

Handbook about crisis management

How to cope and activate the local community in case of crisis

2022

The aim of this manual is to help local communities prepare for potential crises, building on the experience of COVID 19 pandemics. It contains theoretical and practical knowledge on active citizenship and community participation, and presents lessons learned from the pandemic. The handbook provides thorough knowledge on crisis, its effects and measures leaders can/should do to minimise the effects on their community. From this handbook you can also learn the methodology of public involvement and co-creation and share good practices.

The handbook is useful for community professionals such as educators, youth workers, community organisers, cultural managers who are already active leaders or organisers but would like to make a step further and prepare themselves and their community for a potential crisis. However we designed this book having in mind those citizens who care about their local community and are willing to take action to bring it together. To make the most out of the knowledge gathered here take the e-learning modules and read the training curriculum as well.

The handbook was elaborated with co-creation methods by the project partners involving local community organisers from the four participating countries.

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MODULE 1: WHAT IS CRISIS, WHAT IS CULTURE, HOW ARE THEY CONNECTED?

In this module Crisis as a phenomenon and a reality is deconstructed and defined and its relationship to culture is tackled. The types of crisis as well as its nature are visited and how to identify crises is studied, highlighting VUCA world. Last but not least, the effects of crises on the community, on the individuals and on the economy are noted.

1. Deconstructing Crisis: Definition, Types and Nature of Crisis

1.1. Definition of Crisis

Crisis is a phenomenon and challenging situation that needs special attention. It is a difficult and even dangerous state that affects an individual, a group, and a society in many ways and in many sectors.



<https://www.thebluediamondgallery.com/wooden-tile/images/crisis.jpg>

1.2. Types of Crisis

When we hear the word 'crisis', we think of something that threatens us as human beings or even humanity as a whole. A natural catastrophe such as an earthquake or a mudslide or an economic collapse, or a riot, a world war or a pandemic or famine, but we cannot define it in a simple way. What we all agree on, is that crisis is a time of intense difficulty or danger. As



in all phenomena, crisis is multi-typed. The typology of crisis is characterised by a variety based on its nature and context. Thus, a crisis may be economical, societal, educational, ecological, psychological, individual, etc. According to Management Library (2018), there are three main types of crisis: Creeping crisis, slow-burn crisis and sudden crisis, all severe and dangerous. These three types are explained below:

- Creeping Crisis: this type of crisis is indicated and even predicted by a series of occurrences that decision makers do not view as part of a pattern.
- Slow-Burn Crisis: this type of crisis is not predicted, since there is an advance warning, before the event causes any damage.
- Sudden Crisis: this type of crisis entails a situation when damage has already happened and the longer it takes to respond and address this, the worse things will get.

To Señor Lobo & Friends (2020), crisis can be of two main types, i.e. high or low, based on the impact it has on the crisis receivers and their settings. These two types are explained:

LOW IMPACT CRISIS

Low impact crisis has usually the following characteristics:

- It may be controlled by the organisation during this phase by making certain changes
- It may cause low reputational damage with no impact on values
- It has gathered low levels of attention on social media and traditional media.

Low impact crisis may be effectively faced once it is detected by a risk detection system and mobilise management teams. Organisation staff members are usually trained to endure that they will act quickly and appropriately in its event and that they will quickly adapt to change. Impact is quickly absorbed and immediately set to work on their recovery after hard damage. Digital approach and good governance policies are key in effectively facing a hard crisis.

HIGH IMPACT CRISIS

High impact crisis has usually the following characteristics:

- It is rapidly spread in a digitalised context
- It is often caused by close stakeholders or triggered by employees themselves
- It causes severe damage to reputation
- It receives high levels of attention on social media and traditional media

This type of crisis may not be effectively faced due to a weak preventive structure of the organisation, a lack of procedures for prevention and management, an inability to identify the risks faced, and lack of resilience, that may lead the company/ organisation to closure.



1.3. Nature of Crisis

Emerging from its definition attempts, crisis is of a multi-typed, and complex nature. Describing the nature of crisis, Michael Bland, in his publication 'Communicating out of the Crisis' (1998) stated that crisis is one of the most challenging and fascinating communication disciplines, providing another interesting feature – and even a new definition – of the nature and profile of crisis.

Besides its multi-typed nature and identity and its severity and dangerousness as seen above, it is interesting to highlight that crisis is closely related to culture. This is another feature of its nature that is explored in the section below.

2. Crisis & Culture: Exploring a Key Relation

Based on global bibliography, culture has a major role to play in global crises. In the following lines the key relation of crisis and culture is explored.

2.1. Definitions of Culture

There have been several attempts to define culture, due to its multidimensional nature. Rooted in the Latin cultura stemming from colere, meaning "to cultivate", culture is defined as the shared values shaping individual behaviour that incorporate the approaches, the tone of communication and interpersonal exchanges. Culture refers to the patterns of human activity and the symbolic structures that make these activities significant. Culture can be also defined as all the ways of life, including arts, beliefs and institutions of a group of people that are transferred from generation to generation. Culture has been also defined as the way of life for an entire society. As such, it embraces codes of manners, dress, language, religion, rituals, art and norms of behaviour, such as law and morality, and systems of belief.

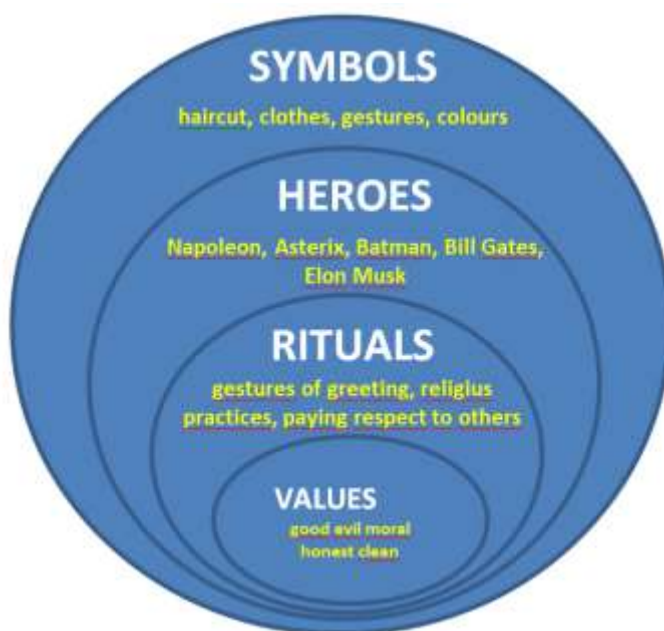


<https://media.istockphoto.com/photos/business-meeting-with-word-culture-on-table-picture-id841152680>

Culture is learned from your environment and is always a shared, collective phenomenon. To describe and compare different cultures there are two models that need to be explained: One is the so-called “Cultural Onion” developed by Geert Hofstede. A culture can be seen like an onion: there are several layers to it. When someone looks at a culture from the outside, they need to slowly work their way past understanding each layer to get to the core. On the outer layer of the onion, you'll have symbols. They are items such as eating habits, foods, flags or colours, logos. Symbols have emotions attached to them. But changing the symbols usually doesn't have a long lasting deep emotional impact, as for example changing rituals might.

The next layer consists of heroes. They are people who have shown behaviour which showcases, for example, the national spirit (e.g. Steve Jobs or important politicians) show behaviour that sets the example. In some cultures, heroes can also be the “anti-hero” - they can be the example of what not to do. Heroes can include real life public figures, like athletes or company founders, or figures such as Superman in popular culture.

On the third layer, closest to the core, you'll find rituals. They are recurring events which shape our unconscious minds e.g. celebrating Independence Day, Thanksgiving, tipping in restaurants, etc.



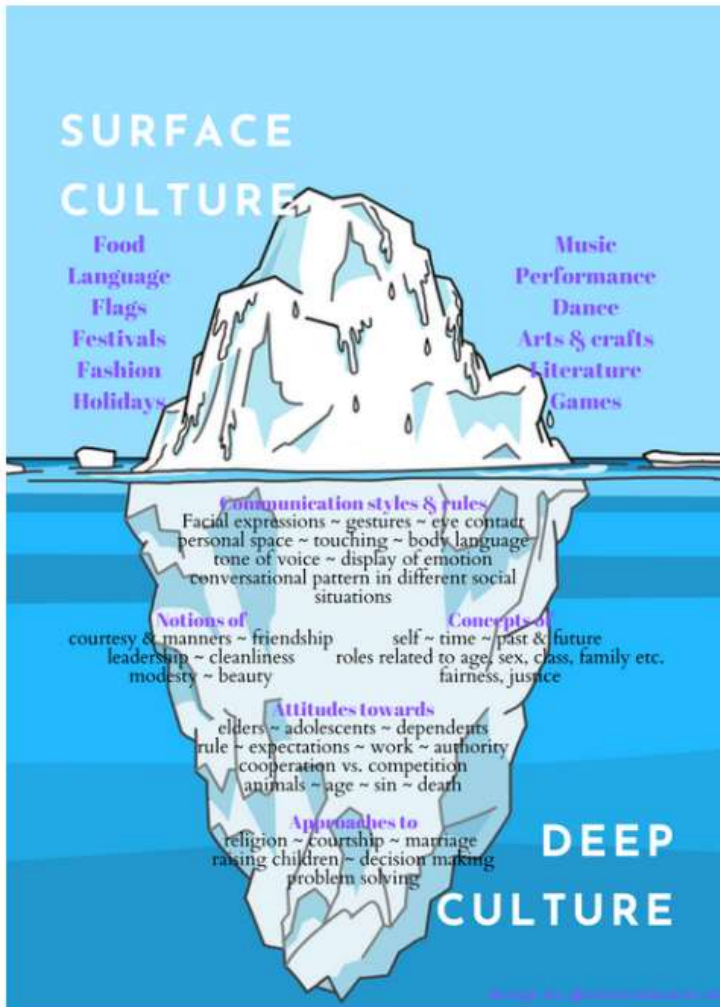
At the core of culture, you'll find values. Values are broad preferences for a certain state of affairs (e.g. preferring equality over hierarchy). Values are transmitted by the environment in which we grow up, like the behaviour of parents or teachers showing us what is acceptable and what isn't. Values are pretty much shaped by the time we hit 10-12 years of age. When we feel threatened or uncomfortable we have a tendency to go “back to basics”. Back to the values instilled within us when we were young.

Hofstede's onion model: Cultural values and practices at different levels of depth (adapted from Hofstede 2005, p.7)

Edward T. Hall developed his Cultural Iceberg Model in 1976.

If the culture of a society was the iceberg, Hall reasoned, then there are some aspects visible above the water, but there is a larger portion hidden beneath the surface. He proposed that culture has two components and that only about 10% of culture (external or surface culture) is easily visible; the majority, or 90%, of culture (internal or deep culture) is hidden below





the surface of a society and includes some beliefs and the values and thought patterns that underlie behaviour. What this model teaches us is that we cannot judge a new culture based only on what we see when we first enter it. We must take the time to get to know individuals from that culture and interact with them. Only by doing so can we uncover the values and beliefs that underlie the behaviour of that society.

[The 'Cultural Iceberg' model, developed by Gary Weaver \(1986\). Graphic layout by Jenny Lau](#)

2.2. Culture and Crisis

As highlighted in global bibliography, culture has a major role to play in global crises as **in moments of crisis people need culture** (Roy, 2020). Interestingly, in times of

uncertainty, culture anchors people to the familiar, providing meaning and helping them to cope with any anxiety that arises. In what follows, culture and its key relation to crisis is explored.

In times of crisis, culture takes effect even stronger, shaping how different groups of people now prioritise needs and benefits in not only an auto-intuitive way but even more in a well-thought-out way. The need for safety and reassurance means that cultures will return to the acceptance of established norms and practices that have in the past helped social groups to overcome such times.



The role of culture in crisis situations and the close relation of crisis and culture is strongly highlighted in well acknowledged theories, such as Terror Management Theory (Greenberg et al., 1986) that is visited below:

Terror Management Theory

According to Terror Management Theory (Greenberg et al., 1986), culture offers individuals reassurance in their world views and interpretations by attaching them to a deeper meaning. This allows individuals, craving for comfort, to cope with and manage the threat to their self-esteem and even their mortality. Familiarity comforts and eases some of the anxiety, worries and fears for the uncertain, and culture is one of the strongest markers of familiarity. In times of crisis – as with COVID 19 – it is revealed that behavioural changes adopted have a tendency to occur within the context of already available options rather than completely new and unfamiliar options/ choices (Roy, 2020).

Terror management theory was firstly proposed by Jeff Greenberg, Tom Pyszczynski, and Sheldon Solomon in 1986 (Greenberg et al., 1986). It has implications for political views, celebrity, fear of death, performance, etc. For the COVID 19 pandemic situation, the researchers, working with Lockett in a 2021 study, where they attempted to explore terror management theory and its effects on people's behaviour during COVID 19, stressed that "regardless of whether one consciously believes that the virus is a major threat to life or only a minor inconvenience, fear of death plays an important role in driving one's attitudes and behaviour related to the virus" (Pyszczynski et al., 2021), maintaining their views that crisis and culture are closely linked.

Studying the consequences of terror management theory, Myers (2022) explains that in crisis situations, individuals and groups may attempt to achieve things in their lives that will help them survive and succeed, and therefore contribute to society in greater ways than if things were different. Changes in behaviour may be noticed or may not be noticed. They may be positive, negative or have no changes, and this may be due to the support and stability that society provides to individuals and groups. The latter shows how people lean on culture when they are confronted with a crisis.

3. Attempts to Identify Crisis

Being a challenging phenomenon, due to its multi-typed nature and context, as seen above, crisis has not been easily identified, with attempts to identify it being ongoing. A promising moment throughout these attempts has been the so-called VUCA world phenomenon that is considered much related to identifying crises. This is elaborated in the following lines.

3.1. VUCA world

Related to identifying crisis, is the VUCA world (Mind Tools, 2022), with VUCA acronym standing for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, i.e. four threats and challenges that emerge in crisis situations:



- **Volatile:** it highlights that change is rapid and unpredictable in its nature and extent
- **Uncertain:** it states that present is unclear and the future is uncertain
- **Complex:** it refers to different, interconnected factors that come into play, with the potential to cause chaos and confusion
- **Ambiguous:** it refers to the lack of clarity or awareness about situations

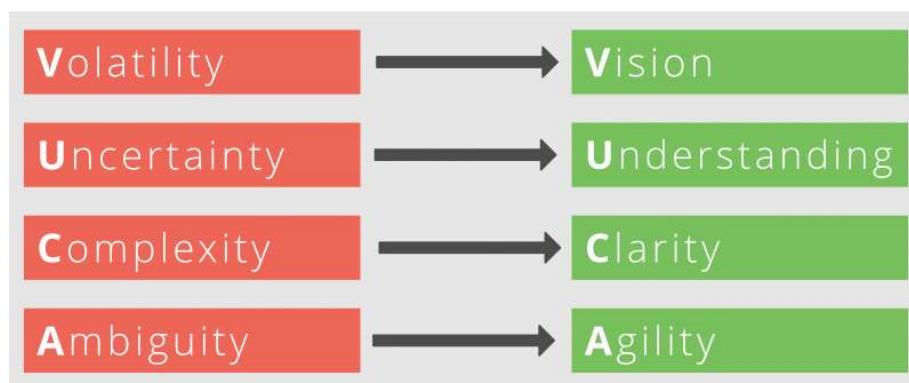
In more specific terms, VUCA world describes the situation of a constant and unpredictable change – a status that is established as a norm in certain areas of the business world (and beyond). It highlights that traditional, outdated approaches to management and leadership and day-to-day working should not be an option in times of crisis and, thus, they should be avoided.

VUCA uses and applications

VUCA was firstly used in 2001 by USAWC – The United States Army War College, one of the first organizations to use this acronym, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 in the US. The radically challenging, different and unfamiliar international security settings that have emerged back in those days and ever since that difficult period, highly worried the military stakeholders, planners and decision makers that described this situation as VUCA, i.e. volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous.

VUCA has been widely used. Bon Johansen, in his well acknowledged book: ‘Leaders Make the Future’ (2012), adapted VUCA for the business world, highlighting it as a set of challenges that individuals, teams, managers, and organisations have to face in affected by crisis industries (and situations). Individually, these challenges can be significant, but they can be challenging when they are combined challenges. Johansen (2009) used VUCA to reflect the wild and unpredictable forces of change that could affect organisations, arguing that in managing the four VUCA challenges, new skills, approaches and behaviours are needed.

VUCA



VUCA Prime framework



In responding to VUCA threats, Johansen (2009), proposes the VUCA Prime framework, suggesting the following 'antidotes' and solutions: vision, understanding, clarity, agility. These are displayed below (Mind Tools, 2022):

- Counter Volatility With Vision
Accepting and embracing change and developing a clear shared vision and flexible goals is key to fighting volatility.
- Meet Uncertainty With Understanding
Understanding and developing new ways of thinking is highly important in fighting uncertainty. Listening to customers, analysing and interpreting their needs, practices, etc. staying updated and self-evaluating/ assessing may result in meeting uncertainty.
- React to Complexity With Clarity
Clarity in communication and expression as well as effective team building and collaboration are highly important in complex situations. They prevent disorientation and isolation.
- Fight Ambiguity With Agility
Promoting flexibility, adaptability and agility is important in fighting against ambiguity. Turning to a plan B, cultivating thinking skills and creativity, building consensus, promoting lifelong learning, participation and awards may work against ambiguity.

4. The Effects of Crisis

Crisis impacts all sectors of human life and in many ways. In this section, the effects of crises on the communities, the individuals, and the economy are discussed.

4.1. Crisis effects on the community

Crisis highly impacts the society in general and the community in particular. As Bench and Hansen (2021) put it, the consequences of the crisis for local communities are unclear and thus may not be easily and accurately anticipated and measured. Data emerging from their recent research on the impacts of the pandemic on societies, highlight that the pandemic has affected the community in many ways, from networking to building trust. As highlighted by the University of Maryland School of Public Policy report on a study of three recent crises (2022), charitable behaviours rise during the years that follow a crisis. Such behaviours involve:



- volunteering for/with an organisation,
- giving to charity,
- working with other community members (e.g. family, neighbours, mates, collaborators, etc.)
- to handle, fix and/ or improve something in the community,
- organising and attending public meetings to discuss community issues, etc.

In the course of this study, data were collected for over 15 years by the United States Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

4.2. Crises effects on the individuals/ on you

Similarly to the effects of crisis on the community, the impact of crisis on the individual is reported to be high. Uncertainty and complexity are high on the consequences list in human lives. Beyond these, explained or unexplained physical symptoms are reported, with stress governing physical symptoms, such as headaches, stomach upsets, muscle aches, and low-grade fevers. Anxiety, worry and fear also arise, causing the same or different symptoms, e.g., sleep disorders, eating disorders, low self-esteem, hopelessness, helplessness, etc. Panic is one more crisis effect which is as dangerous as the previously mentioned effects (CERC, 2019).

Crisis highly impacts the individual as it is the case with the community. Although the impact of a crisis is difficult to be measured, good communication is key in crisis situations, since it may save lives. Proper crisis communication may persuade people to avoid negative behaviours during crisis days and beyond and lessen the negative effects. You may read further information on the effects and reactions of crises in the second chapter.



4.3. Crises effects on the economy



Crisis impacts the economy, which is another critical sector of human life. Consequences such as increased unemployment, loss of income and increased vulnerability are considered to be among the dominant socio-economic impacts of a crisis. The COVID 19 pandemic lockdowns resulted in organisations malfunctioning and even closing, increasing unemployment rates all over

the world (University of Maryland School of Public Policy (2022)).

5. Concluding Remarks

It goes without saying that crisis is a phenomenon in human lives that impacts several sectors in our everydayness and futures. In this module, attempts to define crises were visited and the types of crisis were displayed. The key relation of crisis and culture was tackled and the effects of crisis on the communities, the individuals and the economy were discussed.

Reacting to a crisis before it is too late is critical. Updating risk management procedures as well as threats assessment with setting up appropriate systems for threats detection before these threats cause a crisis is a must. Adjust monitoring and response procedures allow quick reaction, something that is key to effective crisis management. The VUCA world approached in this module as well as terror management theory may provide useful insights into how to effectively face crisis.

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The 'Cultural Iceberg' model, developed by Gary Weaver (1986). Graphic layout by Jenny Lau
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MODULE 2: WAYS TO MOVE FROM REACTING TO CRISES TO RESPONDING

1. Crisis reactions on the level of individuals

We all respond somehow to crisis situations (to sudden and shocking events) however our reactions can be very different and individual depending on our level of sensitivity and at the same time our past experiences also influence our reactions.

Apart from automatic individual reactions to crises, there are common crisis reactions that could help you to understand your own emotions and the behaviour of other people after a shocking event. It is common to feel **anxiety, uneasiness and fatigue, and to have trouble sleeping**. Feelings of despair, loneliness, emptiness and abandonment may also occur. Reactions can include changes in behaviour, physical well-being, psychological health, thinking patterns, spiritual beliefs, and social interactions. Signs, symptoms, and reactions are common psychological responses to a crisis or traumatic event.

1.1. Typical reactions to crisis or disaster

<p>Emotional Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shock or denial ● Anger or irritability ● Depression; feelings of hopelessness ● Fear and anxiety ● Mood changes ● Numbness ● Guilt ● Grief 	<p>Cognitive Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Forgetfulness ● Difficulty making decisions ● Difficulty concentrating ● Dreams or nightmares of the event ● Confusion ● “Flashbacks” of crisis event ● Self-doubt
<p>Behavioural Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Changes in activity level ● Social withdrawal or isolation ● Restlessness, agitation, or pacing ● Eating or appetite changes ● Sleep disturbance/insomnia ● Increased use of alcohol or drugs ● Inability to relax 	<p>Physical Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fatigue or loss of energy ● Headaches and/or back pain ● Gastrointestinal distress, nausea, vomiting ● Muscle tension ● Trembling ● Rapid heart beat ● Sweating or chills ● Dizziness ● Exaggerated startle responses ● Weakness

It is important to remember that reacting is natural and normal; it is not the same as being ill.



1.2. The 4 stage process of crisis reaction

We react to crises in a four-stage process. Each stage has typical reactions. The stages are:

1. We feel the impact of the crisis

- Experience shock and numbness
- Feel fear and helplessness
- May last for hours or days
- May be too overwhelmed to function

The characteristics of individuals who are currently going through a crisis or traumatic event are collected by Albert R. Roberts, professor and author about crisis intervention.

- > Beginning to recognize that there's a threat
- > Discovering that the stress and trauma of the event cannot be dealt with using existing coping skills
- > Experiencing fear, confusion, and stress
- > Exhibiting symptoms of distress and discomfort
- > Entering a state of imbalance where the crisis situation seems insurmountable

2. We withdraw and may act confused

- People pull back from the crisis situation
- Mental isolation- feel separated from the others
- Denial of the crisis
- May claim there has been a mistake
- People protect themselves until they can face it

3. Finally we are able to focus on the crisis

- Start to focus on reality
- Regain some sense of control over emotions
- Begin to look for solutions and make plans

4. We adapt and resolve it

- Start to act according to plans
- Start to make changes
- Life goes on but differently as before

The effects of a crisis can last for a very long time however it also has an effect on you immediately after the event. The symptoms and their timelines are typically different for each individual.



1.3. Crisis reactions over the course of time

Crisis reactions during and immediately after the event

Psychological shock is the mind's way of protecting itself from what has happened and focusing the human resources on survival and action.

Shock may manifest in the following ways:

- Time seems to stop.
- You feel numb and surreal; you do not necessarily experience much emotion.
- It is hard to think clearly.
- Some people experience physical symptoms, such as dizziness, nausea, shaking and sweating. The pulse and breathing can become faster.

A person can go into shock during a traumatic event or immediately after it.

You can support a person in shock by helping them calm down and making sure that they are safe. Physical shock is connected to a sudden drop in blood pressure. It is not the same thing as psychological shock.

Crisis reactions days and weeks after the event

Reactions after having been in shock depend on the seriousness of the event, among other factors. In the days and weeks after a traumatic event, people can experience

- Relief
- Sadness and anger
- Guilt for surviving and for the losses of others
- Fear that the event will reoccur
- Inability to make decisions and plan everyday life
- Feeling disconnected and having difficulty in explaining their emotions to others
- Physical symptoms, such as pain, loss of appetite and trouble sleeping.

Crisis reactions weeks and months after the event

When weeks and months have passed since the traumatic event, most people begin to accept the changes in their lives and adapt to them. However, fear, anger, anxiety, irritation, sadness and hopelessness are still normal feelings.

Stress reactions can include

- Hyperactivity, being constantly active
- Being passive and withdrawing from others
- Heightened vigilance and an overprotective approach to loved ones
- Changes in appetite and sleep patterns

Psychological first aid can still be helpful, but long-term stress reactions are a sign of needing professional help.



Crisis reactions years after the event

Most people recover from crisis situations and are able to adapt to the life changes they generate. However, situations reminding of the traumatic event can trigger a stress reaction.

Sadness is a normal reaction to loss, e.g. divorce, move, illness or death of a loved one. It is important to remember that grief follows no schedule. However, if sadness feels unsurmountable, you may require assistance from a mental health professional. It is never too late to seek help.”

Having accurate information about typical reactions coupled with understanding & support from friends, co-workers, family or other loved ones can make a big difference to people affected by traumatic events. Sometimes, however, that is not enough and professional assistance may be needed. This does not mean a person is weak, crazy, etc. It simply means that the event or combination of events was just too powerful or overwhelming for the person to manage alone.

