Introduction.
Community Psychology in the face of the climate crisis: What contributions?

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Climate crisis is a long-term change in temperatures and weather patterns caused by chemical changes in the Earth's atmosphere and land use. Scientists agree on the seriousness of climate change, as well as on human responsibility for that. Scientists also broadly agree on the consequences: not only rising seas, declining biodiversity, extreme weather events, changes in agricultural productivity (e.g., Sixth IPCC Report), but also the associated impacts on migration, human health, conflicts related to resource scarcity, etc. This scenario makes it even more necessary to strive for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda and makes the interconnectedness of the Earth and human experience and action particularly evident.

Combating climate change is itself a goal (SDG13) of the 2030 Agenda, but it is clearly linked to other SDGs (e.g., reducing inequalities, organising safe, resilient and sustainable communities and cities, implementing sustainable production and consumption patterns, promoting peaceful societies, building partnerships to promote the achievement of the goals themselves…). To achieve these aims, we must address numerous challenges and opportunities. In particular, it is evident that the negative impacts of the climate crisis on people's lives in terms of well-being, decision-making, and disruption of individual, family, and whole community lives are becoming increasingly important. While the climate crisis affects all of humanity, it does not affect all people in the same way. Indeed, it is clear that this crisis has exacerbated global inequalities between North and South, and between classes and genders, making the need for redistribution of power and climate

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justice, which is inextricably linked to social justice, even more urgent (www.apa.org/topics/climate-change).

Psychology has many different capabilities that can be useful in addressing the climate crisis and its impacts. In recent years, this has led to the emergence of a "Psychology of sustainability" that will hopefully continue to gain relevance and cross-fertilise with psychological and other disciplines.

The goal of this issue is to highlight specific contributions to understanding and intervening in the climate crisis that can be derived from Community Psychology. The perspective taken by community psychology (e.g., clinical and political, ecological, multilevel, action-oriented, multidisciplinary), the issues it addresses (e.g., resilience, coping, prevention, well-being, sense of community, participation, connectedness, power, and empowerment), and the justice-oriented values (e.g. social and climate justice) can provide a useful framework for addressing this crisis and offer hypotheses for intervention to people, groups, organisations, and communities.

The first paper by Thompson, Blumer, Gee, Waugh & Weaver (2023) examined the representation of the climate challenge and other broader societal challenges by experts (academics) and young laypeople. The interconnectedness of the climate crisis with other human and environmental problems is well described, as are the differences that the two groups exhibit in their representations. The authors make a case for embedding the challenge of climate change in the broader environmental problem and keeping it connected to the broader social challenges we face. All of this complexity can limit the perceptions of the ability and opportunity to address these emergencies. From the authors' perspective, the critical awareness plays a central role, along with the need to go further behavioural solutions (Adams, 2016), focusing at the macro level of interventions.

Similarly, Norton, Grasso & Sarrica (2023) examined the social representations of sustainability among members of the Network of Argentine Universities for Environmental Management and Social Inclusion (Red de Universidades Argentinas para la Gestión Ambiental y la Inclusión Social, Red UAGAIS). Universities can play a triple role in addressing the climate crisis by providing education for sustainable development, contributing to the co-creation of sustainability actions with society, and managing structures based on sustainability principles and practices (Leal Filho *et al.*, 2021; Sonetti *et al.*, 2016). The social representations of sustainability that emerged consider interdependent cultural, social, environmental, local and situated aspects. Participants mentioned socio-environmental aspects as well as culturally rooted situated practices of local communities. Universities are portrayed as communities where complex and changing representations are made and strongly legitimized to promote sustainability in society. Networks

can multiply capacity building, legitimacy, and advocacy beyond information sharing (Lozano *et al.*, 2013). These types of networks can allow universities to share, negotiate, and debate to empower themselves and gain a voice in sustainability that is not just the scientific one.

To achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda and combat the climate crisis, youth have a central role. Although the Agenda has helped to focus public attention on these challenges, parallel movements and actions have demonstrated the prominent role of youth. Even if they do not yet have the political and economic power to make decisions on a large or small scale, they have grown up with discourses about the climate crisis, environmental disasters, pollution, and so on. Many scholars, and psychologists first, focused on the grief, fear, and anxiety that arise from this context, but also – consistent with Community Psychology – on the need to transform grief and anxiety into activism (Goldman, 2022).

Despite controversial findings in current research on the relationship between affect and climate action (e.g., Bissing-Olson *et al.*, 2016; Hornsey & Fielding, 2016), emotional reflexivity about the climate crisis can increase commitment to action against climate change (Francescato & Putton, 2022; Hamilton, 2022). Mebane, Benedetti, Barni, Passaro & Francescato (2023) examine what emotions and feelings climate change evokes in a group of students participating in an affective education project. In addition, the authors speculate on how these positive and negative emotions were related to unhealthy behaviors (e.g., drinking or smoking) or to prosocial behaviors such as participation in environmental movements.

Affective education ecological courses could be successfully used to maximize the potential impact of emotions related to climate crisis and to promote the intention to fight climate change. Indeed, youth participation can shape the local and global scenario, as they can influence thousands of peers (and not only peers) with events, rallies, but also with everyday behaviors and exchanges, e.g., at school. To support young people's active engagement in these issues, it is necessary to understand what dimensions may influence their decision to begin and continue participation, and also to increase the level of their participation. It seems particularly important to approach the issue from an organizational perspective: How can organizations (e.g., schools, NGOs...) promote and develop youth participation over time? The role and characteristics of these mediating structures appear to be underestimated in the literature. Martini, Fedi, Resceanu, and Tilea (2023) reflect on data from the EU project *Mindchangers. Region and Youth for Planet and People* to identify both incentives and barriers to engagement through analysis of interviews with young participants and a SWOT analysis of best practices in Piedmont (IT) and Dolj County (ROM). The importance of peers in

terms of transmission and belonging (Marshall, 2014), role models, and educational references should be considered, as well as the need to adapt education to the changing needs and challenges of future generations. In addition, the individual, network, organizational, and institutional levels have been shown to be relevant in triggering, sustaining, and expanding youth participation in fighting climate change.

Of course, these proposed are not the only possible contributions from Community Psychology, but some examples of how different perspectives and levels (e.g., those of representations, networks, affects, organizational, educational…) can be considered and effectively taken together in a synergic way as an added value. As community psychologists, our efforts in this field should be direct to transform the environmental consciousness, as an integration of knowledge, experiences, awareness, affects and values), from individual into collective (Sarrica, 2020), so to shift from ecological behaviors to community ecological transformation.

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