

RESISTIRÉ Project

RESponding to outbreakS through
co-creaTive inclusive equality stRatEgies

PILOT PROJECT

Call for proposals

INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

A Toolbox

to engage ALL parents and guardians in dialogue

Guidelines for Applicants



ABOUT RESISTIRÉ: Objectives and Conceptual Framework

RESISTIRÉ (Responding to outbreaks through co-creative inclusive equality strategies and collaboration) is a two-year project funded by EU Horizon 2020, designed to advance the understanding of gender and other inequalities caused by policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The objectives of RESISTIRÉ are:

- 1) To understand through qualitative and quantitative research the impact of policy responses to COVID-19 on behavioural, social and economic inequalities in the EU27, Serbia, Turkey and the UK
- 2) To develop and promote policy solutions that can be adopted by policy makers
- 3) To co-create innovative solutions that can be implemented by stakeholders and actors in different sectors to reduce inequalities.

These **Guidelines for Applicants** were conceived in the context of objective no 3.

The conceptual framework of RESISTIRÉ is informed by an **intersectionality** and **gender+** approach.

The term intersectionality describes how different inequality grounds, such as ethnicity, social class, age, gender, sexual orientation and other individual characteristics, intersect with each other and overlap¹. The result of this interaction is the generation of new and different forms of inequalities². Gender is probably the most universal inequality ground (women make up 51% of world's population)³. The gender+ approach focuses on how this specific inequality ground intersects with other inequalities⁴, recognising that women are not a homogeneous group and that "other axes of inequality always intersect gender"⁵.

After collecting and analysing policy responses and related data from a gender+ perspective (objective 1), the project worked to translate them into operational insights and co-created solutions, to mitigate the negative and unequal impacts of COVID-19 (objective 2).

This was accomplished through a co-creation phase consisting of an action-oriented analysis carried out by researchers and civil society stakeholders working together in **Open studios**. Open Studios are a technique developed to design policies and innovative solutions in a participatory way that brings together different expertise and participants' experience⁶. During Open Studios, participants analyse the current situation and

¹ CRENSHAW, Kimberly (1989) Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. University of Chicago Legal Forum 140: 139–67.

² VERLOO, M. (2013) Intersectional and cross-movement politics and policies Signs 38(4), 893–915.

³BUSTELO, María (2015) Evaluation from a gender+ perspective as a key element for (re)gendering the policymaking process. Journal of Women, Politics and Policy. Special issue in Policy Making.

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ This inequality ground probably the most universal one (women make up 51% of world's population).

LOMBARDO, E., MEIER, P., & VERLOO, M. (2017) Policymaking from a gender+ equality perspective. Journal of Women, Politics & Policy, 38(1), 1-19.

⁶ BOYER B., COOK J., STEINBERG M. (2011) In Studio: Recipes for Systemic Change, Helsinki Design Lab.

depict possible improved scenarios, thereby co-creating 'better stories'. The 'better stories' identify how a given (negative) social situation can be improved. They serve to inspire and form the basis for the development of more concrete actions, such as pilot projects.

RESISTIRÉ OPEN CALLS FOR PILOT PROJECTS

The innovative solutions identified in Open studios have been transformed into a series of **pilot project concepts**, valued as potentially effective in reducing gender+ inequalities in specific domains. In addition, these projects are thought to strengthen small-scale resilience in response to current and future pandemics.

RESISTIRÉ intends to apply and develop these pilot projects by involving civil society organizations, through the launch of a series of calls for proposals (objective 3). Organisations selected under these calls will be asked to use the allocated funding to contribute their expertise and demonstrate the effectiveness of the developed innovative solutions.

In this regard, these Guidelines for Applicants detail information on the pilot project entitled **INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS A Toolbox to engage all parents and guardians in dialogue**. The Guidelines also provide directions on how to structure and submit an application, information on eligibility and evaluation criteria.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic led to many changes within the education realm. Specifically, across many European states, schools closed as part of the public health safety measures. Classes moved online and this had wide ranging ramifications for teachers, students and parents/guardians. For example, interaction between parents/guardians and schools was often strained or non-existent during the pandemic.

