

# RESILIENT REALITIES

How youth civil society is experiencing and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.



**The Methodology  
Behind Resilient  
Realities.**

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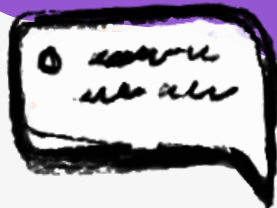
# Objectives Of The Research

To provide a space for researchers to share ideas, connect with one another, and generate new networks of youth actors

To understand and make sense of the realities facing youth-led civil society during the COVID-19 pandemic

To provide insights to donors, governments and other development actors, so that they can better support youth civil society

To inspire co-researchers and their networks to recognise their role in responding to the COVID-19 crisis



The initial intention behind Resilient Realities was to research and understand how young people have been organising in response to the COVID-19 crisis, and to create knowledge to inform donors and policy makers on how to support their efforts. As co-editors and research coordinators for the Resilient Realities research, we reflected on what it means to do research with young people in the middle of a pandemic.

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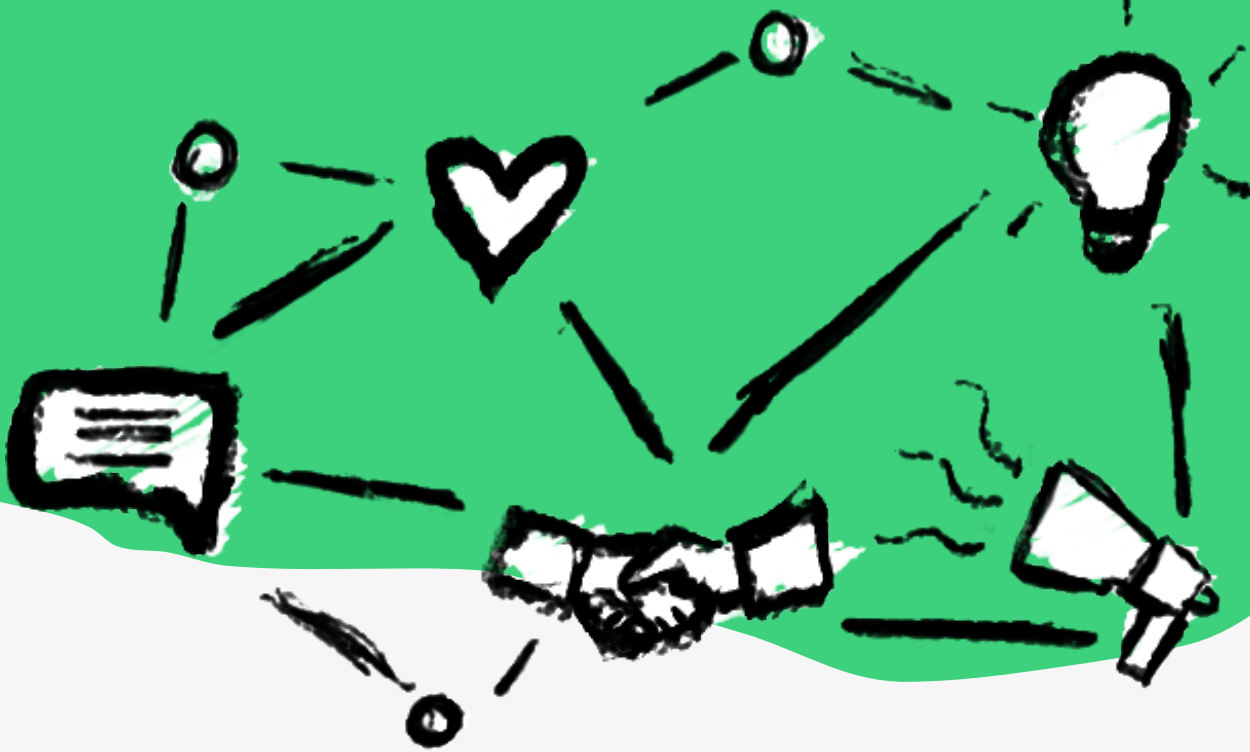
*'First of all, it means stepping into conversations with experiences of deep change, confusion, isolation, and mental health challenges. It requires care. It cannot be extractive: we cannot take information from young people so as to provide them to institutions that could support them. There is something patronizing, disempowering in that. The process needs to be just as useful as the outcome. The intention was to create a community of support, socialise ideas, make connections. If there is no one world, one reality, how can we come together to research our own realities, expand our perception, inspire action?'*

