

# CITIES on the FRONTLINE



Weekly Briefing: September 17<sup>th</sup> 2020

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

Produced by The University of Manchester, UK (Professor Duncan Shaw, Dr Jennifer Bealt, Michael Palin and Professor Ruth Boaden) in partnership with the Global Resilient Cities Network (Sam Kernaghan)

### 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 [Global 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 and Wellbeing, Economy & Society; Infrastructure & Environment; and Leadership & Strategy.

### Highlights of the week

In this week's briefing we highlight strategies for an **equitable recovery** in the most deprived parts of the world; how **preparations for the forthcoming northern winter** are addressing compound risks of seasonal diseases and COVID-19 on high risk communities; the efforts to **overcome long term unemployment** among under 25's, and how digital innovation is being used to improve food supply chain management, and **adapt traditional on-site and face-to-face resilience building activities**.

**COVID 19 has exacerbated inequalities in the most deprived areas globally** and created a need to create opportunities to foster an equitable recovery. Strategies such as housing tenure and job security schemes, and creating or maintaining effective use of public spaces, can reduce unauthorised working and living conditions and mitigate transmission risks.

The start of Autumn/ Fall in the northern hemisphere also means that winter is only a few months away. Concerns about the **compound risks of winter diseases and a resurgence of COVID-19** are prompting authorities to identify mitigation strategies that protect, and pose no further disadvantages to high risk patients or communities. At the same time, as the economic impacts of the pandemic hit across the community, **under 25s are one group that may face years of reduced pay and limited job prospects**. The EU's Youth Guarantee is one response which aims to ensure youth receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

Food supply chains have been disrupted throughout COVID-19 response and recovery phases, with food waste and unsustainable farming practices occurring in part due to the asymmetry in information in the supply chain. **By using digital innovation to decentralise information in food systems, small-scale and flexible production can support more uncertain operating environments such as those needed during COVID-19**. And in Mexico, efforts are being made to adapt traditional on-site and face-to-face resilience building activities to digital online activities during COVID-19 by accelerating the use of online digital tools. These approaches are being designed to **reach those in the community without online access due to remoteness, digital illiteracy, and/or the costs of (smart)phones and mobile data**.

**Consider how to work effectively in deprived areas to foster equitable response and recovery.** Lockdowns and COVID-19 have exacerbated inequalities in the most deprived areas. Many responses assume people have adequate living space, access to affordable basic services, and social safety nets. However, many lack adequate resources to survive lockdowns without defying COVID-19 restrictions e.g. leaving the house to work. Consider working with civil society, government, and charities to:

- Provide support for informal sector providers and workers to encourage tenure security schemes that can offer benefits to informal workers such as more secure housing, and increased legitimacy to work or trade. This may help reduce unauthorised working and living conditions that may increase transmission of COVID-19
- Regular situation monitoring of deprived areas to track key concerns relating to working and living conditions that can inform COVID-19 responses and transmission mitigation. Use online surveys completed by the community or local organisations that know the population
- Creating or maintaining effective use of public spaces for to provide COVID safe community care to reduce isolation, counter misinformation and collect reliable data on COVID-19 impacts

Source: <https://www.iied.org/working-informality-for-more-resilient-equitable-responses-covid-19>;

<https://www.muungano.net/browseblogs/2020/6/23/23-june-2020-coronavirus-situation-tracker-for-kenyan-informal-settlements>

**Consider how to prepare for winter considering winter diseases and a resurgence of COVID-19.** There is much concern about the combination of coronavirus with winter flu and the effects on transmission rates and a recent report outlines concerns and plans. Consider developing a plan for coronavirus during winter months by:

- Analysing current COVID-19 data to develop prevention and mitigation strategies for winter, considering the rise in other illnesses during colder weather
- Considering how mitigation strategies should protect, and pose no further disadvantages to high risk patients or communities
- Engaging with patients, carers, public and healthcare professionals with enhanced coordination, collaboration and data sharing between central and local initiatives.

Consider:

- Minimising community SARS-CoV-2 transmission and impact through:
  - developing effective policies to maximise population engagement in essential control measures e.g. participation in test, trace and isolate (TTI); extensive autumn public information campaigns co-produced by communities and professional organisations; guidance for commercial, public and domestic properties on temperature, humidity and ventilation to reduce virus transmission indoors; consideration of those most vulnerable to COVID-19 who are least able to heat their homes adequately in winter
- Maximise infection control and ensure that COVID-19 and routine care can take place in parallel by:
  - prioritising system-wide infection prevention and control measures; providing training to use personal protective equipment (PPE) and other infection prevention and control measures; maximising remote consultations for hospital and community care; testing and quarantining patients being discharged into the community or care; prioritising the backlog of clinical care by clinical need, not waiting times
- Improving public health surveillance for COVID-19, influenza and other winter diseases through:
  - comprehensive, population-wide, near-real-time, health surveillance systems; conducting large-scale population surveys comparable data collected from hospitals and the community; overseeing and coordinating data centrally
- Minimise influenza transmission and impact by maximising influenza vaccination uptake

