



RESISTIRÉ

Reducing gendered inequalities
caused by COVID-19 policies

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Agenda for Future Research

Addressing the Impacts of COVID-19 Policies
on Gendered Inequalities

2nd cycle

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Summary

RESISTIRÉ researches the unequal impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak and its policy responses on behavioural, social and economic inequalities in 31 countries (EU-27 plus Iceland, UK, Serbia and Turkey) and works towards individual and societal resilience. It does so by mapping policies and social initiatives, collecting quantitative and qualitative data, and by analysing and translating these to insights that are then used for designing, devising and piloting solutions for improved policies and social innovations to be deployed by policymakers, stakeholders and actors in the field in different policy domains.

The results of the project's research activities, including policy mapping, quantitative analysis of Rapid Assessment Surveys and European level data, and qualitative data collection and analysis of pan-European workshops, expert interviews, and narrative interviews, conducted within its second cycle (December 2021-March 2022), combined with co-creation via expert discussions in Open Studios, have led to the development of Operational Recommendations, Pilot Projects and an Agenda for Future Research. The RESISTIRÉ findings and insights, and selected datasets are published Open Access via Zenodo. [Please visit the RESISTIRÉ community for free access to our results.](#)

This Agenda for Future Research is part of RESISTIRÉ's [report on solutions for cycle 2](#). It covers four domains (Care, Work & Pay, Education and Gender-based Violence) and contains the analysis of previous findings from the RESISTIRÉ project, as well as an identification of research gaps. It also puts specific focus on the need for research agendas on intersectional data collection and analysis, and analyses of recovery policy and practice in Europe. It outlines which research questions and topics future research should address, and what questions RESISTIRÉ will focus on in its third and final research cycle.

Table of contents

Introduction	4
Research Agenda per Domain	6
Knowledge Gaps and Research Questions Related to Inclusive Recovery	6
Knowledge Gaps and Research Questions Related to Intersectional Data Collection and Analysis.....	11
Knowledge Gaps and Research Questions Related to Care	17
Knowledge Gaps and Research Questions Related to Work and Employment.....	22
Knowledge Gaps and Research Questions Related to Education	28
Knowledge Gaps and Research Questions Related to Gender-based Violence	35
Research Agenda for the Third Cycle of RESISTIRÉ.....	43
Conclusions	49
References	50



Introduction

RESISTIRÉ is a research and innovation project, funded under EU Horizon 2020. It aims to reduce gender+ inequalities caused by policy and societal responses to COVID-19. Ten European partners and a wider network of national researchers collect and analyse extensive data on policy responses, and quantitative and qualitative indicators of inequalities produced by the COVID-19 crisis, and its subsequent responses in three cycles. The first cycle of analysis shows that national policy and societal responses are unequally (un)able to address gender+ inequalities, despite decades of gender mainstreaming in EU policymaking. Furthermore, quantitative as well as qualitative indicators expose an increase in existing and new, emerging, inequalities, where some groups have been made vulnerable to a higher extent than others. These insights call for a new research agenda to foster a fairer recovery towards resilience and social justice.

Aim of the Research Agenda

The aim of the research agenda is to identify knowledge gaps and formulate future research needs to understand/mitigate/eradicate behavioural, social, and economic inequalities produced by the policy responses to COVID-19. The purpose is to identify knowledge gaps for future research agendas, and to inform the research questions that will be taken up in the next cycle.

Particular attention is paid to the overarching research related aims of the project:

- Investigate and analyse the impact of COVID-19 and of different policies developed by both the public and private sector on inequalities, and understand the role of civil society in mitigating these inequalities.
- Identify and compare in which domains there are positive/negative COVID-19 impacts, for which gender+ inequality groups, and how these may be impacted by policy.
- Identify knowledge gaps on how inequalities play out and develop during outbreak periods.

The findings produced by RESISTIRÉ during the research phase are based on the analysis of various empirical data collected and analysed in different work-packages: the mapping of policies/civil society organisations (CSO) initiatives; official secondary data sources at the international and EU level, as well as RAS at the national level; expert interviews/workshops; and narratives from members of vulnerable groups. In the research agenda these findings have been synthesised in order to identify what knowledge is currently missing in order to support

further research aimed at improving the development and implementation of COVID-19 induced policies/responses considering their impacts on vulnerable groups and (pre)existing inequalities.

Research aims in the second cycle of RESISTIRÉ

This research agenda is produced based on the second cycle of the RESISTIRÉ project. In the first cycle, four domains were identified by the partners for developing research agendas: Care, Work & Pay, Health and Gender-based Violence. For each domain, the research agendas follow the same structure: main findings, knowledge gaps, and research questions. The research agenda in the first cycle informs the research taken up in the second cycle. Similarly, the second cycle research agenda will inform the research in the third cycle.

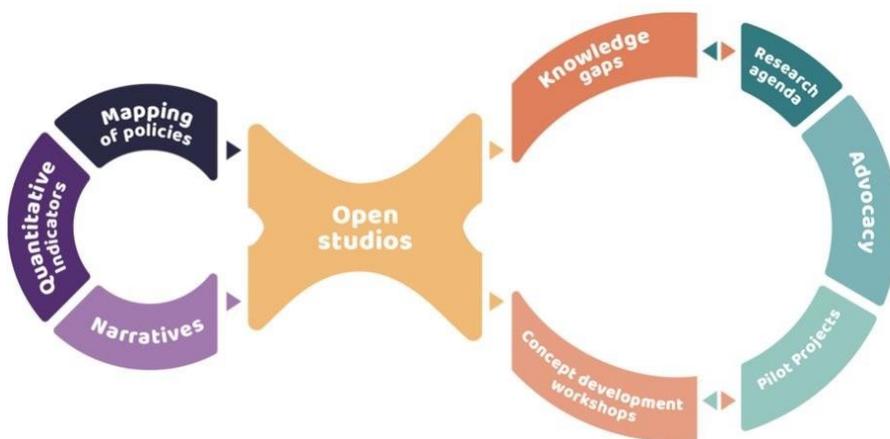
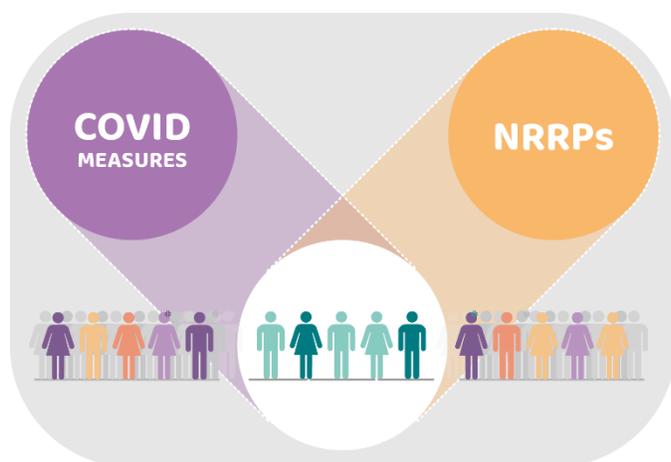


Figure 1: RESISTIRÉ methodological step-by-step three cycle process

This document presents the research agenda for six areas that were identified during both the first and second cycles of the project: inclusive recovery, intersectional data collection and analysis, care, work and employment, education, and gender-based violence. For each domain, findings from the second cycle are provided, as well as knowledge gaps identified based on the empirical data collection and analysis, and potential research questions.

Research Agenda per Domain

Knowledge Gaps and Research Questions Related to Inclusive Recovery



The outbreak of COVID-19 prompted multiple national policy responses aimed at slowing infections, preventing deaths, and mitigating the economic and social effects of the pandemic. Specific policies were designed to stimulate and support the socioeconomic process of recovering from the pandemic in Europe. In particular, EU Member States agreed to the creation of the Next Generation EU (NGEU), a financial stimulus tool (€806.9 billion, in current prices). The Recovery

and Resilience Facility (RRF) is the key instrument through which most (€723.8 billion) of the NGEU funds are distributed to Member States, on the condition that they design a National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) that has a positive assessment by the European Commission and is approved by the Council. The NRRP must outline a series of reforms and investments to be undertaken by individual states by 2026.

The NRRPs, together with equivalent recovery policies in the case of the countries that do not belong to the European Union but are part of the RESISTIRÉ, have been the focus of the analysis conducted within the WP2 of the project in the second cycle with the following goals:

- to determine whether the plans include actions that focus on inequalities in specific domains and their interactions with selected inequality grounds;
- to determine whether and how relevant stakeholders have been involved in the process that led to the formulation of these policies;
- to examine how civil society reacted both to the content of these policies and to the process by which they were designed.

Building on the findings of this analysis, we highlight some of the most striking research gaps identified in the second cycle with respect to the design of inclusive recovery policies.

Strategies to ensure that gender mainstreaming does not only translate into general considerations but also into concrete measures

All the NRRPs refer to issues related to gender equality, and in many cases, they devote special sections to the topic. In several cases, the main challenges are described, sometimes with an emphasis on how the pandemic affected these problems, and how important it is to address them. However, concrete measures, especially ones that would bring about some kind of structural change, are missing in most of the plans. This can be partly explained by the fact that direct encouragement for the Member States (MS) to design concrete gender equality measures was missing. While the MS were obliged to address gender equality issues, gender was not included among the final evaluation criteria and there was no dedicated budget to address gender issues. In addition, the plans seem to have been designed by mostly piecing together economic reforms that decision-makers already had in their desk drawers and that were awaiting funding, without including proper measures tailored on the impact of the pandemic on socially vulnerable conditions. More research is therefore needed to understand how to better translate gender mainstreaming into concrete actions, and effectively encourage and support this process.

Research questions:

- When designing policies for recovery, which strategies and resources can ensure that gender mainstreaming does not only translate into general considerations but into concrete measures?
- Which kind of indicators and benchmarks can be developed to support, trigger and underpin the monitoring and assessment of gender inclusive recovery policies during their implementation?

Decision makers and gender+ sensitive policies

There were several examples during the pandemic of situations in which decision-making processes were entrusted to committees headed mainly by men, compromising, once again, the possibility of having a representative decision-making process from the perspective of gender equality. The measures analysed in the NRRPs show that almost nothing was planned in these documents to avoid this kind of gender bias in the forthcoming recovery policies and to allow for greater diversity in decision-making. In general, more research is needed to understand how inclusivity in decision-making bodies can influence the gender+ sensitivity of the policies.

Research questions:

- Is there a relationship between the gender+ composition of decision makers across different countries and the presence (or not) of more or less gender+ sensitive recovery policies?
- Is there a relationship between particular political ideology of decision makers in different countries and the presence (or not) of more or less gender+ sensitive plans?
- What can we learn from “better stories”/promising practices related to inclusive decision-makers’ bodies and recovery policies?

