



RESISTIRÉ

Reducing gendered inequalities
caused by COVID-19 policies

Approaching the Crisis as a Continuum: Learning from an Inclusive Feminist Crisis Response

**Recommendations to policymakers to mitigate the gendered
impacts of Covid-19 based on RESISTIRÉ findings**



As a way of harvesting our collective insights from the RESISTIRÉ research, we 1) propose the concept of '**crisis as a continuum**' as an essential framework for crisis prevention, response, recovery, and monitoring, and 2) suggest that public authorities at all levels, including the European Union, should support and learn from an **inclusive feminist crisis response** to prevent and better manage future crises. These recommendations are based on the three cycles of RESISTIRÉ research and supported by 21 factsheets that aim to provide a conceptual framework for approaching future crises.

➤ Recommendations

An inclusive and effective approach to future crises requires a fundamental shift in existing practices and a reprioritisation based on a holistic approach to **crisis as a continuum**, which is essential for identifying and addressing the complex and interrelated challenges that arise before, during, and after a crisis, in different places and for different communities and individuals.

Based on the three cycles of RESISTIRÉ research, which are presented in 14 factsheets (FS), we call on governing bodies at all levels to:

1) Approach a *crisis as a continuum* and design all processes of crisis prevention, response, recovery, and monitoring on the basis of an understanding of the interconnectedness of the different sites of the crisis (home, workplace, schools, hospitals, public spaces, etc.) and the different moments of the crisis (before, during, after).

2) Support and learn from an *inclusive feminist crisis response* to prevent and better manage future crises and to co-design and implement gender+ inclusive:

- a. **crisis management plans** in collaboration with diverse groups of CSOs (FS 8 & 9);
- b. **crisis response policies** that recognise, empower, and fund feminist organisations and other CSOs working with vulnerable communities as key actors in a crisis response (FS 1,2, 4, 6a, 6b, 8, 9 & 19 Transformative Funding);
- c. **recovery plans** and to do so by closely engaging with feminist organisations and other CSOs (FS 12 & 13);
- d. **monitoring and evaluation systems** that take into account the wide range of experiences and needs of diverse groups, starting with the collection of intersectional data, which is largely missing from national and EU-level data systems (FS 20 - Intersectional Data).

> Key Insights

Crises and disasters have a disproportionately negative effect on vulnerable groups. When crises take place in the context of structural inequalities, they escalate into social disasters. In the case of gender+ inequalities, the three cycles of RESISTIRÉ research has shown that the COVID-19 pandemic crisis has had a devastating impact on women and the LGBTQI+, wiping out progress in intersectional gender mainstreaming (FS 1 and 2), increasing gender-based violence in general (FS 6a, 6b, and 9) and digital violence in particular (FS 10), exacerbating the gender care gaps (FS 5), particularly as a result of teleworking (FS 5 and 7) and distance education (FS 11), and deepening the gender inequalities in the healthcare sector (FS 3).

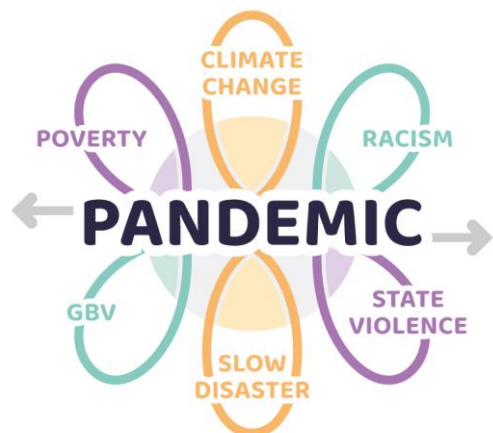


STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES ESCALATE INTO SOCIAL DISASTERS

The pandemic also highlighted the urgent need to develop comprehensive, inclusive, multi-actor crisis management and recovery plans (FS 8, 12, and 13). The lack or inefficiency of European-level, national, and municipal 'crisis management plans' has been a major obstacle to just intervention and recovery. The street-level bureaucrats and other experts interviewed by RESISTIRÉ researchers reported on the challenges of addressing the complex issues raised by the pandemic in the absence of (effective) crisis management plans and other measures to meet diverse needs and urgencies.¹

RESISTIRÉ also discovered that in many countries crisis management plans were not inclusive enough to prevent specific rights-violations and meet needs based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, citizenship status, age, disability, and class. Thus, subsequent recovery policies fell short of adequately addressing gender+ inequalities and incorporating intersectional and participatory approaches to recovery (FS 12 and 13).

