

# CITIES on the FRONTLINE



Weekly Briefing: July 2<sup>nd</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, 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 focus on **how existing urban systems provide for (or not) inclusive access** to those things that individuals, households and communities need to survive and thrive in a post-COVID recovery, and the role affected communities can play, building on their lived experience to inform local, place based recovery.

Residents of informal settlements depend on extremely frail systems to meet basic needs. In response and recovery, experience from Ebola and Cholera outbreaks in cities like Accra, Ghana, have shown that **utilising community knowledge, information and networks** to understand information about the area, is critical for designing robust interventions, from public health campaigns to infrastructure investments.

Many households in countries such as El Salvador and Nepal are dependent on remittances from family members as a main source of income. **Disruption to the sending and receiving of the remittances** has implications for the immediate needs of those households and the wider communities, as well as the agents whose livelihoods depend on these transactions.

Integrated and flexible water management is critical to enabling drinking water access and supply, food production, and mitigating the potential impacts of drought and food shortages. Through recovery, cities need to overcome constraints on movement of workers and citizens in order to **improve water management in urban and peri-urban environments and reduce inequality of access**.

And there are clear **benefits of including those affected by COVID-19 in recovery planning**. For instance: enabling better decision-making that is based on evidence and data; increased transparency; support for improved social inclusion and cohesion; and equality. This inclusive and reflective approach also enables services to ensure the needs of individuals affected are central to the decisions that are made for future delivery of response and recovery action.

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

**Consider how to include informal settlements in the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.** Poor sanitation, cramped living conditions, and insufficient health facilities put those living in informal settlements at high risk from COVID-19. Outbreaks of Ebola and Cholera in cities like Accra, Ghana, have shown that public health policies are most effective when governments work closely with informal communities. Consider:

- Ensuring government efforts tackling COVID-19 are interwoven with local community coordinating committees, volunteer networks, and reporting systems
- Utilising community knowledge, information and networks to understand information about the area, and its population. Tapping into this data is important to effectively target the most vulnerable and understand needs
- Working with communities to develop public health campaigns and to stop the spread of misinformation. Targeted radio campaigns are more effective than TV public health campaigns, as few can afford televisions and electricity is sporadic
- Working with well-informed and respected community leaders as they are often best placed to spread accurate messages and materials about COVID-19 and how to avoid it
- Developing community-driven track and trace systems to help reduce transmission
- Prioritising serious investment into local clinics, hospitals and infrastructure including sanitation and water supply
- Advocating the rights of Africa's urban poor that has left them more exposed to disease outbreaks

Source: <https://medium.com/@resilientcitiesnetwork/lessons-from-african-slums-how-to-include-informal-settlements-on-the-covid-19-response-and-d440826d3eea>

**Consider how to make food systems more resilient post-COVID-19.** Addressing the equality of food systems can help support their resilience. Consider:

- Improving the local economy and the food system simultaneously by growing locally, and employing the local population
- Urban farms for local food production e.g. utilising school gardens
- Engaging neighbourhood leaders to improve understanding of who needs assistance
- Improving sustainability e.g. drive through markets to keep markets open during lockdowns and avoid waste from spoilage, as well as giving smaller sellers security in selling produce
- Enabling community food parcels to be ordered in a similar way to ordering food deliveries
- Improving the food sector workers' protection to help prevent COVID-19 infection
- Keeping school cafeterias open for collection of meals for vulnerable children

Source: <https://medium.com/@resilientcitiesnetwork/coronavirus-speaker-series-sharing-knowledge-to-respond-with-resilience-5a8787a1eef5>

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

**Consider the impact of remittances on the local economy** and the opportunity to digitize payments.

Remittances from overseas migrant workers make up more than a fifth of GDP in some economies. This type of finance is usually very resilient to natural disasters, and financial slumps as those sending money home are unlikely to follow the behavior of financial markets. However, COVID-19 has meant people cannot send money as they normally would due to social distancing and bank/post office closures. This impacts the capacity to send hard cash which made up 80-85% of transaction pre-pandemic. Consider:

- Promoting the digitisation of cash transfers in local communities to support the sending and receiving of remittances as moving cash has become harder
- Giving "mobile-money" agents the status of being an essential service. These small traders serve many times more people than bank branches but struggled to stay open as governments did not deem their services "essential"

Source: <https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2020/06/15/covid-19-has-squeezed-migrants-remittances-to-their-families>

**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 water management reform can reduce virus spread and secondary risks.** Water Management can make safer and more sustainable communities, and due to COVID-19, communities already effected by water inequality could become even further disadvantaged. Points to consider when exploring water management during COVID-19:

- Improving access points to water in a way that avoids queues/crowds forming at water points
- Identifying how to avoid water points becoming hotspots for Covid-19
- How movement restrictions would impact on individuals' ability to attend a water point to access clean water, and how to overcome these impacts
- Improving water cleanliness to avoid secondary diseases and potential malnutrition from, for example, diarrhoea
- Improving the management of water supply, including strict water governance. For example:
  - Consider disruption of food supply from a lack of workforce
  - Prepare for potential dry season cropping by managing water reserves
  - Anticipate (so to mitigate) the effect of disasters (such as drought and famine)
  - Consider how to manage migration to aid camps where social distancing is more difficult
- Improving water recycling to reduce the release of untreated wastewater into the environment
- Education and facilitation to make communities more resilient to changes in the environment and future events such as Covid-19

Source: <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/email/url.php?eid=72192>

**Consider the effect green and open spaces on individuals and communities in relation to physical health, wellbeing and the environment.** COVID-19 has exposed disparities in access to open and green space. Improved access can have positive effects on physical and mental health, communities as a whole and the environment. Consider impacts on:

- The individual: Provides areas for exercise, and improves mental health; and Park closures and restrictions on movement due to COVID-19 negatively and disproportionately effects those without gardens and those who are less economically well off
- The community: Increasing the quantity of green spaces reduces traffic which reduces pollution and encourages city safety; Green space for social housing directly addresses socio-economic disparities regarding; and Can simultaneously address other environmental factors such as flood risk management

Source: <https://landuse.co.uk/green-spaces-coronavirus/>

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

**Consider revising evacuation plans to account for COVID-19 restrictions.** The evacuation and shelter of people during a major emergency is a challenging task under normal conditions but, in the context of COVID-19, social restrictions, and potential to transmit the virus, it becomes even more complex. When planning for evacuation and shelter during COVID-19, consider:

- Provide more transport to comply with social distancing measures
- Rapidly expand shelter capacity, through building or identifying a greater number of current buildings for use as shelters, so as provide greater areas for social distancing
- Consider adapting industries to help prepare for a safer evacuation of populations away from high risk areas. For example, repurposing the garment industry to manufacture personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Separate suspected COVID-19 patients in specific separate shelters
- Reducing chances of person to person contact by introducing public announcements / mass communication tools such as community radio and electronic media
- Create operational systems which allow for autonomy so responders can work efficiently without constant contact with HQ's if they happen to be under different lockdown restrictions
- Combine early warning messages with Covid-19 warning messages

Source: <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/email/url.php?eid=72241>

## Case Study of the week

**A Methodology to identifying those affected by COVID-19:** COVID-19 has had widespread consequences on all aspects of health and wellbeing. The benefits of including those affected by COVID-19 in recovery include better decision-making that is based on evidence and data, increased transparency, support for improved social inclusion and cohesion, and equality. It also enables services to ensure the needs of individuals affected are central to the decisions that are made for future delivery of response and recovery action.

The following steps were taken by Greater Manchester to start to develop a database that identifies people affected by COVID-19, and to consider the impacts of the pandemic. These included:

1. **Developing a Recovery Coordination Impact Assessment** – All multi-agency cells established for the response were asked to complete the assessment to identify groups that were disproportionately affected by COVID-19. This ensured people and place were considered across a variety of groups.
2. **Evaluating responses** – Responses from the Recovery Coordination Impact Assessment were collated and structured by Greater Manchester to determine overarching categories for groups affected, and the sub-groups which made up the core categories. A summary of impacts on these sub-groups was developed from responses from the Recovery Coordination Impact Assessment by Greater Manchester.
3. **Reviewing additional sources** – Additional information about affected groups was gathered and reviewed from sources available at the time such as Public Health England, to provide further information about impacts of COVID-19 on affected groups; this included socioeconomic determinants such as ethnicity, employment age etc.
4. **Review of groups, sub-groups and impacts** – Information about affected groups was circulated to a number of partners for comment to provide critical review and comment. This included local research organisations, VCSE partners, public sector organisations and the academic sector [noting that the partners relevant to your organisation may differ].

This methodology requires a partnership approach whereby relationships formed during the initial stages of response are utilised to strengthen recovery activities in the longer-term. Through multi-departmental cross-organisational working, local, place-based action can be implemented.

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
02 July	<a href="#">Cities on the Frontline Speaker Series: 'Metropolitan Resilience'</a>
25 June	<a href="#">Cities on the Frontline Speaker Series: How will Digital and Green Recovery look like in Barcelona?</a>
24 June	<a href="#">Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and COVID-19</a>
18 June	<a href="#">Cities on the Frontline Speaker Series: Resilient Food Systems</a>
11 June	<a href="#">Cities on the Frontline Speaker Series: Compounding Vulnerabilities: Urban Heat + Covid-19</a>
10 June	<a href="#">UNDRR: Ensuring Resilience, Accelerating Progress – Examining the Impact of COVID-19 on the Sustainable Development Goals</a>
04 June	<a href="#">Resilience at Risk: Pandemics, Planetary Health Crises - New City Priorities</a>
04 June	<a href="#">Cities on the Frontline Speaker Series: Waste Management in Crisis and Recovery</a>