It is well established that parental engagement with in-school activities (for example, attending parent-teacher meetings) impacts positively on pupils' experience of learning. Cohesion between families and schools and actively engaged parents/guardians are recognised as essential to improving children and young people's development. **Quality communication between parents/guardians and schools** can help to identify needs and prevent potential problems for students.

However, as school communities tend to differ greatly, there is no 'one-fits-all' solution in creating a positive and collaborative school environment. In particular, according to the context, certain groups of parents/guardians may be significantly distant from their child's education experience.

Moreover, as research from RESISTIRÉ showed, during the COVID-19 crisis this condition became even more evident since many parents/guardians felt excluded and neglected in relation to their children's

schooling. This is also due to some vulnerability factors, such as socio-economic background, migrant background or refugee status. Finally, parents/guardians of children with disabilities were in some instances all of a sudden particularly isolated and unsupported during the pandemic (Strid et al, 2022).

Against this context, this pilot project will develop a Toolbox for secondary schools⁷ to engage parents/guardians. More specifically, **parents/guardians from marginalised and/or disadvantaged backgrounds and those who are difficult to reach** are among the target groups of this project.

The Toolbox proposed has the potential to encourage beneficial exchange with parents/guardians, and to create a school environment where open dialogue is enabled and fostered.

In the longer term, additional impacts of the pilot project can include:

- Sustainable approaches for enhancing parental/guardian engagement with their children's education, and schools' engagement with local communities
- Sustainable approaches for progressing the relationships between parents and civil society organisations, community and youth workers etc
- The fuller actualisation of the physical, emotional, and academic needs of young people and their families, particularly in marginalised contexts
- Improvement in inclusion levels in school and local communities
- Provision of evidence of the local and wider benefits of engaging parents and school communities.

Description of the pilot project

Objective(s) of the pilot project

*"There is always a better story than the better story."*⁸
(Dina Georgis, 2013)

The overall aim of this pilot project is to enable school communities to anticipate and understand better the physical, emotional and academic needs of **students in second-level education, with an age (depending on national context) between approximately 11 and 15 years old**. Better communication between parents⁹ and school communities can create an environment where reaching this aim is possible.

More specifically, the pilot project will aim to:

- Identify gaps in participation and what would different groups of parents need to overcome the current barriers they face in relation to engaging with schools

⁷ The project is addressing students in the 11-15 years range, generally but not univocally corresponding to the secondary school segment in the education cycle, which is therefore to be considered just indicative.

⁸ Georgis, Dina. (2013). *The Better Story: Queer Affects from the Middle East*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

⁹ Although the term 'parents' is predominantly used in the text, this appeal is addressed to those who exercise parental responsibility, be they parents or guardians.

- Ensure school communities are aware of the barriers that may deter parents from engaging with their child's education
- Define a Toolbox to support school communities to address these barriers, especially for disadvantaged/marginalised groups of parents
- Involve parents in the design of the Toolbox collaboratively with schools other and relevant stakeholders (as appropriate)
- Ensure that the Toolbox is accessible to as many school communities and parents as possible.

Expected tasks

The specific tasks that the applicant organisation is expected to perform are briefly described below.

Task 1 - Preliminary planning of the project with the school(s) involved

This phase will involve meetings with the school(s) board(s) to assess the formal, administrative, and planning aspects to be addressed in view of the project implementation. Although it could be carried out in collaboration with one school only, the participation of several schools is welcome.

Task 2 - Mapping of existing strategies, forms, techniques, and examples of parents and school communities engaging with each other

The mapping of these existing resources will be carried out covering the local, national and European level, through desk research.

The resources must be identified and selected according to two lenses:

- The lens of their possible application to early secondary education (11 to 15 years) and in local contexts (small towns or large cities)
- The lens of their response to groups of parents typically marginalised from involvement in their children's education.