¹ Sandström, L., Callerstig, A.C., Strid, S., Lionello, L. & Rossetti, F. (2023). *RESISTIRE D4.3 Summary report on qualitative indicators - cycle 3*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7708724>



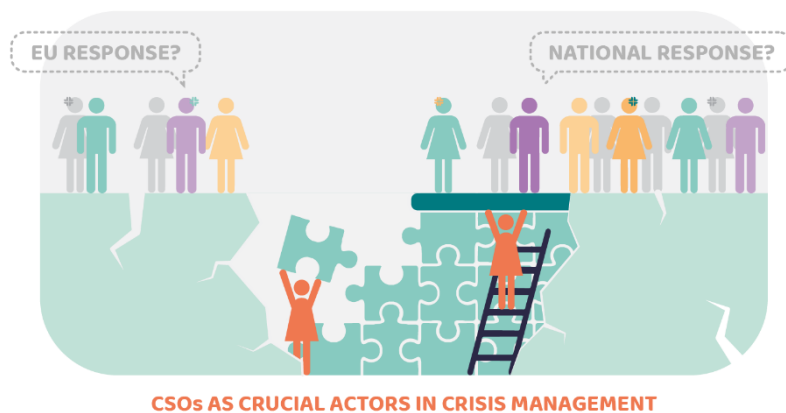
Building on Cynthia Cockburn's concept of *violence as a continuum*,² we propose approaching a **crisis as a continuum**, where the emphasis is placed on the interconnectedness of the different sites of the crisis (the home, workplace, schools, hospitals, public spaces, etc.) and different moments of the crisis (before, during, after). The most overt expression of a catastrophic event may occur within a limited timeframe or at a particular site, but its impact is not time- or site-bound. Moreover, a gender+ intersectional perspective suggests that we live in a world of interconnected, multiple crises: gender-based violence, poverty, racism, state violence, climate crisis, and other forms of slow violence³ and slow disaster.⁴

RESISTIRÉ research suggests that a crisis is best approached as a continuum, so there is a need to prepare before the crisis (e.g., through inclusive crisis management plans and preventive measures), to respond effectively during the peak of the crisis, and to attend to the afterlife of the crisis (e.g., through inclusive recovery plans and monitoring systems).

² Cockburn, C. (2004). 'The continuum of violence: A gender perspective on war and peace. in W. Giles & J. Hyndman (Eds.), *Sites of violence: Gender and conflict zones* (pp. 24-44). University of California Press.

³ Nixon, R. (2011). *Slow violence and the environmentalism of the poor*. Harvard University Press.

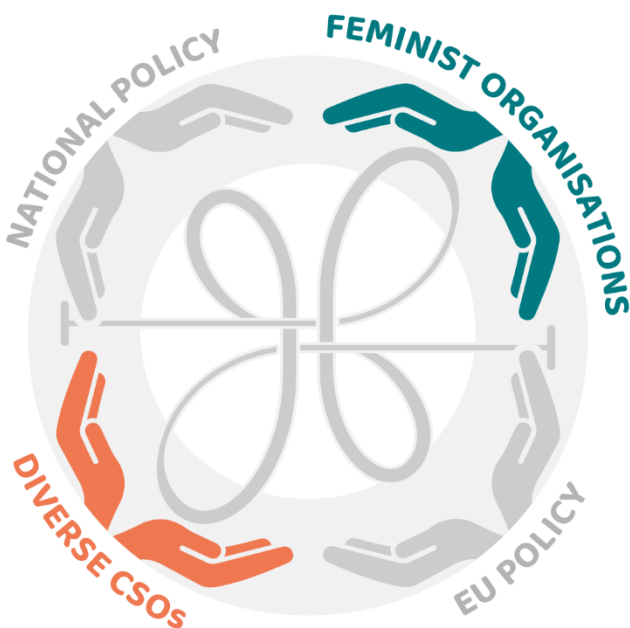
⁴ Knowles, S. G. (2020). Slow disaster in the Anthropocene: A historian witnesses climate change on the Korean peninsula. *Daedalus*, 149(4), 192-206. https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_01827



In the context of the pandemic, CSOs emerged as crucial actors in crisis management and mitigation, who responded more quickly than government authorities, filled the gaps left by governments, provided support and resources to those most in need, and catered to the distinct needs of women, people of colour, the LGBTQI+, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups,

thereby leading to more comprehensive and equitable solutions.

RESISTIRÉ's findings on better stories of the crisis response particularly highlight the accumulated experience, wisdom, and practices of inclusive feminist politics with regards to crisis preparation, management, response, and recovery processes. Feminist and LGBTQI+ organisations, especially those that adopt an intersectional perspective, have played a key role in mitigating the gendered impacts of the pandemic crisis, as well as of the recent earthquake disaster in Turkey, for the most vulnerable communities. The experts interviewed by RESISTIRÉ researchers underscored how an intersectional feminist approach can bring unique perspectives and insights to crisis response efforts. They further argued that while governments and large organisations are struggling to adapt to the changing world, feminist initiatives and CSOs have proven to be more adaptable and responsive in times of crisis. It has also been noted that the capacity for adaptability and for understanding change is a significant advantage that these organisations possess and that make them better equipped to respond to emergencies. The networks, contacts, and trust that CSOs have already built in marginalised communities play a key role in an effective response that takes into account the experiences on the ground.



