CITIES on the FRONTLINE

MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK

Monthly Manchester Briefing #38 – 14 October 2021

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

This month, we consider how integrated governance models and participatory decision-making, such as engaging with young people and business owners from under-represented groups, can build resilience and support inclusive recovery and renewal.

International Lessons

- Impacts of 'Long COVID' on people and local services (UK)
- Building resilience in young people and communities through play (Global)
- Engaging micro- and small-medium enterprises owned by underrepresented groups to better support recovery and renewal (OECD)
- Tools to support and drive local economic recovery (Switzerland)
- Increasing participatory decision-making by using the Open City Toolkit (Germany)
- Collaborating with international humanitarian agencies to support local community resilience (Haiti; Kenya; Madagascar; Mozambique; Philippines)
- Improving preparedness and response to future crises through multi-level and integrated governance models (UN)

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS

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

Consider the potential impacts of long-COVID on local services. TMB Issue 36 mentioned the need to identify and address the impacts of 'Long COVID' on people who receive and provide care and support in local communities (e.g. social care services/unpaid carers). The most recent Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures (July 2021) report that just under one million people in the UK have self-reported symptoms of Long COVID. The symptoms associated with 'Long COVID' (e.g. fatigue, shortness of breath, joint pain, cognitive dysfunction) have the potential to impact people's ability to work, and their physical and mental health. The impacts of Long COVID have the potential to increase long-term demand on local health and social care services. Consider:

- How a rise in demand will **impact current capacities and resources** in local health and social care services
- Where **re-deployment (e.g. of volunteers) may be possible to alleviate pressure** on health and social care workers and meet the needs of people who might require continuous support e.g. with transport/shopping

- What **training and safeguards** would need to be put in place to ensure any additional support provided by volunteers is done safely
- The **impacts of Long COVID on other services** such as housing, transport, welfare and employment
- Conduct a review to:
  - assess current resources and surge capacities
  - understand who in the community does and might need additional support and estimate the length of time this might be for (using information such as people who have underlying health conditions)
  - estimate what funding might be required to meet a rise in demand and how this potential rise can be forecasted, budgeted, and planned for

Sources:
https://tinyurl.com/3h2xrkh9
https://tinyurl.com/yma8jwep

Consider the value of play in building resilience in young people and their communities. The pandemic has disrupted children and young people's education, physical health, mental well-being, and social development. There is an abundance of evidence that shows how play is crucial for children's "health, their physical-and emotional growth, and intellectual and educational development". The social and behavioural skills that children acquire during play can support the development of resilience, increasing children's ability to manage stress and adversity. Local areas now have an opportunity to increase spaces for play through city infrastructure and land use planning in their Recovery Strategies and Renewal Initiatives. Resilient Cities Network (RCN) explored this topic in a recent webinar. Consider:

- The Reclaiming Play in Cities initiative, which recognises how the "built environment as a critical play and learning resource for children". Increasing **opportunities for play in cities can support communities to build resilience.** For example:
  - Barnet, London have taken full advantage of **urban regeneration to invest in play infrastructure**. Core strategies include "balancing private development with adequate resourcing for the local voluntary and community sector (VCS) to provide play activities for the most vulnerable children in the area", and the redesign of two local parks
  - Khayelitsha, Cape Town, with the support of the Urban Play Framework (discussed below), began a two-phase intervention to develop a local play culture in the area. With community participation, the first phase upgrades a series of existing courtyards to create a network of designated play spaces. The second phase will link this network to a refurbished nursery which will serve as a central hub to establish a safer, more varied and stimulating environment for play
- The Urban Play Framework which offers guidance on design and 'placemaking' in cities:
  - The Urban Play Framework Toolkit which provides **methods and tools to support local governments and communities to conduct a play assessment of their area, and identify and co-design play activation initiatives**

The importance of participatory processes and community engagement in the assessment, design, and evaluation of play initiatives so that children are active participants in the process to increase their agency

Sources:
https://tinyurl.com/4smen7rw
https://tinyurl.com/3txb7e2y
https://tinyurl.com/e49mpwy8

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

Consider how to engage with micro- and small-medium enterprises (MSMEs) owned by underrepresented groups to better support their recovery and renewal. Underrepresented groups such as women- and minority- owned MSMEs have shown a higher degree of vulnerability during the pandemic. Women- and minority- owned businesses tend to be micro in size (10 employees or less), more financially fragile, and face barriers when accessing professional and financial support services, according to the OECD and McKinsey. Past experiences of barriers to support mean that these groups are less likely to seek support or are unaware of the support that may be available to them. During a recent webinar, it was reported that these types of businesses could add £70 billion to the UK economy, if fully supported. We explore ways in which national and local government can better engage with MSMEs to develop policies and support mechanisms that will adequately address their recovery and renewal needs. The OECD and the UK's Business in the Community recommend:

