CITIES on the FRONTLINE

MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK

Bi-weekly Briefing #19 (29 October 2020)

Cities for a Resilient Recovery: International Lessons on recovery from COVID-19

This week, we consider how COVID-19 impacts people differently, and how different shocks and stresses interact with COVID-19.

International Lessons

- Localized women-led recovery efforts through gender inclusive services
- Economic inequalities across marginalised groups
- Accessibility and inclusivity of evacuation plans
- Food shortages, agriculture, and climate change

Case study

- Lessons from Vanuatu and Bangladesh: Cyclones and COVID-19.

Useful Webinars

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS

Health and Wellbeing: Everyone living and working in the city has access to what they need to survive and thrive

Consider how to encourage localised women-led recovery efforts through gender inclusive and responsive services. Research has shown that disasters impact men and women differently. While COVID-19 has been shown to disproportionately affect men physically, women are more likely to be adversely impacted by disasters generally, and more likely to be failed by recovery efforts that do not meet their needs. Consider how to develop gender-inclusive disaster recovery that considers impacts of COVID-19:

- Tackle the **drivers** of gender inequalities in areas such as access to healthcare and economic recovery e.g. impacts of COVID-19 on low paid precarious work, health risks to care workers
- Include **multi-stakeholder processes** that ensure women's rights organisations are included in designing national response and recovery measures – this should also include groups representing vulnerable or marginalised women
- Assess bids for new funding using an **additional criteria** of impact on gender responsiveness
- Increase **funding and capacity development** for local and national women's groups; including for action against gender-based violence which saw a global increase during the pandemic
- Strengthen COVID-19/disaster responses to address **women's leadership roles**, not only their vulnerability to the virus

- Examine the availability of **gender-responsive health services** and vital sexual and reproductive health needs at local level
- Consider **communications** designed for women, to reach women. Women and girls may be less likely to receive and contribute to accurate COVID-19 information due to patriarchal norms/structures
- Include the **voices and rights of trans women and gender non-conforming people** in response and recovery so they are equally involved in determining needs

Sources: https://actionaid.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/STPC-AdvocacyReport2020-FINAL-pages.pdf and https://blogs.worldbank.org/sustainablecities/why-we-need-integrate-gender-equality-and-women-s-empowerment-disaster-recovery-and-how-do-it

Economy and Society: The social & financial systems that enable urban populations to live peacefully, and act collectively

Consider how to address economic inequalities between different groups in society. In the USA, Black communities are amongst some of the hardest finically hit communities as a result of the economic fallout from COVID-19. Recovery to date has shown to neglect women, Latinx and Black Americans. Similar patterns are seen globally, with marginalised and already vulnerable groups being hit the hardest economically. Like many countries, this is a result of pervasive existing inequalities in access to income, assets, health, education, formal employment, equal opportunity, social protection, internet, and public services. Consider:

- Explicitly **acknowledging** the heightened economic vulnerabilities of specific socioeconomic groups – and address these with targeted measures
- How to encourage **broad public participation** and collective action in government planning and response to effectively address existing inequalities and the needs of vulnerable populations as well **as minimise elite capture and urban bias**
- How policies should account for **constraints** faced by specific marginalized groups in terms of economic recovery such as job precarity, lack of education, low wages
- That economic recovery programmes that do not address these inequalities run the risk **of reinforcing and deepening inequalities** into the future which can burden economies and health systems
- Assessing **funding proposals** for their impact on different societal groups

Sources: https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/oct/05/covid-has-highlighted-americas-flaws-says-bank-boss-jamie-dimon and https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CA8843EN.pdf

Infrastructure and Environment: The man-made and natural systems that provide critical services, and protect and connect urban assets, enabling the flow of goods, services, and knowledge

Consider how to promote conservation agriculture to mitigate the impacts of climate change. COVID-19 has resulted in food shortages in certain parts of the world due to disrupted supply chains. The compounding impacts of poor harvests as a result of climate change requires the adoption of new farming techniques to protect the environment and lives and livelihoods. Conservation agriculture promotes minimal soil disturbance, crop diversification and the use of organic fertilizer to conserve and improve the soil, and makes more efficient use of natural resources. It is therefore climate-smart from an adaptation as well as mitigation viewpoint. Consider:

- Introducing environmentally friendly **legislation and incentives**. In the UK, the Agriculture Bill is reforming farming to provide subsidies not simply for cultivating land (which is the current EU approach) but for delivering "public goods" e.g. sequestering carbon in trees or soil, enhancing habitat with pollinator-friendly flowers
- Moving **beyond a model of short-term farming subsidies** e.g. through stronger legislative commitments to long term funding, domestic environmental and animal welfare standards, and safeguards on import standards
- How to **promote the benefits** of conservation agriculture for farmers including financial savings that can be made due to less use of machinery, labour, and pesticides
- Using **digital technologies** to disseminate important information on how to limit post-harvest losses, and improve better access markets and financial services

- Encouraging the public to continue to **'buy local'** during the pandemic (e.g. through farms practicing conservation agriculture), as this supports local, sustainable food supply chains