An intersectional approach through the inclusion of civil society in the decision-making process

An intersectional approach is completely absent in most NRRPs. Although there are measures relating to age, social class, and disability, these grounds are in most cases considered in isolation, and intersections with other identity grounds, most importantly sex/gender, are rarely taken into account. At the same time, the sheer absence of a discussion of inequalities related to religion/belief, gender identity, and sexual orientation is also striking. Ethnicity and nationality are somewhat more present within the plans but mostly in general statements against discrimination, while concrete measures dedicated to these inequality grounds are completely lacking. The low level of interest shown in issues related to these types of inequalities should also be highlighted and, in part, explained by the limited involvement of representatives from feminist, immigrant, and LGBTQI+ CSOs in the process of designing the plans. Therefore, more research is needed to develop mechanisms to facilitate the inclusion of an intersectional approach within policies and to push for its actual implementation.

Research questions:

- Which strategies can ensure the involvement of CSOs in the decision-making process that takes place during a crisis?
- What concrete strategies can be used to increase the transparency and effectiveness of public consultation, monitoring and evaluation processes in the design of crisis related policies?
- Which indicators/benchmarks can be designed to assess, monitor and evaluate the extent to which a policy takes intersectional inequalities into account?
- How can we foster better collaboration between CSOs and research organisations that can facilitate collecting and analysing intersectional data?

From economic recovery to social recovery: from recovery to resilience

The need to address the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic appears to have overshadowed social justice issues. Most of the NRRPs focused on interventions aimed at mitigating the economic impact of the crisis while pushing measures that would address inequalities into the background. The lack of effective solutions targeting specific inequality grounds and ensuring the protection of fundamental human rights, made vulnerable groups even more vulnerable in times of the pandemic. In addition, while the concept of recovery implies a return to the past where inequalities are already present, it is suggested to focus on the notion of “resilience”, bringing to the foreground the emphasis on developing systems, institutions and societies to withstand ongoing crises and implement interventions that foster an inclusive social improvement. For this reason, more research is needed to better understand how to facilitate this paradigm shift. The observation of the lessons learnt by the CSOs can be very useful for this task, since their experience in the field can provide a real-time snapshot of the new main challenges and a description of the main tools needed to deal with them.

Research questions:

- Which indicators should be considered by policy makers to support the design of policies less centred on “economic recovery” and more on “(inclusive) social recovery”?
- How can policies support the development and mobilisation of social resilience among people in future crises? What general lessons can be learnt from the CSO’s initiatives during the pandemic? Are there any examples of “better stories”?
- What new roles can CSOs play in the design of resilient policies?
- How can we reinforce the role of social research in the design of resilient policies?

Definitions and frameworks

We are living in an historical period where the condition of emergency/crisis (of different kinds) seems to have become permanent feature in the public debate. However, the analyses and reflections conducted within RESISTIRÉ have highlighted the need for a new discussion on the meaning of concepts such as 'crisis', 'emergency', 'recovery' together with those of 'inclusion', 'participation' etc. Consequently, it is necessary to reopen debates on what is meant by "inclusive policy", "permanent crisis", "intersectional policies" also in the light of different expectations across different countries. As the analysis carried out by the project's national

researchers has highlighted, there is a diverse European landscape regarding gender inclusiveness both in terms of what has been achieved so far and the policies implemented during the pandemic. These differences translate in multiple representations of what inclusive recovery actually means and thus it is necessary to develop common understanding about around specific concepts and conceptual frameworks.

Research questions:

- How is the notion of 'inclusive policy' being understood across different institutional and national contexts?
- How do people's expectations about gender equality across different national and institutional contexts influence how recovery policies are perceived from a gender sensitive lens?
- What are the consequences of living in a condition of permanent crisis/emergency and what can we learn from non-Western countries where similar conditions have already been experienced, in different ways, for several years?
- Considering that emergencies and crises have become embedded in social reality, how can we design flexible policies that meet the changing needs they bring to the surface?



Knowledge Gaps and Research Questions Related to Intersectional Data Collection and Analysis



Quantitative and qualitative research activities in the second cycle of the RESISTIRÉ project focused on the particular inequality grounds of age, relationship status, nationality, sexual orientation and gender identity. This focus emanated from observations in the first cycle showing a limited understanding

about the experiences of vulnerable groups, such as young people, the elderly, single parents, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and LGBTQ+ communities.

The research provided insights on the impact of these policy responses at individual, national and European levels. More specifically, individual insights came from qualitative narrative interviews with people affected by COVID-19 policy, conducted by a team of national researchers. Quantitative national insights were derived from the mapping of Rapid Assessment Surveys (RAS), which are studies undertaken at fast pace to understand the impact of the pandemic. European-level quantitative insights came from reviews of the literature and analysis of relevant large-scale European datasets, in particular the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) for the year 2020, the online survey “Living, working, and COVID-19” by Eurofound, and the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) Corona Surveys.

However, while evidence provided a clear picture of some aspects of inequalities in Europe, detailed, large-scale intersectional analysis was lacking and hindered by data availability. For this reason, we focus here on gaps in quantitative data and analysis. Despite gradual steps towards a deeper understanding of vulnerabilities, more work is needed to ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups in European surveys. Our reviews of the quantitative literature and surveys in the European context have revealed the following gaps in knowledge and data.

Gaps in intersectional data

To assess the impact of the pandemic on the population, a large number of RAS have been initiated during the crisis both at the national and cross-national levels. These surveys were valuable instruments to measure the impact of the pandemic on the population and to study the evolution of the situation overtime, especially during the lockdown periods. As emerged from the RESISTIRÉ analysis, RAS have covered different domains of study and in most cases

reached the population at large. It is important to acknowledge, however, that many RAS were conducted on-line due to the lockdowns and participants were self-selected, which has an impact on the participation of the most vulnerable groups of the population where gender and other inequalities intersect. Nevertheless, many RAS were undertaken by specialised NGOs, which enabled access to groups that are often more difficult to reach.

Besides the RAS, the impact of the crisis could be assessed using existing European-level longitudinal or repeated cross-sectional surveys, which allow for a comparison of the situation before and after the pandemic from an intersectional perspective (e.g., EU-SILC, LFS). These studies tend to collect data face to face or via the telephone, which may generate higher participation rates among vulnerable populations compared to on-line surveys. Nonetheless, these surveys, which target the general population, rarely have a large representation of vulnerable groups. This is especially important when performing intersectional analysis (cf. next section), as a sufficient sample size for each group of interest is necessary to provide the statistical power for cross-group comparison.

Our review of national RAS data and the wider literature reveal that more data are needed to understand the full impact of the pandemic on vulnerable groups such as young people, the elderly, single parents, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and LGBTQ+ communities. For example, comparable and harmonised quantitative data at European level are needed about LGBTQ+ communities and most surveys include only a binary sex/gender variable. Some RAS by specialised NGOs, such as a Polish study of 131 LGBTQ+ young people's experiences of remote learning conducted by an NGO working on mental health, provide some information on the experiences of LGBTQ+ communities during the pandemic. However, most of these studies have small samples and many are limited to studying younger age groups. In terms of gender and age, we also observe a lack of data on the experiences of under-18s during the crisis, due to ethical considerations related to research with children. Lower participation rates among younger adults were also noted in EU level surveys, such as Eurofound, which limit the possibilities for analysis.

There is also a lack of harmonised European data on the experiences of different types of migrants during the pandemic, such as asylum seekers and refugees from an intersectional perspective. What is more, in most of the European surveys, information on migration background, when available, is still limited as no information is collected on the reasons for migration (e.g., for work, or for war) or duration. Finally, intersectional research not only relates to individual-level factors, such as gender and socio-economic status, but should also consider contextual and structural factors, such as the household or the neighbourhood. These factors would provide a better understanding of how certain groups have experienced the crisis. Some European-level surveys have already been designed to collect data at group-level (e.g., EU-SILC at the household level), however they do not necessarily cover a wide range of inequality grounds or domains of inequality. Most national or cross-national RAS do not collect data at group-level.

Research questions:

During the crisis, data have been collected without sufficient consideration of the intersecting structures of inequalities. In such an emergency context, a number of questions emerge:

- How can an intersectional approach be embedded in data collection initiatives?
- What factors prevent the consideration of different structures of inequality in study design and data collection? What could facilitate this approach?
- How can quantitative and qualitative data be collected from harder-to-reach groups such as people living in poverty, refugees, asylum seekers, undocumented migrants, etc. from an intersectional perspective.? How can intersectionally disadvantaged groups be better engaged in participating in research? What is the role of cross-sectoral collaboration (e.g., researchers with NGOs) and how it could be fostered towards this aim?
- What measures should be used to collect comparable data on sexuality and gender identity at the European level?
- What methodologies can be used to collect data on more 'sensitive' topics such as GBV?
- What are the opportunities presented by administrative data and data linkages to promote intersectional research?

Gaps in intersectional analysis

Even when data on vulnerable groups and inequalities are available, intersectional analysis is often missing. At both European and national levels, mapping of existing quantitative studies in both cycles of the RESISTIRÉ project has revealed that intersectional analysis on the impact of the pandemic has been limited or non-existent, despite the inclusion of relevant variables in datasets (e.g., sex, age and socioeconomic background). Even reports examining the unequal impact of the pandemic have lacked intersectional analysis. For instance, the OECD has examined the unequal impact of COVID-19 on frontline workers, migrants and ethnic/racial minorities, but each inequality ground was considered independently from the others (OECD, 2022). Another example is the official Eurostat reporting of the labour market situation in the context of the crisis, which includes some intersections between age and sex, but no further stratification (Eurostat, 2022). A lack of intersectional analyses risks limited understanding of the particular experiences and challenges faced by the most vulnerable groups during the pandemic. For instance, where intersectional approaches have been employed, these have revealed that single mothers were more likely to suffer difficulties in attaining or maintaining a healthy work-life balance and people born outside the EU living in disadvantaged households had a more problematic access to digital resources because they did not have a computer at home (Stovell et al., 2022). An intersectional approach - considering all the possible inequality

grounds - is highly needed not only in times of pandemic, but also in the long term, in order to understand how to prevent potential negative impacts on already vulnerable groups.

In this regard, as part of the RESISTIRÉ project, some national RAS have been identified as promising for intersectional analysis, because of their focus on specific groups (for instance, hard-to-reach groups) or their methodology (such as feminist methodologies). The RESISTIRÉ team has selected a number of these promising studies to approach for collaboration. These collaborations are aimed at contributing towards more and better intersectional analysis in existing and future RAS activities, as well as addressing questions from the agenda for future research that was produced in RESISTIRÉ's first cycle (Živković et al., 2022).