- **Understand the barriers faced by these business owners** by directly engaging with them, for example:
  - Establish and facilitate discussions (e.g. consultation) with MSME owners, organisations that represent them, and others such as banks, insurance companies, and professional services providers
- **Design inclusive schemes** that acknowledge and remove barriers, increase accessibility, and provide adequate support to women- and minority-owned businesses. Examples include:
  - Canada's Women Entrepreneurship Strategy Fund (CAD 15 million) and the Black Entrepreneurship Program (CAD 221 million)
  - Ireland's Women in Business 2020 Action Plan
  - Malaysia's Short-term National Economic Recovery Plan (Penjana) which includes a USD 12.5 million micro financing program and an initiative aimed to raise funds to help finance microenterprises. Both initiatives are targeted at women entrepreneurs
- Deploy **targeted advertising and collaborate** with business associations, to raise awareness of new and existing aid schemes
- **Reduce the bureaucracy** of existing aid measures, by decreasing ex ante eligibility checks and deploying easily accessible digital portals. For example:
  - Switzerland's "bridging credit" scheme which can be applied for through a simple one-page form, increasing to accessibility of financial aid and the speed at which companies can receive assistance
- Create contract/tender opportunities that are **targeted at women- and minority- owned MSMEs** (see examples from Florida and Indiana)

Source:
https://tinyurl.com/5et7ehnp

Consider tools to support and drive local economic recovery. A recent event organised by Geneva Cities Hub (GHC) and UN-Habitat examined the measures that cities across the world took to tackle economic and financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The session discussed lessons learned and how these might inform and accelerate the development of strategies which effectively prepare for and mitigate the effects of future crisis in cities. One core response lesson identified was that "cities which have best managed the crisis are those who have been flexible in the allocation of resources and capacities to support their citizens". A further key takeaway was the potential for tools developed by international organisations to support and drive city recovery and renewal. The tools discussed include:

1. The Urban Economic Resilience Performance Diagnostic and Planning Tool which can support cities to:

- **Identify the "strengths and weaknesses** of institutional and operating" mechanisms with a focus on economic recovery, renewal, and resilience building
- Analyse the "structure and functioning" of cities and effectively measure economic performance. This tool can specifically help cities **to understand how these factors impact vulnerability** to shocks and stressors, and broader local resilience
- Inform the design and implementation of comprehensive Recovery Strategies and Renewal Initiatives that restore and enhance preparedness, and tackle systemic socio-economic conditions to reduce vulnerabilities

2. The Municipal Financial Self-Assessment Tool which aims to support cities to:
   - Analyse city financial health and **identify strategies that will improve the "mobilization of local resources**, financial management, public spending, assets management (public), investment programming and access to external funding"
   - Evaluate local budgets, finance management practices, city savings capacity, investment history and future opportunities, and review financial forecasts
   - Benchmark according to a set of comparable key indicators and ratios
   - Define strategies for a '*Municipal Finance Improvement Plan*' aiming for "greater accountability, visibility and efficiency in the use of public funds"
   - The local government of Kisela Voda, Macedonia, detailed how this tool supported them to mobilize local resources such as increasing land development fees and selling municipal assets

3. The City Resilience Profiling Tool, designed to:
   - Assess and understand unique urban systems by **engaging local governments, the private sector and civil society stakeholders to build city resilience**

Support the establishment of strategies that consider five core and interdependent components: "spatial attributes; organisational attributes; physical attributes; functional attributes; and time"

Source:
https://tinyurl.com/58wth5ry

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 methods to increase participatory decision-making. The Open City Toolkit (OCT) is a web-based geographic information system (GIS) that supports "integrated and participatory urban planning processes, fostering dialogue between governments and citizens and exchange of knowledge and data between government departments". The OCT Toolkit, developed by HafenCity University Hamburg (HCU) and Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeir GnbH (GIZ), is now freely available and offers:

- Guidance to help local government and urban planners **to visualise and analyse complex urban data, collaboratively among local practitioners and with citizens**
- An online introductory tutorial which details the technical components of the system and how these components work together for the tool to function
- A further tutorial series which guides the user of the OCT step-by-step through the process of managing the system.

