthy diet, both in the North and South, although it remains a relatively cheaper choice than the current diet.

Food aid

The 4.9% of Italians - 2.9 million - received food aid in 2023. The share has returned to a slight decline (-0.12%) since 2021, but the total number of recipients remains high when compared to pre-pandemic values. The share of women who personally pick up the package rises, surpassing that of men and amounting to 51.7%. The share of migrant recipients, of foreign origin or part of minorities, has the highest percentages compared to the total number of recipients in the central and northern regions of Italy, while the majority of recipients in the South are of Italian origin. Lower shares of assistance are recorded at 1.2% for people with disabilities and 2.2% for the homeless, probably due to the difficulty in direct food aid intake.

The Metropolitan City of Rome

Food insecurity and malnutrition

Moderate to severe food insecurity in the Metropolitan City of Rome in the years 2021-2023 stands at 7.3% of the surveyed sample. Although there are signs of improvement, the presence of moderate to severe food insecurity requires further targeted interventions to ensure food security for all segments of the population. Highlighting elements of malnutrition in the Lazio region are the increase to 31.9% of overweight adults in 2022/2023 and a daily recommended consumption of 5 portions of fruits and vegetables being consumed by only 5.9% of the population.

Affordability to a healthy diet

Affordability in discount stores is 22% higher than in supermarkets, mainly due to the difference in the cost of healthy diet in the two types of stores. Accessibility to healthy food appears to have a strong geographical component: considering discount store purchasing, accessibility is insufficient (very low or critical) in 4 areas of the city; considering supermarket purchasing, accessibility is compromised in 9 municipalities, with the presence of 3 critical areas in the eastern part. At-risk situations are also detected for large and single-parent families, critical figures given the percentages they represent out of the city's population, about 20% and 13.80% respectively.



Food aid

About 6,2% of the population of Rome requested food aid in 2022. The highest demand occurred in District I and VI. District XI recorded the lowest number of food assistance providers in its territory. Among the modalities of assistance intervention in the metropolitan municipalities surveyed in 2023, most products are distributed through food boxes. The service dedicated to delivering food to homeless citizens appears to be the least provided.



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