

CITIES on the FRONTLINE



Bi-weekly Manchester Briefing #31– 13 May 2021

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

This week, we consider how social protection programmes, participatory and inclusive engagement processes, and investments in universal health coverage can play a key role in the response and recovery from COVID-19.

International Lessons

- Improving social protection programmes for sudden shocks (Vietnam)
- Increasing investment in stronger health programs and Universal Health Coverage (UN)
- Incentive programmes for volunteers (Canada)
- Recovery of local tourism and hospitality (Ireland)
- Renewal of high street and town centres (United Kingdom)
- Infrastructure investment for targeted recovery (OECD)
- Participatory approaches to climate adaptation (Tonga)
- Engaging citizens and deliberative processes for recovery (USA, OECD)

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 increasing investment in Universal Health Coverage and stronger health systems. A recent UN policy brief identified the significant gap in health coverage as a core reason for COVID-19 having such devastating impacts on people's lives. Universal health coverage means that all people and communities can access the health services that they need, with three key priorities; 'equity in access, sufficient quality and no undue financial risk'. Consider:

- **Establish universal provision for 'COVID-19 testing, isolating, contact tracing' and treatment**
- Ensure protection of essential health services during the critical phases of the pandemic (e.g. services for sexual and reproductive health)
- Through international partnerships, **ensure future COVID-19 vaccines are a 'global public good with equitable access for everyone, everywhere'**
- **Protect and invest in core health systems** functions that are critical to protecting and promoting health and well-being, known as 'Common goods for health'
- Suspend user fees for COVID-19 and other essential health care; reduce financial barriers to service use

- Strengthen local, national and global pandemic preparedness and aim for healthy societies for the future through a whole-of-society approach

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/k6h8evch>

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

Consider how to improve social protection programmes so that they are disaster-responsive. Social protection (SP) is critical to help poor and vulnerable households to cope with sudden shocks. Recovery from COVID-19 can aim to better understand and reduce the vulnerabilities that are exposed during crises, and to reinstate preparedness for and resilience to future events. Consider reviewing SP programmes to improve their capacity to respond to disasters:

- **Assess the institutional capacity for improving disaster-responsive SP** by identifying:
 - The key actors who are engaged in, or are responsible for, social protection (e.g. national/local government agencies, NGOs, civil society) and other core actors from relevant sectors (e.g. health, education, infrastructure). Define the roles, responsibilities and mandates of key actors
 - What the current capacities are (e.g. 'knowledge and/or experience' on disaster-responsive SP) and what are the "surge" capacities in staffing (including the 're-deployment capacities of government staff from non-affected areas' and the civil society supports available)
 - If the current policy and legislative framework for SP, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management recognises the roles of all key actors and whether adjustments are required to advance SP to effectively respond to disasters (In Myanmar, 'a legal mandate is in place for the restoration of livelihoods to pre-disaster levels')
- Review information systems to ensure accurate data is available that will trigger a social protection response to disasters:
 - Identify the **characteristics of poverty and vulnerability** data that underpin social protection and other programmes that aim to reduce poverty and vulnerability
 - Identify the measures and methods used to determine the socio-economic status of households and communities and assess if these generate accurate information on vulnerable households (see TMB Issue 34 'vulnerability in the era of COVID-19')
 - **Define the characteristics of disasters that you aim to address** – e.g. 'type, expected speed of onset, geographical distribution (e.g. urban/rural differences)' and numbers of people at risk
 - 'In Vietnam, the "poor list" and "near-poor list" are regularly updated at local levels and inform the identification process of SP beneficiaries – this mechanism may also 'serve as a pre-identified list of households disproportionately vulnerable to disasters'
- **Assess pre-existing social protection programme** performance during COVID-19. Identify the additional measures and interventions that may have been required as a direct result of the crisis, to understand where gaps may exist and what longer-term adjustments may be required to increase preparedness for future crises
- Review financing mechanisms for SP programmes to identify the strengths and weaknesses of current budget allocation. **Allocate additional funding where required to enable SP programmes to rapidly and effectively respond to a variety of disasters** (e.g. targeted funding at local levels to areas that are frequently impacted by floods)

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/nyy7y3mf>

Consider that recovery and renewal plans for high street and town centre development for local growth should be supported by robust evidence. The pandemic has accelerated the change to shopping habits, triggered economic downturn and changed how people live their lives (e.g. working from home). Evidence provided by 'what works centre for local economic growth' prompts thinking as to what types of investment and interventions are likely to be most beneficial when designing recovery plans. The report considers that:

- 'Supply side' investments (e.g. shop front renovations) should be supported by investments and policies that target increasing consumer demand
- **Education and training to improve the skills profile of local communities** can positively impact residents average wages, which will increase spending power and demand for local goods and services

- There is little evidence to support thinking that large department stores/supermarkets ('anchor stores') are of more value than other shops, meaning that balanced and equal support should be provided to protect business continuity of all shops
- Increased levels of working from home is unlikely to instigate large population shifts away from towns and cities and 'proposals that are based on the assumption that housing supply and population density will change significantly should provide robust evidence to underpin those assumptions'
- Recovery and renewal proposals/plans which state that 'physical or cultural regeneration initiatives will also deliver economic growth' should also provide robust evidence as little evidence has shown that investment in new community assets/improved housing quality will deliver local growth