Sources: https://www.insuresilience.org/zambia-how-smallholder-farmers-are-adapting-to-climate-change-despite-covid-19/ and https://www.wcl.org.uk/what-does-covid-19-mean-for-food,-farming-and-nature.asp

Leadership and Strategy: The processes that promote effective leadership, inclusive decision-making, empowered stakeholders, and integrated planning

Consider evaluating the accessibility and inclusivity of current evacuation plans. Vulnerable people and people with disabilities are most at risk during disasters. The impacts of COVID-19 have exacerbated the risk to vulnerable people and people with disabilities, and has exacerbated the risks for marginalised groups of people. Consider assessing:

- How well evacuation plans incorporate vulnerable people and people with disabilities. This should include consideration of **compounding impacts on at risk groups** from COVID-19, and new vulnerable groups such as those with new underlying health conditions from contracting the virus
- The inclusiveness of disaster preparedness activities e.g. the accessibility of hygiene facilities, and accessibility of early warning messaging for those with disabilities, in poverty or with limited access to information
- The availability of **alternative evacuation accommodation** (rather than mass shelters) for particularly vulnerable people, where specialised care can be provided

Source: https://www.preventionweb.net/files/submissions/73645_187snetcovid19impactinsouthasia.pdf

CASE STUDY

When Risks Intersect: Cyclones in Bangladesh and Vanuatu

The compound nature of disasters and COVID-19 intensifies the scale and broadens the scope of human, social, economic and environmental impacts[1]. Climate-related disasters have continued to rise year on year. In 2019, EM-DAT recorded 396 natural disasters globally, that led to 11,755 deaths, affected 95 million people, and resulted in 103 billion US$ in economic losses across the world. Floods were the deadliest type of disaster accounting for 43.5% of deaths, followed by extreme temperatures at 25% (mainly due to heat waves in Europe) and storms at 21.5%. Storms affected the highest number of people, accounting for 35% of the total people affected[2].
This trend has continued, 2020 is on course to be the hottest year on record[3] - impacts of this have been witnessed in parts of Africa and the Middle East where crops have been devastated by locust swarms that begun breeding several months earlier than normal due to weather conditions[4]. Of the 132 unique extreme weather events that have occurred in 2020 (as of late September), 92 have overlapped with the COVID-19 pandemic[5].

Learning from two cases: Vanuatu and Bangladesh
A recent example of a large-scale disaster during COVID-19 is the category 5 Tropical Cyclone (TC) Harold that struck Vanuatu on 5 April 2020, affecting over 130,000 people (approx. 43% of the population) and resulting in three deaths. TC Harold caused significant damage to schools, medical facilities, homes, agricultural crops,

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[1] https://www.sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/tc_harold_and_covid-19_vanuatu_recovery_strategy_v3_130820.pdf
[2] https://www.cred.be/publications
[3] https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/27/meteorologists-say-2020-on-course-to-be-hottest-year-since-records-began
[4] http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html
[5] https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/press-release/least-51-6-million-people-doubly-hit-climate-related-disasters-covid-19-new-analysis-ifrc-reveals/

telecommunications and the local boat fleet[6]. More vulnerable groups such as women were reportedly dealing with multiple concurrent crises, namely drought, scarcity of portable water, volcanic ash, acid rain and sulphur gas as there are also several active volcanoes[7].

While Australia did provide humanitarian aid, strict protocols were implemented when delivering supplies to minimise any chance of transmission to Vanuatu[8], and to date there are no, nor have been any cases of COVID-19 in Vanuatu[9]. However, much of the humanitarian support was offered remotely which demonstrates a shift in how aid is provides e.g. aerial surveillance to assess the scale of impact, logistics support to release relief items that were locally pre-positioned.

The cyclone that hit Bangladesh in May 2020 presents the opposite scenario. The impacts of cyclone Amphan were lessened by decades of disaster risk reduction strategies and a weakening of the storm as it made landfall, which meant the death toll was in the dozens rather than thousands[10]. However, the large number of COVID-19 cases in Bangladesh had serious ramifications for 'normal' disaster response. Coastal communities in the path of the cyclone had to make choices between braving the cyclone's impacts as it hit land, and risking COVID-19 infection as 2.2 million people in Bangladesh were evacuated to shelters[11].

The combination of these cases – heavy impact on people and resources from a natural disaster, combined with high COVID-19 infection rates – demonstrate the worst case for which emergency planners and the humanitarian community need to plan. Going forward, disaster affected countries will be impacted by limitations faced globally, as countries contend with COVID-19 and the impacts this has on their own health systems and economies, and the impacts of this on offers of humanitarian aid. Additionally, logistical support, made more complex by travel restrictions and pressures on global supply chains for resources also needs to be considered, for example:[12]

- Impacts of **restricting travel** on providing and receiving support, including legislation to override COVID-19 restrictions for assistance
- Implications for **efficient response if 14-day isolation periods** are required e.g. if dispatching urgent search and rescue teams; how do you choose between saving people from a collapsed building or (re)infecting a community with COVID-19?
- Availability of **reliable partnerships** for international support including financing, mutual aid and personnel when many countries' own health systems and economies are under huge strain
- Availability of **appropriate protective equipment** for all personnel deployed to support a humanitarian effort, including those working in-country
- Pressures on **internal mobilization of resources**, including the health system which is required for first response to both COVID and disasters
- Risk of **infection during evacuations** while travelling to and from evacuation centres and residing there