Collaboration between civil society organisations, initiatives, communities, and government officials is vital to address challenges and generate innovative solutions during a crisis.⁵ This argument is substantiated by the various examples of experiences being shared through the exchange of information and best practices and the development of continuous dialogue with stakeholders. Similarly, some respondents emphasised the importance of joint planning with CSOs and prioritising various crisis scenarios, while other respondents highlighted the significance of extensive cooperation between local and national institutions.⁶

Experts have underscored how necessary it is to invest in these collaborations in between crisis outbreaks in order to make service-providing structures more resilient and adaptive when they are most needed.⁷

The following are some key lessons to be drawn from the feminist and LGBTQI+ organisations that have developed effective civic responses:

- Multi-actor, collective, and participatory ways of organising and decision-making;
- Using an intersectional lens to expand the organisations' reach and to refine their services to address different needs;
- Making invisible forms of gendered inequality and discrimination visible;
- Investing in community-building both prior to, during, and in the aftermath of the crisis;
- Creating intersectional alliances and communities around the horizontal framework of rights-based 'solidarity' through mutual learning and transformation, rather than by means of top-down, hierarchical frameworks of 'help' or 'charity';

⁵ Cibin, R., Ghidoni, E., Stöckelová, T., & Linková, M. (2023). *RESISTIRE D2.3 Summary report mapping cycle 3*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7708631>

⁶ Sandström, L., Callerstig, A., Strid, S., Lionello, L., & Rossetti, F. (2023). *RESISTIRE D4.3 Summary report on qualitative indicators - cycle 3*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7708724>

⁷ Harroche, A., Still, A., Tzanakou, C., Rossetti, F., Lionello, L., & Charafeddine, R. (2023). *RESISTIRE D3.3 Summary report on mapping quantitative indicators - cycle 3*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7708668>

- Building collaborations and networks with all stakeholders in crisis management, including public authorities;
- Monitoring the unequal effects of the crisis in its aftermath.

In short, we argue that as Europe and the world continue to face other crises and disasters, it has become all the more imperative to design policies that approach a crisis as a continuum and to develop well-integrated mechanisms for inclusive crisis prevention, response, recovery, and monitoring in order to prevent crises from having catastrophic consequences for rights and freedoms and in order to be better prepared for future crises.

> About RESISTIRÉ

This factsheet is based on data collected in RESISTIRÉ's third research cycle, which ran from December 2022 to February 2023. In this research, 30 national researchers worked with the consortium to map policies, societal responses, and qualitative and quantitative indicators relating to the pandemic in EU-27 countries (except Malta), along with Iceland, the UK, Serbia, and Turkey. This research activity was accompanied by workshops and interviews with gender equality experts whose input informed the main findings from expert consultations.

RESISTIRÉ is an EU-funded Horizon 2020 project, the aim of which is to 1) understand the impact of COVID-19 policy responses on behavioural, social, and economic inequalities in the EU-27 (except Malta), Serbia, Turkey, Iceland, and the UK on the basis of a conceptual gender+ framework, and 2) design, devise, and pilot policy solutions and social innovations to be deployed by policymakers, stakeholders, and actors in different policy domains.

Find out more about the project and discover all other outputs at <https://resistire-project.eu>.



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FS 1 Linková, M., Cibin, R., Mohammadi, E., & López Belloso, M. (2022). RESISTIRE Factsheet: Pandemic and Gender Mainstreaming. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7041794>

FS 2 Linková, M., Cibin, R., Mohammadi, E., Bobek, A., & Clavero, S. (2022). RESISTIRE Factsheet: Women Representation, Diversity and Inclusion In Decision-Making. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7041805>

FS 3 Denis, A. (2022). RESISTIRE Factsheet: Gender Equality in The Healthcare Sector. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7041810>

FS 4 Kerremans, A., & Lionello, L. (2022). RESISTIRE Factsheet: Green Spaces and Gentrification. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7041818>

FS 5 Živković, I., & Lionello, L. (2022). RESISTIRE Factsheet: Care and Crisis: Fostering a Paradigm Shift. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7041822>

FS 6A Strid, S., Altınay, A.G., Türker, N., Ghidoni, E., & Tarragona Fenosa, L. (2022). RESISTIRE Factsheet: Reinforcing EU Level Action to Combat Gender-Based Violence. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7041827>

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FS 11 Tzanakou, C., Still, A., Rossetti, F., Sandström, L., Delaney, C., Strid, S., Callerstig, A., Kerremans, A., Tanwar, J., Clavero, S., Henry, S., Cacace, M., & Aglietti, C. (2022). RESISTIRE Factsheet: Education: Developing Resilient Education Systems. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7041786>

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