CITIES on the FRONTLINE

The University of Manchester | RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK

Monthly Manchester Briefing #35– 05 August 2021

Cities for a Resilient Recovery:

International Lessons on Recovery from COVID-19

This month, we consider how to continue supporting the COVID-19 recovery through stronger health systems, recovering public transportation systems, funding green recovery initiatives and by commemorating the pandemic.

International Lessons

- Pandemic Commemoration for Recovery Support (Japan, USA, UK)
- Connectivity between Health Systems (Papua New Guinea & Pakistan)
- Recovering and Renewing Public Transport (UK)
- Funding Global Green Recovery Initiatives (Global)
- Build resilient voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (UK)
- Planning Urban Resilience Principles and Recovery (Global)
- Recovery Plans for Ecological, Social and Economic Growth (Finland)

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 the lessons for post pandemic commemoration to support recovery. COVID-19's prolonged nature, and the intensity of measures taken to respond to it, have brought major disruptions with lasting consequences. Our relationship to mortality and death has been redefined, not least by disruption to traditional rituals that enable societies to cope with and overcome major trauma. A recent webinar, organised as part of **the Manchester Webinar Series**, considered how we might collectively remember the COVID-19 pandemic. Our speakers reviewed lessons from the past on building resilience through coproduced commemoration and discussed key considerations for policy makers and communities in planning to recognise and remember the huge losses caused by COVID-19. Consider the key lessons offered by our speakers:

- There is no one way to remember. Unlike most disasters, each individual's experience of COVID-19 is a personal one and commemoration activities will require careful consideration around ways **to bring people together** to collectively remember while also recognising the **uniqueness** of everyone's experience
- The co-production of activities can provide a way to ensure commemoration is **inclusive** of all of those who would like to be involved, to create a **collaborative** and bottom-up as well as top-down delivery of remembrance, and enable communities to take **ownership** of their remembrance
- Consideration for who will lead and be involved in these conversations will be really important, to mediate, and to **support communities** to find ways to compromise on differing views and perspectives on commemoration
- The timing of **commemoration is a challenge**, considering that COVID-19 is now a long-term chronic problem and we are not at the end of the disaster. The pandemic has seen commemoration since the beginning, demonstrating how communities can begin to create spaces of remembrance even while the crisis persists. Some examples of these commemoration activities can be found in TMB Issue 34 and Issue 29
- Memorials can be political, and grand gestures such as monuments can fade, or be contested. This reinforces the need for co-produced commemoration, **enabling the voices of those who will benefit most from commemoration activities** to be heard and actively participate
- **Education** is a good form of remembering, through storytellers or creating spaces (online or in local newspapers) where people can share their individual experiences of the pandemic. Recording those memories now will enable authentic materials to support education in years to come
- Think about how those who have lower agency in communities will remember (e.g. children who have lost grandparents). Commemoration could be done by **creating spaces** in schools/community youth groups for teachers/youth volunteers to support children

Consider new public-private partnerships to protect health systems during crisis. Throughout the pandemic, many health systems across the world have come within days of being overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients, and others have been unable to prevent their systems from being overwhelmed. Pakistan have adopted **"health stewardship"** as an approach to ensure public health is a "joint function of national and provincial governments, where service delivery relies on mixed health systems". The response in Singh district, which has the highest rate of COVID-19 cases in Pakistan, was underpinned by public-private partnerships with local government. This provides insights into how public-private engagement can be accelerated during the crisis and how "existing policy windows can be used for longer-term planning for pandemics and Universal Health Coverage". Consider that:

- **Stewarding partnerships** enabled rapid acceleration of testing through private laboratories, supported surge capacity to be met in local private hospitals and increased "critical care training of public sector hospitals" through partnerships with private hospitals
- "Health stewardship" can enable advisory relationships with the private sector to create a **joint operational response** and **strategic communications during crisis**
- Procurement (e.g. of PPE) and **supply chain management** can be enhanced through "digitalised data-sharing of cases and hospital capacity across private and public providers"
- Stewardship relationships may be transactional (e.g. limited to purchasing arrangements) but can also include "wide-ranging formal agreements for co-production", providing an opportunity to **reform public and private health partnerships**
- Devolved operations have proven to offer a flexible and effective response where there is rapid "**data sharing** for national-provincial coordination, and **well-informed** local governments who can mobilize inclusive and co-produced responses"