Research questions:

The analysis and reporting of data on COVID-19 infections and the impact of related policies on the population have lacked an intersectional, gender+ perspective. In this context, the following questions emerge:

- What factors prevent intersectional analysis when data are available? How can we mitigate against them?
- How can we encourage and build capacity of researchers to present disaggregated data relating to the intersection of multiple inequalities when assessing the impact of the crisis and its aftermath? How can adopting this approach be encouraged in official European statistics?
- What mechanisms should be put in place to facilitate the analysis, reporting and translation of the effects of multiple intersecting factors?
- To what extent has the pandemic contributed towards or prevented gender+ intersectional approaches? What is being done differently now than before the pandemic?
- How can datasets be better integrated to enable intersectional analysis?

Data needs for recovery management

It is important that intersectional data and analysis are also taken into account as governments and researchers move towards considering recovery and post-pandemic policies. Most of the EU nations' National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) endeavour to propose policy measures aimed at mitigating gender+ inequalities, however gender+ issues in the NRRPs are often relegated to the level of a general reflection or a description of the context, without being linked to concrete solutions (Cibin et al., 2022). While it is still early to assess the effectiveness of these measures, some methodological considerations are needed in order to ensure that recovery will be as comprehensive and inclusive as possible. For instance, we need to ensure

that the target groups are clearly recognised and that recovery policies are built on intersectional approaches, to allow for the consideration of different vulnerabilities. In this context, it is necessary to reflect on how recovery and resilience can be operationalised and quantified. This is crucial for policymakers to assess whether policies have effectively reached the vulnerable groups for which they were implemented.

Research questions:

- How can we ensure that the recovery is assessed from an intersectional, gender + perspective, accounting for a diverse range of vulnerable groups?
- How can 'recovery' and 'resilience' be measured? What indicators do we need to measure inclusive recovery?
- How can we evaluate and monitor the inclusiveness and intersectionality of the policies aimed at recovery from a crisis?

Promising practices in data collection

Our review of available datasets has also revealed some positive examples of data collection and analysis, which were able to reach some of the most vulnerable groups or collect data on underexplored domains. For instance, the ApartTogether survey collected information on how COVID-19 and related measures have impacted the lives of migrants and refugees all over the world (World Health Organisation, 2020). This survey included a series of questions related to psychological well-being, daily stressors, and ability to follow COVID-19 measures, as well as background information such as age, educational level, residence status, housing and work situation. However, despite being a good example of a survey targeted at understanding the experiences of an under-researched group, the online format of the survey meant that only migrants with internet access and a device, as well as with a good level of literacy, could complete the survey, potentially leading to a biased estimation of the effects of the pandemic on this group (World Health Organisation, 2020).

Another example of good practice in survey research during COVID-19 is the inclusion of a 3-category indicator of gender in the Eurofound e-survey "Living, working, and COVID-19". The possibility for respondents to identify themselves as 'in another way' represents a step forward in the analysis of gender identity, which goes beyond the widely used approach of a dichotomous sex/gender variable.

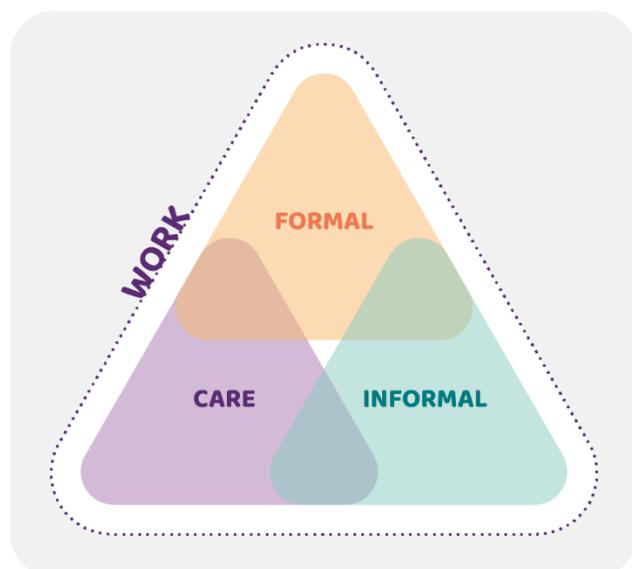
Research Questions:

Future research should look at examples of good practices and take them as starting points for data collection and analysis.

- What can we learn about intersectional data collection and analysis from existing examples of best practice?
- How can these promising research/studies be promoted?
- What can be done to ensure that promising practices are adopted more broadly?



Knowledge Gaps and Research Questions Related to Care



Care work can be broadly defined as the activity of providing personal services to meet the physical, psychological, and emotional needs of one or more other persons (EIGE, 2021; International Labour Organisation, 2007). Care work can be done visibly – institutionalised as paid employment – or invisibly, in the home (International Labour Organisation, 2007). The quantitative mapping performed by RESISTIRÉ focuses on the latter, given that the visibility of unpaid care work performed in the home increased exponentially during the pandemic crisis (Rubery & Tavora, 2020).

The lessons learned from the pandemic on the importance of the care sector for society have not been translated into NRRP attention and investments

There is a gap between words and actions in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs). This is a general conclusion, but it is particularly the case for the care sector. If investments are foreseen in the care sector, they are foreseen in structures rather than for people. The care sector is important for society at large, but also for the economy as it corresponds to about 10% of the GDP on average in the EU, making it the largest contributor to the GDP. Recent research compared the potential investment of 2% of GDP on activities related to care vs. the construction sector in different European countries. The results show that the two types of investments would create a similar number of jobs for men, but that in the case of care investments jobs for women would increase significantly, reducing the gender employment gap (De Henau & Himmelweit, 2020). These insights lead to the need to provide more evidence to policymakers of the benefits of investing more in care and particularly in the people working (formally or informally) to provide care.

The research questions below are all geared towards increasing the knowledge and, therefore, the evidence on current phenomena and trends in the care sector to take better decisions. Today, policymakers are too often taking decisions without having the facts and understanding the longer-term consequences. While some of the topics under consideration have not been addressed (sufficiently) yet in RESISTIRÉ's previous research (or that of other researchers), they have been included in the research agenda based on discussions between the consortium partners during an internal workshop.

Research questions and topics:

- What benefits can increased investment in care bring in dealing with crisis situations? What are the lessons learnt during the pandemic regarding a need for more investment in this area?
- The informal economy of care needs to be better documented, as this phenomenon is quite well-known, but not well-documented. This informal economy consists of both uncompensated labour and non-formalised paid work. Understanding the size, the trends, the problems faced and the actual contributions better will lead to improved decisions and better care in the longer term. How can we best identify/map these factors of the informal care economy?
- Care can be organised in a centralised model or a decentralised one. There is a tension between these two models, which each have their own advantages and disadvantages. What are the evolutions and trends between these two models, and what are the consequences and impacts of opting for one over the other?
- As for the centralised and decentralised model, there is a tension between which sectors or services from the care sector are privatised or provided by the public sector. There is a need to understand the longer-term impacts of choices made, also from a gender+ perspective. Privatisation is often identified as a solution to increase capacity or efficiency of care. A mapping of sectors across the EU and their degree of privatisation is one research line to better understand and compare. A second research line is to analyse the longer-term effects of decisions on the quality of care and therefore on the longer-term costs for taxpayers and society. Recent examples (and scandals) in, e.g., Ireland and Belgium, show that the elderly care sector might be an interesting sector to investigate the longer-term impacts of this type of decision.

The lack of attractiveness of care professions

Before the pandemic broke out, jobs in the care sector already suffered from a lack of attractiveness. The pandemic has exacerbated this problem, with high numbers of trained and educated people leaving the sector or intending to do so. Moreover, the care sector is very paternalistic and contains strong hierarchies (Franklin, Bambra & Albani, 2021; World Health Organisation, 2019), which provides the conditions for power-related sexual abuse and harassment from supervisors, colleagues, and even patients (Strauss, 2019). Mental health issues and burnout due to high workloads, especially during COVID-19 (Franklin & Gkiouleka, 2021), further detract from the attractiveness of the sector.

Research questions:

- What are the factors/triggers that make people leave the care sector?
- What is the impact of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual harassment in the care sector?
- What is the impact of increased violence perpetrated by those receiving care, as well as their families, on care workers?
- Modelling the impact of burnouts: what role does it play in inciting people to leave the sector and in reducing its attractiveness?
- What has been the impact of brain drain on the care sector in certain countries (e.g., Turkey, Russia)?

The impact of innovation on the care sector

Innovation in the care sector has been a way to increase productivity and seen as a solution to handle increasing demand without increasing the resources going to the sector. This role of innovation is not the same in all EU countries, with some countries having invested heavily, while others have not. Innovation can make the sector more attractive, but (particularly technological) innovation potentially brings in new stereotypes and gender roles into this highly feminised sector.

Research questions:

- What is the impact of technological innovation on the gender balance in the sector, on gender roles, on gender sensitivity?
- What is the gender bias in new technology that is adopted in the care sector?
- What is the impact of social innovations on care?

The effect of the pandemic: what have we learned? What are we doing differently now than two years ago?

The crisis the sector went through should lead to changes on issues like crisis management, how to retain staff, how to take care of the mental health of staff, etc. To what extent have actual lessons been learned on these subjects by the different stakeholders involved in the care sector?

Research questions:

- What are institutions doing differently now than before the pandemic?
- What are policymakers doing differently?
- Comparing countries and models: which countries are keeping their stated promises and which are not? Which economic model can be associated with making a good care system?
- What are the better stories in the different countries that can be used by policymakers as examples of good policies in the care sector during crisis situations?
- What are the resistances to change in the care sector, and how can we reduce these?

A better understanding of the functioning of the labour market in the care sector

The care sector is characterised by the distinction between formal and informal care (provided by friends and family). However, it is also characterised by the existence of a black market for care services. The size and importance of informal care and the black market are not well-documented in most countries.

The care sector is also known for searching for solutions to reduce its salary costs, as these constitute a very high proportion of the cost to deliver services. Innovative tricks are used to reduce these staff costs, often leading to the discrimination of groups of people. Using migrant labour, for instance, is one of the techniques used to reduce salary costs. The war in Ukraine, leading to the displacement of millions of people from East to West is an opportunity for the care sector to recruit cheap labour, exploiting people who have few alternatives and cannot have their true educational levels recognised.

Research questions:

- What are the in- and outflows in terms of care workers and workforce across borders within the EU, and from outside of the EU?
- What is the impact of the war in Ukraine on the care sector in terms of supply and demand?
- What is the impact of these trends in the labour market on those receiving care (the elderly, children, patients, ...)?

