Sustainable Responses
to the COVID-19 Pandemic

#informality #prosperity #communities

INTERSECTING

VOLUME 02/2021

Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD
Milindo CHAKRABARTI
Gunnar HARTMANN
Nella Sri HENDRIYETTY
Holger KUHLE
Riatu MARIATUL QIBTHIYYAH
(eds.)

NEW DIALOGUES PUBLISHER

9 782957 990535

INTERSECTING

VOLUME 02/2021

Qaisar **ABBAS** | Iskandar **ABDULLAEV** | Aziza **AKHMOUCH**
Gautam **BHAN** | Luca **BIZZARRI** | Daniel **BRIDGE** | Nicolas J.A.
BUCHOUD | Milindo **CHAKRABARTI** | Gunnar **HARTMANN** | Nella Sri
HENDRIYETTY | Onur **ERYUCE** | Luisa **FENIZOLA** | Baris **KARCI**
Holger **KUHLE** | Amitabh **KUNDU** | Riatu **MARIATUL QIBTHIYYAH**
Vitor **MIHESSEN** | John **NEWBIGIN** | Thai **NGUYEN** | Bart **ORR**
Piero **PELIZARRO** | Teuku **RIEFKY** | Ghulam **SAMAD** | Warren **SMIT**

Which of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have gained importance since the beginning of the pandemic?

preface

"Cities cannot fix the magnitude of pre-crisis and new challenges on their own. They need to work with national and global stakeholders to contribute to well-being, transition to a low-carbon and climate resilient economy, and drive inclusive growth."

– Aziza AKHMOUCH, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris, France

Image Source: A mural in the old city of Georgetown, Penang, Malaysia. Image by Nicolas J.A. Buchoud, all rights reserved ©.

Aziza AKHMOUCH
Head of Division, Cities,
Urban Policies and
Sustainable Development,
Organization for Economic
Cooperation and
Development (OECD)
Paris, France

The COVID-19 and the Global Solutions Dialogue: catalyst towards inclusive, green and smart cities for global well-being?

Pandemics have always triggered rethinking of urban paradigms, and COVID-19 is no exception. Our latest OECD Report on COVID & Cities argues that this crisis has not revealed anything new about our structural vulnerabilities, but acted as a magnifying glass, trend accelerator and catalyst for change at local, national and global levels. Cities have always been places of creativity, experimentation, agility and innovation, and to ensure this will be the case again, we should draw lessons at least three domains to go smart, green and inclusive.

First, the digital revolution, notably the large-scale tele-working experience, can minimise pressure on local services, land, housing prices and natural resources. Going forward, we should revisit our relationship to time and chrono-urbanism to stop doing the same thing, at the same time in the same place such as piling up in crowded transportation and traffic jam to start work at 9am. We should upscale multi-purpose infrastructure and make better use of empty offices where people will no longer work every day. And we should we revive our downtowns to remain attractive in this new context of remote working.

Second, the increased environmental awareness induced by the combined "Greta Effect" and the "Zoom Effect", and the rediscovery of local loops and proximity, provide a unique opportunity to accelerate the ecological transition, which seems socially and politically more acceptable today than just a year ago. Recovery packages should build on this momentum to enhance green and circular cities, create jobs, reduce CO_2 emissions (renewable energy, cycling, walking), prepare communities for climate risks (floods, heats), improve urban environmental quality (air pollution, biodiversity) and promote energy efficiency.

Third, the growing citizen discontent requires renewing the social contract to strengthen local governance. The crisis disproportionately impacted vulnerable populations such as women, youth, migrants, the homeless and the elderly. Going forward, fixing the inequality issue will be the hot potato for city leaders. They should adapt urban design, reclaim public space, and ensure immediate access to amenities while securing safety and health for all their residents for a more quality urbanisation and greater territorial cohesion.

In light of the above considerations, only place-based and people-centered solutions can help build back better cities and fight inequality. For example, for the digital transformation to deliver benefits for all, we must address the 'digital divide' through upscaling our investments. Rethinking clean forms of urban mobility (e.g. cycling, walking, etc.) also requires managing the distributional effects across specific places (i.e. suburban and low-density urban areas) and people (i.e. elderly, families with children, disabled etc.).

Cities cannot fix the magnitude of the challenge on their own and need to work with national and global stakeholders to contribute to well-being, transition to a low-carbon and climate resilient economy, and drive inclusive growth.

