

CITIES on the FRONTLINE



Bi-weekly Manchester Briefing #30– 29 April 2021

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

This week, we consider how community participation, investment in climate-ready infrastructure, and supporting ethnic-minority businesses can play a key role in the response and recovery from COVID-19.

International Lessons

- Supporting ethnic-minority businesses to recover (USA, UK)
- Community participation in recovery and resilience-building (Indonesia, Dominica)
- Rethinking what 'vulnerability' means and how it changes (India)
- Creating spaces and moments for remembrance (Italy, India, UK)
- Investment in climate-ready infrastructure that is equitable and produces green jobs (global)
- Reviewing risk communications to improve disaster risk management (Sri Lanka, South Africa, Nigeria)
- Embedding principles of social renewal (Scotland)

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 rethinking 'vulnerability' in the era of COVID-19. Vulnerable groups of people are those that are disproportionately exposed to a risk. This can change dynamically and it is not a simple process of dividing populations into two groups of 'vulnerable' and 'not vulnerable'. Amid the pandemic, vulnerable groups have emerged from a diversity of communities. They are not only older people, those with ill health or disabilities, or homeless persons, but also people from a range of socioeconomic groups who might 'struggle to cope financially, mentally or physically' with crises precipitated by the pandemic. Consider:

- If the definitions and categories we use to **identify vulnerable people, and consider their needs**, adequately represents their lived experiences - whether their vulnerability existed prior to COVID-19, has been exacerbated by it, or has been newly created by it?
- **Identify the people behind the 'vulnerable' label** - who are they, where are they, and why are they vulnerable? - to increase our understanding of the person and the conditions or environment (root causes) that may be making them vulnerable to certain risks

- If there are different levels/spectrums of vulnerability, do we need to organise vulnerability with respect to different forms of risk (e.g. immediate risk to life, risk to mental health, social/financial security, geographic location)?
- Assessing those who may have been defined as vulnerable prior to COVID-19 and the conditions associated with this vulnerability, those who have become newly vulnerable as a direct result of COVID-19, and what factors lead to these people/groups becoming vulnerable
- **The risk of under-supporting those who face severe risk if we rely only on our previous (to COVID-19) assumptions or understanding of vulnerability**
- Whether re-defining vulnerability may support more effective recovery and renewal strategies e.g. classifying vulnerable groups according to risk levels/spectrums, creating vulnerability indexes and identifying the root cause of each
- Recovery strategies should aim to provide transactional aid to alleviate the negative effects of vulnerability exacerbated or caused by the pandemic
- Renewal initiatives should **address the root cause of vulnerabilities** through transformational initiatives that aim to prevent people from becoming vulnerable

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/yuxtvbz9>
<https://tinyurl.com/hffyrstz>

Consider initiatives that offer people places of remembrance following COVID-19. Memorialisation and remembrance will be an essential component of recovery, as discussed in [TMB Issue 29](#). Online memorial services, a website and a dedicated memorial space were three of the opportunities discussed in this recent Issue. An increasing number of activities to memorialise are taking place, including;

- In Italy, a community created a small garden with a quince tree and a sculpture which has been inscribed with the words “Resilienza” (Resilience), “Comunità” (Community) and “Ripartenza” (Restart), to remember those who have died from COVID-19
- In India, the City of Cerritos placed lights on to trees and sculptures in public gardens to honour each member of the community who has lost their lives due to the pandemic
- In the UK, ‘[Barnsley’s COVID Memorial](#)’, will commemorate the lives lost and recognise the key workers who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic with a sculpture designed by a local artist and sculptor. Local school children have been invited to create drawings of key workers that will be incorporated into the plaque on the sculpture, along with photographic studies and portraits of key workers
- [In Brazil](#), community members, civic society groups and organisations working to tackle climate change have collaborated to launch a tree-planting, wildlife conservation and restoration drive, which will honour those who have lost their lives, thank frontline workers, and support environmental restoration efforts across Brazil
- In the UK, Itchen Valley Remembrance – “Togetherness space”, a concept modelled on a peace garden, incorporates natural and sustainable materials (e.g. willow, hazel and existing hardwood on the site) and tree planting. There will also be socially distanced benches in a formation that ensures people still feel connected
- [NHS UK](#) have secured funding to create a national oral history collection of COVID-19 which will capture the impacts of the pandemics on lives and communities