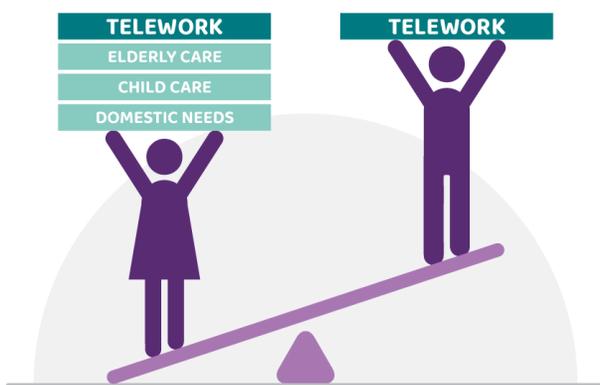
Care and intersectionality

Research from the second cycle has found that the experience of providing or receiving care significantly varies depending on intersectional inequality grounds. The decline in the quantity and quality of home care during the pandemic, for instance, was felt more acutely by older generations, while the intensified combination of care work and wage labour – i.e., due to school or day-care closures – disproportionately fell on younger adults (particularly women). In terms of relationship status, there were generally more difficulties in attaining or maintaining a healthy work-life balance for single parents, and especially for single mothers. These findings can form the basis of deeper and more probing research questions, and the general absence of certain inequality grounds in the research so far necessitates research questions focused on these dimensions as well.

Research questions:

- What is the impact of the gender care gap among younger adults on the future career prospects of young women? How does this vary for young women with a low socio-economic status or with a migration background?
- What has been the true extent of the care gap between single mothers and fathers during the pandemic? Are there any other gender disparities in single parents' experiences of the social and economic repercussions of COVID-19 measures, and what are the underlying mechanisms?
- How have inequality grounds like nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, and others influenced the experience of receiving care and of the gender care gap? What are the intersectional dynamics?

Knowledge Gaps and Research Questions Related to Work and Employment



The outbreak of COVID-19 prompted multiple national policy responses aimed at slowing infections, preventing deaths, and mitigating the economic and social effects of the pandemic. The pandemic and the measures introduced to slow down the spread of COVID-19 reconfigured the world of work, on both, long and short-term basis. Lockdowns and stay at home measures resulted in a move to remote work for those who could work from home, while many

other workers lost their jobs, at least temporarily. The pandemic also brought a recognition of so-called 'essential work' with health care and care workers employment conditions being brought to the forefront of the public debate. The intersection of work and care, in general, also became an important topic in this new context. While some of the changes have now been reversed, other shifts, most notably the work from home or hybrid work, are most likely to be a permanent feature of contemporary employment. Building on the findings from the first cycle, we highlight some of the most pertinent research gaps identified during the second cycle regarding work and employment. These research gaps and the research questions deriving from them are particularly important in the context of recovery, policy change, and future crises. As will be discussed in the following sections, intersectional inequalities have been a focal issue in the second cycle, and our qualitative study, to a large extent, mirrored the issues raised in international literature as well as in quantitative surveys conducted during the pandemic.

The future of telework and hybrid work from a gender+ perspective

Telework became an important feature of everyday life during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been argued that this arrangement allows for a better work-life balance and access to employment for some vulnerable groups, such as people of different abilities, on one hand; on the other hand, however, it can also result in deepening of the inequalities on the labour market inequalities deepening. For example, research suggests that migrants are less likely to work from home as they are concentrated in sectors where remote work is not possible (Fasani and Mazza, 2020).

Remote work was an important theme in our qualitative study, particularly in relation to gender. It was noted that women were more likely to continue to work from home after restrictions had been lifted, which poses a danger of having a 'two-tier' labour market with "real workers" in the

office and “the others” at home. The impacts of hybrid forms of work by socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, migration status, dis/ability and age were also noted as salient during the second cycle. For example, experts pointed out that working from home provided access to the labour market for many disabled people. In addition, the lack of adequate space to work from home in, particularly affecting people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, was also discussed. Finally, the impacts of hybrid work across different domains (e.g., economy, health and wellbeing, care, environment etc) constituted an important feature of the qualitative research.

Research questions:

- What is the future of the telework/hybrid work from a gender+ perspective?
- In what ways do post-pandemic hybrid/telework arrangements enable previously disadvantaged workers to widen their access to the labour market? Is there an emergence of a ‘two tier’ workplace with ‘on site’ workers at more advantage?
- Have workers across Europe followed the trend described in the USA as the “great resignation” seeking possibilities of better working conditions associated with remote work? Did the pandemic change the expectations on working arrangements, particularly among younger workers?
- How does hybrid work/telework affect the meanings and experience of “workspace” and “home space” and what are the interconnections?
- How did the interplay of gender+ inequalities affect experiences of isolation and emotional well-being in the context of work? How were people supported through these difficulties? What are the lessons/better stories in relation to self-care and resilience?

The intersections of work and care

The closures of many childcare providers and moves to online schooling in Europe completely transformed the lives of parents, many of whom also had to switch to work from home to fulfil their caring duties. Most parents rely on childcare providers and schooling to offset some of the burden of care and give them the ability to work and provide for their family (Letablier and Luci, 2009; Spitzer et al., 2018). As shown through quantitative studies, combining work with care particularly affected single parents, in particular single mothers (Zagel et al., 2021).

The difficulties of juggling work and childcare and the emotional burden of work were also discussed during the narrative interviews. Insufficient childcare provision, coupled with the persistent gender division of care work, were identified as an issue in relation to increasing inequalities in the labour market too. The narratives also revealed the intersectional

inequalities experienced by some individuals in relation to work-life balance. For example, the difficulties experienced by single parents dealing with work and parenting during the pandemic were discussed. These challenges were also intensified for those individuals experiencing another of the inequality grounds in addition to family status. Finally, the narrative interviews revealed that some people experienced a lack of support at institutional and/or workplace level during the pandemic in relation to care and self-care.

Research questions:

- What are the most important intersections between work and care?
- How have companies reacted to the heightened awareness the pandemic has brought to employees' care roles in tandem with their paid labour roles? Have organisations introduced policies in relation to the care commitments of their employees? Did such policies exist pre-pandemic?
- What would a labour market that assumes that all workers are also carers - or may become carers at any point in their careers - look like? If organisations considered care-giving as intrinsic to everyone when designing /reorganising work/workplaces, what impact would that have on wellbeing? Would there be a shift away from the perception of men as breadwinners focused only on work?

Intersectoral and intersectional perspectives on the experience of work during and after the pandemic

While almost all work was somehow affected by the COVID-19 crisis, certain sectors, as well as certain categories of workers, were impacted in a more significant way. For example, it has been acknowledged that migrants were at a greater risk of job loss, as a considerable number of migrants are employed in sectors that have been hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis, such as food services, tourism, domestic care, construction, and the garment industry (Guadagno, 2020; You et al., 2020). They were also more likely to be self-employed or employed in precarious jobs (Guadagno, 2020; Katikireddi et al., 2021; OECD, 2020).

Furthermore, the most salient inequality grounds identified by the experts in the second cycle qualitative research included: gender, socio-economic status, disability, migration and ethnicity. Other inequality groups specifically mentioned in the expert interviews included BME workers, as well as Roma and Traveller people. Informal workers were also identified by experts as a group which needed more attention, as the pandemic illuminated the problems they experience - precarious work, lack of access to benefits and wider poor conditions. In relation to an intersectoral perspective, the experts noted that women were overrepresented in essential services and that the working conditions for essential workers should be improved for these jobs to be properly valued. The impacts of COVID-19 on work within different sectors, including the informal sector, as well as sectoral comparisons of these impacts overtime to

illuminate the lessons learned and better stories need to be included in research going forward. Finally, the analysis pointed towards the importance of including the experiences of people living in geographically marginalised areas and those in non-paid work in future research.

Research questions:

- How did inequalities shape the experience of working during COVID-19? How does it look like now? What can be said from an intersectoral and intersectional perspectives?
- Have hierarchies deepened in the move to new types of work, particularly in relation to working-class workers and workers with care obligations? What was the experience of paid work during the pandemic (and beyond) for those on the margins of the labour market? What lessons are to be learnt from these experiences? What can policy makers do to support people on the margins of/excluded from the labour market to secure and maintain employment during this recovery phase?
- How does family status (e.g., being a single parent) affect access to the labour market in post pandemic times?
- Are new forms of work creating new inequalities that were not present before the COVID-19 crisis?
- Are there new opportunities to reduce inequality with new forms of work that have emerged since the pandemic?

The impact of the pandemic on young people's labour market experience

Age has been identified as an important factor in relation to employment particularly as young people's employment has been affected by the COVID-19 crisis. For example, for younger adults, income losses were related to the higher risk of losing their job or reducing their working hours (International Labour Organisation, 2020a). This is partly due to younger people being more frequently employed in sectors that were severely hit by the crisis (e.g., sales-related sectors) and on temporary contracts (International Labour Organisation, 2020a; Konle-Seidl and Picarella, 2021).

Young people's (18-30) experiences of entering the labour market during the pandemic from a gender+ perspective was noted as an area requiring further research during the second cycle. First, younger workers were in danger of losing their job (particularly if they worked in

one of the affected sectors, such as hospitality), or might have had difficulties in securing their first jobs during the pandemic. Second, our qualitative research showed that remote working constituted a particular challenge for new entrants as they missed important in-person experiences specific to the office environment. This could be further related to the impact of the pandemic on young people's skills acquisition. For example, remote working can potentially result in reduced opportunities to learn job specific skills or 'soft skills' usually acquired in an office setting. This connects with the wider area of work, labour markets and transitions during times of crisis.

Research questions:

- What kind of impact did the pandemic have on young peoples' labour market experience specifically?
- What impact has entering the labour market during the pandemic or as restrictions lifted, had on young people in terms of wellbeing, stress, and mental health?
- From a gender+ intersectional perspective, what are young people's experiences of working in an office/other workspace after working remotely during the pandemic?
- Are young people lacking in labour market skills and know-how, (e.g., teachers in training did not get the usual face to face training opportunities during the pandemic as they would have had pre-pandemic)? How does this impact young people professionally and personally?
- What are young people's experiences of their working conditions post pandemic, including precarious contracts, wages, and access to housing?

Facilitators and barriers to the fair recovery: 'better stories' of policy initiatives on work and employment

While the existing and the new inequalities were an important theme in the public debate during the pandemic, there is a danger that some of the lessons learnt during the crisis may be forgotten. For example, our analysis of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans across Europe shows that there has not been sufficient attention paid to the situation of vulnerable groups. The gender+ approach is also often missing from the NRRP proposals for employment.