Source: <https://acmedsci.ac.uk/file-download/51353957>

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

**Consider measures to reduce youth unemployment due to COVID-19.** In the UK, it is expected that youth unemployment will rise by over 640,000 in 2020 taking the total to over 1 million. Under 25s may face years of reduced pay and limited job prospects long-term. Consider strategies to tackle youth unemployment:

- Encourage organizations to develop partnerships with UK employers, government, education institutions, and civil society to create quality work placements for young people
- Promote the benefits of employer networks e.g. lower recruitment costs and improved staff retention to facilitate more work placements
- Consider measures such as the 'EU measure against youth unemployment'. The Commission wants EU countries to increase their support for the young through their recovery and suggest member states should invest at least €22 billion for youth employment. Initiatives also include:
  - Youth Employment Support which includes The Youth Guarantee which aims to ensure people under the age of 25 get a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.
  - Extending the Youth Guarantee which covers people aged 15 - 29 (previously the upper limit was 25) and: Reaches out to vulnerable groups, such as minorities and young people with disabilities; Provides tailored counselling, guidance and mentoring; Reflects the needs of companies, providing the skills required and short preparatory courses

Source: <http://www.mancunianmatters.co.uk/content/200878994-coronavirus-youth-job-crisis-how-beat-it>;  
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20200709STO83004/covid-19-how-the-eu-fights-youth-unemployment>;  
<https://www.fenews.co.uk/press-releases/53450-high-quality-work-experience-placements-to-reduce-youth-unemployment-and-transform-the-lives-of-young-people>

## Infrastructure & 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 reduce information asymmetry in food systems through digital innovation.** Information asymmetry means that one party has more or better information than the other. During COVID-19 information asymmetry has led to food waste and unsustainable farming practices as information about food production is only available to a small number of people in the supply chain. Decentralised information that includes small-scale and flexible production can support more uncertain operating environments such as those needed during COVID-19. Producers and retailers can consider how to increase the flexibility and sustainability of their supply chains by:

- De-concentrating markets and supply chains by ensuring they are not concentrated in a small number of large companies by using online platforms that create more access for businesses to sell goods and provide producers and consumers more options.
  - In Peru, 80% of merchants at a major market tested positive for COVID-19, but authorities felt closing the market would result in significant food shortages as the supply was concentrated. However in India, by selling through digital platforms, coffee producers were able to keep selling, and obtain significantly higher prices than usual
- Tracing food throughout the supply chain in a decentralized manner creates opportunities for safer, more sustainable food to protect from zoonotic disease
  - In Uruguay, foot and mouth transmission was mitigated through de-centralized information sharing where the system would assign an identification code to cattle, letting you know its treatment and location on the production chain in real time
- Disseminating open data throughout the complex food system to: correct information asymmetries, encourage innovation, and increase efficiency of public spending

Source: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2020/08/06/beyond-the-pandemic-harnessing-the-digital-revolution-to-set-food-systems-on-a-better-course>

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

**Consider how to adapt traditional on-site and face-to-face resilience building activities to digital online activities during COVID-19.** Accelerating the use of online digital tools for improved resilience and pandemic preparedness is important for reducing the risk of transmission of the virus, for reaching a wider audience, and for sharing best practice more effectively.

However, when digitizing activities, it is important to consider those who may not have online access due to remoteness, digital illiteracy, and/or the costs of (smart)phones and mobile data, and to ensure important information still reaches these communities. This may be done by adapting activities into written or picture format, or providing necessary resources or training.

Consider raising awareness of activities, training, and ways of organising the community:

- Raising awareness:
  - Conduct face-to-face health and hazard awareness programmes through infographics, podcasts, and videos on WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter
  - Use platforms that provide health advice about COVID-19 to raise awareness of other diseases that may have similar symptom e.g. influenza, dengue etc.
  - Use online community engagement as an opportunity to raise awareness about other risks, and resilience strategies e.g. flooding
- Training
  - Establish 'community brigades' that can help prepare the community for emergency situations – educate and train them by creating and sharing instructional videos
  - Share podcasts promoting COVID-19 safety measures with local leaders and authorities, who play them on loudspeakers in the community
- Organising the community:
  - Develop virtual community networks that support the community to organise themselves, working with local leaders, authorities, schoolteachers etc. who can disseminate information widely
  - Conduct regular follow-up calls with community leaders to create feedback channels and to help monitor local situations

Source: <https://floodresilience.net/blogs/adaptability-in-times-of-covid-19-exploring-digital-resilience-building>

For more international examples please register @ [ambs.ac.uk/covidrecovery](https://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@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Duncan.Shaw@manchester.ac.uk)

## 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 for presentation)
23 July	<a href="#">Cities on the Frontline: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Crisis and Recovery</a>
24 July	<a href="#">Infrastructure after COVID-19 – what will it look like?</a>
29 July	<a href="#">Cities on the Frontline: Digital technology underpinning recovery</a>
6 August	<a href="#">Cities on the Frontline: Using school buildings to create adaptive, resilient infrastructure</a>
13 August	<a href="#">Cities on the Frontline: How will public transport operators adapt in the face of the Covid-19</a>
20 August	<a href="#">Cities on the Frontline: Healthy Cities – What does a city need to be healthy?</a>
27 August	<a href="#">Cities on the Frontline: Urban Density</a>
4 September	<a href="#">Cities on the Frontline Speaker Series: Aging Cities</a>