Task 3 - Consultation phase to identify needs and barriers to parent/guardian involvement

The consultation is aimed at identifying needs and barriers¹⁰ that prevent beneficial exchange between parents and school communities, in the school(s) involved in the project.

The consultation can be performed through interviews with relevant stakeholders, especially parents and parent/guardian groups, but also students, teachers, school(s) board(s), civil society organisations, policy makers, etc.

¹⁰ The various barriers to their involvement that may exist include, for example, language deficits, power imbalances, literacy levels, social background, incarceration, geographical distance from the school, lack of trust in the education system, or others relative to the context.

Parents from marginalised and/or disadvantaged backgrounds and parents who are difficult to reach are among the target groups of the consultation.

Task 4 - Designing of the Toolbox (using co-design)

Relevant stakeholders involved in the consultation will be invited to contribute also to the designing. The methodology to build the Toolbox will be participative and implemented through co-design workshops. It will involve **especially parents and parent/guardian groups**. It may also involve other relevant stakeholders (i.e., artists, students, teachers, school(s) board(s), civil society organisations, policy makers, etc.).

Same as previous task, co-creation should involve groups of parents from marginalised and/or disadvantaged backgrounds and hard-to-reach parents.

As far as the Toolbox is concerned, it is supposed to include several components, such as:

- Target group(s)
- Identified needs and barriers
- Forms of engagement
- Techniques (concrete actions)
- 'Better stories' (promising practices to be taken as examples).

The 'Target group(s)' component should provide an indication of which groups of parents could be addressed through the envisaged tools, while the 'Identified needs and barriers' component should concisely outline what are the main needs and barriers identified in relation to the various target groups. 'Forms of engagement' should present strategies to attract and actively involve parents, and may include artistic and other creative and multimodal approaches. 'Techniques' should describe the activities that can be carried out to foster dialogue with the target groups of parents/guardians to better understand the physical, emotional and academic needs of secondary education students. Where available, 'Better stories' can accompany the 'Techniques' to illustrate promising practices already in existence from local, national and/or international contexts.

Task 5 – Testing and release of the Toolbox

The applicant will conduct a test on the Toolbox created, in order to assess its effectiveness and feasibility. In particular, at least two of the most innovative 'Forms of engagement' and 'Techniques' included in the Toolbox will be tested by real application in the school environment, involving the target group(s) of parents.

As for the other 'Forms of engagement' and 'Techniques', the test will be carried out by simulation, which may consist of an open discussion with representatives of parents of the target groups and other relevant stakeholders. This will allow for their feedback and suggestions to be collected. The tests carried out will allow redefining and improving the contents of the Toolbox, a final version of which will be produced.

The Toolbox will then be published (in the form of a manual, website or similar) in the language of the applicant's country as well as in English.

Task 6 - Disseminating and making accessible this Toolbox to parents, schools' communities and other relevant stakeholders involved in its design, as well as further afield

Dissemination activities should include:

- A public event, such as a conference and/or seminar (also on-line)
- Social media campaigns (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Tik Tok, etc.) that focus on:
 - Raising awareness of the importance and benefits of engagement between parents and school communities, as well as the major barriers hindering it.
 - Giving visibility to the Toolbox.

These dissemination actions will leverage on the selected applicant's network and channels. The content will include full acknowledgement of the RESISTIRÉ project and link to the outputs on the RESISTIRÉ website.

Required outputs

1. A published Toolbox for schools to engage with parents, in the form of a manual, website or similar, in both the language of the applicant's country and in English.
2. A public event (either at local, national or EU level), such as a conference and/or seminar (also on-line), to present the Toolbox.
3. A social media campaign to disseminate the project among the general public.

Territorial scope

It is expected that the successful applicant will develop the project in one of the countries involved in the RESISTIRÉ project (EU27+ Turkey, Serbia, Iceland and the United Kingdom) except Spain, Austria and Turkey, since applicants from these already received funding to implement the first cycle pilot projects.