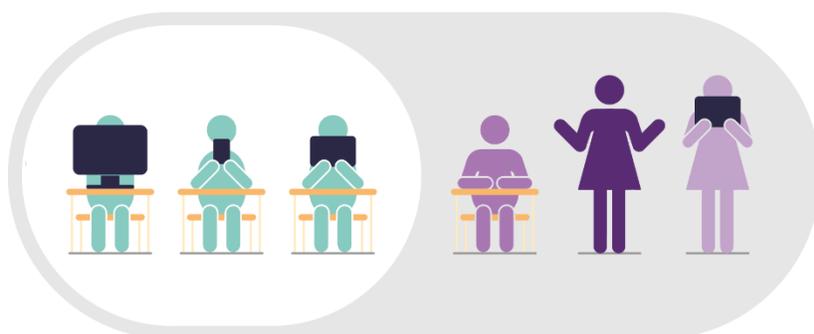
In addition, experts interviewed for our qualitative study identified further barriers to a fairer recovery. These included the slow implementation of policies, the lack of coordination between different government departments and the fragmentation of the CSO landscape, as well as insufficient childcare and flexible work provisions. However, several enabling factors were also noted. This was particularly related to the lessons that can be learnt from the

pandemic, with the introduction of some policies (e.g., right to disconnect), which were recognised as positive developments. It was also acknowledged that problems which were hidden or simply ignored before the pandemic gained visibility/attention and that this can open up an opportunity for policy-change. It would be thus beneficial to compare across countries and identify which policies regarding employment (e.g., telework, four-day working week) are in place already, and to what extent they are being used on the ground. It was also suggested that gathering examples of existing practices and policies related to care would be beneficial to addressing the knowledge gaps. Post-pandemic workfare and welfare states also require more scrutiny. Specifically, activation programmes and the relationship between the labour market and the recognition of care, which is particularly relevant to the situation of 'economically inactive' single parents or others who have care responsibilities. Finally, it would be beneficial to study how policies define "work," who counts as a "worker" and an "essential worker," and which workers still lack recognition in policy. This could be carried out at both theoretical and empirical levels. Possible changes in the working conditions of "essential workers" should also be examined in different national contexts as comparative cross-national studies could provide enlightening information in this regard.

Research questions:

- What concrete measures have been, or can be, taken at the policy level to reduce inequalities related to the labour market?
- Which labour market relevant policies introduced during the pandemic are still in place? Are they properly enforced? Are there any good practices among EU countries which can be identified? How are the activation programmes working in a post-COVID-19 labour market context?
- How are 'worker' and 'essential worker' defined depending on the context? How are irregular workers included/excluded from the official policies?
- How do we create resilient work forces? What does resilience in relation to work and the labour market mean? What did a resilient workplace look like pre-pandemic and what does it look like now? Are there policies and/or organisational strategies being implemented that encourage and support resilient workforces/workplaces?

Knowledge Gaps and Research Questions Related to Education



✓ GENERAL POPULATION | VULNERABLE GROUPS ✗

From the very outset of the pandemic, it had direct and major effects on the education systems. Already in April 2020 a majority (approx. 90%) of students worldwide and at all levels of education were affected. Schools in most countries were closed and education moved online. Besides having to adjust to

new technical and pedagogical challenges in online teaching, teachers also faced emerging emotional and social needs of their students. Preparedness to the crisis was generally low, one example being that no EU country had a pre-existing disaster mitigation strategy for education (Van der Graaf et al., 2021). This made the personal prerequisites to mitigate the negative impact on education even stronger and highlighted the large differences for various groups in this respect. Already vulnerable groups had a more difficult time coping with the pandemic stressing the need to address the root causes of inequalities in recovery efforts. Below we highlight some of the most striking research gaps identified in the second cycle with respect to Education.

Young people's educational achievements

School and university closures have naturally had consequences for educational attainment (Zancajo, 2020; Zancajo et al., 2022). According to the Global Survey on 'Youth and COVID-19', one in eight young people aged 18-29 was left with no access to courses, training or teaching and over half of the respondents reported to have learnt less since the pandemic (International Labour Organisation, 2020b).¹ Accessing online learning has been more difficult for students with lower socio-economic status, due to lack of dedicated working space and equipment. In this way the pandemic has highlighted and contributed to existing digital gaps within classrooms (Zancajo, 2020; Zancajo et al., 2022). The most severe outcome of an interrupted education is increasing dropout rates, although statistics around Europe vary and a general trend is complex to identify because of the different schooling systems (Eurostat, 2021). Of the 316 mapped RAS in the RESISTIRÉ project, nine focused on the experiences of young people in education, including their mental health and wellbeing (Stovell et al., 2021;

¹ Some limitations of this survey should be taken into account. First and foremost, the survey population mainly represents students and young workers with a tertiary education. Among the workers who are not in education, 89% had a tertiary education. 65.8% of the sample aged 18-29 indicated to have at least a first tertiary degree level (for instance, a Bachelor Degree).

Stovell et al., 2022). Distance learning and educational outcomes were the focus of six of these studies on young people, one on the effects on university age students, and five on the effects of the pandemic on school age children - principally teenagers. Due to the ethical restrictions around conducting research with younger children, RAS engaging with the experiences of younger children were limited. In the RAS focusing on young people, increases in levels of stress, anxiety and fears about the future were observed. Students' views on their educational experiences and future plans were affected; high school students in particular expressed concern and worry about their futures. The qualitative studies of the RESISTIRÉ project confirmed the findings of the quantitative results, showing that responses to the pandemic in this domain, the switch to remote education in particular, severely affected many young people's educational achievements and their outlook on the future. However, not all youth were equally affected, and the socio-economic status of a person played a large part in how well they coped: it affected not only access to digital tools and sufficient space available to study, but also the kind of help that their parents could provide. The qualitative studies showed that migrant children, who are more likely to live in low-income households, were particularly vulnerable as they often faced the additional challenge of insufficient language skills (their own and/or their parents'). The results also indicated that migrant families were more likely than non-migrant families to keep children home from early childhood education, when based on recommendation (rather than regulation). As the narratives suggested, some migrant parents simply lacked the persuasive power to convince the school that their child needed to attend. Disability also stood out as a salient inequality ground. The special needs of learners with disabilities were often neglected during the crisis which was made apparent across the different types of data.

Research questions:

- What is the long-term impact of the pandemic on the educational and job prospects of young people from a gender+ perspective?
- Are the long-term impacts gendered and in what ways does gender intersect with other inequality grounds? (socio-economic status, ethnicity, migration status, disability, gender identity etc.)
- How has limited access to early childhood education affected the development of language and other skills in younger children, especially children from a migrant background?
- How have the school closures during the pandemic affected students from difficult socio-economic conditions, such as for young single mothers and fathers?
- How have the school closures during the pandemic affected students in different geographical locations?
- What is the impact of the lack of data on education consequences at a European level from a gender and age lens, partly due to different schooling systems?

- What is the impact of lack of data on younger children's experiences, due to ethical considerations?
- How have the increasing care responsibilities during the pandemic affected girls' education and what long-term consequences may this have for girls/women's possibilities to secure working conditions, career development and economic security from a life cycle perspective?

Digitalisation and the digital divide

The quantitative studies found that rising inequalities are linked to variations in the digital opportunities for different groups. For younger age groups, the review of RAS and the wider literature indicate that the 'digital divide' is important for understanding the consequences of the pandemic on access to education. Using Eurofound data, RESISTIRÉ therefore investigated to what extent access to technology was an issue at a European level. Students aged 18-34 were asked whether they were satisfied with the quality of online education and whether they had the necessary equipment. Students who struggled to make ends meet were more dissatisfied with the quality of home schooling and they were less likely to have the adequate means to carry out online education.

Further analysis (albeit with a small sample size) suggests that young girls from more disadvantaged households report a higher rate of dissatisfaction with the quality of online education than young men in a similar situation. Existing studies indicate that migrant parents tend to have fewer resources than native-born parents to help children with their homework, they are less likely to have access to a computer and an internet connection at home, and they cannot provide children with a quiet place to study (Di Pietro et al., 2020; OECD, 2020). However, these differences appear to be largely due to the fact that children of migrants are overrepresented among those with a low socio-economic status (OECD, 2020). Moreover, 40% of native-born children of migrants do not speak the language of the host country at home, thus contributing to a challenging online learning process (OECD, 2020). Refugee children were, even before the pandemic, more likely to be out of school than other children, and the switch to online education has only made things worse, given the remote locations and precarious conditions of refugee camps (You et al., 2020, p. 36).

Through analysis of EU-SILC data from 2020, we investigated the extent to which access to digital resources was a particular issue for migrant families during school closures across Europe. These analyses reveal a high proportion of people born outside the EU had no access to a computer at home, especially among those living in disadvantaged households (26% with no computer access). However, no such inequalities are found for access to an internet connection. This may be because such a connection is a high priority for migrants to stay in contact with their native country.

The qualitative studies of RESISTIRÉ confirmed that the effects of digitalisation are strongly interlinked with gender+ inequalities. They also showed that even when the digital tools were in place, many students and teachers expressed concerns about the quality of online

education, highlighting the need for research on which educational needs have been met during the pandemic and which have not.

Research questions:

- How and with what effects have the digital divide increased inequalities for different groups and in different geographical locations?
- What efforts have been made to bridge the digital divide and what can be learnt from such 'better stories'?
- What new skills have been learnt and what skills have disappeared or been weakened in the face of increased digitalisation, particularly among pupils and students?

Social and psychological effects of COVID-19 measures in education

The quantitative and qualitative studies of the RESISTIRÉ project both showed how schools are not only educational institutions, but they also provide an important space for social interaction that is often vital to the well-being of young people. Hence closing down schools not only affected educational outcomes, but it also had negative effects in other aspects of young people's everyday lives and it had a detrimental effect on their mental wellbeing. In the RAS mapped, the causes of poor and worsening mental health and wellbeing were attributed to difficulties with online learning, balancing paid part time work and studies, lack of social interaction, insufficient finances, resources and poor living conditions, experiences of COVID-19 infection or fear of themselves or their family members contracting COVID-19 and forms of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. Poor mental health among young people was related to distance learning and school closures, with consequences for educational outcomes noted in several studies e.g., that children in compulsory education experienced significant reductions in levels of concentration. Two studies also showed that behavioural issues were exacerbated among young people and that parent-child relationships were negatively affected. Poor behaviour in children was especially prevalent in lower income and single-parent households.

In the quantitative mapping, sex-disaggregated data and gendered analysis were evident in six out of the 17 surveys focusing on young people. Echoing studies on older populations, girls tended to report lower physical and emotional wellbeing than boys. For example, female university students reported higher levels of anxiety in comparison to male students and girls aged between 13 and 17 years of age assessed both their mental wellbeing and life satisfaction lower than male counterparts in the studies examined. Another example is the finding that girls were more likely to be at risk of physical, sexual and emotional abuse. According to one study, young women were also more likely to report that their family income had decreased and that they felt the impact of socioeconomic issues more intensely. Two further studies looked

specifically at the gendered outcomes of distance learning, with both finding that girls struggled more with the move to online formats and one highlighting increased incidences of medical concerns among female students, such as worse sleep, increased headaches and deteriorating mental health. The qualitative studies in RESISTIRÉ also found unequal effects on mental health (girls fared worse than boys). In addition, the qualitative studies showed that when schools and universities closed, girls spent more time at home and as a result, many were forced to take on more household chores. The pandemic also appeared to have had a negative effect on social skills and when schools reopened, some struggled to reconnect to with their peers. Again, the digital divide may have played a role. For students who had access to technology, RAS observed an increase in social media use among teenagers compared to before the pandemic, with online formats being used to maintain social relationships with peers during periods of lockdown when physical interaction was restricted.

