

CITIES on the FRONTLINE



Weekly Briefing: September 3rd, 2020

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

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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 weeks' briefing we highlight how engaging in [place-based COVID-19 research in your city and community can create multiple-benefits](#); how African bank and non-bank actors are adopting or accelerating measures to digitize economies to provide safer, more inclusive financial mechanisms; and how recovery is the time to focus on underlying root causes of vulnerability, including people living with visible and invisible disabilities.

With research being done on most conceivable topics related to COVID-19, many projects are looking to expand the range of governments, cities, organisations and individuals that will get involved in the project to contribute information into the project and provide a testbed for their work. Participation may enable you [to influence the project towards your priorities, get early access to project findings that could change the ways you deliver, get funding to support your involvement, and provide access to a wider network](#) that can help you in your job.

In Africa, African banks and non-bank actors are adapting their operating models and products to help [lower barriers to mobile banking and payments and bring more people into the cashless economy](#). This means not just safer, cashless payments to facilitate social distancing during the pandemic—but in the longer-term a shift towards financial inclusion that could help get economies back on track faster after the crisis.

The World Bank argues that this crisis is a [time to focus on underlying root causes of vulnerability, particularly social inequality and exclusion](#). Helping communities recover and strengthen their resilience to pandemics, natural hazards, and climate change will require addressing pre-existing social, political, and economic factors that make poor and marginalized people more vulnerable in the first place.

Equally, [inclusive recovery practices are essential as additional groups of vulnerable people emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic](#), reinforced by data on the disproportionate effects of COVID-19 on vulnerable and marginalised people. People living with visible and invisible disabilities have been adversely impacted by the virus due to challenges in accessing health services, and because they are at greater risk of experiencing complex health needs, worse health outcomes, and stigma. [By making disability inclusion a priority in the recovery agenda, we can ensure more self-sufficient, inclusive, and resilient societies for all.](#)

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

Consider how to adopt or accelerate measures to digitize economies to provide safer, more inclusive financial mechanisms. Consider:

- How digitization can facilitate capacity for longer-term economic recovery. For example, in Nigeria, Egypt, and South Africa, increased migration from cash to digital transactions has resulted in more account-to-account transfers and e-commerce sales which boosts economic activity and maintains social distancing
- The role of digital-payment platforms in increasing financial inclusion outside of traditional banking systems e.g. in Togo through cash transfers that disburse social welfare payments through mobiles
- Collaboration with banks and non-bank payments players to restructure transaction fees and limits to encourage digital payments
- Promoting easier access to digital-payment tools e.g. the Ghanaian government eased account-opening regulations

<https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/industries/financial%20services/our%20insights/how%20the%20covid%2019%20crisis%20may%20affect%20electronic%20payments%20in%20africa/how-the-covid-19-crisis-may-affect-electronic%20payments-in-africa.pdf>

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 address COVID-19 recovery and climate change simultaneously. Many countries face multiple risks from COVID-19 and natural hazards. To combat these dual challenges consider how to:

- Integrate climate change into green recovery plans post COVID-19
- Use COVID-19 as an entry point to engage communities in preparing for other diseases that may be brought about by climate change
- Engage the local community in designing local preparedness and response plans e.g. to address COVID-related food insecurity, distribution of PPE, local finance solutions that meet the communities needs

<https://blogs.worldbank.org/climatechange/natural-disasters-and-vulnerable-groups-insights-inclusive-and-sustainable-recovery-from-COVID-19-coronavirus>

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

Consider finding out what ongoing research projects can contribute to your COVID-19 activities: There is research being done on most conceivable topics related to COVID-19. Many projects are looking to expand the range of governments, cities, organisations and individuals that will get involved in the project to contribute information into the project and provide a testbed for their work. Participation may enable you to influence the project towards your priorities, get early access to project findings that could change the ways you deliver, get funding to support your involvement, and provide access to a wider network that can help you in your job.

Consider whether to:

- Identify what knowledge gaps you have in your organisation that research could usefully help to fill
- Identify the information that you can feed into projects and other contributions you can make to a project
- Approach local universities and research institutes to partner on research or mutual interest
- Talk to national bodies on what research they have funded § Contact national and overseas researchers to request participation and/or early notice of their emerging findings
- Joining research webinars, research network email-lists, and research observatories to receive notification of project results
- Join advisory boards of projects to direct their focus
- Search databases of funded projects to find those that align with your interests

Source: <https://www.eria.org/database-and-programmes/topic/covid-19/>; <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/worldwide/asean/additional-%E2%82%AC122-million-made-available-urgent-research-covid-19-calls-open>; <https://www.ukri.org/research/coronavirus/>; https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JWeD1AaiGKMPrY_EN8GjIqWx4J4KLQIAqP09exZ-ENI/preview#heading=h.3wgnf7t31bot; <https://www.who.int/research-observatory/resources/>

Case Study of the week

Disability-inclusive recovery from COVID-19: Inclusive recovery practices are essential as additional groups of vulnerable people emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, reinforced by data on the disproportionate effects of COVID-19 on vulnerable and marginalised people. In particular, people living with visible and invisible disabilities have been adversely impacted by the virus due to challenges in accessing health services, and because they are at greater risk of experiencing complex health needs, worse health outcomes, and stigma.

While disability alone may not be related to an increased risk of contracting COVID-19, some people with disabilities might be at a higher risk of infection or severe illness because of their underlying medical conditions. In particular, “adults with disabilities are three times more likely than adults without disabilities to have heart disease, stroke, diabetes, or cancer than adults without disabilities”. In the UK, working-age women with a disability are more than 11 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than women without a disability, and for men, the death rate was 6.5 times higher than for men without a disability.

Disability-inclusive recovery can help reduce poor representation of people living with disabilities in post-disaster recovery efforts, providing an opportunity to build a more accessible environment that is inclusive and resilient to future disasters, and to reduce the disproportionate risks faced by people living with disabilities by:

- Making infrastructure resilient and accessible (barrier-free buildings and land use planning)
- Setting up programs to actively employ persons with disabilities, such as hiring them in the recovery and reconstruction planning and implementation process
- Making healthcare and education readily available and ensuring healthcare is accessible to persons with disabilities before and after a disaster
- Communicating hazard exposure and risk information in a way that can be understood and acted upon (for example, sign language interpretation and plain language)
- Improved accessibility before and after a disaster also benefits older people, those who are ill or have been injured, pregnant women, and some indigenous and non-native language speakers.

Recovery is often tumultuous and traumatic, but it is also an opportunity to renew systems and processes by understanding and addressing unequal practices and structures. By making disability inclusion a priority in the recovery agenda, we can ensure more self-sufficient, inclusive, and resilient societies for all.

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

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