While most crisis events are time-limited, long-term exposure to stressors and traumas can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other anxiety disorders.

PTSD is an anxiety disorder caused by very stressful, frightening or distressing events. It is a mental and behavioural disorder that can develop because of exposure to a traumatic event, such as sexual assault, warfare, traffic collisions, child abuse, domestic violence, or other threats on a person's life.

Most people who experience traumatic events do not develop PTSD. People who experience interpersonal violence such as rape, other sexual assaults, being kidnapped, stalking, physical abuse by an intimate partner, and incest or other forms of childhood sexual abuse are more likely to develop PTSD.

Individuals suffering from PTSD experience flashbacks, nightmares, sleep disturbances and other symptoms, which often become so severe that they interfere with daily life.

2. Crisis reactions on the level of the community

During a disaster, people may experience a wide range of emotions which can lead to psychological barriers. The barriers can interfere with cooperation and response from the public and may lead to unwanted actions by the crowd. If we are aware of these potential reactions we can ease them. By acknowledging these feelings in words, expressing empathy, and being honest we can mitigate these reactions. We have the power to support our community. Here are the potential reactions and some tips how to deal with them:

Uncertainty

During a crisis, ideally there are more questions than answers. The actions that people can take to protect themselves may be unclear. This uncertainty will challenge everyone. To reduce our anxiety, we seek out information to determine options and confirm or disconfirm our beliefs. We may discount information that is distressing or overwhelming.



What helps? **Acknowledge uncertainty.** Acknowledge and express empathy for your audience's uncertainty and share with them the process you are using to get more information about the evolving situation. This will help people to manage their anxiety. Use statements such as, "I can't tell you today what's ..., but I can tell you what we're doing to find out. Here's the first step..."

Tell them

- What you know.
- What you don't know.
- What process you are using to get answers.

Instead of offering a promise outside of your absolute control, promise something you can be sure of. Never make a promise, unless it's in your absolute power to deliver.

Fear, Anxiety, and Dread

In a crisis, people in your community may feel fear, anxiety, confusion, and intense dread. In some cases, a perceived threat can motivate and help people take desired actions. However in other cases, fear of the unknown or fear of uncertainty may prevent people from taking action. When people are afraid, and do not have adequate information, they may react in inappropriate ways to avoid the threat.

What helps? We can help by acknowledging it with empathy. Using statements like, "we've never faced anything like this before in our community and it can be frightening." By depicting an accurate assessment of the level of danger and providing action messages so that affected people do not feel helpless.

Hopelessness and Helplessness

According to psychological research, if community members let their feelings of fear, anxiety, confusion, and dread grow unchecked during a crisis, they will most likely begin to feel hopeless or helpless. Hopelessness is the feeling that nothing can be done by anyone to make the situation better. Helplessness is the feeling that people have that they, themselves, have no power to improve their situation or protect themselves. If a person feels helpless to protect him- or herself, he or she may withdraw mentally or physically. Avoiding hopelessness is a very important aim during a crisis.

What helps? Instead of trying to eliminate a community's emotional responses to the crisis, help community members manage their negative feelings by setting them on a course of action. Taking an action during a crisis can help to restore a sense of control and overcome feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. You can support people by advising them to take actions that are constructive and directly relate to the crisis they're facing. These actions may be symbolic, such as putting up a flag or preparatory, such as donating blood or creating a family check-in plan. Helping the members of your community feel empowered and in control of at least some parts of their lives may also reduce fear.



Denial

Denial refers to the act of refusing to acknowledge either imminent harm or harm that has already occurred. People may receive and understand the message, but behave as though the danger is not as great as they are being told. When people doubt a threat is real, they may seek further confirmation.

What helps? You could help by offering several trustful sources of information for your community members. Denial can, at least in part, be prevented or addressed with clear, consistent communication from a trusted source.

Remember, both people directly affected by the crisis and those who anticipate being affected by the crisis need enough information to help them manage anxiety and avoid behaviours that may divide the community.

GOOD to KNOW: Most of us tend to have stronger psychological and emotional reactions to a crisis if it's man made or imposed.

3. Caring for yourself and for others during crises

In times of crisis it's our natural reaction to start to care for our loved ones and for those in need. As described in the previous chapter we all have automatic reactions to crisis situations but we have another choice – we can learn to respond as crisis situations impact even care givers. The study on the Impact of the COVID 19-19 Pandemic showed an increase in the rate of burnout, dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and compassion fatigue; a reduction in personal accomplishment; and levels of compassion satisfaction similar to those before the pandemic. In order to be able to care for others in a lasting and supportive way, we need to care for ourselves first and be aware of our resources and support network.

3.1. Caring for yourself in crisis situations

While you care for others it is vital to pay attention to your state as well. If you are happy, you have enough energy to make others happy – the same way if you are worn out, tired and stressed you cause even more chaos around you. Engaging in a self-care routine has been clinically proven to reduce or eliminate anxiety and depression, reduce stress, improve concentration, minimise frustration and anger, increase happiness, improve energy, and more. From a physical health perspective, self-care has been clinically proven to reduce heart disease, stroke and cancer. However caregivers often forget to take care of their own health. The prolonged exposure from listening to clients' traumatic stories makes you susceptible to compassion fatigue and is not always easily identifiable. Compassion fatigue is a preoccupation with absorbing trauma and emotional stresses of others, and this creates a secondary traumatic stress in the helper. Whereas burnout is about being 'worn out' and can affect any profession. The impacts of burnout emerge gradually over time and are easily identified to direct links and stressors within the working and personal life.



3.2. Triggers for burn out

Unhelpful and unhealthy coping strategies can be triggers for burnout some of these include:

- Work longer hours
- Don't delegate
- Don't take breaks
- Don't say no
- Bottle up feelings
- Procrastinate and avoid
- Be a perfectionist
- Take work home
- Take on social justice issues
- Take on issues
- Don't talk about it
- Squeeze out hobbies

If you think you might be suffering from compassion fatigue, you can take the [Professional Quality of Life Scale Screening test \(PROQOL\)](#). ProQOL is a self-assessment test for burnout and compassion fatigue

Your mindset plays a big role. Five factors associated with compassion fatigue are:

1. High expectations of work
2. Idealistic worldviews
3. The view that self-care is selfish
4. A lack of strong personal boundaries
5. An overdeveloped sense of responsibility

3.3. Learn to cope!

We all need to learn to be compassionate to ourselves and our reactions. The followings might be helpful to shift your mindset to help you feel better.

- "I'll see the Good Whilst Accepting the Bad": Mental resilience is reminding ourselves that positive outcomes are not always achievable.
- "Self-Care is Essential to Mental and Physical Health"
- "It's Okay to Set Compassionate Boundaries" - deciding what you will and won't accept for your wellbeing, learn to say no and to ask for help.
- SWITCHING ON AND OFF! It is your empathy for others that helps you do this work. It is vital to take good care of your thoughts and feelings by monitoring how you use them. Resilient workers know how to turn their feelings off when they go on duty, but on again when they go off duty. It is a coping strategy. It is a way they get maximum protection while working (switched off) and maximum support while resting (switched on). How to become better at switching on and off
 1. Switching is a conscious process. Talk to yourself as you switch.
 2. Use images that make you feel safe and protected (switch off) or connected and cared for (switch on) to help you switch.
 3. Find rituals that help you switch as you start and stop work.
 4. Breathe slowly and deeply to calm yourself when starting a tough job.



3.4. Building resilience

Beth Payne, an expert on resilience writes that building your resilience is one of the best ways to prepare for a crisis since resilient people and teams are more adaptive, flexible, and collaborative. If an emergency is prolonged, and we don't intentionally maintain our resilience, we risk becoming burned out and ineffective. Here are some ways you can build individual and team resilience during a crisis:

- **People Priority:** The highest priority in an emergency is the safety and security of team members. Take the time to ensure that everyone has what they need to feel secure.
- **Use your support network:** Take the time to eat a meal with your family, have lunch with a friend, or chat with friends or family by phone. It is easy to become consumed by the crisis, but a few minutes spent with your social support network (made up of friends, family and peers) is a valuable resilience boost. Poor social support has been linked to depression and loneliness and has been shown to alter brain function and increase the risk of alcohol use, cardiovascular disease and depression. Our social support systems involve both different types of social support as well as integration into different social groups. These social relationships influence both; our physical and mental health. They can help us to make healthy choices and habits as well as help to cope with stress.
- **Ask for Help** One of the best ways to maintain resilience during a crisis is to resist the temptation to prove how capable you are by going it alone. Be proactive early on and get the help you need.
- **Eat, Hydrate, and Exercise:** Minimise caffeine and sugar since these only provide a temporary boost followed by a significant drop in energy. If you want to have snack foods, bring in fruit and nuts instead of candy and chips. Avoid alcohol since it will mask but not reduce stress. Make time to exercise even if it's only taking a ten-minute walk.
- **Take Rest Breaks** While a crisis often requires 24/7 work coverage, that doesn't mean people should work non-stop. Develop work schedules that incorporate time for rest breaks, meals, and relaxation. Leaders should designate deputies so they can also take time to eat, sleep, and relax.
- **Identify Goals** Many of us assume we know what our goals are during a crisis, but hearing those goals articulated will help ensure that everyone understands and shares the same goals. Remind people often what your shared goals are.
- **Stay Positive** Look for the positive in everything you do and remind colleagues what good has happened every day. It's easy to focus on the negative in a crisis so intentionally shift your focus to something more positive.
- **Communicating extensively and effectively** is critical in a crisis since staff will fill a vacuum of information with rumours that are often worse than reality.
- **Encourage Humour** Even though you may find yourself in a life or death situation, there is still room somewhere to have fun and laugh - find it. Be sure you are culturally sensitive when you do this.
- **Actively Problem Solve** In a crisis, it's easy to get stuck when things do not go as planned. Work with colleagues to identify issues and find solutions.



- Do What's Right Sometimes in a crisis, rules and regulations need to be bent to do what's right. While you don't want to disregard policies and procedures, there will be times when they will conflict with what is right.

Our challenge is to maintain our resilience so that we can keep doing the work with care, energy, and compassion. Here are listed 10 things to do for each day:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Get enough sleep. | 11. Practicing gratitude is a good way in times of crisis, at the end of the day to think about what I am grateful for (3 things to list, write down) |
| 2. Get enough to eat. | |
| 3. Do some light exercise. | |
| 4. Vary the work that you do. | |
| 5. Do something pleasurable. | 12. Planning and re-planning is very important but so is grieving. Mourning things -individually +/- in a group- in order to move on. |
| 6. Focus on what you did well. | |
| 7. Learn from your mistakes. | |
| 8. Share a private joke. | |
| 9. Pray, meditate or relax. | 13. Spiritual work and learning is something can be very good investments for the future. |
| 10. Support a colleague. | |

3.5. Tips for Self-Care

- Reach out and make contact with others.
- Talk with friends and loved ones.
- Recognize and accept your feelings as “normal” responses to extreme circumstances.
- Express your feelings appropriately; keep a journal to help in the process.
- Structure your time.
- Maintain your usual schedule as much as you can.
- Get extra rest and set aside time to relax.
- Eat regular balanced meals even if you don't feel hungry.
- Exercise or participate in some regular physical activity.
- Delay major decisions or changes in your life.
- Avoid excessive use of alcohol or drugs.
- Consider professional counselling if symptoms persist.

3.6. How to Support a Friend in Crisis

- Reach out and spend time with the person in crisis.
- Make time to talk, encourage the person to express his/her feelings, and listen.
- Respect the person's need to spend time alone, too.
- Help with everyday tasks where possible; run errands, share a meal, pick up mail, care for a pet, etc.
- Don't try to offer false cheer or “fix things.”
- Listening non-judgmentally is a powerful form of support.
- Help the person connect with supportive resources.
- Encourage the person to seek professional help when appropriate.
- Take care of yourself and know your own limits.



4. What can citizens do in crises

4.1. Active citizenship

The term is frequently used to describe citizens that engage in a broad range of activities that promote and sustain democracy. Active citizenship usually refers to participation that requires respect for others and that does not contravene human rights and democracy. 'Active Citizens' are those who look beyond their basic legal duties (e.g.: to have a passport issued by the state and the duty to pay taxes to the state) and are further engaged voluntarily in activities that somehow affect the public life of their locality or communities. This might be through 'civil' society (citizens using their freedom to join together, usually for the purpose of managing social change in their locality) or 'civic' society (relating to the ruling powers or decision makers of the community). These actions include civil society activities such as protesting and collecting petitions, community activities such as volunteering, and conventional political engagement such as voting or campaigning for elections.

The Council of Europe, Education for Democratic Citizenship (2004) identifies some key characteristics of Active Citizenship, such as:

- Participation in the community (involvement in a voluntary activity or engaging with local government agencies)
- People are empowered to play a part in the decisions and processes that affect them, particularly public policy and services
- Knowledge and understanding of the political/social/economic context of their participation so that they can make informed decisions
- Able to challenge policies or actions and existing structures on the basis of principles such as equality, inclusiveness, diversity and social justice.