The OCT is currently being piloted in two cities:

- Bhubaneswar, India where high numbers of people are living in informal settlements (e.g. slums) and the local government are using the OCT **to identify land for the development of affordable housing**
- Latacunga, Ecuador, where large areas of the city are vulnerable to risk due to their proximity to the Cotopaxi volcano and the local government intend to use the OCT **to develop collaborative solutions for volcanic risk governance**

The OCT has been adapted to the specific local planning requirements of the two pilot cities mentioned above, but offers open software for the development of further functionalities for new contexts.

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

Consider how collaborating with international humanitarian agencies can support local community-led preparedness and resilience. Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe are working with civil society organisations (CSOs) and faith-based organisations (FBOs) to design, develop and enhance local level preparedness systems and capacities to support resilience building during and after crises. Local and national governments, the private sector, the media, and academia are also collaborating with the initiative, to help communities to develop their preparedness and response planning. Working with existing community structures, the initiative aims to mobilise and engage community leaders, key stakeholders, and underrepresented groups. The initiative ensures that the most vulnerable people in the community are at the heart of activities. A lack of capacity, resources and capabilities often creates challenges for local governments to initiate effective disaster risk reduction strategies and support from partners e.g. international humanitarian agencies can help to fill the gaps in the initial planning and implementation processes. Consider establishing new partnerships with international humanitarian agencies to:

- Provide institutional capacity and knowledge on emergency preparedness and response processes;
- **Support the design, planning, development and implementation of projects** that incorporate new initiatives which enable communities to participate and collaborate on emergency response;
- Support partners to **establish local preparedness and response systems**, including their own governance capacities;
- Conduct **peer reviews to identify lessons learned and share examples of good practices**;
- Inform future disaster preparedness and response planning

The activities in this initiative include:

- **Train CSOs and FBOs** on integrated disaster management. This activity aims to develop localised first response systems and capacities;
- Support and train CSOs and FBOs on Emergency Preparedness & Response Planning **capacity development**, including strategies for building resilience;
- Establish/strengthen **40 local voluntary community groups** on areas such as community preparedness, early warning and response;

Pilot a **'Supporting Community-led Response' programme** which aims to enable communities and self-help groups to collaborate on response to crisis, and to address root causes of vulnerability, through workshops, peer review and lessons learned sessions

Consider new governance models to increase preparedness and ensure effective responses to future crises. The role of all levels of government in determining the success or failure of the COVID-19 response in different countries was recognized early in the pandemic. So, it is no surprise that multi-level governance and an integrated approach are generally accepted as key elements in achieving the best results to fight against the pandemic. The UN recognizes that governance systems are

complex due to their interaction with the social, legal, political context of each country and region. Therefore, there is no "off-the-shelf" solution that can be universally applied. Considering this, the UN recommends:

- "Incorporating governance approaches into national, subnational, and local pandemic responses, that take into consideration local situations and needs
- Promote an **integrated and cooperative approach between different levels of governance**, to avoid competition/division, political confusion, and institutional friction
- Maintain and strengthen health care, social welfare, and other protections, by increasing funding to these areas and developing revenue sources such as progressive tax models
- Ensure that **emergency preparedness is effectively integrated into health governance at all levels**. The current pandemic is a learning opportunity for national, regional, and local governments and its lessons should contribute to build appropriate governance mechanisms
- Incorporate digital technologies into policy making and improved governance, by investing in the appropriate infrastructure, increasing the number of government services available online, and promoting digital inclusion

Ensure crisis management strategies incorporate **long-term recovery strategies that align with aspirational goals around social inclusion and sustainability**. The current crisis offers a unique opportunity to rebuild and renew. Governments, at all levels, should consider new paths forward in order to not only improve resilience against future pandemics, but also to address pre-COVID problems such as inequality, climate change, migration, and the erosion of human rights"

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	
23 September	The Manchester Series and TIEMS - Managing meaningful recovery from COVID
23 September	Resilient Cities Network and World Bank – Cities on the Frontline: Co-Designing a Resilient Recovery in Cities
Upcoming	
13 October	Alliance Manchester Business School and Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum - Launch of the National Consortium for Societal Resilience (NCSR+)
14 October	Resilient Cities Network and World Bank – Cities on the Frontline: Mainstreaming Resilience Thinking Into Recovery Packages
11 – 14 October	University of Manchester - Manchester Festival of Climate Action
15 October	The Manchester Series and TIEMS - Anticipating a resilient future
26 October	Federal Emergency Management Agency - USA 'Maintaining and Revitalizing your CERT Program'
28 October	Resilient Cities Network and World Bank – Cities on the Frontline: SMEs and Resilient Recovery

Produced by The University of Manchester, UK (Professor Duncan Shaw, Róisín Jordan) in partnership with the Resilient Cities Network (Gladys Tan)

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