To ensure memorialisation activities are appropriate and reflect the community, consider:

- Where the memorial will be located, to ensure all members of the community will have access to the space
- Bring community members together to generate ideas for memorialisation and co-produce the plans
- Collaborate with partners that specialise in supporting those who have been affected by bereavement
- Whether the memorial will be dedicated to lives lost, those who have been otherwise affected by the pandemic, and/or those who have helped in the response to the crisis

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/3653h7dx>
<https://tinyurl.com/2ymn3xrw>
 Safety and Resilience Manager (UK)

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

Consider how to support ethnic minority-owned businesses to recover and renew. Ethnic minority-owned businesses play a vital role in the UK economy, the [FSB](#) reported that ‘ethnic minority businesses (EMBs) contributed £25 billion to the UK economy in 2018’. The entrepreneurial characteristics of diverse communities will be crucial for economic recovery. The impacts of the pandemic on EMBs is significant, as they account for a large number of businesses within the sectors closed during national lockdowns (retail, health and social care and hospitality). Consider:

- **Invite ethnic minority business owners to discuss how best local government can support and facilitate entrepreneurship and growth post-COVID**
- Targeted support programmes for ethnic minority-owned organisations and businesses that provide advice and support for applying for financial assistance, IT and tech support so that they are equipped with the skills and tools needed to recover and renew
- Create an ‘inclusive matrix of support, including grants, wage subsidy and micro-loans for small ethnic minority-owned organisations, start-ups and new businesses’. Those businesses that may not have qualified for government financial support schemes introduced during the pandemic
- Go beyond the restricted lens of the ‘Business Rate System’ and **broaden the understanding of how local economies function**. This can be done by including ‘all sectors, including homeworkers, night time economy, responses to local transport needs and the retail sector, to provide a comprehensive picture of local businesses and economic activity’. Use this to introduce support systems that promote sector diversity, good practice in sustainability, growth and cooperation in economic recovery

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/yhvjr4d>
<https://tinyurl.com/ryahdan7>
<https://tinyurl.com/5vsujac7>

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

Consider rural infrastructure development priorities for recovery and renewal. COVID-19 has presented Ireland with an opportunity to balance regional and rural development. The government has responded with an ambitious five year policy which addresses both the challenges facing rural areas following the pandemic and the transformational opportunities that the pandemic presents for rural economies and communities. This lesson offers an overview of the key priorities set out in the policy, examples of the measures that will be taken to achieve these priorities and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) linked to the measures:

Optimising digital connectivity:

- Investment in the delivery of the ‘National Broadband Plan’ to accelerate the delivery of connectivity in rural areas (SDG 8; 9; 10)
- Implement a ‘National Remote Work Strategy’ through the creation of 400 remote working hubs (e.g. providing financial support to local authorities to convert vacant buildings/utilize rural pubs as work spaces during the day) to support the retention of skilled people in rural areas (SDG 3; 8; 13)

Supporting employment and careers in rural areas:

- Design and implement nine new ‘Regional Enterprise Plans’ to support and promote the development of enterprise and job growth (SDG 8)
- Providing support and assistance for the diversification of rural economics into new markets and sectors by capitalising on high speed broadband and new technologies (SDG 8; 9)

Revitalising rural towns and villages:

- Prioritise short-term recovery rural development programmes and strategies to support rural towns to recover from the impacts of the pandemic (SDG 9; 11)
- Implement a collaborative ‘Town Centre First’ renewal initiative to put town centres at the core of decision making (e.g. provide and resource dedicated local authority staff to support town centre renewal) (SDG 11)
- Engage with ‘Approved Housing Bodies’ who are responsible for housing for older people to develop and deliver accommodation in town centres that is more suitable for those with reduced mobility (SDG 11)

Enhancing participation, leadership and resilience in rural communities:

- Design and deliver a range of recovery and renewal programmes to support communities, voluntary organisations, social enterprises and charities to build resilience and increase their positive impact in the aftermath of COVID-19 (SDG 3; 10; 11)
- Implementation of a 'National Volunteering Strategy' to support community-based volunteers and voluntary organisations (e.g. by streamlining grant applications for volunteer groups) and establish a permanent 'Volunteer Reserve' in local communities who can be called upon and deployed by the community, voluntary organisations and local authorities during emergencies (SDG 11; 17)

Enhancing public services in rural areas:

- Review and update Rural Housing Guidelines for planning authorities, to tackle rural housing in a broader rural development and settlement context (SDG 11)
- Introduce a new 'Policing and Community Safety Bill' to redefine the functions of policing bodies to include community safety (SDG 16)

Supporting the sustainability of Agriculture, the Marine and Forestry:

Provide support and assistance to local authorities to expand the number of farmer's markets, farm shops and support the formation of 'community-owned markets' in all towns, promoting local farmers, growers and food producers

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/svacph2a>

Consider investment in climate-ready infrastructure that is equitable and produces green jobs. Yesterday, RCN launched Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner's R-Cities Board Chair's Agenda for "climate-ready infrastructure that is equitable and produces green jobs". This agenda expands RCN's commitment to support cities across the world in a resilient recovery. The preliminary actions for advancing this agenda include; '**Assessing** R-Cities work across the network that advances this agenda; **Engaging** with existing communities of practice, programmes, and partners to share and exchange knowledge around this agenda; and **Mobilizing** resources to deliver place-based projects in multiple cities that advance the agenda'. This initiative will support resilience in cities in multiple ways, including:

- Call for de-siloing investments in resilience to create climate-ready infrastructure that is equitable and creates green jobs
- Amplify the co-benefits of city transitions to net zero greenhouse gas emissions
- Demonstrate how interconnected services, that support communities and economies, can withstand the disruptions of an uncertain future with climate-ready infrastructure
- Demonstrate how climate-ready infrastructure embraces innovation and the interdependencies of resilient city systems, that are critical to equitable outcomes for people

Watch the latest Cities on the Frontline Speaker Series #07 Earth Day which launches **The R-Cities Chair's Agenda**

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/4n36s98z>

Consider a review of risk communications to improve disaster management response at pace. Effective risk communication is central to public health risk management, so that people can make informed decisions and take the correct actions to 'prevent, mitigate and recover from emergencies'. It enables real-time access to, and exchange of, reliable information. **However, the sheer scale and pace of COVID-19 led to an uncoordinated overload of sometimes inconsistent information**, so people were unsure about the severity of risk, and therefore behaved according to their individual perception. There has also been a surge of misinformation throughout the pandemic, which has undermined national and local health responses globally. Consider:

- **A review of risk communication strategies** employed during the pandemic, to identify what worked and what could be improved for future emergencies
- Build risk communication capacity by appointing dedicated risk communicators at national and local levels, to maintain consistency in communications and develop a sense of familiarity among the public, which can build trust
- **Identify the stakeholders in disseminating risk information** (e.g. media) and assess the strength of the relationships with stakeholders. Identify how collaboration and coordination can be enhanced so that the information disseminated is 'timely, accurate and transparent'

- Tailor risk communications to the specific risk and needs of diverse communities
- Engage with the community to co-develop risk communication support structures and establish accountability of community members for required behavioural change
- Use social media to track (through data analytics) and counter misinformation, and develop a narrative of solidarity through crisis ([UN Sri Lanka](#))
- **Establish a central risk management coordination** platform that consolidates risk information and forecasts other potential risks (e.g. concurrent emergencies such as severe flooding). This can enhance capacities and capabilities to provide strategic interventions, and minimize further social and economic impacts ([Dominican Republic](#))
- Acknowledge and communicate uncertainty in clear and unambiguous language to avoid misinterpretation, e.g. use scientific evidence to estimate the likelihood of COVID-19 case resurgence as precisely as possible, and avoid language such as 'probably/possibly'
- **Regularly gauge and monitor the public perception of risk**, through surveys and consultations with public bodies such as police, to inform timely action to prevent lax or panicked behaviour
- Evaluate and update risk communications regularly to account for developments (e.g. vaccination)

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/d5dttdc6>

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

Consider how to facilitate community participation in recovery, renewal and resilience building activities.

Recovery and renewal strategies require community co-production to be influenced by the knowledge, skills and experience of communities. Participation depends on a number of factors. *VFL* find that time and convenience are crucial when it comes to community participation in recovery, renewal and resilience plans and actions. Measures to facilitate community participation should address the needs of all community members, so as to ensure accessibility, and not reinforce inequalities. Consider whether:

- **Local planning and government meetings, forums and workshops are conveniently located and accessible:**
 - Select locations and venues that facilitate access for all members of the community. Consider access constraints affecting disadvantaged groups, which may be physical, geographic, economic, or faith related. E.g. provide online access, transport, refreshments, accessibility for people with disabilities
 - Select venues/online forums where different groups within the community already congregate (e.g. different religious groups, women)
- **The timing of activities fits with the commitments of the community members who will be participating.** For example, work schedules, household responsibilities, school timetables of children and parents (particularly women), farmers' seasonal calendars
 - Carefully consider people's time, and seek feedback from the community on times that are suitable
 - Draw on appropriate local volunteers to offer childcare where physical meetings are held
- **Socio-cultural issues which might prevent some people from participating have been considered:**
 - Identify potential barriers related to language, literacy levels, ethnicity, gender discrimination, etc.
 - Provide expert facilitation and translation services, or organize separate meetings with women, people with disabilities, specific ethnic minorities and other groups to facilitate their participation

Report back to participants on the outcome of their community participation and how thinking/planning has changed as a result of their contribution

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/3n2e9yfh>

<https://tinyurl.com/trw6pcf5>

Consider the principles of social renewal from COVID-19. In Scotland, the government's Social Renewal Advisory Board has proposed ways that transformational renewal can deliver lasting change post-COVID. The board published a report in January 2021 titled 'If not now, when?' which recognises the inequalities that have been exposed by the pandemic, and the civic response which emerged. The report presents 'Calls to Action' to tackle these inequalities and further galvanise the social action that is instrumental. Consider the principles offered by the report with regard to three key aspects of renewal:

1. *Money and Work*: the need to support low income communities and tackle the structural inequalities in 'homes and across society' (e.g. unpaid care predominantly offered by women), including those disproportionately impacted by the health, economic and social impacts of the pandemic. The report calls for:

- A '**Minimum Income Guarantee**'. All incomes should 'meet a minimum income standard through a combination of paid work and/or social security'. This provides payments based on a person's circumstances, accounting for differing 'needs and costs associated with disability, childcare and housing'
- A '**person-centred approach to money, financial education and help**'. Addressing individual debt through temporary payment moratoriums, improved financial education and support, particularly for those in ethnic minority groups who may not seek financial advice
- A '**new social contract on Fair Work**'. Partnerships between government, public sector and employers to deliver greater levels of financial security for workers through focusing on inclusive and targeted employment programmes

2. *People, Rights and Advancing Equality*: the need for all people to have adequate housing, food and access to services and information, including migrants and refugees. The report advises:

- '**Make the prevention and ending of homelessness a national priority for the next parliamentary term**'. Tackle the gaps in financial housing support and make adequate housing a human right for all people in Scotland
- '**Increase access to nutritious, culturally appropriate and affordable food**'. Invest in local food partnerships to build greater local food resilience
- '**Tackle the digital divide**'. End digital exclusion by placing a duty of responsibility on public bodies to enable digital access

3. *Communities and Collective Endeavour*: focused on empowering people, communities and frontline teams to drive new ways of working which started to emerge during the pandemic, and develop new arrangements for local governance:

- '**Co-producing policies and programmes** with the public through citizen participation in design and delivery, and supporting the inclusion of a wider portion of society
- '**Values-based leadership**' to empower frontline teams to deliver flexible services based on community needs and priorities
- '**People, communities and places, building on strengths and assets**' to share responsibility and ownership with communities to build local resilience capabilities