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 the priorities of local governments for public transport recovery and renewal. Use of public transport can "reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality and public health". The Local Government Association (LGA) UK note that COVID-19 has exacerbated pre-existing challenges in the decline of the bus industry and recommend that recovery should employ "council's and central government's funding, infrastructure and traffic powers to work in partnership with public transport providers". A study by the LGA aimed to understand local authority (LA) recovery priorities for local transport provision, what can accelerate these priorities, what challenges have prevented these priorities from being successfully implemented previously and what reforms are required for recovery and renewal. Consider the themes for recovery identified by local councils in this study:

'Deliver Local Authority responsibilities effectively'
- Increase the capabilities of LAs to provide school transport, "socially necessary bus services" and to account for the needs of communities e.g. elderly populations:
- Increase LAs agency on how local funds are spent to improve their ability to address their responsibilities and context specific challenges posed by some operating environments (e.g. rural areas)

'Make bus services more accessible for commuters'
- Affordable, practical and convenient services are viewed as a new way to "connect new communities, reduce car dependency and congestions, lower carbon emission and fight climate change, improve air quality and health, and tackle social inequalities". Examples of best practice include:
  - More efficient services which reduce travel times and operating costs, renewed branding and increased marketing
  - Integrate service networks with other networks such as rail/tram/cycle lanes, and integrate tickets and payment to improve ease of travel across various networks

'New Approaches to Transport Delivery'
- New challenges caused by the pandemic, pre-existing problems and specific contextual issues (E.g. rural area networks) require innovative solutions, for example:
  - "Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)" can support improvements to connect rural and isolated networks and communities, create "flexibility for school transport and be used as model for community led transport schemes" (See Rural and Demand-Led Transport)
  - "Total Transport and Mobility as a Service (MaaS)" can support integration of transport network modes, tickets and payments and sectoral transport (e.g. health, education, tourism)

'Link Public Transport and Development'
- Co-ordinate "land use planning and local public transport planning to build demand, reduce car reliance and ensure people have equitable access to jobs, healthcare and other services", by:
  - Designing "liveable neighbourhoods" that reduce people's need for non-local travel (increasing local services e.g. through hubs)

'Contribute to tackling climate change'
- Address negative impacts of transport on the environment by improving bus fleets - replacing older vehicles with low and zero emission vehicles e.g. Coventry All Electric Bus

These themes in this report relate to six case study areas in the UK, with feedback sessions with wider local authorities suggesting that these themes are shared, but their scale and implementation may vary depending on the local context.

Consider global funding initiatives for a 'Green Recovery'. TMB Issue 37 detailed some investment initiatives adopted in France, Sweden, Finland and Chile to stimulate a green recovery. This lesson brings together further examples of how countries are implementing green recovery and renewal plans which aim to cut emissions in the aftermath of COVID-19. Consider:

- Italy has deployed a stimulus support package targeting the agricultural sector, designing "integrated projects" which include **green community initiatives** and **awareness campaigns** around environmental challenges
- Ireland committed to "raising the energy rating of 500,000 homes by 2030" in 2020. A new green recovery stimulus package includes a "retrofit skills training initiative" and additional funding targeted at the **Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland** to expand the initiative. This is expected to **create an additional 3,200 "quality, sustainable jobs"**
- Spain has included funding for "housing renovation and urban regeneration" which aims to **improve the "energy performance of buildings"**, as part of their Recovery and Resilience plan, which has been submitted to the EU Commission
- South Korea has designed an initiative "green transformation of living infrastructure" which aims to **stimulate employment growth and transform "state-run facilities** (e.g. community health clinics, public housing, childcare facilities) **to zero-emissions"**. The plan is to replace "fossil-fuel based utility systems with efficient, green systems, and implement 100 new IT-based systems to help resolve environmental issues, including low-carbon vehicle manufacturing and air quality improvement"

Sources:
https://tinyurl.com/3maach9f

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

Consider the resources needed to recover and build resilience in the VCS sector. The Mobilising Volunteers Effectively (MoVE) project, led by Universities of Sheffield, Hull and Leeds, aims to understand the ways in which communities have mobilised in response to COVID. The project has released a number of reports which set out the findings from the first phase of the project. The **'Resilience of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)** across Yorkshire and the Humber' (May 2021) report highlights the challenges created for VCS organisations due to a "rise in demand, diminished donations and restricted opportunities to trade and raise funds". The emergence of multi-agency partnership working (e.g. between local governments, VCS organisations, mutual aid/ informal community groups and businesses) has supported local response capabilities throughout the pandemic, highlighting a need for a more strategic approach to strengthen the partnerships, relationships and capabilities of communities to collectively prepare for future shocks and build resilience. The findings are informed by 407 VCS organisations responses to a 'Resilience Survey'. Consider the key recommendations set out in this report:
- Ensure volunteers and those involved in VCS organisations are included in community **mental health and wellbeing support** in the aftermath of the pandemic
- Support **small local VCS organisations**, who may lack sufficient infrastructure to secure grant funding, with guidance on grant application. This could also be supported by simplifying the grant application process
- The provision of practical support (e.g. fundraising support) and increasing volunteer recruitment, retention and training support, e.g. through partnerships, for example:
    - Sandwell council partner with local VCS organisations to provide free e-learning to volunteers covering topics such as "child protection, fire safety, information sharing" and more
    - A community-run Red Cross Cardiac First Response volunteer group in Ireland, partner with the local fire brigade and other local authority organisations to provide emergency response training to volunteers and support activities to raise vital funds for ambulances and medical equipment
- **Targeted financial support** through government subsidy for VCS organisations who are providing services for "children and younger people" as they were found to be "least financially viable over time". The report recommends that the "art, culture and heritage and community development" VCS organisations should then be prioritised and targeted for financial support