As a responsible citizen you can take action in many different ways in times of crisis. However before engaging into action here are a few things to remember:

- First, stay safe when supporting others.
- Let family and friends know what you're doing
- Support others by phone or video calls where possible
- Don't take on too much – be careful not to let people down
- Let local services know if you're working with someone with serious issues
- To ensure your protection and the vulnerable people you might be working with, follow the health and safety regulations of your country and the advice of the organisation.

You can help your organisation and your community prepare for, respond to, and recover from an emergency by using six main principles suggested by The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention' manual for Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC):

1. be first,

4. express empathy,



2. be right,
3. be credible,
5. promote action,
6. show respect.

4.2. Activities during the four phases of a crisis

As an active member of society we all want to offer useful support during a crisis. Within the different phases of a crisis there are plenty of activists needed for various tasks. The CERC Rhythm graphic shows the four phases of a crisis.



[Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication \(CERC\): THE CERC RHYTHM](#)

Main activities of the different phases are listed below:

Tasks during preparation:

- Develop partnerships and build relationships with organisations and community stakeholders that you expect to work with in a response.
- Draft and test messages with different populations to make sure that the information is understandable and actionable in a crisis.
- Prepare for the types of disasters you are especially likely to face.
- Create crisis communication plans.
- Select and train spokespersons.
- Determine the approval process for releasing information.
- Engage communities in preparedness planning: Get to know and be known by the people you will be helping in an emergency. Include representatives or leaders for established organisations in your preparedness planning activities and exercises.

Tasks during initial:

- During this stage of acute danger, the priority for all is basic safety and survival.
- Express empathy right away.
- Provide simple explanations of risk.
- Promote action. Give people things they can do to reduce the risk you are describing and actions to stay safe.

Tasks during maintenance:

- Ensure the community understands ongoing risks and actions they can take to reduce risk or harm.

- Provide more background information.
- Explain the different risks that exist for different people.
- Encourage public support and cooperation with response and recovery efforts.
- Address misunderstandings, rumours, and unclear facts.

Tasks during resolution:

- Motivate people to take action or remain vigilant.
- Discuss, document, and share lessons learned from the response.
- Evaluate plans.

If you feel like you have the urge to inform your local community there are very important and useful tips on how to communicate in crisis situations. The affected people and those at immediate risk are ready to act right away and need information on the situation and how to stay safe immediately. With effective communication, we can impact how our community responds to and recovers from these potentially devastating emergencies. While every event is unique, some crisis communication steps are universal and can help your community effectively manage most emergencies.

Step 1: Verify the Situation

Step 2: Conduct Notifications

Step 3: Conduct Crisis Assessment (Activate Crisis Plan)

Step 4: Organise Assignments Quickly

Step 5: Prepare Information and Obtain Approvals

Step 6: Release Information through Prearranged Channels

Step 7: Obtain Feedback and Conduct Crisis Evaluation

Step 8: Conduct Public Education

Step 9: Monitor Events

4.3. Suggested social actions during crisis

- Regularly check upon your family members
- Regularly check those physically around you- e.g.: you neighbours
- Set up an emergency phone call chain within your family and friends
- Volunteer with trusted organisations
- Open a social media platform to advocate for change
- Join or create local groups on social media
- Set up a club or an informal group
- Organise a fundraiser or donation campaign
- Play your part in combating fake news
- Start discussions about the crisis with your peers
- Follow your local council's updates
- Support one of your favourite organisation
- Share knowledge, technologies and techniques in your neighbourhood
- Raise community awareness on an important issue and organise activities around them
- Connect and collaborate globally, e.g.: <https://global-Covid.blog>



5. HOW TO ACTIVATE YOUR COMMUNITY DURING CRISIS

In order to activate the local community in a crisis, it is important to have a continuous and active relationship with them, even during calm times. Knowing that community-based organisations are created for local communities, at the initiative of local citizens, they are the most credible representatives of local citizens' interests and concerns.

5.1. How to be prepared?

Have a plan!

To be able to activate your community in critical times it is essential to have a plan. This means it is advised to prepare a crisis management plan for your community (– depending on your status within the community. Your crisis management plan (CMP) should outline how to respond to a critical situation that would negatively affect your community's ability to operate.

The key component of a crisis management plan is the safety and well-being of human life. The goals of crisis management are to prevent damage and to return the community to its normal operations as quickly as possible, and ensure that people are safe. You need to decide what services, activities will have to go on and what new activities have to be implemented during a crisis. This has to be known by the members of your community as soon as possible. To keep them interested and informed remember to co-create, to engage your community members into the planning process. You can take this as an excellent opportunity to map your members' attitude, find out why they are inactive. To prepare a crisis management plan the following steps are necessary. You can get more information on how to write a crisis management plan in the next chapter.

1. Identify the goal of the plan.
2. Identify stakeholders.
3. Create a hierarchy for sharing information on the crisis.
4. Assign people to create fact sheets.
5. Identify and assess example crisis scenarios.
6. Identify and answer common questions.
7. Identify potential risks.

Manage resources!

Every community has obvious and hidden resources that are either unknown or unused which could come handy during crises. Mapping and planning with the local resources (physical, human, immaterial, social and community, and financial) of your community could save plenty of time. Community resources include people, places, activities and things; they could be businesses, organisations, public service institutions or individuals in the community. To prepare an inventory of your community's resources in advance would be a good basis for the crisis planning.



If you want your community to be able to respond to crisis situations promptly it's useful to have an independent financial fund with a given purpose - to be able to support those members of the community who are the most affected by the crisis. As part of the co-creation process of the crisis management plan the community could create a crisis fund with each member's donations. Regarding the crisis fund it is crucial to agree on clear rules created and accepted by all community members.

The use of open and covered spaces in a crisis should also be planned in advance. It should be decided what will be where, so that all community members know exactly where to go for help or assistance. In order to be able to allocate helpers and to have information about all members of your community, prepare an emergency communications plan in which you make an initial call to one person, who then calls the next person, and so on to make sure that all members know what is happening in the event of an emergency.

5.2. Principles and skills

Individuals and organisations around the world had to adjust very quickly to new ways of working. Leaders had to change how they worked with their organisations and teams during a very difficult time. For many, little guidance was available and they had to adapt rapidly as the situation progressed.

To lead a group of people in a crisis situation there are essential guiding principles to follow:

- Organisational Principles: Organise, Plan, Anticipate, Practice, Monitor
- Operational Principles: Don't Hesitate, Take Control, Take the initiative, Aggressively Seek Information, Demand Accuracy, Be ready to Adapt, Be Thorough
- Communication Principles: Communicate Facts, Communicate with Empathy, Demonstrate Accountability, Show the steps you are taking.

In order to follow the above described principles specific skills must be executed during crisis situations by those guiding groups of people. Some of these skills are talents that emerge in crisis situations others need to be learned:

- Situational awareness: you need to assess the relevance and completeness of available information, anticipate the likely consequences.
- Improvisation: you need to be able to quickly decide to change plans based on the information distilled through situational awareness. Improvisation goes hand-in-hand with creativity and adaptability.
- Creativity or open minded: you need to be able to look at an event from multiple perspectives before deciding on specific plans and solutions. Crisis management requires out-of-the-box thinking and creative solutions.
- Adaptability: you need to be able to change course on a moment's notice.
- Good at prioritising: you need to have a strong sense of which issues should be tackled first and why based on an understanding of how tasks and solutions are interrelated and the cascade effect of doing them in different orders.
- Strong communicator: you need to interact with groups and individuals in a wide variety of contexts and situations, including soliciting and clearly and concisely sharing important information. You need to be able to distil the most important information and present it with the right tone and frequency. This keeps people focused on what's



important. In order to avoid confusion, messages must be clear, crisp, concise, and timely.

- Good coordinator: be able to quickly organise cohesive teams that are well-suited for the tasks at hand.
- Agility: you need an experimentation mind-set, knowing that not every solution will work, try something, learn from it and refine it, you have to embrace failure.
- Decisiveness: you need to make decisions while taking risks in the face of confusing, conflicting, and changing information. You need to be able to rapidly make the right decisions in the face of difficult circumstances. You also need to be able to facilitate collaborative decision making if needed.
- Emotional intelligence: you need to be able to acknowledge other people's emotions and use that information to make sound decisions, and communicate, accordingly. You must deal with the emotional lives of your teams by demonstrating empathy and keeping them connected to one another and to the organisation.
- Cool-headed: you need to handle stress and remain calm and focused in the midst of chaos.
- Relationship management: you need to be able to maintain relationships with different groups of people.
- Re-evaluation: be able and willing to assess emergency response by repeatedly asking, "How are we doing?" and "What are we missing?"

It is important to mention here that any leader has to pay attention to where to focus – especially in crisis situations. This concept is fully explained by Daniel Goleman, he defined the triple most important focus areas for leaders.



The triple focus areas for leaders defined by Daniel Goleman

Daniel Goleman explains why leaders need to cultivate their awareness at three levels and what they can do to improve upon these three areas of focus in this [2013 HBR video](#).

It all starts with self-

awareness. Before the pandemic all but halted flights, one of the first announcements, in the safety demonstration before the flight commenced, called on travellers to put their own mask on first before helping others. The same applies to leaders. Even experienced leaders have their limits and need to invest in themselves and build their inner focus. They can only support their teams and achieve their goals if they show up fully centred. Leaders have to look after themselves in order to look after others.

To maintain effective performance in a severely disruptive crisis situation, there are some general leadership and management practices to consider. Adopting a learning and leadership framework provides a pathway for organisations to develop their most precious people resource and cement a learning and innovation culture in which teams can continually learn together, and where creativity and innovation are encouraged and celebrated at all levels.

When you are creating the learning framework for your community to keep members engaged it is important to focus on the relation of culture and adult learning. When leaders and community organisers also have to act as educators they have to be aware that being a part of a culture influences our learning, remembering, talking and behaving. Therefore culture determines to a great extent the learning styles also.

Although culture is intangible, it is reflected through everything one says and does. Therefore, adult educators not only need to be creative and flexible with their instruction, but also need to take a holistic approach to improve cultural awareness and competency of adult students. Incorporating collaboration-based teamwork into the curriculum can minimise possible negative impacts of culture. Most students are far more comfortable talking to a few classmates at the same time than interacting with the entire class. Being engaged in dialog with a few classmates, individual learners have sufficient time to get to know each other at a personal level, which helps build a learning tie that later may become very important to support learning. The strong presence of this tie makes learners willing to tolerate differences existing within the group to avoid embarrassment. In addition, this tie among group members is essential for understanding and appreciating differences among members and for improving emotional comfort. Working with a smaller number of people also allows individual students to shift their attention from paying attention to the differences that exist between team members.

To improve cultural awareness and competency of any community, the most important to adult educators is the ability to critically reflect on their identity and cultural perspectives and be well aware of the associated limitations to their teaching practices. Critical self-reflection is important for responsive adult educators to develop a positive cultural identity and a precondition to fairly conduct culture related learning activities without allowing the dominant culture to minority cultures.

6. Ways to engage your local community into common actions during crisis situations

6.1. Citizen or Community Engagement

There are many different community engagement strategies. However, here we list only a few that help officials or leaders navigate a discussion with people in the community before and during those times when community-level emergency actions must be taken in a short time with incomplete, new and possibly changing information.



The following engagement strategies allow the public to share its perspective on the issue of concern. To decide what works in the context of the current emergency, consider its pros and cons.

Strategies (from least to greatest engagement):

- Social media chat (real time or set period for comment): Facebook or twitter.
- Town hall community conference call
- Open regularly scheduled official function to public comment (monthly commissioner's meeting)
- Specially scheduled town hall meeting.
- Authorities meeting with organised potentially dissenting groups on the group's turf.

There are a number of further tools or techniques that you can use to implement public participation. These include in-person tools (those that involve face-to-face interaction – meetings or workshops, for example) and remote tools (those that do not involve face-to-face interaction – written surveys or websites, for example). This tools section is organised around the fundamental purpose of the tool:

- [Tools to Inform the Public](#) -- techniques that you can use to provide members of the public with the information they need to understand the project and decision process
- [Tools to Generate and Obtain Input](#) -- techniques that you can use to obtain public input to the decision process
- [Tools for Consensus Building and Agreement-Seeking](#) – techniques that you can use to bring diverse groups of stakeholders together to engage in shared learning and decision making.

If you are interested in further public participation tools that government agencies can use to collaborate and engage with their community please read EPA's Public Participation Guide.

6.2. Citizen participation

Organisations and charismatic individuals have the opportunity to step up and engage their communities to support those in need. To start *a new initiative locally the following attitudes are useful:*

Make time to understand the local scene, who's there and how things happen. Chat with neighbours, colleagues, others in the community you may know. Attend community workshops and meetings; engage with local groups to get a sense of local people, place, and context. Which key community leaders, organisations and networks will be useful to have on your radar?