Research questions:

- What are the long-term effects on school closure on mental wellbeing the students affected by it? How do the effects differ from an intersectional perspective?
- What effects have the different approaches and measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Education across countries had on mental health from a gender + perspective and why?
- What life skills have vulnerable groups of pupils/students missed out on developing during the pandemic and how can they 'catch up' again?

Sexism, harassment, and bullying in education

Schools are, for some children, a safe haven away an unsafe home environment. For others, schools are very far from safe. Moving from a physical to an online setting had implications for both groups. The qualitative research conducted in the RESISTIRE project showed that sexism, harassments, and bullying took new forms during the pandemic including digital violence. But COVID-19 also meant that other forms of inequalities such as psychological, physical and verbal abuse in classrooms and school facilities were temporarily set on hold and being back to school was not always experienced as positive in this respect. One example is how the pandemic fostered new communication patterns with distancing and wearing face masks as the normal, and some students expressed how "being back" and having to adjust to post-pandemic social patterns left them uncomfortable and more exposed to being sexualised and bullied. In the narrative interviews, the preference several transgender narrators showed for remote education and their reluctance to attend school for fear of bullying was noteworthy. In this case, the narrative material clearly diverges from the more optimistic interpretation made by one of the expert interviewees. In this expert's opinion, remote education had been positive

for pupils who had poor school attendance prior to the pandemic. This interpretation however, failed to get to the root cause of why the pupils stayed home in the first place.

Research questions:

- What are the long-term effects of the pandemic on sexism, harassments, and bullying in schools from a gender+ perspective?
- What approaches and measures to prevent sexism, harassments, and bullying in schools have been taken across various countries during the pandemic and beyond? What effects have they resulted in and why?
- How have measures to prevent the spread of covid-19 affected the vulnerable position of LBTQI students in schools and why?

Crisis management and recovery in Education

Preparedness to the crisis was generally low, one example being that no EU country had a pre-existing disaster mitigation strategy for education (Van der Graaf et al., 2021). The mapping of the national recovery plans in RESISTIRÉ revealed however that Education is present, in different ways, in the vast majority of the plans analysed. One example being that a good part of the narrative and measures described in the section dedicated to the work and labour market domain was based on the need to provide women and vulnerable groups with educational tools that offer them adequate skills to face the challenges of the labour market. Three plans contain measures aimed at preventing the school drop-out of girls and vulnerable people. Among general considerations on the topic, some plans underline the importance of increasing women's skills in the digital and STEM areas. Inequalities in access to education for women and for children, which exacerbate the gender gap in the labour market, are also highlighted. The goal of improving educational infrastructures is also specified, other examples include the correlation between a low level of education and lower life expectancy for men and women is underlined, and the need to reskill people with low levels of education is mentioned. Another example is the focus on the importance of providing high-quality education and getting young people more involved in environmental sustainability issues emphasized in one plan. The keyword shared by the majority of the concrete measures is 'digital'. There are different actions, for instance, designed to provide women and specific vulnerable groups with digital skills, devices, and infrastructures. The plans also devote some attention to offering training in Science, Technology, Education, and Mathematics (STEM). In many European countries, the most acute phases of the pandemic brought about the closure of schools and a rapid switch to various experiments in online teaching. It is well known (e.g., Engzell et al., 2021; Haelermans et al., 2022) that such sudden changes had a negative impact on the learning opportunities of many students, especially those from more vulnerable groups.

In very few of the analysed plans, however, there were measures that address this kind of problem.

The qualitative studies highlighted many elements as missing from recovery plans on the national and local level. Missing elements include:

- Lack of policy initiatives/policy actors/policy coordination;
- Lack of inclusion/representation;
- Lack of data/analysis;
- Lack of provision of (material) resources and an overall vague definition of recovery.

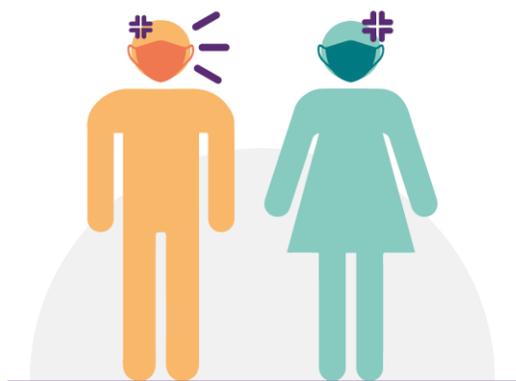
The qualitative studies also showed the lack of students' engagement in crisis management as concerning. The results showed how existing teacher-student hierarchies and standard school procedures understand students as passive receivers of education rather than co-producers or partners in joint knowledge-building. The findings from the narrative interviews highlighted factors that enable or hinder individual resilience and a person's ability to improve their situation, the most common hindering factors being; lack of access to digital tools (and knowledge on how to use them); unmanageable demands on both teachers and parents; social isolation; loss of independence; lack of support; disrupted/delayed learning process. The most common enabling factors were: support from parents and peers; communication with schools; schools catering to the individual needs of learners and that online education can limit exposure to harassment. The qualitative studies also highlight the need for better insight into the sources/reasons why teachers have been experiencing burnout, causes related to physical and digital as well as hybrid working environments both in school and at home. The burden on teachers has always existed, but it has been made more visible with the crisis. Lessons from this crisis should be used to get more insights into this burden as teachers make up an essential part of the recovery of the educational systems.

Research questions:

- How are gender+ considerations integrated into crisis management plans in schools considering also variations between different school systems and geographical locations?
- What short and long terms effects will gender+ considerations integrated into national recovery plans have for the ability to mitigate inequalities caused or widened by the pandemic?
- What factors impact on the capacity to implement a gender+ integrated crisis management plan?
- What factors impact on the capacity to implement a gender+ integrated recovery plan?
- What factors caused some teachers to experience burnout during the pandemic? What causes some teachers to leave to profession and what enables others to stay working as teachers?

Knowledge Gaps and Research Questions Related to Gender-based Violence

Increase in gender-based violence and lack of systematic data collection



The research conducted as part of the RESISTIRÉ project reveals the increase of gender-based violence during the pandemic². Even though crises do not directly increase gender-based violence, risk factors associated with gender-based violence, such as demographic characteristics and psychological characteristics of both victims and perpetrators among others, are exacerbated by the crisis context (Moreira and da Costa, 2020). Similarly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, policies of home confinement and social isolation, movement restrictions and

other restrictive measures as well as economic crisis accompanied by job losses contributed to the risk factors and increased incidents of gender-based violence while also making women and LGBTQI+ people more vulnerable to violence and less able to leave violent homes/relationships. Yet, the increase in violence was not reflected in the reporting of gender-based violence cases due to the extreme difficulty victims experienced in reaching out for help during lockdowns for fear of escalation (Sandström et al., 2022).

Thus, there is an urgent need for better policies which would enable reporting without the perpetrator knowing, and for better information-sharing with people who are looking for this kind of help. Similarly, the pandemic resulted in an increase in online and digital violence coupled with the lack of sufficient mechanisms or tools to deal with it (Sandström et al., 2022). On the other hand, there is a lack of systematic and standardised data collection and monitoring systems regarding gender-based violence during the pandemic (and beyond) at the national level in most countries as well as at the EU level, as expressed by many experts consulted as part of the project. This problem of missing data is a restraining factor in developing better responses to gender-based violence.

Another knowledge gap is about the consequences of gender-based violence particularly from an intersectional and gender+ perspective. The literature on the risk of increase in gender-based violence, of all forms, during emergencies and crises (epidemics, economic, poverty, natural disasters, humanitarian emergencies) shows that society's capability to protect

² Existing data also demonstrates that violence, including GBV increases during humanitarian crises and emergencies (Arthur & Clark, 2009; Chandan et al., 2020; John et al., 2020; Roesch et al., 2020; Stark & Ager, 2011).

women and girls from gender-based violence diminishes during these times. In addition to the existing root causes of gender-based violence, unequal gender relations based on hegemonic men's dominance over women and various subordinate masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), the emergence of different drivers of violence during the crisis period necessitates further research on intersecting gender inequalities and an exploration of the risk of increase in gender-based violence during the pandemic and beyond from an intersectional perspective. There is also a need for longitudinal study conducted with survivors of gender-based violence to see how their lives have evolved and what kind of challenges and opportunities they have experienced in terms of receiving support against gender-based violence or what new challenges they have experienced during the pandemic and beyond.

Research questions:

- How can we improve the ways in which data collected on gender-based violence is more systematic, up-to-date and reliable? How does the data collection become an enabler for an intersectional analysis?
- In what ways do outbreaks exacerbate the risk of different forms of gender-based violence, including how different drivers of violence change during an outbreak?
- How can local, national and EU level data be synchronised for effective response at all levels?
- What are the consequences of increased exposure to gender-based violence in various forms, especially from an intersectional perspective? Which groups face more risk of violence in crisis situations, and with what consequences?
- What policies and mechanisms have been or would be supportive for situations in which women and LGBTQI+ are experiencing intersectional inequalities that make them more susceptible to gender-based violence?
- What happens when there is an overlap of several crises (e.g., energy, food, economic, armed conflict) in terms of the implementation of policies against gender-based violence, including short- and long-term support to gender-based violence victims and survivors?
- What impact do policies and support mechanisms (or their lack) have in terms of the occurrence of gender-based violence and the struggle against it?
- What impact have pandemic-related policies had on gender-based violence?
- In what ways does data collection improve the design of evidence-based policies and programs that respond to the needs of women, reduce the risk of violence, and mitigate negative effects during and after the pandemic?
- How do the cultures and practices of impunity regarding gender-based violence interact with pandemics and other crisis situations? How is data collection on gender-based violence constrained or prevented by cultures and practices of impunity?

- What role do anti-gender discourses and movements play in crisis situations, particularly in relation to establishing and implementing mechanisms of prevention and support for victims and survivors?
- What impact have anti-gender discourses and movements had on systematic data collection on gender-based violence at the local, national and EU level during the pandemic and beyond?

Methodological challenges and possibilities

There are certain methodological challenges and possibilities regarding research on gender-based violence. In many countries, quantitative data collection is difficult, due to the prohibition to collect indicators of belonging in certain categories (such as ethnic or religious affiliation or sexual orientation). This prevents understanding the impact of gender-based violence on specific groups and the variations that might have occurred as a consequence of the COVID-19 policy responses, particularly from a gender+ perspective.