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/3hjh68et>

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 targeted infrastructure investment to stimulate recovery. Infrastructure investment has been found to effectively stimulate economic activity. Project prioritization and methods of financing are two key policy and investment questions, noted by the International Transport Forum (OECD). Consider:

- Projects which deliver jobs, stimulate growth in the short- and medium-term should be prioritised
- Those projects that are already in the pipeline with cleared planning and environmental approval should be the focus
- 'Interventions should be Timely, Targeted and Temporary: the **IMF's TTT principle**'
- Local projects should be accurately estimated and the **life-span of projects should be effectively forecasted**
- Incentives or stimulus packages should be based on aims to drive 'decarbonisation, social equity and resilience'

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/45cj3cer>

Consider an inclusive participatory approach for climate change adaptation strategies. COVID-19 presents an opportunity to address climate change impacts and improve disaster risk management. Tonga is highly exposed to natural hazards and the effects of climate change. In an effort to develop a 'resilient Tonga', an inclusive participatory approach has been employed that is based on strong governance and the development of knowledgeable and proactive communities. A broad range of goals, strategies and projects have been identified within Tonga's 'Joint National Action Plan 2 on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management' (CCADRM), including:

- The introduction of new policies and projects (e.g. National Forest Policy, Land Use Policy, Tonga Ridge to Reef Project) to improve governance for CCADRM
- Increase information, education and understanding of CCADRM by initiating awareness programmes and the establishment of a climate change data management system
- Improvement of analysis and **assessments of vulnerability to climate change impacts and disaster risks** through coastal assessment and protection projects (E.g. Lifuka Island vulnerability assessment and adaptation to sea-level rise community project (p69))
- **Investment in public infrastructure** (e.g. schools and community halls) to increase their 'structural resilience to climate impacts and the construction of evacuation roads to increase community preparedness and resilience to the risks and impacts of disasters'
- Design and delivery of renewable and energy efficiency projects to increase the technical reliability, economic affordability and environmental reliability of energy. E.g. Outer Island Renewable Energy Project which aims to provide a 'secure, sustainable and environmentally-sound source of electricity' to Tonga's outer islands
- The **establishment of collaborative forums to include non-governmental organisations**, charities and community committees to enhance partnerships, cooperation and collaboration between national and local government agencies, civil society, NGOs, the private sector and the public

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/m3sau9e6>

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

Consider incentive programmes for volunteers. Retention and continued engagement of those who have offered their time, knowledge and skills to support response efforts will be crucial to ensure the valuable resources and capabilities are available for recovery and renewal activities. Recognising the enormous efforts of volunteers over the last year is integral to their retention. Consider:

- Recognise and thank volunteers for their efforts through personal letters or less personal approaches such as via social media
- Develop **accredited certification programmes** to officially recognise volunteer skills and knowledge
- Establish a service awards programme for volunteers based on length of service
- Introduce **a tax credit programme for volunteers**. E.g. The Search and Rescue Volunteers Tax Credit (SRVTC) represents 'federal recognition' of the important role played by search and rescue volunteers in Canada. There are conditions and criteria that are required to be met in order for volunteers to qualify for tax credit (e.g. volunteers who perform in excess of 200 'eligible hours' in a year). Appropriate recruiting, screening and management of volunteers helps to ensure people are not joining for the wrong reasons

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/vuctu74r>

Consider the principles for engaging citizens in deliberative processes for recovery. Involving citizens in the recovery planning and development process can lead to more effective policy outcomes and build trust and a two way dialogue between citizens and government. COVID-19 has had diverse impacts on the lives of individuals and communities, and their involvement in deciding the routes to long-term recovery following the pandemic is crucial. **Consider the good practice principles for deliberative processes offered by the OECD,** which will support the achievement of 'high-quality processes that result in useful recommendations and meaningful opportunities for citizens to shape public decisions':

- **Clearly define the issue as a question** that is aligned with the concerns and challenges faced by different communities
- **Invite people to make recommendations** for addressing the issues that affect them, respond to recommendations in a timely manner, and monitor and feedback regularly to people on the progress of their implementation (e.g. Scotland's Citizens' Assembly)
- Ensure the process is inclusive and representative of all people in the community, e.g. stratified random sampling to select a participant group which fully represents a community's demographic profile
- Make information easily accessible through public communications. Include the purpose, design, methodology, recruitment details, experts, recommendations, the response, and implementation follow-up
- Establish a **mechanism through which people can request additional information**, ask questions and keep up to date on progress of activities
- **Appoint a liaison** person who can feed information in from and out to the community
- Take time to reflect on and evaluate deliberative processes, to ensure learning, help improve future practice and understand impact

Sources:

<https://tinyurl.com/9t6fpxph>
<https://tinyurl.com/955mdv4k>
<https://tinyurl.com/46v9m94f>

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	
06 May	Resilient Cities Network, World Bank: Cities on The Frontline Speaker Serie - Assessing Risk Through Data-Driven Decision Making
07 May	TIEMS: Resilience Planning & Emergency Management
Upcoming	
14 May	FEMA Region 2 Webinar Series: Past, Present and Future of CERT
17 May	Resilient Cities Network, World Bank: Cities on The Frontline Speaker Series- Resilient Infrastructure
07 June	British Standards Institute: Continuity & Resilience Series

Produced by The University of Manchester, UK (Professor Duncan Shaw, Róisín Jordan, Alan Boyd and Dr. Simos Chari) 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