Be positive, proactive and observant and take every opportunity to meet new people and organisations. Do what you say you'll do, this shows respect and helps to build trust and confidence.



6.3. Engaging local citizens

We all must do all we can to help more and more people to move from being consumers who only care about their own interests and well-being to becoming aware citizens who take responsibility for their choices, their environment and their community.

Already existing **informal groups and online communities** have a great potential to efficiently represent needs, ideas, decisions of local people and become key potential players in the civil and public sector. Civil society structures are usually struggling to engage enough participants, activists, members for their missions and actions.

Co-creation is a good way to engage locals and to provide them the sense of co-ownership of a new project as it is a form of collaborative innovation: ideas are shared and improved together, rather than kept to oneself. A co-creation process can come very handy as it enables organisations to:

- find a connection between groups that would normally not collaborate;
- raise awareness and sensitivity towards important issues with certain;
- groups/individuals;
- create a safe space for sharing;
- create a common understanding;
- enable the creation of more layered and nuanced exhibitions and events;
- build relationships between groups/individuals that exist well beyond the scope of a project;
- empower minority perspectives.

Below you find the most useful and easy-to implement games, methods to develop local organisations and communities.

Tools for planning:

- [Strategic planning](#)
- [Future search](#)
- [Dragon Dreaming](#)
- [Collective mind mapping](#)

Tools for creativity:

- [Photo voice](#)
- [Happiness door](#)
- [Brown bag lunch](#)
- [Brainstorming](#)

Tools for discussion:

- [World Café](#)
- [Fish Bowl](#)

Tools for decision making:

- [You consent dissent](#)
- [Five to fold](#)
- [Constellation game](#)
- The Citizens' Jury method

Tools for problem solving:

- [Wisdom council](#)
- [Solution focus](#)
- [Action learning](#)



The Citizens' Jury method is an exciting, unique democracy-building method that simultaneously fosters civic engagement, develops debate culture and moves participants out of their own prejudices, while inviting them on an exciting adventure into the world of litigation. While it supports the sensitisation to democratic values, debates and social challenges of today the Citizens' Jury method is a unique way to engage locals into the decision about their community.

The six steps of resident involvement:

1. Consultation meeting with the representatives of the municipality or sub-region, the actors and decision-makers of the application programme
2. Preparation of community planning: questionnaires, interviews with key actors
3. Preliminary forum: consultation meeting with the experts in the field (e.g. social workers in the case of a programme on extreme poverty, health workers in the case of a programme on health promotion, NGOs)
4. Conducting the population planning (minimum 4-hour planning session with local residents)
5. Training for programme professionals: how to involve the community in planning?
6. Evaluation report on the results of community planning

In case you consider starting your own project for and in your local community the following 10 steps are suggested to achieve success.

- Step 1: Find Out What Is Needed in Your Community.
- Step 2: See What You Have the Ability to Do.
- Step 3: Match the need with the skills of your team.
- Step 4: Develop a Plan.
- Step 5: Recruit Volunteers.
- Step 6: Make a Budget.
- Step 7: Make a Timeline.
- Step 8: Raise Money.

7. Motivate and inspire people to remain active in times of crisis

Many people feel a sense of commitment to their neighbourhood and are actively involved in activities to improve the quality of life. However, keeping them motivated in the long term is not always that simple for non-profit organisations.

People feel good in an environment that is improving their self-esteem. People with a high degree of self-esteem are those who meet three motivational needs at the same time, namely: the need for co-ownership, the need for uniqueness and the sense of power. (McCurley, Lynch, 2000)

- **Co-ownership** means that people feel connected to something, they feel they belong somewhere, that they are part of a group or an organisation they can identify with.
- **Uniqueness** is a feeling that a person is authentic, unique and has a combination of remarkable qualities and characteristics. You can build a feeling of uniqueness through recognition of the results of your team member's work. In a positive and understanding environment, people can be themselves. They can be unique and feel the support of the group.



- **Sense of power** – in a positive way it means a feeling of effectiveness, feeling that one can bring a change. That is why your team members need to work on something that makes sense. Even though they are working on a simple task (e.g. mailing), we need to tell them what sense the task has for the organisation and for the target group and how it is linked with other tasks and results achieved.

Keeping people engaged has to be a conscious decision of the leader and a continuous activity within a team whether in a work environment or in an informal group of active citizens or volunteers.

A great way to keep your team motivated and engaged is to use the above described co-creation methods.

Those active citizens who are willing to take action for the benefit of others out of their own free will without any remuneration are called volunteers. If they join an organisation most probably they will be given guidance and support.

The key to keep volunteers engaged in an organisation is to determine what motivates them and then to recognize them, based on their motivations. By linking motivations to recognition, you are acknowledging the reasons why volunteers are involved in your organisation and placing value on that involvement in a meaningful way to the volunteer. (Humphrey-Pratt, 2006)

7.1. Tips for good recognition

- **Be timely and spontaneous.** The longer you wait, the harder it will be to say, and the less effective the compliment becomes. Say it now, rather than saving it for the annual recognition night.
- **Be sincere.** If you don't mean it, don't say it. If you try to deceive, your non-verbal communication will give you away, and you will end up sounding artificial and forced.
- **Be specific.** Give attention to details. Be specific in indicating exactly what the person did that was so important, and why. Compliment the "little" as well as the "big" things.
- **Reinforce it nonverbally.** A warm pat on the back, a wink, a smile, an agreeing nod of the head, excitement in your eyes will more than triple the impact of your words. The desired effect of praise can be amplified (or negated) by how it is given.
- **Do it often.** Recognition of volunteers should happen on a year-round, frequent and informal basis. Begin by saying "thank you" often!
- **Recognize the person, not the work.** It's best to phrase recognition to emphasise the contribution of the individual and not the end result. "You did a great job!" as opposed to "This is a great job!"
- **Be consistent.** Make sure that whatever standards of recognition you establish, they can be consistently maintained by your organisation/institution in years to come. Holding a volunteer recognition dinner one year sets up expectations for future volunteers.



- **Customise it.** Getting to know each of your volunteers and their interests will help you learn how best to recognize each individual and make him or her feel special. (Volunteer Appreciation Guide, Lip,2005)

Some ideas and tips for recognition of volunteers (Mc Curley, Lynch, 2005):

Daily means of providing recognition:

- Saying “Thank you”.
- Telling volunteers “You did a great job”.
- Suggesting volunteers join you for coffee.
- Asking for their opinions.
- Greeting volunteers when they come in the morning.
- Showing interest in their personal interest.
- Smiling when you see them.
- Bragging about them to your boss (in their presence).
- Jotting small thank- you notes to them.
- Having refreshment with volunteers after activities.
- Saying something positive about a volunteer’s personal quality.
- Telling a volunteer what happened at the organisation since their last visit.

Intermediate means of providing recognition:

- Taking volunteers to lunch.
- Providing food at volunteer meetings.
- Letting volunteers put their names on the products they produced.
- Writing them a letter of recommendation.
- Putting volunteers in important task forces or committees.
- Posting graphic displays, showing their progress toward targets.
- Mentioning major contributors by name in your status report to management.
- Inviting volunteers to present their results.
- Giving volunteers permission to go to seminars, conventions or professional meetings.
- Writing articles about their performance for newsletters or newspapers.
- Decorating a volunteer’s work area on their birthday.
- Celebrating the major accomplishments of a volunteer.
- Letting volunteers to represent your organisation at important meetings.
- Making special caps, shirts, bags, agendas
- Encouraging volunteers to write an article about some accomplishment in their volunteering.
- Giving the plaque or certificate for most improved results (or any other title you choose).
- Buying volunteers good equipment for their tasks.
- Getting a volunteer’s picture in the paper/online for outstanding accomplishment.
- Giving a volunteer additional responsibilities and a new title.
- Renting newspaper space to thank volunteers.
- Suggestion and recommendation box.
- Funny notes during stressful times, Field trips, Networking opportunities.



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MODULE 3: CRISIS MANAGEMENT FOR COMMUNITIES – STEP BY STEP

A great advantage of the Crestart project in terms of crisis management for communities' suggestions is that the project partnership includes organisations from 4 EU countries with different socio-economic backgrounds, cultures, local communities' relations and development, and administration involvement in self-governance and public life. All of this as well as the research we have done allow us to have a broader picture and experience thus we can suggest such Bottom up Crisis Management for Communities guidelines and tools that answer different needs and can be applied in a variety of different local communities.

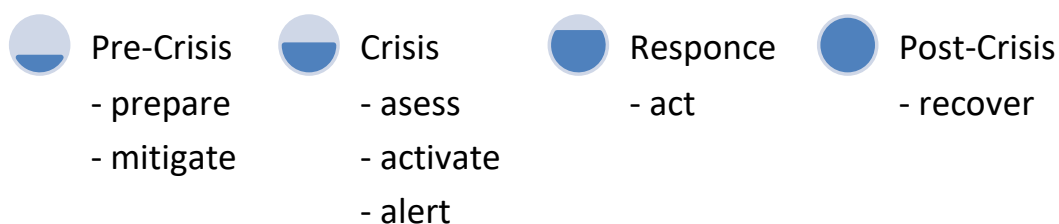
For the needs of the Current Bottom up Crisis Management for Communities Plan we define the following assumptions about change promotion, crisis stages and approach highlights.

- Change promotion

In periods of crisis all efforts are directed to promote a quality change from one vulnerable position of your community to another, better one. In general, all community interventions refer to actions addressing social problems. They are implemented in neighbourhoods, communities, or other public local places. With this understanding, community intervention is intentional action to promote change in the area of community problem/s. It is expressed in different ways depending on the needs and interests of the community.

1. Crisis stages

A crisis situation involves a sequence of events that leads communities from “equilibrium to disequilibrium and back again” (Golan, 1978). A crisis might be unpredictable sometimes, but all crises follow more or less the same pattern that generally involves four components.



1.1. Pre-crisis stage

This first stage occurs before the crisis itself hits. In many cases, this pre-crisis stage will be like any other day. Some crises— cyberattacks, natural disasters, car traffic accidents —can happen at any time, without any prior warning.



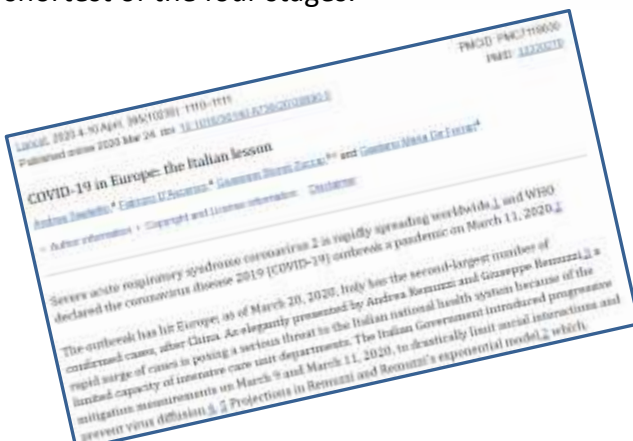
For example with Covid we can accept that the pre-crisis stage started with the announcement of Coronavirus cases in China and the huge amount of people affected by the virus there.

What to do during the pre-crisis stage: Prepare yourself/your team and mitigate. If you feel a crisis is coming, it is now a priority to develop a crisis plan if you don't have one. What will your crisis communication strategy be if you need to communicate urgent information? How the community will you stay connected to ensure their safety and wellbeing? Understanding the answers to these questions now—before the crisis—can ensure you will not be shocked when the crisis will start. At this stage potential threats and risks have also to be proactively monitored.

This stage is also the time to build/check your network of stakeholders and potential volunteers.

1.2. Crisis stage – also known as the acute phase

This is the point of no return where a crisis is here and we can't prevent it from happening. Now the focus needs to be on risk assessment so that you can rapidly respond and mitigate the event's impact. While often the most intense phase, the acute stage is generally the shortest of the four stages.



For example: when Covid first aggressively entered Europe, the world moved from pre-crisis to crisis stage – the pandemic started.

What to do during the crisis stage: the first goal is to assess the situation, with three main questions to answer:

- What is the specific threat or crisis?
- Who is involved or at risk?
- Which response plan should we activate?

Once it is identified what the crisis is, who will be affected and which plan is needed, you need to alert and protect (if possible) any community members who are at risk. It is of crucial importance to quickly send notifications through multiple and different communication channels—such as media, social media, community emails, text messages, but also phone calls and face to face notifications having in mind that some people don't have access or can't work with electronics.

1.3. Response stage

The crisis moves into its response stage and we have to allocate resources needed to address the emergency at hand thus the crisis team takes actions.

This stage can be shorter and longer depending on the type of crisis. Some events, like a power cut due to a storm, could last a few days. Others, like pandemic, could have much longer response periods. No one could predict that the world would still be responding to the COVID-19 pandemic more than two years later.