Throughout 2020, the Global Solutions Dialogues provided a unique platform for exchange, based on an innovative and open format, to share best practices and common solutions to common problems. In that sense, it was a major catalyst for change towards urban paradigms that can help achieve better quality of life while preserving productivity, social inclusion and the environment.

"Intersecting is not just a book about cities or infrastructure. Built across months-long dialogues and ad hoc panels, Intersecting is also a visual reflection of a major crisis and its aftermath."

– Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, Global Solutions Initiative, Paris

Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD (ed.)
Global Solutions Fellow
Paris, France

INTERSECTING as a compass for recovery

The pandemic is over (isn't it?).

When in the spring of 2020, we first initiated the Solutions Dialogues which would then become INTERSECTING, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported 10 million COVID-19 cases and half a million dead across the globe. When we released INTERSECTING's first edition a year later, the Coronavirus Update Live reported 115 million cases and 2,5 million dead. Halfway to 2021, over 220 million cases have officially been reported and nearly 5 million dead.

Much has been said about the pandemic, and often as quickly forgotten. It is unclear what we have learned from the crisis and yet, the world has moved from research to large scale industrialization of vaccines -and so far, a very uneven distribution of them. The global lockdowns of the spring 2020 have allowed for an instant photography of our interconnected world. Following the SARS, MERS and Ebola pandemics, the COVID-19 has forced us to break all routines abruptly and at massive scale. Governments, together with Central Banks and International Financial Institutions have spent staggering amounts to mitigate the crisis' macroeconomic impacts, especially in developed countries.

INTERSECTING's exploration from the Amazonian to Central Asia to the Arctic, from neighborhoods to urbanization corridors, from health to inequalities, warns that painting in green and inclusive colors the same institutional and networking patterns as before the crisis will quickly fall short.

Few countries and institutions, including local governments and their advocacy networks, have admitted how little prepared they were to cope with the pandemic. The global community has consolidated knowledge from the management of previous pandemics in too scarce and random a way, a situation accurately described by the Center for International and Strategic Studies in 2019 as a 'cycle of complacency.

The New Urban Agenda celebrated at the Habitat III Summit in Quito in 2016 was silent about pandemic risks. In 2020, the final Declaration of the 10th World Urban Forum held in Abu Dhabi remained equally mute, whereas cities and billions of urban dwellers were hard hit by the pandemic's many impacts.

Infrastructure investments are widely thought to be a key to recover from the crisis, to reach out to a new sustainable

economy, especially if we favor a new paradigm of infrastructure for distribution. Yet a decade of rebuilding growth through connectivity after the 2008 global financial crisis has painstakingly exposed people to the pandemic, showing the limitations of existing investment models. Multiple pleas for cities to implement sustainable pandemic responses locally and play a new role globally could just add more complexity to clogged global decision mechanisms.

INTERSECTING is a call for knowledge generation and distribution to become the cornerstone of future good government but this will be done in a world that is, if not in disorder, in transformation. The race for post pandemic leadership has started for good but delivering on a global roadmap of sustainable recovery will require coherent and accountable institutional frameworks and implementation mechanisms.

Formidable change has occured already. In the United-States, the new presidential administration elected in 2020 has issued a bipartisan trillion dollars' infrastructure plan in the summer of 2021, with even more to come. The European Union also approved a large recovery plan of more than 750 billion euros. In the meantime, profound geopolitical shifts are happening and one could only think that the United-States could no longer continue fight a war in Afghanistan while massively investing at home.

INTERSECTING was built as a compass or even as an astrolabe, pointing out to multidimensional combined social, political, infrastructural, geo-economical and scientific challenges and recovery options. It reflects over 18 months of debates, research, exchanges, dialogues, explorations and publications.

INTERSECTING is based upon multiple, interlinked entry points, from 'disease' to 'cooperation', looking into possible future world structures. We believe it is ours to decide how infrastructure can serve other purposes than trade development and resources consumption, ours to understand the social factors of global warming and other ecosystem alterations, ours to assess how cities can continue to be places of innovation while re-valuing rural geo-economics and while understanding that they are also the places where resentment and distrust are articulated.