**- Gioel Gioacchino, Recrear International**

Researching during the COVID-19 pandemic means doing research remotely, with all the challenges that implies: the impossibility to notice body language, to feel each other, to share food, to build trust through our full presence with others. The methodology for this research is a cooperative inquiry, a Participatory Action Research (PAR) method that brings together practitioners to surface new knowledge, carried out online. Resilient Realities is not a research project that is trying to capture quantitative data at the global level. It is global research, yes, but with a personal touch: it brings people together through a set of digital tools to talk with each other, support each other, share perspectives, and create knowledge together.

With this project, we wanted to create a safe research space where a group of young organisers could come together to make sense of how the world around them is changing and how this change is impacting their work, activism, organising and life. Managing such a project in the midst of a pandemic, in a very uncertain moment and in some context where civil liberties are being restricted, meant that we strived to put the safety and wellbeing (both physical and psychological) of the researchers above all.

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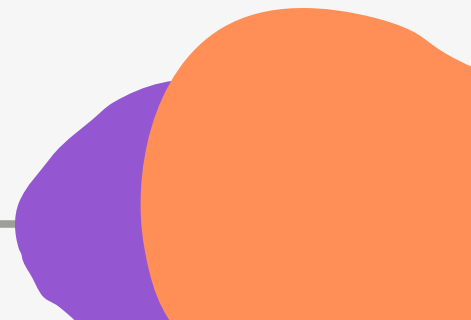
We brought together 12 young co-researchers who are actively engaged with youth-led organisations, groups or movements, to together understand how COVID-19 is impacting their activism and community participation. Each co-researcher brings a unique experience working with youth-led civil society; each one can also access and engage their own communities to make sense of what is happening as a response to the COVID-19 crisis. It also allowed the researchers to integrate this work with their ongoing projects and work, to ensure that this project was not an excessive burden but rather an interesting learning exercise. For each continent, we selected two researchers in order to explore two different angles and understandings. To deepen their relationships each of them worked with a regional partner (the only exception of this was the Latin American and North American teams who decided to join forces and work together). As this research is grounded in their own experiences, the findings and lessons drawn aren't necessarily representative nor applicable to the entire continent where the co-researchers are based. In addition, some regions, such as Central America and the Middle East, remained unrepresented.

Through the methodology, we wanted to establish an horizontal partnership between everyone involved. We wanted to respond to an invitation that the COVID-19 pandemic offered: that of connecting to our need to be personal, to be human, to be real, to be seen in the way we show up in public spaces. This is why in this report we share the research outcomes with a personal tone, integrating as part of our findings a constellation of stories, conversations, emotions, lived experiences, and perceptions. We wanted to express the uniqueness of each co-researcher and what they brought to the research. This is why we decided to publish six regional spotlight reports alongside the Global Overview, to better preserve the rich individual and collective research that was conducted all over the world.

One of the aims of this research project - and at the same time one of the main challenges - was to coordinate quickly enough to be able to understand, in a continuously changing situation, the experiences and responses of youth organisations in relation to the COVID-19 crisis. This meant balancing depth and reach in order to capture a picture for each of the six geographic areas. The whole project lasted only four months and was spread across six continents. Additionally, the Participatory Action Research methodology aims to generate knowledge that is applicable to a specific setting and to the people active in that context, rather than knowledge that can be abstracted or tested in across contexts. This means that this study doesn't provide an exhaustive analysis into the effects of the COVID-19 on youth organising.

By no means does this project aim to be a panorama or detailed representation of how youth organisations are responding to the COVID-19 crisis. On the contrary, this project captures a short moment, an instance, a small element in a big landscape. It can provide us with some colors, flavors and sounds to bring us closer to understanding the whole picture.

**Gioel Gioacchino and Fiammetta Wegner**, Recrear International



The background features a vibrant, abstract composition of overlapping organic shapes. A large, bright green shape dominates the center, partially overlapping a purple shape above it and a yellow shape below it. The remaining areas are filled with a solid orange color. The overall effect is bold and energetic.

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