Example: Different world's answers to Covid pandemic and its negative impacts

Covid-19 vaccine: First Lincolnshire patients gets jab



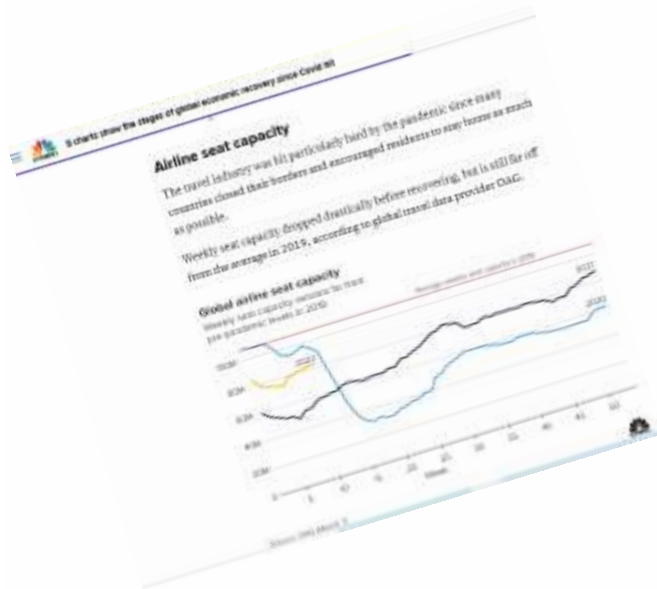
First Person: The power of art in a time of coronavirus crisis



What to do during the response stage: Take action and deal with the effects of the crisis, try to take control at least in some areas which depend on you. It is important to have in mind that in this phase, in prolonged situations where the government/s are not able to supervise and send support to every emergency point, delegating responsibilities or swift decision-making from local community organisations/active citizens can make the crisis response very effective – the crisis response teams will help effectively manage the situation and mitigate additional risks on local level.

1.4. Post-crisis stage

At this stage, the crisis can be considered over as you transition from crisis management back to usual daily life. Depending on the type of crisis, this final crisis resolution stage can take days, weeks, or even months.



Example: The world is slowly recovering after the Covid pandemic period. Some areas of our life can faster go back to “normal”, some other one will do it much slower, and some areas will never be the same.

What to do during the post-crisis stage: recover, assess and repair damages thus the community can be as close as possible back to normal life. This phase should also take into account any impact that the crisis may have had on the well-being of your community and its members. They will need to be taken care of and their return to life with the support of community, administration, specialists.

The crisis response team should assess your local community response to the crisis. After you evaluate the effectiveness of your response, your strategy and plan can be modified and redesigned.

This is the time when your crisis cycle moves back into the first, pre-crisis stage and you begin to monitor the current world environment and life and prepare your community for the next eventual future crisis.

Making your first steps in crisis management on the local community level will help you become more and more capable to overcome different crisis situations and support in a great way your beloved ones, friends and the whole local society. Knowing that the lifecycle of any crisis develops across four distinct phases will help you develop an effective crisis management plan that protects your life. With a deeper understanding of the four stages of a crisis—pre-crisis, crisis, response, and recovery— you will be able to identify which stage you are in and you and your crisis team will be better equipped to tailor your actions and decisions in the best way.



- Be aware about your approach

Usually a crisis doesn't come and finish in one moment. It's a process that has its beginning and progress within a period as well as some post-crisis impact which can be much longer than expected. There are a few strategic highlights which are important for the successful crisis management, as follows:

1. Create a crisis management team as soon as possible
2. Be aware of the facts – they speak clearer and are important by themselves
3. Be objective but positive
4. Don't allow rumours and panic
5. Delegate responsibilities
6. Communication has to reach different target groups
7. Be "here" and "now"
8. Stay focused
9. Regularly self-evaluate
10. Reread your goals
11. Involve different stakeholders as much as possible

When planning emergency procedures, it's important to act as if these situations will definitely happen, instead of hoping that they won't.



The days of playing ostrich – burying your head in the sand and hoping the problem goes away – are gone.¹ The proactive attitude towards emergency planning will help keep your community safe. The best way to start planning for these emergencies and why a crisis management plan for communities.

1

2. Bottom up Crisis Management for Communities Plan



Local communities need a crisis management plan to be prepared for different emergency situations. We have developed a user-friendly, step-by-step activity plan on how to develop a crisis management plan that can be easily adopted in different situations.

The crisis management plan (CMP) has to describe the way local community and different stakeholders have to react to a crisis, including who will be involved and what they will do. It strives to minimize harm and restore normal life as soon as possible.

Crises come in many forms, but generally they threaten our communities' wellbeing, daily life, finances, etc. Some crises jeopardise lives, health, and safety. The crisis management plan is a key piece of crisis management. It has to assure that out of all the information, data, and speculation being thrown around, the community members have to receive trustful information. Furthermore, there is no way to know exactly when a crisis will finish, thus performing a basic risk analysis can give you a generalised idea of the potential threats your community may face.

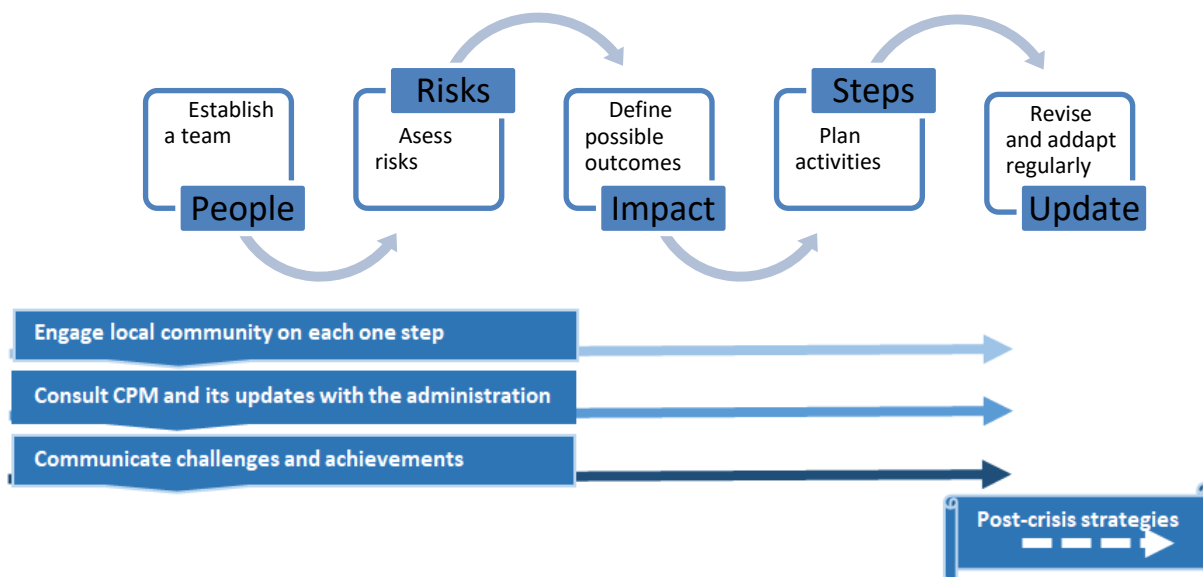
The plan outlines how your community will react if a crisis occurs. Your plan should identify:

- who and how will take action;
- what their roles will be;
- what, when, and how to communicate with your community, administration, broader audience.

The crisis management plan is a document which the crisis management team can refer to and update frequently. There are various ways to create a plan, but in a crisis that affects the community on different levels and ways, we suggest making a checklist as it is easy, manageable, and understandable. When a problem occurs or is solved, the team can check off what items need to be done to respond to the crisis or mark a stage which is reached.

Despite how big and serious is the crisis, divide your crisis management plan into small, easy, and possible steps.





2.1. Establish a team - identify your crisis leadership

The first step to be done – even before you can make the first moves in crisis management planning – is to choose a team of active people to work with during the crisis planning process. The selection procedure has to be open and transparent for every community member. The team should also include people who will take action during a crisis. This team has to work together from the very beginning of the crisis management planning so everyone knows the tasks, the risks, the pros and cons of your crisis strategy, plan, and actions, who are the others involved – partners, volunteers, organisations, administration, citizens. Distribution of roles and responsibilities is crucial and has to be done more or less on a volunteer base. After the team is selected it has to be presented to the local community thus everyone is aware of who is who and how to contact them. You have to plan together and to stand behind the plan and its implementation.

2.1.1. Roles

The crisis management team is essential for the good design and right implementation of the CMP. It has to cover the major areas of interventions within the plan as follows:

- Team Leader,
- Activities' Coordinators,
- PR and emergency communications coordinator,
- Stakeholders' Network Coordinator,
- Risk management, CMP's update and Evaluation Coordinator,
- Platform coordinator (and if possible maintenance), etc.

Depending on the local community scale the crisis management team can have different numbers of members, however if the team is compact it will be much easier for them to

communicate and share information. If the team is bigger there will be a need for a Team Coordination support.

2.2. Crisis management plan template

A crisis management plan template is a repeatable agenda that your crisis management team will use to track unexpected emergencies and other major situations that can negatively impact your community life. The template has to include key details and steps. The information has to be developed in such a clear and well explained way that everyone will know what to do if and when a crisis happens.

You have to develop the CMP template:

- for the particular needs of your team and community in a way that targets the solution of a particular situation - not every crisis is the same, and it is important that you design your plan for the emergency at hand.
- which is easy to be followed by people with different backgrounds as you don't know who will volunteer to be part of the crisis management team from your community. There are different ways to create a crisis management template but here we suggest using a basic template to create many different specific plans for unique situations.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEMPLATE CONTENT:

Activation protocol
Roles
Register of possible risks
Emergency contact list
Procedures to respond crisis
Communication strategy

- Activation protocol - a document which describes what has to happen before a crisis management team will activate the crisis management plan – what situations, list of factors, etc. This is a set of dependencies that need to occur before the plan begins.
- Roles – it is easy to forget essential duties in the chaos of a crisis. Since the beginning of the pre-crisis stage all team roles should be assigned ahead of time with backup personnel identified.
- Risk register - outlines any potential risks your community may face. Depending on the potential crisis that you're planning for, a risk analysis can help you determine the likelihood of this event occurring.
- Emergency contact list - relevant contact information for both members of the crisis management team within your organisation, but also with local emergency responders such as the fire department, poison control, or other important authorities.



- Response procedures - the steps that your team will take during a crisis once the activation protocol is met.
- Communication strategy - the communication plan your team develops to solidify how you'll communicate during an emergency with both internal communication and external communications to external stakeholders.

2.3. Assess risk

The planning process starts with listing and evaluation of various risks your community may face. This can be done as brainstorming sessions or discussion series within the crisis management team and with a broader audience (in order to include the community on the earliest level of these activities).

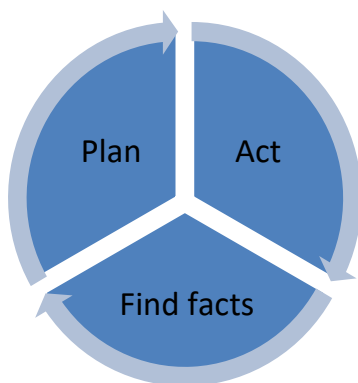
There is a need for this activity to be assigned as role and responsibility to team member/s - for registering all preliminary defined risks and updating them regularly. This can help to identify and analyse the probability of risks occurring and can eliminate progress delays and prepare for potential setbacks. It can also help to visualise which risks are most likely to occur so you can plan a response for these risks.

2.4. Determine the impact on local community

Once you've identified the high-probability risks that could affect your community, determine the impact of these risks with the help of your crisis team. Each risk can cause different outcomes, so it's important to analyse them separately. Potential community impacts may include – social exclusion, low or no access to social and health services, health problems, lack of social contacts, lost income, etc.

2.5. Plan the response

Take each risk you have identified and define what particular actions the crisis management team would need to take to respond to the threat if it would happen.



In periods of crisis it is not only important that our approach is pro-active but it also has to be effective. The key for improving effectiveness is to be aware of current steps and base the next ones on ongoing evidences base thus frequently update the crisis management plan as a learning cycle



2.6. Review and update

Once the crisis management plan is complete make it more than a written or verbal strategy. Update it regularly because potential risks can change with time. It should also include the way to collaborate with key stakeholders so that everyone understands what to do and when.

3. Addressing the crisis' related issues: steps of effective crisis communications

Wrong or poor communication can provoke a lot of damages and instead of supporting overcoming the crisis it can stop or even create problems - between the crisis management team and the local community, within the community itself and between the local community and external actors. In cases of absence of adequate internal and external communications:

- Community responses will break down.
- Stakeholders will not know what is happening and quickly become confused, chaotically, and even negatively reactive.
- The length of time required to bring full resolution to the issue will be extended, often dramatically.
- The impact to community image can be negative and the local community members seriously demotivated.

