



ITALY

THE CORONA POOR

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parallelotzero





Milan, public housing along Via Graf in the Quarto Oggiaro neighbourhood, on the northwest outskirts of Milan.

Who are the new poor living on the breadline because of Covid-19?

Elsa and Noemi are both contract teachers who are now out of work because of the coronavirus emergency. There's Marco, an electrician, Abukar a carpenter, and Elena, who supported herself and her son through babysitting and working in a school canteen, while Calogero put bread on the family table by working as an informal parking attendant near Milan's San Siro Stadium. From one day to the next all of them were prevented from making a living and were forced to stay home.

The impact of the coronavirus on the economy and on employment has been devastating. Many people are stranded at home, without redundancy payments or social safety nets other than the help provided by charities such as the Caritas Ambrosiana or the Fondazione Progetto Arca.

Many Milanese were already experiencing hardship prior to the coronavirus emergency, some with precarious temporary jobs or fixed-term contracts. These people and others have seen the door to gainful employment slammed shut in their faces: no teleworking, no savings to fall back on, just poverty that gets worse with each passing day.

During the lockdown half of the Italian population has stopped working. The government's official figures currently count 1 million 700 thousand fewer people in work in 2020. This tsunami has swept up those on short-term contracts, part-time or seasonal workers and those working in the informal economy off the books. Colidretti, an agricultural association, claims that in Italy there are at least one million new poor in need of real assistance just to feed themselves, in addition to the 4 to 5 million people who were already living in poverty prior to the epidemic.



Milan, the Falcone family lives in public housing and survives on the redundancy payments received by father Daniele, a manual worker. Wife Maria Paola doesn't work. Marika is a law student and Marco worked as an electrician at Linate airport but his contract wasn't renewed. For this reason they regularly receive food parcels from Caritas.



Milan, in the evening volunteers from the Fondazione Progetto Arca take food to people in need.



Desio (Milan), Silvia Micieli attends a meeting with Gianluca Sanvito, head of the territorial office of the trade association Confartigianato, and one of his colleagues. Together with her partner Riccardo Bertolini, Silvia launched a start-up, the WOW Clock, but due to the coronavirus lockdown Riccardo has been made redundant and the couple, who have a daughter aged 10, are now in difficulty. They have requested the 600 euro grant available from the government as well as the suspension of mortgage payments on their home and repayments of the loan they took out to finance the start-up.



Milan, a charity worker from the Fondazione Progetto Arca delivers food parcels for families in need: during the pandemic, the number of parcels they distribute has doubled.



Milan, contract teacher Noemi Ventura has been unable to work or earn a salary since the beginning of the lockdown and the closure of the schools. Noemi lives with another contract teacher, Elsa Radaelli, in an apartment provided by the Fondazione Progetto Arca, which also supplies them with food parcels.



Milan, second-stage accommodation run by the charity CAST (Centro Assistenza Sociale Territoriale). Abukar Mubarak, originally from Somalia, worked in a carpentry and restoration workshop but the coronavirus emergency has prevented him from working and from continuing his Italian language course and training to obtain his forklift truck driver's licence.



Milan, the so-called Case Bianche (White houses), a neighbourhood of public housing on the eastern outskirts of Milan.



Milan, Maddalena with her father Alessandro D'Amanzo and her mother Anita. Maddalena is on the computer that her parents had to buy her so she could follow online school classes. Anita doesn't work and suffers from multiple sclerosis. Her husband Alessandro was born with arthrogryposis and receives disability benefits but the family need extra support and receive food parcels from Caritas.



Sovico (Milan), Franco Montrasio and his brother Carlo are co-owners of IMA Mobili, which produces furniture for children's bedrooms. The company has been closed since the beginning of March and all 12 employees are receiving redundancy payments. The future of the company is now uncertain.



Milan, second-stage accommodation run by the charity CAST (Centro Assistenza Sociale Territoriale). Three guests (from left Sana Fofana, Samani Bangura and Gaetano Lanciano) have all been prevented from working by the coronavirus emergency.



Novate Milanese (Milan), 49-year-old Elena Simone lives in public housing with her son Leonardo, aged 10 (she has two other grown-up children). She used to work in a school canteen and as a babysitter but has lost both of these jobs because of the coronavirus lockdown. Now she receives support from Caritas in the form of food parcels.



Lissone (Milan), Alberto Gislon at the Gislon workshop that he co-owns with his cousin and business partner Paolo Perego. The company produces signs and publicity material but had to close at the beginning of March. Many payments have been blocked and staff have been placed on redundancy.



Milan, contract teacher Elsa Radaelli has been unable to work or earn a salary since the beginning of the lockdown and the closure of the schools. Elsa lives with another contract teacher, Noemi Ventura, in an apartment provided by the Fondazione Progetto Arca, which also supplies them with food parcels.



Milan, public housing along the Via Segneri in the Giambellino neighbourhood.



Milan, volunteers from the Fondazione Progetto Arca prepare food parcels for families in need: due to the pandemic, the number of parcels they distribute has doubled.



Cinisello Balsamo (Milan), Irene Barrientos with her children Rossella and Piero in the bedroom of the home they share with her husband and two other children. The apartment was provided by Fondazione Progetto Arca. The coronavirus emergency meant that both parents lost their jobs and for this reason they regularly receive food parcels.



Milan, radiologist and GP Tjen Tu-Van, who moved to Italy 1979 from Vietnam, volunteers two days a week at the Anselmo da Baggio public showers.



Milan, second-stage accommodation run by the charity (Centro Assistenza Sociale Territoriale). Sana Fofana, originally from Gambia, worked in a carpentry and restoration workshop but the coronavirus emergency has put an end to his activities.



Milan, contract teacher Elsa Radaelli has been unable to work or earn a salary since the beginning of the lockdown and the closure of the schools. Elsa lives with another contract teacher, Noemi Ventura, in an apartment provided by the Fondazione Progetto Arca, which also supplies them with food parcels.



Milan, Massimo, aged 51 and originally from Catania, leaves the soup kitchen run by Opera San Francesco per i Poveri. Massimo is a nurse but suffers from a social disability. He was working as a carer but with the introduction of the lockdown, like many other people, he lost his job.



Milan, the Falcone family lives in public housing and survives on the redundancy payments received by father Daniele, a manual worker. Wife Maria Paola doesn't work. Marika is a law student and Marco (pictured here on the bed) worked as an electrician at Linate airport but his contract wasn't renewed. For this reason they regularly receive food parcels from Caritas.



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