



National Values Assessment Italy

Precursor project | Italy | Values, culture and civic action

The question behind the project

The Italian National Values Assessment took place before Ve3 was established, yet it addressed a question that still guides our work: what can values tell us about who we are and about the society we are building together?

Voc-Azione brought together coaches, managers and facilitators who wanted to support cultural change in Italy. They worked from the conviction that values affect behaviour, relationships, trust in institutions and people's willingness to contribute to the common good.

Understanding values was never the final objective. It was the starting point for understanding how people, organisations and institutions could create more conscious and responsible ways of working together.

The research

The 2020 study followed the first Italian assessment conducted in 2012. Kantar constructed a representative sample of 1,565 adults aged 16 to 65. Fieldwork was completed in February 2020, just before the pandemic changed social and economic life across the country.

Participants selected the values and behaviours that best described three areas: themselves, the culture they saw in Italy at the time, and the culture they wanted Italy to develop.

What the findings made visible

In describing themselves, Italians selected values centred on relationships and growth: friendship (46,3%), family (43,6%), listening (35,7%), honesty (33,9%), respect (28,5%), continuous learning (28,4%), welcoming (27,5%), adaptability (24,7%), creativity (23,1%) and generosity (22,6%).

Their description of the country was very different. Corruption, clientelism, unemployment, uncertainty about the future, bureaucracy, criminality and violence, conflict, gender discrimination, lack of transparency and environmental pollution dominated the picture.

Their preferred future was more effective, welcoming and attentive to people. Priorities included better government, support for disadvantaged groups, employment, affordable housing, social justice, human rights, openness, culture and environmental awareness.

Cultural entropy stood at 60% in 2020. This was an improvement on the 73% recorded in 2012, but it still reflected a high level of perceived dysfunction and a large share of social energy lost to limiting patterns.



From evidence to participation

Voc-Azione treated the assessment as a starting point for public engagement. Between 2013 and 2020, it worked with schools, associations, civic groups, local institutions and universities, facilitating conversations about values with around 2,350 people.

That progression from evidence to conversation remains central to Ve3. For Ve3, research is valuable when it helps people recognise shared challenges, creates a common language for dialogue and enables them to take collective responsibility for change.

Why it matters for Ve3

The National Values Assessment helped establish habits that still shape our work: listening before proposing, bringing hidden cultural dynamics into view, convening people with different perspectives and turning awareness into shared action. It belongs to the intellectual and practical origins of Ve3, and to our belief that lasting change begins when values move beyond individual beliefs and become shared practices within organisations, institutions and communities.

Learn more

- Barrett Values Centre - <https://www.valuescentre.com>