The basic steps of effective crisis communications are not difficult, but they require planning and regular discussions in the crisis management team. Communication strategies are a critical aspect of crisis management requiring thought and preparation. During a crisis situation, reactive messaging can do more harm than good. When it comes to effective communication, each stage of a crisis needs a slightly different approach:

3.1. Pre-crisis: Demonstrate that you are ready and well aware

Community has to be informed about your readiness and what steps you plan to take before a crisis really occurs. Communicate your plans across different stakeholders, ask for feedback and adjust your plans as necessary.

3.2. Crisis: Alert your team

At the moment our community faces the crisis stage it's time to alert the local community about the facts and danger. Using all channels for information is an effective way to ensure you can reach as many as possible community members.

3.3. Response: Communicate regularly updated information

When the response stage is ongoing communication should be regularly spread as the crisis develops. All adjustments/updates of the crisis management plan should be disseminated immediately. Using a communication platform with event page functionalities, groups, meeting rooms, etc. or combination of different communication channels - calendars, zoom, FB groups, Google rooms, etc. can help consolidate all event-specific information into one central point that the community can access whenever they need to.



3.4. Post-crisis: Assess and evaluate

Once the crisis is over, the crisis management team should assess and evaluate the response and decide what you would do differently in the future. Feedback from the community and discussion on what has happened could be very helpful as information on this stage. Any changes to your crisis management plan or final updates as a result of these evaluations and after the crisis should also be communicated to the community.

4. Fundraising

When you establish relations based on mutual trust within your community or when your team shows your achievements and potential to support the community during a crisis, you can start initiating fundraising campaigns.

The campaigns can be to support:

- your own activities that are in service to the community;
- other institutions/organisations such as hospitals, social centres, etc. in their activities or missing apparatus, materials, food, resources.

The fundraising campaigns can use:

- traditional ways:
 - announcing fundraising goal and the bank account where money can be send in support
 - fundraising platforms
 - direct donation of food, cloths, materials for people in need, etc.
- creative ways
 - “adopting” old or other person in vulnerable position who doesn’t have anyone to help him
 - donation of time and efforts in support of people in need, etc.

All fundraising campaigns should be very strict in reporting exactly what the money has been donated for. If there is not more need but the money still exists or comes, the crisis management team has to immediately inform all donors about this change and ask them for approval thus the money could be directed in other areas of needs.

There is a need for good coordination between different crisis teams operating in the same community, administration, social services suppliers, etc. for the successful fundraising campaigns in periods of crisis. People and businesses are more ready to donate when they can see trustworthy networks staying behind the activities for which money is collected.



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MODULE 4: HOW CAN CULTURE-BASED ACTIVITIES BE USED TO COPE WITH A CRISIS?

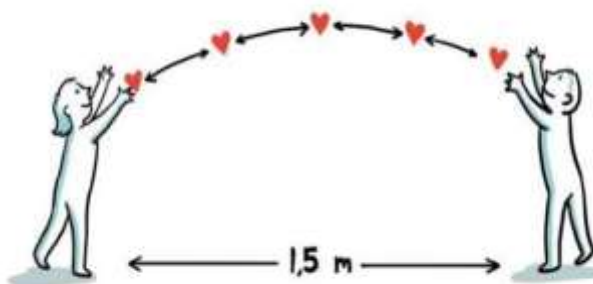


SPRING DATING

Introduction

To answer this question we asked stakeholders and participants of cultural activities.

Below are several answers that matter and underline the importance of cultural activities both in general and in crisis time.



-“Cultural activities are a great way to take a break from the drudgery of everyday life. Or it can just put you with both feet back on the ground”.

-“Consuming different types of cultural activities provides a broad view of what values and norms to

adopt or not, leading to a strong self-image. Moreover, "getting among people", going to experience culture together, is a very strong bonding time. People are social creatures and need this. In my opinion, creating in itself is also a strong tool to promote mental well-being, as it allows you to express every conceivable emotion. So you don't have to bottle anything up in the world of culture; you can be completely yourself and make your own way through it.”

-“I hadn't really thought about this before the COVID crisis, but this situation has made it clear that a lot of people need culture to float away from reality for a while. It is an important outlet not only for me, but for a lot of people.”

-“A big part of how humans have evolved has to do with keeping up and passing on cultures. Culture is the changing and evolving of traditions and everything around them. Without culture, we would be much closer to primitive primaeval man”

More specific answers can be found in the results of the Crestart project.

The Crestart project conducted 100 online surveys per region/country and between 10 and 15 in-depth interviews per region/country with stakeholders who were directly or indirectly involved in organising activities before, during and after the COVID 19 epidemic.

The summary and evaluation of these surveys and interviews can be found on the Crestart website. This evaluation also includes a brief description of the regions where the interviews were conducted.

Given the different distinctive aspects in different regions in terms of faith, rural, urban, demographic differences and diversity of cultures, there is nevertheless uniformity in the way government, voluntary organisations and individuals have deployed cultural activities that could be significant during this period of crisis.

For each region and organisation, it has been a huge challenge to redesign the gaps created by the impossibility of physical contact, mobility and presence of multiple people in a space. Although they themselves were in a difficult situation due to the transition to online operations and the shortfall in "normal" revenues, many NGOs went above and beyond to help mitigate the consequences of the epidemic.

- Sports competitions were banned
- Working from home became the new standard, and home the work environment
- Performances in theatres and festivals were cancelled
- Elderly in nursing homes no longer allowed to receive visitors
- Education was delivered remotely/digitally
- Interaction between people was kept to a minimum

This is a very limited and incomplete enumeration of the constraints that everyone faced, but all these constraints fortunately did not lead to a form of apathy, resignation and acquiescence in society in most environments.

Communities sought new ways to stay in touch and connected.



This manual refers to cultural activities, but in the evaluation, cultural activity is interpreted as a very broad concept: all organised social and cultural activities that are used to contribute to well-being and create connection in society matter.

Hence, in the section on tips and best practices, a broad definition of cultural activities is adopted. This section provides examples of activities that were of value to society during the COVID 19 crisis. Not only tips and best practices are discussed. The interviews and online survey also revealed that this crisis has deepened some core values in our society.

COVID 19 has resulted in new skills being developed by both individuals and organisations, and perhaps also by the government.

Not just 'skills' but also a change in attitude towards the importance of "looking out for each other". Especially in times of crisis, all sections of society appear to be more aware of the common good.

1. What can culture offer you/the community in times of crisis?

The COVID crisis showed how important the 'social fabric' of a society is.

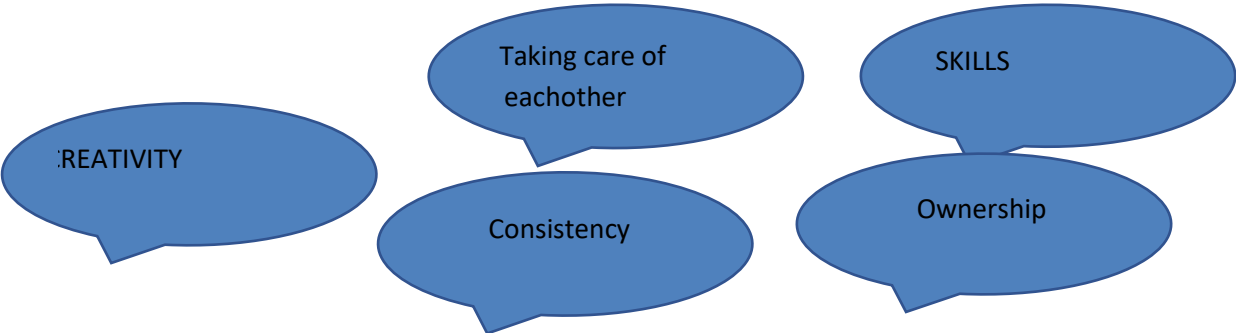
In this context, the provision and organisation of cultural activities during the crisis made a positive contribution to maintaining cohesion and connection in the community.

Especially in the first phase of the crisis, community involvement was felt and visible everywhere, from COVID buddies and mutual meal preparation to providing iPads to the elderly and taking care of each other's children. Many of these initiatives were initiated from personal involvement. Bottom-up activities were widely initiated. At the same time, it appeared that the same social fabric is partly dependent on a government and voluntary organisations for activities and care for each other. What if voluntary care ends? How can we sustain a resilient social organisational structure together? How can we secure new and renewed cultural activities in a crisis?

For this, it is important to pay attention to the network of associations, social initiatives and mutual aid as well as professional organisations. This creates space for an active, resilient local community that can buffer the social impact of a crisis. Cultural activities create connection and engagement in the community.

In the online survey and in-depth interviews, it became clear that connection and engagement can be strengthened by being aware with each other of the energy created during the crisis.

Some of the key concepts that endorse this can be read between the lines of the interviews and online survey:





Talent Development

Resilience

Connection

Given the results of the interviews and online surveys, the creative capacity of actively engaged citizens was found to be very high. Numerous existing initiatives have been revamped and could therefore continue and new initiatives and cultural activities have emerged in this crisis period.

2. TIPS & SUGGESTIONS: BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES BY TARGET GROUP

Besides the general cultural activities, there are also activities specific to the different target groups during the COVID crisis.

The needs for YOUNG PEOPLE are more focused on their development in becoming adults

- Every young person encounters bumps on the road to adulthood.

In puberty, you have to learn to regulate your emotions, make your own decisions and their consequences, learn to work in a planned way and learn to work systematically.

Without positive experiences or support from friends, family or a teacher, you can get stuck in one or more life domains. For example in education, work, social relationships or self-reliance. What helps them? Cultural activities can make a positive contribution here.

Here's how to make your project with young people a success:

- Put young people in charge;
- encourage experimentation;
- offer safety so young people feel at home;
- provide involved coaching.

It is also important to connect with young people's perceptions. The current generation has a strong Do-It-Yourself mentality. They find their own music lessons on the internet, make videos, learn breakdance moves from each other, make their own clothes, write a poem and recite it rhythmically, play in a band. Hip-hop - involving music, rap, graffiti, DJ-ing, dancing - is the most popular.

Many young people learn through tutorials on the internet, but social media also takes up a large part of their free time: 95% of young people are on the internet daily, 94% of young people use social media. The most frequent activities young people engage in are music (29%), then visual activities (24%), photography and film (20%), dance (16%), creative writing (12%) and theatre (10%). Young people are more likely to organise informally, in temporary projects and like 'festival-like settings'.



The needs for the Society at large activities will focus more on seeking connection in and with the society.

-Our society is diverse and multicoloured. People differ from each other in countless ways. The visible things, like age and skin colour, and the less visible things like cultural and social background, competences and lifestyles. Through cultural activities, participants experience and experience the positive aspects and possibilities of the differences between people.

The needs for Older People will manifest more in activities aimed at countering loneliness and preventing drifting away from society

-Active cultural participation has a positive effect on older people's well-being, vitality and health. Participating in culture can alleviate problems often associated with old age, such as loneliness, inability to participate and dementia.

The online survey includes a number of open-ended questions asking directly and indirectly for tips, suggestions and examples of best practices.

The best practice examples from the survey were supplemented by best practices picked up in the media and from the internet environment.

This section discusses a number of tips and best practices that can be of added value for organising cultural activities during and after the COVID 19 crisis. Thus, these tips and suggestions do not only deal with organising cultural activities during the crisis, but are also useful in general.

2.1. Tip 1 What are the NEEDS of the community?

Find out what activities are being missed. What are the actual NEEDS? Not only with the organisations, government and volunteers but also question society and, where possible, target groups.

Organising an activity without knowledge of the actual needs may cause negative reactions in the community and, partly as a result, reduce motivation among, for example, volunteers and other participants.

Understanding what really matters can also bring new unexpected ideas around the corner and make the range of activities more diverse.

Use participants' creativity to enrich the offer and engagement.



The question in the survey related to these NEEDS regularly indicated that there was demand in the communities for activities that could provide connection between different target groups.

The elderly, young people and families were specifically mentioned in this context. In addition, there is a strong demand for activities with social cohesion and impact.

2.2. Tip 2 What TALENTS are present within the local community?

Investigate what TALENTS there are in the community that can be used in organising the activities.

TALENTS can be used interactively to enhance the quality of activities and participants, volunteers and organisations can learn from each other's talents.

Often, talents remain hidden until they are actually asked for. By gaining more insight into the talents present, they can be used effectively and you may create a win-win situation as an organisation.



The use of the talent not only benefits the quality of the activity, but also possibly contributes to the motivation of the person who can make his talent available. He feels heard, seen and feels useful by contributing; all ingredients that can make for a positive, active and motivated volunteer.

Failure to recognise or acknowledge talents can create a negative impact on organising activities now and in the future.

The survey revealed that there is a great potential of talent that can really matter in this time of crises.

It is also clear that the needs to be organised must also be supported by the right talents. Make clear which talents are needed to organise certain activities. This removes noise and expectations. As an organisation, however, remain aware of and alert to the potential of talent that is not always immediately visible. Challenge volunteers and organisations to further develop the talent available.

2.3. Tip 3 What specific SKILLS matter in the COVID 19 crisis?

- digital skills
- fundraising
- making connections between government and non-profit organisations



In many cultural activities, the input and cooperation of volunteers is the backbone of the activity. Their commitment and intrinsic motivation helps make an activity a success.

During the COVID 19 period, volunteers were also forced to abandon their volunteer efforts or organise them differently. Many dropped out altogether. For organisations working with volunteers, it is therefore of great importance to monitor continuity by staying in touch with the volunteers and continuing to communicate.

To ensure volunteer engagement, the following recommendations were gathered from the interviews and surveys:

- ensure that intrinsic motivation is nurtured
- give space to volunteers' own ideas
- ensure the role of volunteers is clear and transparent
- organise motivating online meetings
- provide scope for training to develop skills and knowledge
- make sure the volunteer is heard
- involve family members and friends of the volunteers in the organised activities, so that support is also increased
- start a project only if enough volunteers want to participate
- let volunteers function in pairs, so that there is a shared responsibility
- make sure the WHY of the project is clear to everyone.

2.5. Tip 5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT as supporter of activities



COVID has also seen the government change its role as an organiser and supporter of activities.

The evaluation of the interviews gave a number of recommendations. As these varied greatly from region to region/country to country, it was not easy to provide some unambiguity in them. This tip will therefore not be applicable to every region, but does provide direction for a local government on how to deal with the barriers created by COVID 19.

- Nurture the network of associations, social initiatives and mutual care initiatives. An active, resilient local community provides a buffer that can cushion the social impact of crises both literally and figuratively. Preserve and reward the energy created during COVID crises. Creative initiatives are not reserved for a crisis, nor are they a final piece of policy. For new initiatives, deal wisely with subsidy conditions and prevent the same initiatives from losing out due to strict regulations.
- Consider new forms of financing where residents have ownership. Be prepared for financial scarcity and link this to new forms of resilience and ownership by opting for a social financing model of government, market and private initiative. Let businesses, but especially private residents, have a 'stake' in libraries, community centres, swimming pools, theatres or care organisations. Not for profit, but as an expression of social commitment and appreciation that these facilities exist.
- As municipalities, take on the role of coalition broker. Acknowledge your responsibility for public facilities, but let other parties co-decide and (co-)own them. As a municipality, also show your commitment to associations over which you have no control, such as churches and mosques, under the motto 'Even if you don't control them, you belong to them'. Resilience literally arises in contact and collaborations, ad hoc and structural.
- Harness the opportunities of social media. Living with COVID boosted the digitalisation of everyday life. At last, social media were being used for their intended purpose, it was heard. At the same time, the danger of confirmation within one's own group remains high.
- See online meetings as an opportunity for greater cohesion, but be alert to the risk of staying in one's own bubble.

3. BEST PRACTICES



Both the examples in online surveys and in-depth interviews show the resilience and creative capacity of both local authorities, organisations, volunteers and individuals.

In these dark times, bottom-up organised cultural activities have contributed substantially to the welfare of local people.

By organising activities, there was connection, cohesion and care for the community. The common goal of getting through the COVID 19 crisis together was supported with many wonderful initiatives.



Examples of practice can be identified in this COVID 19 period for specific target groups with a specific need for help, as well as examples of best practices that were accessible to everyone in the community.

There is not enough space to describe all the best practices mentioned in the surveys and interviews, so in this module we suffice with a brief description of the most salient best practices.

These are best practices at a time when physical contact was reduced to the minimum, and organised online activities became the new normal.



At the beginning of the lockdown, many existing cultural activities were continued as much as possible in an online environment.

But this very online environment has also created the space for entirely new initiatives within cultural offerings. Some activities were geared towards specific target groups and others were open to all sections of society.

The COVID 19 measures mentioned above hit the already vulnerable target groups particularly hard. The lock-down added to the distance from society for the elderly and single people, and loneliness lay in wait. Therefore, it is not surprising that many organisations soon started organising a number of initiatives to prevent this loneliness.

Some best practices have been collected in this section.

3.1. Initiatives to combat loneliness

The initiatives below are both physical and online:

Tile wisdom, residents of residential care homes invent spells and exchange them in their surroundings and to family friends and acquaintances.



(if we all care, then we don't have to worry)

- Flowers bring colour into your life, residents of residential care centres make and exchange flowers. The volunteer organisation distributed necessary materials to residents who wanted to participate in this activity. It soon became clear that participants provided the flowers with poems and stories, sharing their loneliness with those around them.

- Digital or telephone meetings between vulnerable people/families and artists
- Pop-up opera and live-song concerts outdoors in the garden of a care home.

What started as an individual initiative by well-known and unknown singers and singers was soon embraced by local authorities and organisations, enabling an effective network of performances to be organised.

- Mini-performances on YouTube, especially for care homes.
- Co-dance 15-minute films for old(er) people and homebodies.
- Create playlists for yourself, your parents or elderly people in a care facility.
- Heart stories organised by the Heart Foundation.



- Create little personal stories and poems for someone who is alone.
- Vitamins for the mind, booklets with artistic assignments for residents of residential care centres.

- Special dance events (in the garden or on the doorstep) for residents and local residents of care homes.
- Elderly living alone in blocks of flats can organise regular meetings on the corridor on a given topic. e.g.: literature club – members can read the same book and have a discussion on it when meeting in the corridor. Online participants may join as well.

Like many other online initiatives, there were quite a few barriers to reaching older people online. Computers were not available and many elderly people lacked the skills to access the online environment. Within this project, therefore, a department was started in which elderly people could get digital support from volunteers and the purchase of computers was made possible through crowdfunding and in cooperation with local government and companies. A great example where not only the activity was effective, but also participants and organisations could develop skills and talents. Without horizontal connection and cooperation with businesses, this activity might not have been as successful.

3.2. Online initiative

- exchanging recipes from different cultures
- organise birthdays of family and friends online
- celebrating festivals online, e.g.: Easter, carnival
- online bingo, street cafe sharing on Facebook
- young people supporting elderly people in learning digital skills
- classes and talks on mental and physical health online
- online brainstorming on ways to prepare lessons online
- online drinks
- yoga classes
- streaming theatre and music performances
- home library
- read-aloud moments by volunteers for young children.

Sing-along café: At a fixed time during the week, the local broadcaster organises the sing-along café. Ingredients: live music, great evergreens, clear lyrics and a lot of fun. Before COVID this was physical, but during COVID it was entirely digital. The power of the Sing-along cafe is that people sing together, in a cosy setting. To give people the feeling they are singing together, the digital Meezingcafé was set up. It is hosted by live musicians and everyone participating can see each other. As a visitor, you can hear the musicians and the people in your living room. You cannot hear the other visitors, but because you can see everyone, you do have the feeling that you are singing with each other. And of course, care is taken to have the lyrics available. Five songs are sung at a time, with the COVID Cafe song as the finale.

During this COVID period, a small number of physical activities were also started that created togetherness and belonging in the residential area:

- shopping for neighbours



- support measures in case of infection and isolation
- flowers for health workers to show they matter
- joint gardening and maintaining the environment

In addition to the examples of best practices mentioned above, numerous other examples were mentioned in the survey and interviews. Here are some of the activities that helped illuminate these dark times for local communities.

Open door initiative for the city of Érd: the 2030 Association has created an online opinion room for the local community, with the aim of enabling Érd residents to individually report tasks, problems and ideas that they think should be solved in their residential environment. It is an online opinion room where any resident of Érd can post comments about their living environment. The association also tried to get representatives (members of the local government) to work together on solutions by involving citizens. The association has created a google form so citizens can report problems or ask questions about the city, transport, anything related to Érd. Citizens can indicate the name of the street and the info is sent to the relevant responsible people who try to solve the problem. All municipal problems or complaints are sent to this centre - it is run by volunteers.

Online appointments: Making online appointments can be very nice for older people who are physically limited and live far away from each other.

Green leaf / red leaf on the window: There was also an action in one neighbourhood with hanging up a green leaf in front of the window when everything was going well and hanging up a red leaf in case of emergency, so that someone nearby could help you. You do notice that everyone is willing to get involved and look for appropriate solutions together. The unanimity in this was nice to see.

There are several creative communities in and around Hungary that need to connect and brainstorm together. A good example in Sázhalmobatta is the OMNYE (Oil Industry and Technical Retirees Association), Nocsak during the epidemic, which has a long history and a rich range of activities that have effectively brought the community together. There are common members, they occasionally attend each other's events.

When a "grocery and chocolate collection" was organised for the workers at Korányi, which were printed out and distributed with chocolates to the workers who came to work, for example, it mobilised many people from the neighbourhood, some of whom asked for a parcel of groceries themselves and took it to another hospital. It also brought very different people together, as everyone felt they could personally contribute something, give something to help overcome the difficulties of the situation.



For the support of health workers during COVID many initiatives were launched: individuals started to send parcels, chocolates, cakes and thank you cards. More active citizens started to connect the individual supporters with each other and the needy hospitals. A [special donation platform](#) has been set up for health workers who are working valiantly to fight the

COVID epidemic, where doctors and nurses can register their needs and donors can be targeted to meet them.

Facebook page/group "Live broadcasts during Covid" listed such events. This included Ádám Móser the accordionist, who broadcast a live balcony concert every day. Another unifying, Belgian initiative 'the View from my window', was Facebook community, whose collected photos have already been used for a 2-volume photo book.

Cromo Foundation has collected and shared contents in several categories during the COVID outbreak: 1. links and videos on [learning at home, digital education](#), knowledge hubs, Facebook groups, parent-teacher support platforms, 2. the foundation started collecting and sharing the [good examples of individual and business giving and donation](#) on its Facebook and web page, 3. [national examples and good practices of solidarity](#). Though contents are in Hungarian the initiative itself is worthwhile to follow as it helped plenty of target groups such as teachers who had to face online education from one day to the next, elderly locked into their homes alone, families with having to care for kids at home all day and night.



The Ökotárs Foundation in Hungary, has launched a call for proposals, entitled Second Wave, with the aim of recognising and highlighting the work of NGOs providing targeted and effective assistance to vulnerable target groups most affected by the first spring wave of the COVID epidemic and supporting their continued support. [They have shared 25 good practices](#) from all over Hungary.

MÁSODIK HULLÁM
- civil szervezeti jó gyakorlatok
a koronavírus-járványban

There is more cooperation between the municipality, other institutions and organisations and citizens.

 ökotárs
alapítvány

In Cyprus, large online concerts were organised, which gave support and motivation to the participating artists while providing a psychological boost to the detainees who attended. Bi-communal festivals emerged with a band formed by the two communities in Cyprus offering their music for free at central locations in the south and north of Nicosia.

CONCLUSION

All these fine examples in different regions have been of significant added value at the time of the crisis. These best practices show that especially in difficult times, the population has the potential and will to jointly find creative solutions to all the constraints society has faced during the crisis.



Many of these activities could be continued even after the crisis period, strengthening the range of cultural activities on offer. Not only the range of activities on offer, but also the skills and abilities of local government, organisations, volunteers and actively engaged citizens have grown precisely because of this challenge. Also, the importance of connection, horizontal alignment and support, read "intensified cooperation" between local government, voluntary organisations and bottom-up activities has proven to be an important breeding ground for future cultural activities.

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

CRESTART- CReative rESilient leARning communiTies meeting COVID challenges

This project aims to build resilient communities by building the capacity of local residents to become active culture shaping stakeholders and community organizers locally. During the project [the partners](#) gather and share the learnings from COVID in order to connect social groups, encourage micro-community contact programs, actively involve residents, provide community spaces.

We want to equip local community organisers and stakeholders with the knowledge and toolkit to organise local communities' events, activities in challenging times: that will have an effect on the mental health of the community, also will contribute to the community cohesion. Our project focuses on community organisers from the field of culture, but knowledge can be used in other fields as well. We have identified the following aims:

- Understanding and mapping the old cohesive traditions of the local societies and their chances to survive in the 21st century.
- Mapping the impact of the COVID pandemic on the culture of local societies in the participating countries and pilot settlements.
- Mapping the community resources in the pilot settlements, with special regard to the creative capacity among the target groups.
- Via mapping we plan to reach active citizens (nonprofessional community organisers) as well, and also we plan to identify formal and informal local groups.
- Cultural consumption and culture shaping best practice collection in the participating countries, with particular reference to geopolitical and cultural differences in the Netherlands, Hungary, Bulgaria and Cyprus.
- Searching for opportunities to involve locals by target group (young people, the elderly, working-age adults) in order to achieve the main goal.
- Assessing the possibilities of offline and online activities and developing new solutions by target group in the pilot settlements.
- Capacity building of local residents to become active culture shaping stakeholders and community organizers locally.
- International exchange of creative solutions, adaptation of new creative methods in local level.
- Making available a user friendly and easily adaptable social impact measuring tool for settlements eager to support community initiatives.