

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

 Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)

PROJECT	
Participant:	[12] – [GMINA WIELISZEW] ([WIELISZEW])
PIC number:	[930716456]
Project name and acronym:	[SECURE] — [Strengthening European Communities, Uniting Regions and Reinforcing Engagement]

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	[3]
Event name:	[Third International Event - Adapting to change: women's role in shifting international landscape]
Type:	[International Event]
In situ/online:	[in-situ]
Location:	[Wieliszew], [Poland]
Date(s):	[17-20/11/2025]
Website(s) (if any):	https://secureprojectnot.wordpress.com/third-international-event-wieliszew-poland/ https://www.lighthouselanguages.it/portfolio/secure/
Participants	
Female:	49
Male:	32
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 [Poland]:	43
From country 2 [Italy]:	12
From country 3 [Greece]:	2
From country 4 [Hungary]	6
From country 5 [Spain]	1
From country 6 [Latvia]	4
From country 7 [Portugal]	2

From country 8 [Slovenia]	1		
From country 9 [Malta]	4		
From country 10 [Serbia]	2		
From country 11 [Czech Republic]	1		
From country 12 [Cyprus]	2		
From country 13 [France]	1		
Total number of participants:	81	From total number of countries:	13

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The third international event of the SECURE project, held in Wieliszew, Poland, was designed to advance the project's core objectives of fostering democratic participation and civic engagement. The event focused on three key pillars:

Community Engagement

By organizing cultural exchanges and collaborative activities, the event brought citizens together to discuss shared challenges, celebrate diversity, and strengthen community bonds.

Inclusive Dialogue

Structured discussions and workshops created safe spaces for participants from diverse backgrounds to share opinions and points of view.

Through these efforts, the event reinforced the SECURE project's mission of building resilient, participatory democracies across Europe.

The event brought together delegations from 13 countries, including representatives from:

Local municipalities
Civil society organizations
Youth centers
Educators and trainers
Citizens and community leaders

Participants came from Italy, Slovenia, France, Greece, Cyprus, Latvia, Portugal, Serbia, Hungary, Malta, Czech Republic, Spain and Poland.

The main topic of the Third International Event of the SECURE project was "Adapting to change – Intersectional practices of resilience."

The event specifically focused on exploring and developing strategies related to two interconnected themes:

- Intersectional practices of resilience: understanding how individuals and communities can effectively adapt to change (ranging from local challenges to international crises) by considering the complex ways that different forms of social identity and systemic inequality (the intersection of race, gender, class, etc.) affect a person's vulnerability and capacity for resilience.
- Gender mainstreaming and the role of women: highlighting the vital role of women in crisis response and community adaptation, and integrating gender mainstreaming (the assessment of the implications for women and men of any planned action) into policy and planning for building more resilient European communities.

Prior to the event, all delegations were required to complete the mandatory preparation task: "Your Intersectional Resilience Story". This task was crucial for ensuring an engaging and valuable co-creative workshop, directly feeding real-life experiences into the central thematic focus. Each partner engaged their local communities to work on the task, thus widening the indirect outreach of the event. Goal: each partner delegation was asked to prepare a short contribution (maximum 10 minutes)—which could be a talk, video, or slide presentation—sharing a real-life example of women resilience and change from their community or organization. The core aim was to demonstrate how different

parts of a person's identity affect their ability to handle tough times.

Contextual rationale: the task was framed by the understanding that resilience is never uniform.

Intersectionality reveals that a person's ability to overcome a crisis is profoundly shaped by the overlap of their social identities—such as gender, race, class, and disability. These intersections determine access to vital resources and expose individuals to compounded risks. Recognizing this dynamic is essential for building adaptive strategies that genuinely support the most vulnerable.

Presentation structure: all 10-minute contributions were structured around three simple questions to ensure thematic alignment:

The situation & the person: briefly describe the change/crisis and the person(s) involved. What were their main identities (e.g., race, age, economic status, gender)?