One of INTERSECTING's main finding is that lethality of the SARS-Cov-2 virus is redoubled not only by its multiple variants, but also by a knowledge and even a cognitive crisis accelerated by the development of the digital space and media transformation. Therefore, solutions are to be found at the edges. At the intersections of disciplinary and policy borders. At the intersections of short and long term. At the intersections of community and global scales. At the intersections of systems, institutions and cultures. At the intersections of entrepreneurship and society. Otherwise, what lessons from biotechnologies and vaccine development could we ever learn to serve for better policy-making in the urban age?

INTERSECTING is a collective work, the result of the dedicated engagement of five co-editors, several supporting knowledge partners, ADBI and OECD, nearly a hundred co-authors, including strong voices and ones from future leaders, from all regions of the globe, with two dozen of some of the world's very best universities and research centers taking part. Incubated by the Global Solutions Initiative, supported by GIZ, it also marks the 10th anniversary of the Grand Paris Alliance for Sustainable Investments.

You can read INTERSECTING piece by piece, photography by photography, quote by quote and as a whole.

This very first volume of INTERSECTING 'On sustainable urbanization and infrastructure response to the Covid-19 pandemic crisis' is the cornerstone of several upcoming policy, research and advocacy global initiatives addressing resources and circular economy, the future of work and creative economy, and the delivery of the 2030 Agenda, in the context of the Troïka of G20 presidencies by Indonesia, India and Brazil from 2022 to 2024.
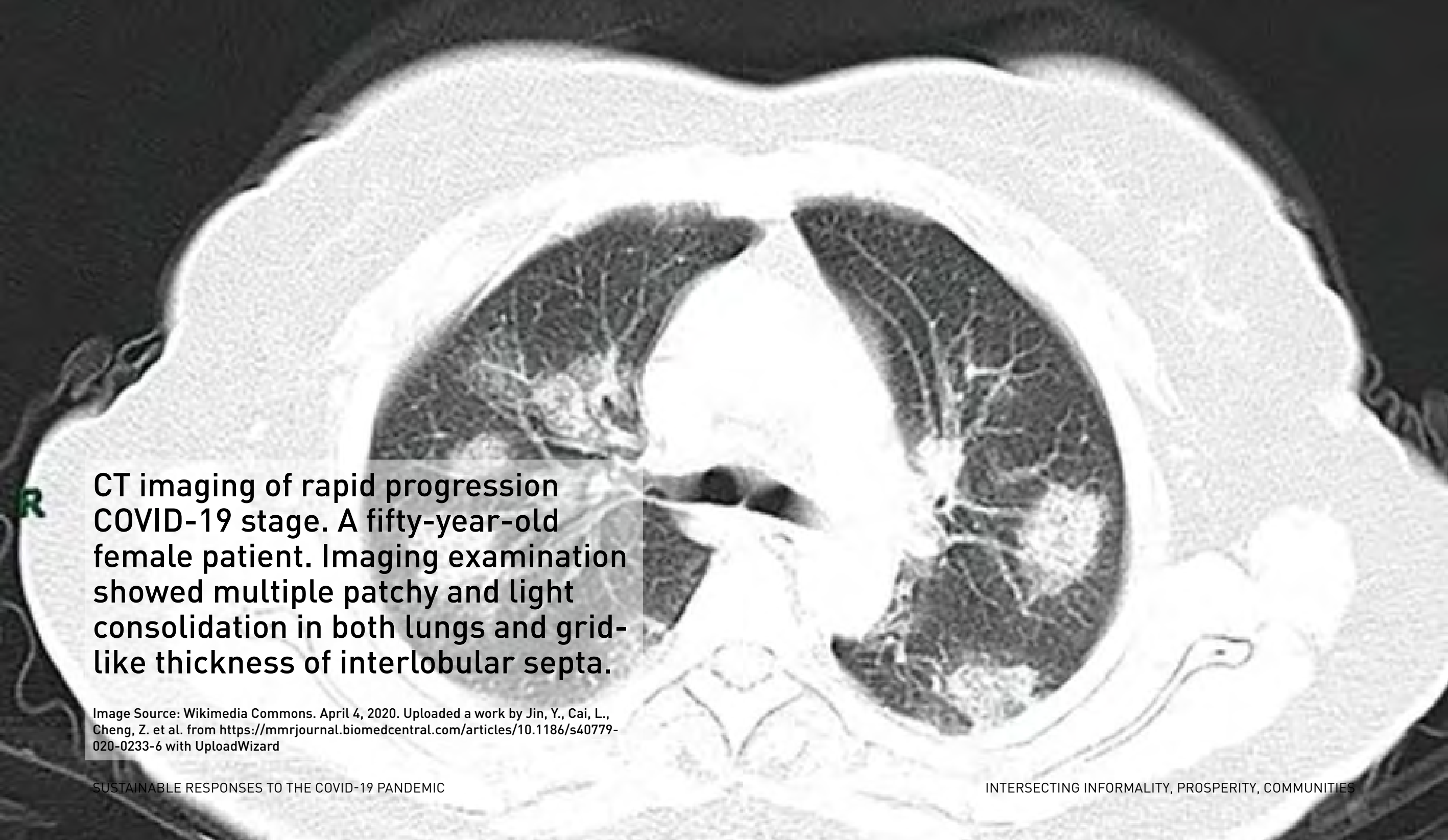
Welcome to INTERSECTING.

