

CITIES on the FRONTLINE



Weekly Briefing: July 9th 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 (Lina Liakou and Femke Gubbels)

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 look at the different ways the COVID-19 crisis and the introduction of lockdown measures has impacted the **urban economy, and specifically certain segments of the economy that were already strained or vulnerable prior to the pandemic.**

Very early on into the public health emergency, it became apparent that an economic emergency was developing in parallel. Municipal finances took an immediate blow, and businesses saw their income drop while fixed costs continued. Furthermore, the pandemic not only exposed a **lack of redundancy in global supply chains**, it also **increased workers' vulnerability to modern-day slavery**. Looking ahead to long-term recovery, cities and businesses will need to create more **transparent** supply chains and work **collaboratively** to reduce this stress.

This illustrates the point that those who were already at a disadvantage before COVID-19 are disproportionately affected by economic downturn. To address this, the City of El Paso is setting up targeted **training programs to upskill the local workforce** and reduce their reliance on volatile service work. The programs aim to support long-term economic development and create a more **stable financial position for the community**.

In this week's briefing you will also find considerations around **circular economy**, the political economy of the **food system**, the role of **clean energy** in improving health outcomes during COVID-19, and why you should consider looking into a **data impact assessment** to create a safe working environment.

Lastly, we highlight a case study on **localised 'smart' lockdowns**. As we begin to see **second wave outbreaks** in some cities across the world including Beijing, Tel Aviv, Leicester, and Melbourne, some are experimenting **decentralised approach** to lockdowns to contain the spread and mitigate wider economic consequences. It is worth asking where specifically these second outbreaks tend to occur and if there are common trends, which could help identify them early on.

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

Consider addressing the political economy and ecology of food systems. The transfer of diseases such as COVID-19, avian influenza and swine flu can occur in agriculture and food production sectors. This can be facilitated by the rapid industrialization of meat production and poor biosecurity. Consider:

- increased monitoring of agricultural production as ‘big farms create big flu’
- careful monitoring of wild animal sales; simply banning such practices may only drive markets underground and reduce visibility
- disease mitigation measures on farming practices of vulnerable populations. In the avian influenza outbreak, poultry from ‘backyard chicken’ producers were slaughtered compulsorily in huge numbers which caused devastating impacts on livelihoods across southeast Asia
- affordable measures for smaller farmers to meet food and agricultural standards, and consideration that if you remove their livelihoods, they will likely become more susceptible to current disease or new zoonotic diseases as a result of wild animal sale or consumption

Source: <https://steps-centre.org/blog/five-lessons-from-past-global-influenza-outbreaks-for-covid-19/>

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

Consider the implications of COVID-19 on modern slavery risks in supply chains. The shock to global supply and demand resulting from COVID-19 has exacerbated workers’ vulnerability to modern slavery. Consider supply chain management approaches that reduce the risks of worker exploitation by increasing firms’ resilience to cope with highly volatile and extreme events, such as COVID 19. Consider:

- ensuring there is capacity to audit suppliers and their workforces to detect and remediate instances of labour exploitation
- how to maintain transparency in the supply chain so that risky supplier behaviour, such as unauthorised subcontracting, can be traced
- circumventing organisations with known malpractices in order to meet demand e.g. in the US, an import ban has been lifted to receive supply from a large Malaysian manufacturer of medical gloves accused of using forced labour
- liaising with support mechanisms for those at risk of modern slavery, such as faith and community organisations and helplines to monitor wellbeing
- collaborate with unions, NGOs, and other expert stakeholders to increase supply chain transparency and allow for a proactive detection on deteriorating working conditions.

Source: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13669877.2020.1772347>

Consider training unemployed people through tailored training programmes in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) activities to develop a more resilient local economy. The City of El Paso has mapped local economic opportunities in their area to develop economic strategies that rely less on precarious work such as those in the service industries. The city has five good Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) based Universities, and aim to leverage opportunities and relationships to develop a local economic sector based on life science and technology industries. El Paso is developing programmes to upskill the local workforce (many of whom are financially unstable and in-service industries) towards STEM. The strategy recognizes the profile of the current workforce and is aiming to develop training programmes in jobs such as laser welding, which is technical but does not require high levels of education. This supports long-term economic development and is linked to community welfare and financial stability.

Source: City Officials USA

Environment and Infrastructure: 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 adopt, accelerate and promote the Circular Economy. The Circular Economy calls for all materials in manufacturing to be reused, recycled or biodegradable. COVID-19 has raised new questions about plastics use and sustainability of, for example, using single-use surgical gowns, masks and gloves. Consider:

- investing in new protective materials that are reusable or biodegradable and that replace harmful plastics
- the environmental friendliness of cleaning products that will end up in waterways and oceans
- the potential health implications of contamination

Source: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nishandegnarain/2020/04/13/ten-lessons-the-coronavirus-has-taught-us-about-the-planet/#62f16a4d6f2f>

If you are interested in joining city practitioners and professionals to work together on circular economy during the pandemic and beyond, consider signing up for the GRCN Community of Practice [here](#), with support from The Circulate Initiative and Ocean Conservancy.