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/wpkdd99c>

CASE STUDY: LESSONS FROM FUKUSHIMA FOR RECOVERY

Last month, Japan's Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) marked ten years since the Great East Japan Earthquake (GEJE), and the subsequent tsunami that devastated the region and caused a nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Post-accident analysis verified that radiation from the accident at the power plant has not had any direct impacts on human health. However, the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people living in surrounding areas resulted in premature deaths, due to lack of access to healthcare or medicines, among other stresses. Like Fukushima, COVID-19 presents both policy makers and the general public with a range of multi-dimensional challenges. We explore three lessons from Fukushima recovery that can support COVID-19 recovery:

Preparedness and disaster management plans

Like COVID-19, the GEJE exposed fragilities in the planning for complex and extraordinary disasters, which were addressed by reformulating disaster management plans at national and local levels in Japan. Consider:

- Reviewing & revising disaster management plans at national and local levels to ensure plans are kept up to date:
 - Integrate lessons learned during the pandemic to inform new disaster management planning and policy.
 - Focus on the following issues: coordination of administrative and operational functionalities; preventative measures, such as education, safety drills, and issuing and transmitting of information and warnings; evacuation and rescue activities, and primary goods supply and distribution in emergency situations; and overall coordination of reconstruction and restoring livelihoods during the recovery phase

Engaging local stakeholders

Resilience is strengthened when it is shared. Establishing strong communication and collaboration – between communities, local medical staff, central government, municipalities, and experts – was found to build awareness amongst local residents about exposure risks to radiation, and how to reduce those risks in the future. Consider:

- Authentic stakeholder engagement means meaningful, creative and impactful interactions with people and communities, and the co-production of recovery and renewal strategies:
 - Actively involve and recognize community members in recovery conversations.
 - Build on collaborative relationships and integration initiatives that have been developed through the pandemic in local areas. Conduct a review to identify areas where these established relationships and initiatives offer opportunity for creative and impactful engagement in recovery
- Effective participation requires leaders to utilise a range of models of engagement that:
 - Encourage community participation (e.g. joint planning groups)
 - Provide the community with access to expertise, advice and training (e.g. disaster risk planning)
 - Facilitate community mobilisation and empowerment, by establishing partnerships with voluntary organisations and community groups, and initiating community development programmes

Recognising the impacts on mental health

Fear of exposure to radiation, plus the evacuation itself, created significant psychological distress for those who experienced the events of Fukushima. These have similarities to the psychological effects of COVID-19. Multifaceted-support and societal recovery progress has been found to help address the impacts of the Fukushima disaster on people's mental health. Mental Health Europe offer guidance to recovery and renewal of mental health support:

- Co-produce long-term strategies to mitigate the crisis with service users and relevant organisations
- The promotion of 'basic social rights', together with targeted investment in economic protection, such as 'universal basic income, income protection schemes, loan guarantees, rent protection' and booster packages.
- Invest in mental health literacy
- Promote cross-sectoral collaboration and more integrated social and health care & investments in peer support
- Facilitate and support community-based services that 'respect the will and preferences of users, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Involve people with lived experience.

Sources:

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USEFUL WEBINARS

Key past and upcoming 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)
Previous	
22 April	Resilient Cities Network, World Bank: Launch of R-Cities Chair's Agenda
29 April	University of Manchester: Recovering from COVID-19
Upcoming	
1 May	Covid-19 Second Wave: IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR INFORMAL SECTOR AND MIGRANT WORKERS
6 May	Resilient Cities Network, World Bank: Cities on The Frontline Speaker Series

Produced by The University of Manchester, UK (Professor Duncan Shaw, Róisín Jordan, Alan Boyd, Dr. Stephen Brookes), with guest briefing from Greater Manchester Police UK (Umer Khan), in partnership with the Resilient Cities Network (Femke Gubbels, Archana Kannan)

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

Every fortnight the [University of Manchester](#) brings together relevant international practices and examples on recovery from COVID-19. The bi-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](#)

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