There is also need for more qualitative data collection in exploring the intersectional consequences of increase in gender-based violence as they are not easy to capture in quantitative research. Similarly, quantitative studies are not generally devised to explore the situated knowledge of victims and survivors of gender-based violence, i.e., their perceptions and ideas regarding their experiences of gender-based violence, the support mechanisms they can access (or not), as well as their views on the role of local-national-EU authorities and NGOs in the prevention and response to gender-based violence. Moreover, there is need for collaborative, interactive action research methodologies to be developed with the involvement of stakeholders (e.g., NGOs working in the field) and survivors of gender-based violence. It has been emphasized in RESISTIRÉ workshops, Open Studios, and interviews that victims and survivors of gender-based violence should be acknowledged as agents of change and as co-creators of knowledge.

Research questions:

- Do the pandemic related measures or the crises accompanying and following the pandemic introduce new ethical issues in conducting research with survivors? If yes, what strategies would help to overcome them? What new challenges are introduced in a crisis context, such as the pandemic? What can we learn from the pandemic experience to develop new methodologies for researching gender-based violence in other crisis contexts?
- How can different stakeholders and survivors of gender-based violence be included in the research on gender-based violence as research partners and co-creators of knowledge?
- In what ways do different methodologies on gender-based violence research

(e.g., quantitative, qualitative, longitudinal, etc.) contribute to understanding the various experiences and perceptions of gender-based violence and its intersectional impact on diverse groups of survivors? What are the limitations and opportunities of different methodological tools and approaches in the development of measures against different forms of gender-based violence?

- To what extent are existing methodologies intersectional - covering LGBTQI+ experiences of gender-based violence, as well as other gender+ intersections for both women and LGBTQI+? To what extent do current methodologies help identify intersectional gender inequalities and different forms of gender-based violence as well as developing related measures?
- How can we develop a bottom-up glossary of key terms regarding gender-based violence (including new forms of violence that have intensified with the pandemic, such as digital violence) with the inclusion of different stakeholders and survivors of gender-based violence?

Systematic and comparative analysis of better stories and sustainability across domains

As part of the RESISTIRÉ research, several “better stories” (Georgis, 2013) of policies and NGO responses have been identified in response to gender-based violence in different countries (Sandström et al., 2022: 52-54). There is need for comparative and systematic analysis of better stories in different local contexts to make these stories scalable and more sustainable beyond the pandemic across different domains. This would require doing follow up research with the actors involved in better stories. In this regard, better stories could be employed to highlight the changes that are possible in people’s lives, to serve as an inspiration, and finally to develop even better stories of preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

Research questions:

- What are some of the key characteristics of better stories? What factors contribute to making them better stories? What are their commonalities and differences? How do similar better stories work in different contexts?
- How do the existing structures and innovative solutions involved in better stories of policies and NGO responses impact individual lives and help victims and survivors in dealing with gender-based violence?
- What can we learn from better stories of individual responses or individual forms of resilience that have been developed during the pandemic? What factors contribute to personal and collective resilience?

- How can these better stories be scalable?
- What are the enabling and restraining factors of better stories?
- How can we make better stories more sustainable? How would better stories like “Mask 19” (Spain) be sustained beyond COVID-19?

Comparative analysis of country experiences regarding gender-based violence

RESISTIRÉ research in the second cycle has demonstrated that most of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) examined (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Sweden) omit gender-based violence among the issues to be addressed through the recovery policies (Cibin et al., 2022: 55). This is concerning, given the increase of gender-based violence during the pandemic and the exacerbation of gender inequalities with the pandemic in general. Even when gender equality is somehow mentioned, this is done with a focus on the labour market while leaving out issues like gender-based violence (Czech Republic, Poland). In particular, in most European countries there are no segregated figures on sexual harassment and harassment on grounds of sex or discriminatory harassment. In addition, most of the focus of research on gender-based violence is on physical violence while much less information is collected on psychological violence and even less on economic violence. Similarly, there is lack of an intersectional approach, for instance, gender-based violence against the LGBTQI+ is not specifically mentioned in the plans.

A few countries do mention gender-based violence in their plans with different degrees of depth: from general statements to few concrete measures (Cibin et al., 2022: 55-57). Overall, most of the measures listed in the plans do not reflect or respond to concrete issues raised during the pandemic, especially to the need to strengthen the resilience of support services, which were severely affected during the crisis. Additionally, measures related to gender-based violence are still limited to either intimate or heterosexual partner violence (IPV) among adults, thus neglecting other forms of violence and particularly missing gender-based violence experienced by LGBTQI+ persons and the youth. No mention is also made of digital violence and how to tackle this growing form of violence, especially in conjunction with the increase of digital activities brought about by the COVID-19 crisis.

RESISTIRÉ research and workshops also highlighted the lack of harmonisation at the EU-level regarding gender-based violence, particularly in relation to legal definitions and different criminal laws among different EU member states (Sandström et al., 2022: 50). The proposal of an EU Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, which includes

online violence and provide protections also to LGBTQI+ persons, would be an important step towards harmonisation³.

Several gender-based violence experts have mentioned the lack of funding allocated for policies and actions to respond to gender-based violence at the municipal, national, and EU level, as well as the scarcity of resources and lack of support for shelters and NGOs working on gender-based violence in most countries.

The absence of national and municipal “crisis management plans” in most contexts has had a significantly negative impact on responses to gender-based violence during the pandemic. The absence of national and municipal ‘crisis management plans’ is a major obstacle to intervention and equality measures.

Women’s and LGBTQI+ shelters are not regarded as “essential services” in most countries, which had also led to a poor response during the pandemic, particularly during periods of lockdown. This raises the question as to whether the Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) funds will be distributed to these shelters and the NGOs working in this field.

Concerns about the adoption and implementation of the Istanbul Convention were also raised by some of the experts interviewed by RESISTIRÉ researchers. According to an expert based in Turkey, for instance, the Istanbul Convention was “an assurance, a guarantee against gender-based violence” and the withdrawal from the Convention (in July 2021) was a major factor that increased the risk and experience of gender-based violence in Turkey (Sandström et al., 2022: 29). It made it more difficult to get support from the police, the courts, and other public authorities. It also made it harder for civil society organisations (CSOs) and municipalities to provide women with support in criminal and legal processes. This resulted in a significant decrease in reporting, as women lost their faith in the possibility of being supported through the official channels. An EU-level expert not only labelled Turkey’s withdrawal as “shocking” but also expressed concern about some countries in the EU “threatening not to sign or to pull out.” In view of the preparation of the [proposed EU Directive](#) on violence against women and domestic violence, a [comparative report on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention](#) was prepared by the EELN regarding the criminalisation of GVB in domestic law. Further comparative research on public policy on gender-based violence (beyond criminal provisions) for the effective implementation of Istanbul Convention would be necessary.

³ Our interviews and workshops were conducted before the announcement of a draft directive on this issue by the European Commission. See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022PC0105>

The adoption of this proposal would be an important step toward the need for harmonization expressed by our research participants and NGOs working on GBV across Europe.

Research questions:

- How were different policies and actions regarding gender-based violence implemented in different EU countries (including responses to online/digital violence)?
- How are NRRPs regarding gender equality in general, and responses to gender-based violence in particular, implemented in different EU countries?
- What are the enabling factors and main agents across different countries driving successful gender-based violence policies? What are the lessons learnt in reporting gender-based violence cases during the pandemic?
- What difference did the countries' position in relation to the Istanbul Convention make in their response to gender-based violence? Was there a difference in the responses to gender-based violence in different countries based on whether they had signed and ratified the Istanbul Convention or not?
- In which countries were services regarding gender-based violence regarded as "essential services"? How did this variable change the effectiveness of responding to gender-based violence in different contexts?
- Which municipalities and national governments have "crisis management plans"? Is gender-based violence mentioned in these plans?
- What is the language used (by different municipalities and national governments) regarding gender equality and gender-based violence? How do municipalities/national governments that avoid using gender (due to the prevalence of anti-gender politics) compare with those that use gender/gender-based violence as a category in terms of their responsiveness to gender-based violence?
- Which municipalities and national governments have instituted policies that explicitly address gender-based violence experienced by the LGBTQI+? What are the rates of gender-based violence experienced by the LGBTQI+ in these contexts, compared with other contexts where there are no explicit policies?
- In which countries have feminist, LGBTQI+ and other rights organisations contributed to the drafting and implementation of NRRPs? Has such participation had an impact on the effectiveness of responding to gender-based violence in the context of the pandemic?
- In what ways do inclusive and multi-layered resilience plans help to prevent gender-based violence and/or create effective support mechanisms?
- What is the impact of backlash against the Istanbul Convention, as well as of anti-gender discourses and movements on gender-based violence in specific countries and the EU at large?

Gender-based violence, perpetrators, and multiple masculinities

There is very little research done on perpetrators of gender-based violence and what they consider to be abusive behaviour. Similarly, there is lack of quantitative and qualitative data on men's perceptions of gender-based violence as well as better stories of non-violent masculinities. There is need for better stories of caring and non-violent masculinities to imagine alternative masculinities. Therefore, better stories of non-violent masculinities and men responding critically and effectively to gender-based violence should be made visible through further research.

Research questions:

- How do men define and perceive violence? What are the differences between different men's perception of violence?
- What are the consequences of gender-based violence for men as perpetrators, victims, and bystanders?
- What are the better stories of caring masculinities? What makes non-violent masculinity possible? What happens when men choose to or are able to be caring and non-violent? How are their lives and relationships transformed?
- What is the impact of perpetrator programmes on the struggle against gender-based violence?

Research Agenda for the Third Cycle of RESISTIRÉ

The first cycle of analysis showed that national policy and societal responses were unequally (un)able to address gender+ inequalities, despite decades of gender mainstreaming in EU policymaking. Furthermore, quantitative as well as qualitative indicators exposed an increase in existing and new, emerging, inequalities, where some groups have been made vulnerable to a higher extent than others. While the first cycle enabled a generic scoping and wide data collection, the second cycle allowed for a more focused approach, in order to dig deeper into some of the most salient inequalities touched upon in the first cycle. To facilitate depth over range, the research in the second cycle therefore reduced the number of domains in focus and ensured the inclusion of specifically vulnerable groups that were not given sufficient voice in the first cycle, including young people, LGBTQI+, migrants and refugees, Roma, and persons aged 65+, from a gender+ perspective. Five crosscutting research themes guided the research and analysis in the second cycle: 1) recovery, 2) better stories, 3) gender+/intersectional inequalities, 4) the resilience of gender equality systems and 5) the mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in times of crisis. The main findings of the second cycle research activities, as well as how it informs the direction of the third and final cycle of data collection are reported below.