Intersecting
as a collective compass for recovery.

CT imaging of rapid progression COVID-19 stage. A fifty-year-old female patient. Imaging examination showed multiple patchy and light consolidation in both lungs and grid-like thickness of interlobular septa.

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons. April 4, 2020. Uploaded a work by Jin, Y., Cai, L., Cheng, Z. et al. from https://mmrjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40779-020-0233-6 with UploadWizard

informality
prosperity
communities

1. **Unlocking the COVID-19 from cities**
Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, Global Solutions Initiative, Paris, France

2. **'Crisis Municipalism' institutional innovation as a response to COVID-19?**
Onur ERYUCE, Counsellor to the Mayor, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, and Barış KARCı, Deputy Secretary General, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, Turkey

3. **Resilience from theory into practice. Elements from the Milan experience**
Piero PELIZARRO, Municipality Milan, Italy

4. **Southern urbanism and collective life**
Gautam BHAN, Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS), Bangalore, India

5. **Food baskets and baskets of indicators: Actions by Casa Fluminense's network in the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro**
Luisa FENIZOLA and Vitor MIHESSEN, Casa Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

6. **A grounded response to COVID-19: On informal civil society and support**
Thai NGUYEN, Young Global Changer of Global Solutions Initiative, University of Groningen, the Netherlands

informality
prosperity
communities

informality
prosperity
communities

Image Source: Rice ATMs have been created in Vietnam by private entrepreneurs to provide free, safe distribution of rice to the poor and lower income households and individuals, during the pandemic. The system was endorsed by local governments and it and rapidly and successfully expanded from Ho Chi Minh City to other cities in the country and in the Asean region throughout 2020.
https://vnanet.vn/en/anh/vna-photos-1027/covid-19-hanoi-unveils-rice-atm-machine-for-underprivileged-people-4598743.html Note: We apologize for the low image quality.

"The infrastructure in the most successful projects are people. Social capital generates community resilience and well-being more than financial capital but it also produces value and financial outputs."
– Michael COHEN, New School, New York

Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD (ed.)
Global Solutions Initiative
Paris, France

UNLOCKING THE COVID-19 FROM CITIES

The COVID-19 pandemic has escalated into multiple socio-economic challenges in a world interconnected by cities. It has circulated within cities along local and regional infrastructure systems supporting the economy. In the absence of preventative and curative strategies, the World Health Organization, supported by national governments, has urged people to adopt social distancing measures but this approach has had many drawbacks.

Social distancing does not apply for communities depending on street-life. Social distancing does not apply for people and households depending on informal economy, whereas it is a predominant feature of the global urban economy. Social distancing does not apply for workers who have to commute within metro-areas, meaning for hundreds of millions who have been more severely exposed to health risks not because of the place they live but because of jobs and housing distribution. [1]

International organizations and national governments have often considered that cities were to implement centralized sets of solutions of social distancing and other sanitary protocols, bypassing local decision-making and overlooking communities' resilience. Now that vaccines distribution has started, the role of subnational governments in contributing to recovery plans is critical, as over 60% of the global gross domestic product comes from less than 1,000 cities and metropolitan areas of +500,000 inhabitants.

It is urgent to unlock the COVID-19 from cities, recognizing the risks of enlarged social divides that could lead to possible new forms of sanitary apartheid. Anticipating the foreseeable post pandemic crises with increased poverty and social inequality, there is need to acknowledge pre-crisis discrepancies. As the semantics and pragmatism of green sustainability are highly developed, the standards for social sustainability, have eroded. In light of the extent of informality, solutions and policies that reduce the waste of social capital and human resources are to be privileged. It's about coevolution of the human social interaction and the environment, but not about a kind of simplistic destructive or even constructive win-win relationship.

As patterns of agglomeration inequalities are repeated locally across the globe, the urban socio-economic consequences of the pandemic have to be addressed globally by national and local governments together with international institutions, otherwise the post COVID-19 crisis financial

deficits will be redoubled by deeper social losses and chronicle institutional instability. Because poverty, which in many cities is particularly related to informality, is only one side of polarization, it is worth not losing sight of the other end: wealth. Cities are places where wealth and poverty sit starkly side by side. In many countries, wealth is concentrated primarily in large cities. They serve the purpose of businesses, social commoditization, the availability of infrastructures, security as well as outward representation. The analysis of both poverty and wealth makes the overall view of social reality possible. This is required, in turn, as basis for understanding the impact and interlinking different policy areas in order to reduce poverty with support of the contributions of both poor and rich households.

It is not all about inequities and injustice. It is also a lot about human capital and people's plans for the future. Well-managed, large scale urban development and urban regeneration projects could become catalysts of integration and participation. Some cities have smartly built upon existing resilience strategies to draw participatory plans for the future and maximise the benefits of digital tools for food and welfare distribution. There are also signs of post-pandemic urban culture emerging from within the crisis, which could be streamlined by the acknowledgement of a new sustainable development goal incorporating culture and creative economy. This would be a clever way to both revive the 2030 Agenda and to strengthen local voices.

Inclusive urbanization depends on many factors, some of them beyond the immediate reach of cities alone. Labour markets will play a critical post COVID-19 'constitutional' role, entailing wealth and welfare distribution at national and regional levels. The introduction of new rights for basic services to all, such as in India, is a promising policy-response reaching out to families and people, including migrant workers. Regional integration and cooperation in key regions for the world economy such as the ASEAN, could bring more long-term benefits than individual national strategies by upscaling new social and welfare standards through structural reforms. We can no longer rely on urban production systems that have been self-reliant on endless growth through global connectivity.

1. For example, in mid-September 2020, São Paulo, which accounts for 12% of the population of Brazil, had 25% of the deaths; Buenos Aires, 33% of the population of Argentina, 60% of the deaths, and Mumbai, 8% of the population of India, 10% of deaths. Source: Financing Cities' Recovery from Covid-19 and Preparing for Future Shocks, U20 Special Working Group on Covid-19 and Future Shocks, Sept. 2020

"Global poverty reduction had started to slow down significantly by 2015, echoing research underlying that the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak caught off-guard a planet with many prevailing socio-economic and environmental combined fragilities."
– Nicolas BUCHOUD, Global Solutions Initiative

Onur ERYUCE
Counsellor to the Mayor
Izmir Metropolitan
Municipality
Turkey

Barış KARCI, Deputy
Secretary General
Izmir Metropolitan
Municipality
Turkey

**'Crisis Municipalism' institutional innovation
as a response to COVID-19?**

When we were suddenly hit by the pandemic, our lives were disrupted in an unprecedented way. The circumstances of the pandemic have been extremely dynamic and kept changing at an overwhelming pace. To prevent this health crisis from turning into a social one, we had no choice but to create a solution urgently, collectively, and by building a wide-ranging city coalition. Millions of people living in Izmir have been negatively impacted by the pandemic and faced with financial, social, and health-related difficulties. To respond to the urgent needs of the citizens in the most effective way, the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality decided to put in place an institutional renewal that reconsiders the way it operates.

The fundamental challenge was about how to best manage the municipal resources. We planned how to use most effectively the limited financial, human, social, and time resources of the city overall and the Municipality in particular. To achieve that, the Municipality decided to implement an institutional innovation that updates the regular modality of carrying out municipal operations and services. On March 27th, 2020, the Municipality issued a new directive entitled "working principles of Crisis Municipalism". First, we defined new processes for municipal operations and services. Second, we established new decision-making, executive, and consultative bodies. Third and most importantly, we created the right environment that promotes solidarity and volunteering in the city.