The intersectionality factor: explain how those different identities worked together to create advantages or disadvantages in that moment.

The resilience practice: what concrete action, idea, or community practice ultimately helped this person adapt and move forward? What was the lesson learned about making resilience work for everyone? The results were then analyzed during the workshop to gather 3 main cluster or most relevant answers to be discussed during an Unconference.

Overview of the activities:

Main sessions included:

1. Formal analysis and strategy development

Seminar: "Women's role in shifting international landscape"

Focusing on the contributions, unique challenges, and diverse perspectives of women within complex global dynamics and international crises.

Workshop: "Adapting to change – Intersectional practices of resilience"

Participants directly engaged in a debate aimed to share recommendations and point of views on strategies of adaptation. This session directly incorporated the findings and case studies presented during the task, allowing for the analysis of how different social identities and systemic inequalities affect resilience. The workshop reinforced the need for an intersectional approach to policy and intervention.

2. Interactive co-creation and exchange

Coffeestorming with Public Administrations and stakeholders

An informal, interactive session in the Gmina Wieliszew city Hall that facilitated direct dialogue and exchange.

"Privilege Walk": Understanding Intersectionality

This was a game, inspired by non-formal education techniques, designed to foster self-awareness and empathy by visually demonstrating how different privileges and forms of marginalization intersect and profoundly influence individual experiences, reinforcing the core principle of intersectionality in resilience planning.

Impacts and outcomes:

-Enhanced understanding of intersectionality and resilience: the required presentations and subsequent workshop provided participants with real-world case studies on applying an intersectional lens to resilience planning, moving beyond theory. Allowing regular citizens to come in contact with issues and thematics that are usually discussed only among scholars.

-Integration of gender mainstreaming: the event promoted gender mainstreaming, having more than 80% of speaker who were female during the event and delegations composed by a majority of women.

-Strengthened european cohesion and networking: by integrating shared, personal narratives from 13 European countries, the event reinforced regional cooperation and dialogue through a deeper, empathetic understanding of diverse community engagement.

-Development of practical policy input: the direct exchange of best practices through the "Intersectional Resilience Stories" yielded specific, actionable inputs for integrating active citizen engagement into local and regional strategies.

Target: citizens, young people, stakeholders, PA.

A report of the recommendations can be downloaded here:

<https://secureprojectnot.wordpress.com/materials/>

A key quote from the event:

"The 'Intersectional Resilience Story' task wasn't just homework; it fundamentally shifted our perspective. We realized that true community resilience isn't about giving everyone the same life jacket—it's about understanding why some people are already wearing a weighted belt and adjusting our efforts accordingly." by Marlene Silva (Portugal).

Further information, photogallery, presentations and materials can be browsed here:

<https://secureprojectnot.wordpress.com/third-international-event-wieliszew-poland/>

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).

INTERSECTIONAL PRACTICES OF RESILIENCE



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his report synthesizes the key presentations, case studies, and strategic insights from the Third International Event of the Secure Project, held in Wieliszew, Poland.

The event's central theme, "Adapting to Change – Intersectional Practices of Resilience," guided a series of discussions aimed at understanding how communities respond to adversity in an increasingly complex world. Moving beyond theoretical debate, this document provides a grounded overview of how resilience is practiced and understood across diverse European communities, drawing directly from the stories and analyses shared by project partners.

The event was anchored in a core conceptual framework designed to provide a common language for analyzing complex social challenges. The key terms are defined as follows:

- **Intersectionality:** Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, this is a framework for understanding how multiple social identities (e.g., race, gender, class, disability) combine to create unique experiences of discrimination and privilege within systems of power.

It serves as a critical lens that moves beyond "one-size-fits-all" solutions to reveal the full picture of an individual's experience.

- **The Resilience Gap:** This concept articulates how crises magnify existing inequalities. An individual's capacity to "bounce back" from a shock is not equal; it is directly influenced by intersecting systemic factors such as the wealth gap, access to healthcare, and housing stability. Those facing multiple, overlapping forms of marginalization have a lower starting point for resilience.

- **Polycrisis:** This term defines the interaction of multiple, simultaneous crises that create a compound threat. A health crisis can trigger an economic crisis, which in turn exacerbates a housing crisis, overwhelming systems designed to handle single, isolated problems.

To ground these concepts in lived experience, all project partners were given a preparatory task: to share a 10-minute "Intersectional Resilience Story" from their community. Each presentation was structured to identify the specific situation, analyze the intersectionality factor at play, and describe the specific resilience practice that emerged in response.

This work is made all the more critical by the compounding global challenges that define our current era.

The Shifting Global Landscape: Why Intersectional Resilience is an Imperative

Understanding the current global context is of paramount strategic importance. As outlined in the event's keynote presentation, we are living in a "World in Flux," where local resilience practices do not occur in a vacuum but are direct responses to broad, interconnected global pressures. These systemic shifts create the conditions in which crises emerge and disproportionately impact vulnerable communities. The compounding global pressures can be categorized into three key domains that redefine global stability and strain community resources.

Within this shifting landscape, it is crucial to analyze the gendered nature of modern crises. As a guiding principle derived from UN Women states: Crises are not gender-neutral. They disproportionately impact women and girls, yet women are also the primary architects of community-level resilience. This dual reality highlights that while women and girls often face heightened vulnerability due to structural inequalities, they are simultaneously central agents of change, leading grassroots efforts in peacebuilding, climate adaptation, and community care. These macro-level challenges provide the backdrop for the specific, ground-level stories of resilience shared at the event.

Geopolitical & Conflict	Environmental & Economic	Democratic & Digital
New and protracted conflicts, forced migration, and strained international relations redefine global stability.	New and protracted conflicts, forced migration, and strained international relations redefine global stability.	Disinformation, rising populism, and declining trust in institutions threaten civic space and democracy.



Intersectional Resilience in Practice: A Synthesis of Pan-European Case Studies

This section forms the core of the report, presenting a collection of case studies shared by project partners from across Europe. These stories are not merely anecdotes; they are crucial data points that illustrate how intersectional theory manifests in the real world. The cases are grouped thematically below to highlight recurring patterns of vulnerability and the innovative resilience practices that have emerged in response.

Theme 1: Navigating Economic and Professional Precarity

Analysis of Identity and the Workplace in Cyprus

In Cyprus, two case studies revealed how resilience in a professional context can mean challenging or strategically exiting a flawed system. These cases challenge conventional notions of resilience-as-endurance. They redefine resilience as a strategic calculation of value and agency, demonstrating that in inequitable systems, the most resilient act can be a refusal to adapt. The story of Maria, a chemical engineer, exposed a 15% gender-based pay gap. Her resilience practice was a "strategic exit" after her data-backed attempts to rectify the disparity were met with excuses. Similarly, Anna, a 45-year-old surveyor, faced age and gender bias from new management. Her resilience practice was to "turn expertise into necessity," formalizing her deep, irreplaceable knowledge of complex local land boundaries into a new senior compliance role. From a policy perspective, the strategic lesson is that resilience is not always about adapting; it can be an act of resistance that forces a system to re-evaluate worth.

The Link Between Caregiving, Age, and Economic Shock in Italy

From the Viterbo province in Italy, the story of Signora Elena provided a powerful lesson in targeted support. At 56, she lost her job of 25 years when a local ceramics cooperative closed. Her intersecting identities—age, working-class background, and rural location—were compounded by her role as the sole caregiver for her 92-year-old mother. The key intervention came from the community itself. Leveraging local trust, the pharmacist and priest organized a "Shared Care Rota," an informal network of retired women and a student who provided daily support for Elena's mother. This act of mutual aid addressed her primary structural barrier—a critical time constraint—enabling her to retrain, earn a Food Certification, and find new employment.

The Role of Municipal Support in Hungary

The story of Erzsébet, a single mother in Hungary, demonstrated the vital role of local government in restoring both stability and dignity. After losing her job and facing housing insecurity, she was offered a place in a municipal community service program. This program provided more than a regular income; it offered structure, a supportive community of peers, and a renewed sense of purpose. The municipality's goal was not just employment, but integration. The program restored Erzsébet's dignity and gave her the foundation to plan for the future, proving that the right institutional intervention can be a powerful catalyst for personal recovery.

Theme 2: The Power of Community-Led and Relational Support Systems

The following cases from Malta, Portugal, and Greece offer three distinct but complementary models for building community-led resilience. Malta provides a model of proactive service delivery by a local institution; Portugal demonstrates a model of participatory transition management during systemic change; and Greece offers a testament to the profound power of long-term relational investment.

Multi-Faceted Local Government Initiatives in Gudja, Malta

The Gudja Local Council in Malta presented a comprehensive model of proactive, human-centered action. The case of Maria, a 78-year-old widow facing "quiet invisibility," was addressed through a suite of practical services: a Community Van, Bill Assistance, and a Social Services Desk. For Toebe, a 33-year-old migrant from Nigeria, the council provided critical anchors of stability in housing, employment, and social connection, transforming his isolation into a sense of belonging.

Collective Action in the Rehousing of the Roma Community in Portugal

The rehousing project for the Roma community in Paredes, Portugal, underscored that structural change is insufficient without social support. The project's success was not rooted in the new buildings, but in the human-led support systems. Municipal teams, social workers, and cultural mediators worked with families, organizing community meetings to listen to fears and co-design solutions. This approach proved that true resilience must be built collectively, with the community actively involved in shaping its own future.

Deconstructing Layers of Support in Serifos, Greece

The life story of Katerina Rota from the Greek island of Serifos is a profound testament to relational resilience. After losing her mother and facing economic hardship, her resilience was forged through overlapping networks of care: first, the village community embraced her, and second, her extended family provided a trans-local safety net. Later, this foundation of resilience was deepened through a profound act of humanitarianism. During the Yugoslav Wars, her family took in a 6½-year-old Serbian boy who had witnessed the brutal killing of his father. When the program ended, Katerina's brother-in-law traveled to Bosnia to return the boy, discovered he had a 4½-year-old sister, and brought both children back to Greece to prevent their separation. The boy remained with the family for 11 years, receiving trauma-informed care that allowed him to heal. Today, he is a successful restaurant manager in Slovenia, and Katerina recently baptized his second child. This story provides a critical proof point that resilience is not a finite resource; it can be strengthened through empathy and become intergenerational. These stories, rich with context and complexity, offer a set of common lessons for building stronger communities.



Distilling Key Insights: The Core Principles of Intersectional Resilience

Moving beyond individual stories, this analysis identifies the cross-cutting principles that emerged from the event's presentations. This synthesis forms the basis for the strategic recommendations that follow.

1. Resilience is Relational, Not Individual

A persistent myth frames resilience as a matter of "grit." The evidence overwhelmingly refutes this, demonstrating that resilience is an outcome of community networks, family bonds, and collective care. It was the village that supported Katerina Rota (Greece), the "Shared Care Rota" that enabled Signora Elena (Italy), and the mediators who empowered the Roma community (Portugal). From a policy perspective, this validates investment in social infrastructure as a primary resilience strategy.

2. Effective Solutions Must Fit the Specific Barrier

"One-size-fits-all" solutions consistently fail because they misdiagnose the problem. The case of Signora Elena in Italy is the clearest example: the solution was not simply finding a new job, but solving her caregiving time-constraint. Policy and program design must therefore begin with a granular, intersectional diagnosis of the specific, compound barriers an individual faces.

3. Local Institutions are Critical Actors

The evidence overwhelmingly indicates that devolving resources and authority to municipal-level actors is the single most effective vector for building ground-level resilience. In Malta, Hungary, and Portugal, local councils provided tangible services, restored dignity, and acted as the essential bridge between individuals and systemic support.

4. Resilience Can Be an Act of Resistance or Strategic Exit

Resilience is not always about adapting to a flawed system. The case studies from Cyprus demonstrate that it can also be an act of resistance or a strategic calculation of value. For Maria, resilience meant a strategic exit to an environment that valued her correctly, while for Anna, it meant forcing the existing system to recognize her unique expertise. This principle requires a re-evaluation of programmatic goals, shifting from mere adaptation to fostering agency and empowerment.

5. Human Dignity is a Foundational Component

Successful interventions, like those in Malta and Hungary, focus not just on material needs but on making people feel seen, heard, and valued. By actively combating social isolation and fostering a sense of belonging, these programs restored hope, which is a foundational element of sustainable resilience. Any effective resilience strategy must include metrics that measure not just material outcomes but also social connection and human dignity.

These principles provide a clear roadmap for designing more effective and humane community support systems.



Strategic Recommendations for Building Community Resilience

Based on the preceding analysis, the following recommendations offer a strategic framework for the Secure Project and other community-focused organizations to foster more effective and equitable resilience.

- **Recommendation 1:** Design for the Margins. Policies should be built around the needs of those facing the most complex, intersecting vulnerabilities. The Gudja Local Council's support for the elderly and migrants is a model of this principle. By creating robust services for specific groups, communities enhance the entire support infrastructure, making it more resilient for all.
- **Recommendation 2:** Redistribute Power in Planning and Response. Shift decision-making authority and resources to community-led organizations. The success of the Roma rehousing project in Portugal, which relied on community meetings and cultural mediators to build trust and co-design solutions, validates this approach. True participation means redistributing power, not just consulting.
- **Recommendation 3:** Invest in Social Capital and Relational Infrastructure. Formally support the networks of mutual aid and community care that are often the most effective first responders. The "Shared Care Rota" in Italy and the village support for Katerina in Greece are powerful examples. The goal of policy should be to formalize and fund the types of relational support that communities organically create, transforming informal social capital into durable, resourced infrastructure.
- **Recommendation 4:** Create Connected and Accessible Support Systems. Urge the integration of crisis response systems (e.g., housing, employment, social services).

The multi-service approach of the Gudja Local Council in Malta—combining bill payment, social work access, and transport—provides a model for a "no-wrong-door" support environment that reduces the burden on individuals in crisis.

- **Recommendation 5:** Champion Women as Architects of Resilience. Drawing from the "Shifting Landscape" analysis, it is a strategic imperative to address the structural barriers—funding gaps, exclusion from leadership—that women face. Empowering women in peace processes, local politics, and economic initiatives is a direct and powerful strategy for strengthening community-wide stability.



Conclusion: Resilience as a Collective Journey

The stories and insights shared at the Secure Project's Third International Event offer a clear and compelling conclusion: true, sustainable resilience is not an individual attribute but a collective outcome. The challenges of a world in polycrisis cannot be met with calls for individual grit. Instead, by adopting an intersectional lens, we can see how vulnerabilities compound and design solutions that address the root causes of exclusion. The ultimate goal is to build a society that is strong by its very structure—a system that, as the Paredes rehousing project reminds us, recognizes that "Changing a house is easy. Changing a life takes a community."

Quotes

Selected quotes by workshop's participants:

"Resilience is not an individual trait of 'grit,' but a direct outcome of social capital and collective care networks. The evidence urges us to invest in social infrastructure with the same urgency we invest in roads."

"True community resilience is not about providing everyone with the same support, but about understanding why some are already burdened by compound disadvantages and adjusting our efforts accordingly."

"'One-size-fits-all' solutions fail because they misdiagnose the real problem. Success requires a granular intersectional diagnosis to address the specific, compounding barriers that block recovery."

"Effectiveness boils down to the local level. Devolving resources and authority to municipal actors is the most effective vector for building deeply rooted resilience and addressing specific community barriers."

"The ultimate lesson from our European case studies is clear: 'Changing a house is easy. Changing a life takes a community.' Resilience is a collective journey, not an individual test."

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