Despite these challenges there are measures which can help countries better prepare for compound COVID-19 disasters. Consider how to:

- Reconceptualise all disaster response as simultaneous **COVID-19 response and mitigation of virus transmission**
- Develop strategies that incorporate **both climate change adaptation and reducing global health threats**, by building COVID-19 into disaster risk reduction strategies. Use pre-existing resources such as the Disaster

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[6] https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/vanuatu/development-assistance/Pages/supporting-cyclone-recovery-reconstruction-vanuatu
[7] https://actionaid.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/STPC-AdvocacyReport2020-FINAL-pages.pdf
[8] https://www.dfat.gov.au/crisis-hub/Pages/tropical-cyclone-harold
[9] https://covid19.gov.vu/
[10] https://www.wri.org/blog/2020/05/south-asia-confronts-double-disaster-cyclone-and-covid-19?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+WRI_News_and_Views+%28WRI+Insights+Blog%2C+News%2C+and+Publications+%7C+World+Resources+Institute%29
[11] https://www.wri.org/blog/2020/05/south-asia-confronts-double-disaster-cyclone-and-covid-19?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+WRI_News_and_Views+%28WRI+Insights+Blog%2C+News%2C+and+Publications+%7C+World+Resources+Institute%29
[12] http://nautil.us/blog/a-warning-from-history-about-simultaneous-disasters

Resilience Scorecard for Cities, and its related Public Health Addendum[13], or the UN's Build Back Better approach[14]

- **Partner** with disaster risk reduction and emergency planning organisations to integrate health management and disaster management
- **Integrate data** on COVID-19 and disasters to inform early warning systems, and invest resources into upgrading and expanding systems to manage complex situations
- Deliver **preparedness messaging** about disasters and other diseases, alongside COVID-19 advice, to keep issues at the forefront of people's minds and to ensure communities have up-to-date information about mitigating risks posed to them, and the support services available[15]
- Build an understanding based on **expertise and skills** guided by science, while also **building capacity** in communities to better understand the hazards of a double disaster and plan collective action[16]
- Keep **messaging simple**. COVID-19 messaging is already fraught with confusion and misinformation, detailing the risks from other hazards may doubly confuse people if not done in a simple way

Climate change has resulted in disasters which have become seasonal, reoccurring and protracted. Combined with COVID-19, this results in compound disasters that are continually unravelling, which blurs the lines between response, recovery, preparedness, and prevention[17]. It is therefore important to consider humanitarian assistance for a world that is facing two chronic challenges; COVID-19 and climate change.

USEFUL WEBINARS

Key webinars on how cities are building resilience in the face of the pandemic and other shocks & stresses.

Date	Webinar Title (Click to register or to access materials)
13 October	Disaster Risk Governance in the Context of COVID-19
22 October	Cities on the Frontline Speaker Series: Funding and Financing Recovery
4 November	The Impact of COVID-19 on the Environment – Observations and Insights
5 November	Communications in the time of COVID-19
12 November	Cities on the Frontline Speaker Series: Resilient Leadership

Produced by The University of Manchester, UK (Professor Duncan Shaw, Dr Jennifer Bealt, Dr Ayham Fattoum, and Professor Ruth Boaden) in partnership with the Resilient Cities Network (Femke Gubbels)

What is the weekly briefing on Cities for a Resilient Recovery?

Each week the University of Manchester brings together relevant international practices and examples on recovery from COVID-19. The weekly briefing is curated by the Resilient Cities Network to bring key lessons and examples targeted for resilience officers, emergency planners and other city practitioners. The structure of the briefing follows the City Resilience Framework – specifically the four drivers that cities have been identified as mattering the most when a city faces chronic stresses or sudden shocks - Health & Wellbeing, Economy & Society; Infrastructure & Environment; and Leadership & Strategy.

For more international examples please register @ ambs.ac.uk/covidrecovery
Join the Coalition of Cities for a Resilient Recovery **here**

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[13]https://www.unisdr.org/campaign/resilientcities/assets/toolkit/documents/Disaster%20Resilience%20Scorecard_Public%20Health%20Addendum%20Ver1%20Final_July%202018.pdf

[14] https://www.unisdr.org/files/53213_bbb.pdf

[15] https://www.bnhcrc.com.au/hazardnotes/79

[16] https://www.wri.org/blog/2020/05/south-asia-confronts-double-disaster-cyclone-and-covid-19?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+WRI_News_and_Views+%28WRI+Insights+Blog%2C+News%2C+and+Publications+%7C+World+Resources+Institute%29

[17]https://www.shelterclusters.org/sites/default/files/docs/tc_harold_and_covid19_vanuatu_recovery_strategy_v3_130820.pdf

If you would be willing to contribute your knowledge to this briefing series (via a 30-minute interview) please contact Duncan.Shaw-2@manchester.ac.uk