TMB Issue 8 describes how recovery and renewal requires broader strategic partnership working nationally, regionally and locally. The relationships that have been developed through the pandemic can underpin recovery and renewal initiatives, enabling national and local action through multi-departmental and cross-organisational

working. Key to these partnerships is recognising that partners have power and place-based relationships that will be crucial to the success of recovery and renewal activities.

Sources:
https://tinyurl.com/mvy3fwhp
https://tinyurl.com/5z82wj4z

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

Consider the principles of urban economic resilience. The UN-HABITAT City Resilience Global Programme (CRGP) define urban resilience as the "measurable ability of any urban system, with its inhabitants, to maintain continuity through all shocks and stresses, while positively adapting and transforming towards sustainability". This gives rise to the following 'Urban Resilience Principles' to consider:

'Dynamic nature of urban resilience'
- Recognise that resilience is a fluid condition and requires that systems "evolve, transform and adapt to current and future conditions". Resilience building activities require "context-specific" and adaptable plans and activities which account for the complex and "dynamic nature of risk and resilience"

'Systemic approach to cities'
- Acknowledge that urban areas consist of "interconnected systems through complex networks" and even small adaptions can impact the entire network of systems. A wide-ranging and comprehensive approach is required to account for the interdependencies that exist within urban systems and are exposed to disruption during crisis

'Promoting participation in planning and governance'
- Co-production of resilience planning and governance can enhance the "prosperity" of stakeholders (e.g. city residents), increase a sense of local ownership and achieve more effective implementation of resilience building plans and activities

'Multi-stakeholder engagement'
- "Continuity of governance, economic activity and other city functions" is critical to a resilient system. Facilitating collaborative communication and working between all interested stakeholders such as "public entities, the private sector, civil society, academic institutions and the city community", is essential

'Strive towards the Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs)
- Underpinning resilience building plans and initiatives with SDGs can ensure that human rights are "fulfilled, respected, and protected"

Sources:
https://tinyurl.com/yu57pvb7

Consider recovery plans that drive ecological, social and economic growth. Finland's 'Sustainable Growth Program: Recovery Plan' sets out the reforms and public investment projects that aim to **boost "competitiveness, investment, skills development and research, and innovation".** The overall objectives of the programme are:
- "Decrease greenhouse gas emissions;
- Productivity growth;
- Raising the employment rate;
- Faster accessibility to care;
- Progress in equality"

This recovery plan has recently been submitted to the EU Commission for review. The plan is not yet approved, however, this lesson offers an insight into Finland's Recovery and Resilience priorities. The programme is built around four key pillars:
- "A **green transition** to support structural adjustment of the economy and underpin a **carbon-neutral** welfare society;
- Digitalisation and a digital economy to strengthen productivity and increase access to services;
- Raising the employment rate and skill levels to accelerate sustainable growth;
- Access to **health and social services** will be improved and their cost-effectiveness enhanced"

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
08 July	Resilient Cities Network, World Bank & Real Play Coalition: Cities on The Frontline Speaker Series- Private Sector Engagement
15 July	Resilience First Summer Debate
22 July	Resilient Cities Network, World Bank & University of Manchester: Cities on The Frontline Speaker Series- Building Effective Food Systems for Cities
	Upcoming
12 Aug	Resilient Cities Network, World Bank: Cities on the Frontline Speaker Series- Private Sector Engagement In Urban Resilience
9 Sept	Resilient Cities Network, World Bank: Cities on the Frontline Speaker Series – Resilient Sanitation

Produced by The University of Manchester, UK (Professor Duncan Shaw, Róisín Jordan and Alan Boyd) in partnership with the Resilient Cities Network (Alexandria Cedergren)

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

Every month the University of Manchester brings together relevant international practices and examples on recovery from COVID-19. The monthly 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