Project partnership with host school(s)

It is expected that the lead applicant will involve one or more school(s). At the time of the proposal submission, it is sufficient the applicant provides a brief description of the school(s) intended to be involved, possibly accompanied by letter(s) of intent. Subsequently, if selected, the applicant organisation will have to submit a formalised agreement with the school(s) prior to the signing of the Grant Agreement, under penalty of exclusion from the project.

Timeframe of the project

The pilot project should start in September 2022 and the foreseen end is April 2023. An example of a general work schedule for the implementation of the project could be organised as follows.

- **Months 1**
 - Task 1 - Preliminary planning of the project with the host school(s)
 - Task 2 - Mapping of existing resources
- **Months 2 and 3**
 - Task 3 - Consultation phase to find out needs and barriers
- **Months 4 and 5**
 - Task 4 - Designing the Toolbox (using co-design).
- **Months 6 and 7**
 - Task 5 – Testing of the Toolbox
- **Months 7**
 - Task 5 – Finalisation and public release of the Toolbox.
- **Months 8**
 - Task 6 - Dissemination activities

Based on this example, applicant organisations will be asked to provide a detailed work schedule, tailored to the activities in their proposal.

Risks and how to mitigate them

Alongside the risks listed below, the selected organisation can identify and point to others they consider may emerge in the course of the project, and provide appropriate mitigation strategies where relevant.

- **Risks associated with co-design:** there is a risk that the participatory nature of the Toolbox design will not be able to capture insights or practices outside the scope of experience of the project participants. A solution to this issue is to target as diverse a range of contributing stakeholders as possible, and to maximise connections with stakeholders (e.g., certain community and youth work organisations, and civil society organisations) who work with parents daily, especially parents not directly or indirectly represented in the core stakeholder group.
- **Risks associated with localised focus:** a connected risk is that the Toolbox developed will be too localised, and in this way untranslatable to other contexts. A solution to this is to have a wide range of stakeholders involved where feasibly possible, and to incorporate examples of best practice from national and international settings in the mapping phase of the pilot where appropriate. This will ensure that local solutions will nonetheless have wider resonance.
- **Risks associated with originality:** as the mapping activity suggests, toolboxes and toolkits already exist on how best to maximise engagement between parents and school communities. A solution is to focus on gaps that can be filled, such as gender+, cross-sectoral, and secondary school aspects, accessibility of these tools for marginalised parents, and the centrality of social awareness raising (e.g., social media campaign as one of the dissemination activities).
- **Risks associated with participation:** there is a risk that parents of children attending second-level education will be difficult to recruit, given how parents typically become less directly involved as their children mature. A solution to this is to prepare a reserve list of relevant stakeholders on the chance that initial contributors withdraw from the project or do not respond to invitations.

WHO CAN APPLY AND WHAT EXPERTISE IS REQUIRED

Eligible actors expected to apply for this call include:

- Parenting groups (local, regional, and/or national formal associations)
- NGOs, civil society organisations, and other community groups
- Artistic and cultural groups/organisations (to coordinate a pilot themselves, and/or to take on the development of more ambitious and creative actions arising from the Toolbox).

It is envisaged that the pilot project will be primarily coordinated by the main applicant, who will engage with relevant, key stakeholders in the development of the Toolbox at a local level. National-level organisations are welcomed to apply, as long as their proposal is grounded in the local dimension.

Under this call, applicants are required to have documented and proven experience in the following areas:

- Excellent knowledge of, and/or engagement with issues facing parents and school communities. Knowledge of second-level education contexts and issues is desirable, but not essential
- Previous involvement in projects related to education, school-community engagement, and/or parenting in (but not limited to) marginalised contexts
- Documented network of employees, partners, and/or organisations that may be interested in participation in the pilot project
- Experience in the design and the delivery of participatory workshops and inclusive trainings with parents, schools, and/or other local communities, etc
- Experience in project design and all aspects of project management (e.g., planning, budgeting, reporting)
- Good command of the English language to ensure the cooperation with members of the RESISTIRE consortium.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this call, organisations are invited to use the **Application Form for Technical Proposals** available on the RESISTIRÉ website.

