



PRELOC

building local preparedness
to global crises



Research project “**Building local preparedness to global crises (PRELOC)**”

Duration: 2021-2023

Funding: CARIPLO Foundation

Principal Investigator: Lavinia Bifulco, Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Milano-Bicocca

The project is developed by three different research teams working jointly from the Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Milan-Bicocca (lead partner), Department of Political Science, University of Pisa and Department of Sociology and Business Law, University of Bologna.

Research team: Maura Benegiamo, University of Pisa; Vando Borghi, University of Bologna; Davide Caselli, University of Bergamo; Laura Centemeri, CNRS; Lorenza Dodi, AUSL of Parma; Barbara Giullari, University of Bologna; Carlotta Mozzana, University of Milano-Bicocca; Davide Olori, University of Bologna; Carla Panico, University of Pisa; Luigi Pellizzoni, Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa; Vanessa Mascia Turri, University of Milano-Bicocca.

PRELOC's research activities are also supported by an interdisciplinary advisory board that actively collaborates with the research units in defining strategies and tools in the first phase of the project and in analysing and interpreting results as they become available in the following phases.

Interdisciplinary Advisory Board components: Fabrizio Bianchi, National Research Centre (Italy); Gianluca Brunori, University of Pisa; Liliana Cori, National Research Centre (Italy); Nicoletta Dentico, Society for International Development; Enzo Ferrara, National Institute of Metrological Research (Italy); Andrew Hoffman, Radboud University; Frédérick Keck, French National Centre for Scientific Research; Tommaso Luzzati, University of Pisa; Benedetto Saraceno, Lisbon Institute of Global Mental Health.

Finally, some phases of the project envisaged the involvement of collaborators as experts on specific issues.

Collaborators: Margherita Bono, Rosario Cutuli, Laura Tanzini.

The project:

PRELOC focuses on the relationship between science, technology and society by working on the notion of *preparedness*, which can be translated as "preparedness" or "readiness," a notion that is today at the heart of global policies on coping with environmental and health emergencies, particularly pandemics.

The *preparedness* approach is characterised by the relinquishment of a complete control (that is envisaged by the predictive/preventive model) over uncertainty in favour of widespread vigilance that allows for early detection of threat signals, thus shifting the focus of action from the short time of the emergency to the long time of socio-ecological organisation. Within this general theoretical framework, the project aims to clarify, refine and operationalise *preparedness* in the Italian context, particularly in the agriculture and health sectors, both heavily affected by the current crises.

In particular, PRELOC outlines two ideal-typical modes of *preparedness*: one transformative and one conservative. In short, *transformative preparedness* is based on the ability to recognise and influence structural processes that, over time, co-produce potentially destructive situations while raising questions of causal explanation and collective responsibility. It crucially depends on tools and processes geared toward enhancing territorial capacities to generate and share knowledge, information and socio-technical solutions. Instead, *conservative preparedness* emphasises problem-solving capacities and narrow, manageable, and standardised technical responses without considering local political ecologies and vulnerability factors. These two modes delimit a relatively wide range of situations with heterogeneous rationales that tend to coexist.

The empirical investigation, focusing on selected cases, therefore, addresses the question: what conditions favour the development of *transformative preparedness* approaches and practices?

In this way, the research aims to make a scientific contribution on several levels: giving strength and evidence to the nexus between health, sanitation and care in ecological systems; exploring and enhancing national experiences already active or under development; and proposing a specific approach that can positively reorient the relationship between science, technology and society.