Findings and gaps identified by research on policies and societal responses

Whereas the first cycle policy mapping collected qualitative information on both policies and societal responses, the second cycle focused primarily on policy. The aim of the second cycle policy mapping was, first of all, to understand if and how the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (or equivalent recovery policies in the case of the countries that do not belong to the European Union but are part of the RESISTIRÉ project) address gender inequalities in specific domains (gender-based violence; work and labour market; economy; gender pay and pension gaps; gender care gap; decision-making and politics; environmental justice; health; education), and their intersections with selected inequality grounds (social class/socioeconomic background; age; disability; nationality; ethnicity; religion/belief; sexual orientation; gender identity). Secondly, the analysis focuses on the processes that led to the design of these policies to understand the level of involvement of relevant stakeholders. Finally, it examines how civil society reacted both to the content of these policies and to the process by which they were designed.

The second cycle policy mapping found that although there are big differences between countries in this respect, most plans contain some attempts to propose policy measures aimed at mitigating gender+ inequalities, mostly in the area of work, education, and care. However, in most cases the NRRPs' gender+ issues are mainly relegated to the level of a general

reflection or a description of the context, without being linked to concrete solutions. This can be partly explained by the lack of gender dimensions in the criteria for evaluating the plans and the lack of a dedicated budget for this purpose.

The mapping also disclosed a striking lack of measures related to violence (e.g., gender-based violence) and inequalities in the sharing of power (e.g., decision-making and politics). Women are mainly dealt with just as workforce participants and when labour market inequalities are addressed, the plans have embedded stereotypes that see women's problems in accessing the labour market, lower wages, or difficulties in career progression as simply due to a lack of skills and education or their need to learn (male) management skills. There is also an excessive focus on male-dominated economic sectors and the difficulty of mainstreaming gender in those sectors.

An intersectional approach is completely absent in most plans, and although there are measures relating to age, social class, and disability, these grounds are usually considered silos. With rare exceptions, a discussion of inequalities related to religion/belief, gender identity, and sexual orientation is noticeably absent. There was a low level of involvement of representatives of feminist, (im)migrant, and LGBTQI+ organisations in the process of designing the plans and the process of stakeholder involvement and public consultations, when not absent, were rather tokenist in nature or lacked transparency.

As the results highlighted above show, recovery policies generally lacked attention to gender+ issues and consultation with civil society organisations in the policy process was limited at best. In order to move from 'recovery' to 'resilience', one of the most pertinent knowledge gaps to be explored in the third cycle is therefore what can be learnt from CSOs that can support the development of a resilient society that can face new crises. The concrete goal would be to offer recommendations to support policy makers to be better prepared on gender+ issues during crisis management, including strategies to support policy makers to properly involve CSOs during crisis situations.

Findings and gaps identified by quantitative research

While the quantitative research activities in the first cycle provided analytical insights on the impact of the pandemic across multiple domains of inequality (work and the labour market, the economy, the gender pay and pension gap, the gender care gap, gender-based violence, decision-making and politics, human and fundamental rights, and environmental justice), the second cycle turned the focus towards the inequality grounds underpinning the RESISTIRÉ project. Hence, the second cycle provided an update of the quantitative mapping of both national and European indicators with an emphasis on the experiences of young/old people, single parents, migrants/refugees/asylum seekers and Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) communities. This focus on the inequality grounds of age, relationship status, nationality, sexual orientation and gender identity emanated from observations in the first cycle showing a limited understanding about the experiences of these particular groups.

The findings of this second cycle of quantitative mapping demonstrate that COVID-19 policies have contributed to existing inequalities for vulnerable groups. Commonalities in experiences have been observed across our groups of focus, with pandemic restrictions preventing access to vital sources of support, care and education, as well as creating occupational and financial precarity. In combination, these factors have contributed to what appears to be a widespread mental health crisis. Intersectional gender+ analysis also reveals how, within vulnerable groups, inequality grounds can overlap and intersect. For example, women have tended to experience worse outcomes and additional pressures across all the inequality grounds explored here. However, despite many commonalities in outcomes, the ways in which pandemic restrictions impacted these vulnerable groups and the mechanisms of inequality are not always alike and tailored approaches are required to address these inequalities.

While evidence provided a clear picture of some aspects of inequalities in Europe, a detailed intersectional analysis was not possible for all vulnerable groups due to data availability. In particular, comparable and harmonised data at a European level is needed on LGBTQ+ communities, as most surveys include only a binary sex/gender variable. Some steps forwards in the research on LGBTQ+ communities have been taken by some RAS, however most of them limited to younger age groups. Moreover, harmonised European data are missing on different types of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in particular. During the pandemic, a global survey has filled this gap by collecting data on the impact of COVID-19 on people with different residence statuses, from citizens to undocumented migrants, including information on their housing situation. Despite these gradual steps towards a deeper understanding of vulnerabilities, more work is needed to ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups in European surveys.

Although an intersectional perspective will remain central to the third cycle, addressing some of the knowledge gaps indicated above will require continuous efforts that goes beyond the scope of the RESISTIRÉ project. However, the timing of the third cycle puts us in a better position to explore the theme of resilience by looking more closely at what longitudinal insights quantitative data can bring. By this stage, large-scale European data sets are emerging that should allow a comparison across pandemic and pre-pandemic years. Almost 100 longitudinal RAS have also been mapped, which NRs could explore in more depth to investigate how findings and methods have shifted during the crisis. The goal of this would be to look for signs of recovery, as well as to identify where inequalities have deepened. Considering the findings and methods of quantitative studies, we can also assess what can be learnt for investigating and addressing future crises.



Findings and gaps identified by qualitative research

The first and second cycle of qualitative research explored gender+ inequalities using pan-European workshops with inequality experts from civil society representing the voices of specific target groups, public authority experts and academics; semi-structured interviews with predominantly public authority experts and academics; and individual narratives interviews with people from across Europe.

The overall findings of the first cycle of qualitative data described a complex picture, where different groups of women remain significantly disadvantaged across all domains and where there is spiral of increasing inequalities; being marginalised or disadvantaged makes you disproportionately vulnerable to further disadvantaged or marginalisation. COVID-19 and its policy responses have made the most vulnerable even more vulnerable, particularly in strong gender regimes where social class, migrant status, and age regimes cut straight across domains. These findings suggest an inter- relation between domains and intersections between inequalities.

The second cycle focused on a few selected domains (gender-based violence, education, work and care) and made specific effort to include groups underrepresented in the first cycle (including young people and persons over 65+, LGBTQI+, migrants and refugees, Roma, and victims/survivors of gender-based violence). Based on the knowledge gaps identified in the first cycle, the second cycle also had an additional aim of focusing on unintended consequences, recovery and resilience and better stories. Despite the difference in approach, the second cycle largely confirmed the results of the first cycle. The main conclusion was that recovery is not taking place, despite an extensive political and societal response to the pandemic. Instead, we are witnessing an increase in inequalities, and emerging forms of new inequalities, including an intensification of gender-based violence and emergence of new mechanisms and methods of perpetrating violence; an educational debt - similar to the health debt - affecting millions of young people across Europe; widespread digital poverty that leave many without access to essential services; an exacerbation of the time poverty experienced by many women struggling to combine paid work with unpaid care work; welfare systems that favour insiders and reinforce inequalities; as well as worrying indications of a rise in mental health concerns, affecting young people especially.

Based on the first and second cycle results, as well the growing pool of research on the pandemic outside of the RESISTIRÉ project, we have now gathered substantial knowledge on the negative effects of the pandemic on inequalities. While the lack of attention to these effects in recovery policies is apparent, the importance of acknowledging these inequalities in building future resilience to crisis, have also been highlighted. In addition, the pandemic has been recognised as a potentially disruptive moment in history that may lead to systemic change. However, there is significantly less overall attention on what practices that may transform/change inequalities and very little attention on individual agency. For that reason, the focus of qualitative data collection in the third cycle will pay attention to individual better stories of marginalised groups during the pandemic and beyond. We ask what kind of agency that is practiced, or available to practice, by marginalised groups, with an emphasis on a) what supports and b) what hinders strategic agency. Better stories, a concept borrowed from Dina

Georgis (2013), has been a key element of RESISTIRÉ's framework throughout the previous research cycles. Many different such better stories of policies, NGO responses and individual experiences have already been identified in response to crisis in different countries (Cibin et al., 2021; Sandström et al., 2022). There is therefore a need for comparative and systematic analyses of better stories in different contexts to make these stories up-scalable as responses to further crises - beyond this pandemic. Such approach requires research with actors involved in already identified better stories and would enable making visible that change - beyond only coping - is indeed possible, from which even better stories of responding to crises could be developed.

Aim and research questions of the third cycle

Based on the findings and knowledge gaps identified in the second cycle of research activities, two overall research questions were decided upon for the third cycle:

- Better stories: what are the better stories and what makes them better stories? What are some of the key characteristics of better stories? What factors contribute to making them better stories? What are their commonalities and differences? How do similar better stories work in different contexts? What can we learn from better stories of individual responses or individual forms of resilience developed during the pandemic? How can these better stories be up-scaled and sustainable?
- Change: What are we doing differently now compared to two years ago? What have we learnt from the pandemic? How can lessons learnt be used to increase and improve responses to other crises?

These questions will be approached in different ways in the three work packages. For each of the overall research questions, a set of sub questions are developed in each of the research work packages, enabling interrelations in data collection and analysis between the work packages. Further, as each of the research agendas in this document has underlined, intersectional analysis will be central to the third cycle.

Finally, the third cycle should build on and make use of the data collected thus far throughout the project. Modelling, or other methods, to make use of and connect the many results already produced should be an explicit aim. This could include, for example, techniques such as a group model building based on research results and involving experts and stakeholders. Further options include qualitative comparative analysis, based on overall RESISTIRÉ results. Such approach could also be pursued for knowledge dissemination purposes.

Table 4 - Third Cycle Research Focus of the Three Research Work Packages

Focus/data collection	Quantitative indicators (WP3)	Policy and societal responses (WP2)	Qualitative indicators (WP4)
Gender+ data/intersectional analysis	RAS, EU secondary data analysis	CSO better stories/WS	WS/interviews/narratives
Better stories	RAS, EU secondary data analysis	CSO better stories/WS	WS/interviews/narratives
Resilience	RAS, EU secondary data analysis	CSO better stories/WS	WS/interviews/narratives



Conclusions

The second cycle research agenda has sought to provide answers to some of the first cycle's research questions. This research has provided some concrete results and conclusions, but it has also generated a variety of new questions to be considered. These knowledge gaps and research questions have, within the context of RESISTIRÉ, both opened up new lines of inquiry (i.e., relating to ongoing COVID-19 recovery efforts) and added to existing research agendas (i.e., GBV, care, work and employment). These will be promoted towards funders in order to ensure that innovative research is carried out across Europe, and will provide the basis for RESISTIRÉ's final research cycle.



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