Applications should be submitted no later than the 4 July 2022 at 5 p.m. CET.

Applications must be submitted in English.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Financial support will be awarded to successful applicants following an open and transparent selection process based on the assessment by a panel of researchers and experts from the RESISTIRÉ consortium.

The basic guarantees of transparency are in the application of the following:

- Selection criteria publicly disclosed as part of this call (see below)
- A two-stage selection process through equitable, written assessment of applications against the relevant selection criteria, complemented by an online Q&A session with shortlisted organisations.

The main evaluation criteria will be related to:

- a. Alignment with the RESISTIRÉ objectives and conceptual framework
- b. Alignment with the pilot project objectives
- c. Conformity with the expected outcomes
- d. Description of the pilot project innovation
- e. Scalability and replicability
- f. Justification of the proposed budget
- g. Previous experience of the applicant.

For each evaluation criterion, a score from 1 to 5 will be given, except for a) and g), where the score will range from 1 to 10. Following these criteria, the maximum score that can be awarded to proposals will be 45. Proposals scoring below 20 will not be considered eligible for funding.

The three organisations obtaining the highest score will be entered in a shortlist and admitted to the next selection phase. The communication to the shortlisted organisations will be given by email. In case one or more applicants withdraw, those with the higher scores immediately following them will enter the shortlist.

Ultimately, the final selection of the successful applicant for the pilot project will be based on written documents, and also complemented by an online Questions & Answer (Q&A) session between the candidates and the RESISTIRÉ jury panel.

EXTERNAL MONITORING PROCESS

Throughout the project implementation, the candidate will be asked to participate in periodic meetings for the monitoring and evaluation process (to be communicated afterwards).

BUDGET AVAILABLE AND FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

Budget available

The total maximum available grant for the project will be 40,000 euros.

Financial Conditions

Funding is provided exclusively to meet the costs incurred by the specific project and may not be used to meet costs on another separate project or activity. Any commitment incurred before the grant starting date or any commitment in excess of the amount awarded, is the responsibility of the applicant.

The maximum grant amount set out in the agreed final budget can NOT be exceeded. The maximum grant amount of the application is calculated on the estimated and justified eligible costs submitted by the applicants to implement the pilot project. Only justified eligible costs may be used to determine the maximum grant amount.

Payment will be limited to the actual costs within the maximum grant amount set out in the agreed final budget. All costs associated with the project must be itemised and fully justified in the appropriate section F. of the Application Form. ESF, on behalf of the RESISTIRÉ project, reserves the right to examine, in detail, all items of expenditure charged to an award.

The main categories of costs which can be funded by this grant are indicated in Annex 1.

All costs should be included in EUROS (€).

Payment Conditions

The contract will be a lump sum one. The Grant Agreement will be signed with one organisation only, who will exclusively receive payments, according to the following schedule:

- 33% upon signing of the Grant Agreement
- 34% upon the release of a complete first draft version of the Toolbox
- 33% upon approval of the final report

TIMEFRAME OF THE CALL

The timing of the present call for proposals is summarised in the following timetable.

Launch of the call	Wednesday 1 June 2022
Deadline for applications	Monday 4 July 2022
Selection of a shortlist of applicants	5 - 11 July 2022
Communication to the shortlisted applicants	Tuesday 12 July 2022

Online Question and Answer session	Wed. 20 and Thur. 21 July 2022
Notification to awarded applicants	Friday 22 July 2022
Signature of the Grant Agreement	August 2022
Start date of the Pilot Project	Thursday 1 September 2022

SUPPORT FOR APPLICANTS

The RESISTIRÉ consortium maintains a frequently asked questions (FAQs) section available on the project website: <https://resistire-project.eu/pilots-faq/>. It will be updated as new questions arise, through the duration of the call. The answers that applicants cannot find in the FAQs section can be submitted by contacting aglietti@knowledge-innovation-org and marina.cacace@knowledge-innovation.org.