Consider how clean energy can improve health outcomes and mitigate impacts of COVID-19. Clean energy can reduce negative health effects associated with using polluting fuels and the chances of respiratory diseases which negatively impact COVID-19 chances of survival. Consider:

- how to improve access to electricity through renewable energy
- providing electricity for water pumps for more reliable access to clean water in contexts where this is challenging
- incentivising renewable energy adoption at household level to help reduce the economic burden of utility bills which can have impacts on mental and physical wellbeing

Source: <https://www.preventionweb.net/news/view/71894>

Consider changes to rules on organisations collecting personal information to provide safe working environments for staff. Data protection does not stop an organisation asking employees whether they are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms or introducing appropriate testing. Consider the following to ensure data protection compliance:

- only collect and use information that is necessary to ensure the workplace is safe. Decide if the same result can be achieved without collecting personal information
- only keep information temporarily or justify if a permanent record of information is needed
- be clear, open and honest with staff about their personal information, how and why you need it, who you will share their information with, and for how long
- treat people fairly and think carefully about any detriment or discrimination staff might suffer if the information is retained and shared
- keep people's information secure and consider when personal information needs to be anonymised
- enable staff to exercise their information rights, and discuss any concerns

Conduct a data protection impact assessment:

<https://ico.org.uk/global/data-protection-and-coronavirus-information-hub/coronavirus-recovery-data-protection-advice-for-organisations/>

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

Consider developing COVID-19 addendums for local resilience plans. Existing resilience strategies should be amended in real-time to include long and short-term actions to combat the effects of COVID-19. This should include consideration of pre-existing vulnerabilities such as local socio-economic conditions, and environmental risk such as heatwaves and floods. Consider evaluating all indicators of all resilience programmes to weave COVID-19 impacts and indicators into sustainable resilience planning. This helps accommodate COVID-19 into existing long-term city plans, rather than trying to build resilience purely around COVID concerns.

Source: [City of Houston press release](#)

Case Study of the week

Localised 'Smart Lockdowns'

Recently, European Union countries have begun enforced lockdowns in smaller regions in response to new outbreaks of COVID-19, rather than bringing the entire country to a halt. 'Smart lockdowns' have been undertaken in Germany, Portugal, **Italy¹ and the UK² where local governments have declared local lockdown where cases of COVID-19 could not be contained.**

Special consideration should be given to the identified causes of spikes in transmission. In most cases, overcrowded living conditions, poor working conditions, cultural practices, and/or limited socio-economic capital point to increased risk of infection and transmission. In Warendorf (Germany) and Cleckheaton (England), outbreaks were attributed to abattoirs³ and meat factories⁴, which often employ migrant workers in poor working conditions on low-paid contracts^{5 6}.

These patterns barely differ from the spike in cases in Singapore in May 2020 in which Singapore's progress on tackling COVID-19 was halted as tens of thousands of migrant workers contracted the disease due to poor living conditions and being neglected by testing schemes⁷ as their migrant status and relative poverty meant they were **overlooked by the government.**

Implementing smart lockdowns requires:

- Outbreak control plans for the COVID-19 partnership to be developed, written, and communicated to wider partners, specifying their role in the outbreak response
- Collaborate closely across the public sector to understand possible at-risk communities e.g. minority groups, migrant workers, those in poor or insecure housing, those in particular occupations
- Identify new cases early through rapid testing and contact tracing and sharing timely data across agencies
- Decide the threshold at which a cluster of new cases become an outbreak
- Decide the threshold at which an outbreak triggers the lockdown of an area, and how the size of that area is determined
- Collaborate closely with the public sector to communicate and enforce local lockdowns e.g. the police, the health and social sector, local leaders
- Ensure there is capacity in local-health care systems to respond to the outbreak
- Collaborate with citizens to ensure good behavioural practices are understood and adhered to e.g. hand washing, social distancing at work and in public areas
- Ensure the parameters of the local lockdown are clear. For example, in a UK "local authority boundaries can run down the middle of a street"⁸ which makes it different to differentiate what is appropriate for a city or region, and to understand how a local community identifies with the place and boundaries in which they live

Local outbreaks, whether in migrant worker accommodation, meat factories or impoverished areas of a city, clearly **underscore the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on minority, migrant, and poor communities.** Increased engagement with, and attention to ethnic minority groups, marginalised people and impoverished communities is key to staving off local and national resurgences of COVID-19. **Strong multi-organisational**

¹ <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-06-25/local-covid-19-lockdowns-in-germany-italy-portugal-offer-hope>

² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-53237059>

³ <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-06-25/local-covid-19-lockdowns-in-germany-italy-portugal-offer-hope>

⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-53150480>

⁵ <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a3d9/90a7c2f278a284ef087a9d8b9b27e746f576.pdf>

⁶ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/ntwe.12046>

⁷ <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/14/asia/singapore-migrant-worker-coronavirus-intl-hnk/index.html>

⁸ <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-06-uk-local-lockdown-covid-pandemic.html>

partnerships are required to account for varying needs and concerns with certain communities including addressing their living and working conditions and the risks this poses to public health.

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@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
24 June	Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and COVID-19
24 June	Cities on the Frontline: Digital and Green Recovery
2 July	Cities on the Frontline: Metropolitan Resilience
9 July	Cities on the Frontline: Gender Inclusive Cities
13 July	Schooling for Refugees during COVID-19
13 July	Hurricane Preparedness in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic