

Communities in Transition: two Italian case studies, critical global thinking, and worldwide participation

Transition Towns is an international movement developing a systemic approach to inspire concrete actions, organized by citizens, from a bottom-up ethos. Transition aims to challenge the globalised and exploitative economic model, through revitalizing local production, enhancing human relations and improving the citizens' quality of life. Despite its growing social size and influence, the movement has until now been largely unresearched using qualitative methods and from a critical community psychology perspective.

This presentation will follow a creative format, using visual material and drama dynamics taken from the Theatre of the Oppressed methodology, as Image Theatre technique. The aim is to encourage participants' engagement with Transition principles and processes, in a critical and experiential way.

We will include a presentation comparing the results of two case studies in the Italian context: Monteveglio and San Lazzaro di Savena Transition Towns, both located in Emilia-Romagna region. The two studies, which are the outcomes of a PhD and a Master's thesis, explored the dynamics of communities in Transition with qualitative methodologies. In particular, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using thematic analysis.

We will discuss what pathways and developments each Transition Town community followed, and what dynamics were involved. Especially, we will debate the concept of sense of community, with reference to internal cohesion and the possibility of creating trustworthy relationships within and outside the community. In this Innovative Presentation we aim to gather a new insight on our work and to share worldwide perspectives on these highly topical issues.