AWARDED ORGANISATION

Administrative duties

The administrative tasks for the selected applicant, including activity reporting and related documents will be provided during the negotiation and contracting phase.

The selected applicant will be requested to sign a Grant Agreement, after providing appropriate documentation to prove the following:

- Legal existence: Deed or Articles of Association (corporate statutes)
- Legal representative: Copy of Power of attorney document (if applicable), National Identity Card
- Tax Agency Documentation to evidence the fulfilment of tax obligations
- Certificate of up-to-date Social Security payments to evidence the fulfilment of obligations
- Financial statements: P&L, Balance sheets (from the previous year). In the case that it is the first year of activity, it will not be asked any further information
- Bank Account information: IBAN & SWIFT code (if applicable).

Obligations of beneficiaries

Successful applicants formally accept the following conditions in case of being awarded as the beneficiary of the present call:

- Beneficiaries accept their responsibility for the accuracy and veracity of data and documents submitted for proving the fulfilment of the eligibility criteria when submitting their applications
- Beneficiaries will provide documentary evidence proving the provision of services
- Beneficiaries are obliged to store the documents for external audit purposes until January 2026 either on paper or electronic version
- Beneficiaries will make references to public funding from the EU, including suitable logos, and EU flag
- Beneficiaries will include references to the RESISTIRÉ project and specifically show that funding is

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- Beneficiaries will cooperate with and participate in monitoring and evaluation activities on the implemented pilot action that will be carried out by the RESISTIRÉ project team.

If negotiation with the first applicant of the list eventually fails, negotiation will be initiated with the subsequent applicant(s).

After the contract has been signed, a kick-off meeting with the beneficiary organisation will be scheduled to define the detailed planning and work plan of the pilot project implementation, as well as obligations connected to monitoring and evaluation from the RESISTIRÉ project.

ANNEX 1

FUNDED COST CATEGORIES

1) Directly Incurred Costs

'Eligible costs' are costs that meet the following criteria.

(i) for actual costs:

1. They must be actually incurred by the applicant or their partner organisations
2. They must be incurred during the pilot project period
3. They must be incurred in connection with the selected project and necessary for its implementation
4. They must be identifiable and verifiable, in particular, recorded in the applicants' accounts in accordance with the accounting standards applicable in the country where the project is implemented and with the applicant's usual cost accounting practices
5. They must comply with the applicable national law on taxes, labour and social security
6. They must be reasonable, justified, and must comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

(ii) for unit costs:

1. They must be calculated in consistency with the applicants' usual practice, by dividing the full annual cost by the total number of productive units
2. The number of actual units must comply with the following conditions:
 - a. The units must be actually used or produced during the project period
 - b. The units must be necessary for implementing the action or produced by it
 - c. The number of units must be identifiable and verifiable, in particular supported by records and documentation.

Direct Personnel costs

Payroll costs for staff, full or part-time, who will work on the project during the life of the project e.g. employees in local organisations, and/or individuals, and/or other actors in charge of the programme implementation.

In particular, this includes:

- Costs for employees (or equivalent)
- Costs for individuals working under a direct contract
- Costs for beneficiaries that are individuals without salary.

Personnel costs are eligible if they are related to personnel working for the beneficiary under an employment contract or equivalent appointing act, and assigned to the action. Their cost is limited to the share of their time spent on the project.

Exceptional payroll items such as bonuses, gift vouchers etc. are not eligible.

Travel and subsistence

Funds for travel and subsistence are not eligible.

Consumables

The inclusion of consumables is permissible if proportionate to the workplan and is justified as providing a clear benefit to the project (e.g., public awareness campaigns)

2) Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are not allowable costs.

Indirect costs are described as non-specific costs, such as overheads.

3) Other costs

Direct costs of subcontracting (including related duties, taxes and charges such as non-deductible value-added tax (VAT) paid by the beneficiary) are deemed to be eligible.