The Crisis Municipalism model is very much based on building an effective dialogue mechanism that strongly connects the Municipality with the citizens, civil society, business circles, other public institutions, and basically with every key stakeholder in the entire city. A concrete example that can show the commitment to this goal is the large stakeholder meetings taking place digitally, every week on Monday with a long, diverse, and inclusive list of participants and with the presence of the Mayor himself.

Crisis Municipalism organized the response of the Municipality through a critical incident management team. It envisioned structures that bring together the appropriate collection of people. Tasks were distributed to these people who were provided the necessary level of authority. Within this framework, the new directive established three bodies for more effective public governance.
Those are listed below:

1) Crisis Management Supreme Board: Chaired by the mayor, the board consists of high-level executives of the Municipality, directors of municipal companies, representatives of professional organizations, civil society organizations, trade unions, and other experts.

2) Crisis Management Executive Board: This board consists of the Mayor, the secretary-general, and one senior manager according to the nature of the crisis.

3) Scientific Board: It consists of relevant experts and is formed by the Crisis Management Executive Board at the request of the Mayor.

These newly established structures have worked in coordination, taken more robust decisions with the availability of a higher level of expertise and capability, and put these decisions into practice. Since the crisis required the attention of multiple actors along with the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, the directive foresaw a distribution of roles among organizations coming from different jurisdictions, levels of

government, and professions. In this regard, coordination and cooperation between the district municipalities and the metropolitan municipality had the uttermost importance.

The Mayor of Izmir, Mr. Tunç Soyer, invited the mayors of all 30 district municipalities of Izmir to an urgent meeting to create alignment in the fight against the Covid-19, resulting in a joint strategy against the pandemic. Article 17 of the directive entitled "institutional structuring" encouraged municipal units to build task forces to come up with innovative solutions against Covid-19. In this respect, the Deputy Mayor of Izmir, senior executives of municipal companies, and the Mayor's advisors have been given the authority to conduct joint activities with district municipalities and relevant stakeholders. Each of the managers was appointed to a different region outside the Izmir city center. The managers have worked in coordination with district mayors and the Metropolitan Municipality Local Management Services units. Besides aiding people in need, these activities allowed the Crisis Management Supreme Board to collect valuable data for further and more effective actions.

A highly important purpose of Crisis Municipalism is to increase solidarity and volunteering in Izmir. At the beginning of the pandemic, Mayor Soyer invited all citizens of Izmir to social solidarity. In this process, we heavily relied on technology as a tool to connect people. We brought citizens together in a digital city square that we call WeTheIzmir. Thanks to this platform, we achieved to take city-wide deci-

sions together, we raised new resources and used them to improve social resilience through the protection of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

By providing the necessary means to our citizens to help each other, we were able to reach hundreds of thousands of people. WeTheIzmir platform made it possible to match people who need support with those who are willing to provide help. For example, 230 thousand food packages were donated by the citizens during this period. The active engagement of citizens was not limited to making donations, but it also included helping the Municipality in the preparation phase as well. Thanks to the citizens' contributions, 380 thousand packages of food and 130 thousand packages of hygiene products were distributed to over 250 thousand households.

The Municipality has introduced another initiative using the same approach. It is called the "Pending Bill". This is an online tool in the WeTheIzmir platform which enables volunteers to cover the cost of a utility bill of a citizen who is facing economic difficulty. In total, the utility bills of 16 thousand 496 households, worth 1 Million 473 thousand 825 Turkish Lira, have been paid by volunteers.

Other than the above-mentioned ones, the Municipality offered many different options to citizens for them to actively participate in Izmir's collective response to the pandemic. To become a volunteer, citizens can sign up through the WeTheIzmir platform. Thanks to their involvement, approx-

imately half a million citizens have received a direct phone call and were asked about their urgent needs. One thousand one hundred volunteers did the shopping for the elderly. Volunteers also fed street animals and harvested the fruits that had not been collected due to the lack of workers during the pandemic. There is also a rewarding mechanism in place. Volunteers earned points for their contributions. These points could be used to buy event tickets or participate in the different trainings given by the Municipality. Citizens could also choose to donate their points. For example, they could purchase clothes for the people in need or plant trees in the name of their friends.

We developed a detailed Izmir Resilience Action Plan where we describe the Crisis Municipalism approach and all the steps that we have taken to fight against COVID-19. This action plan will also help us to be more prepared for potential future crises.

With the Crisis Municipalism model, closer connections were established in Izmir, and there have been more communication, interaction, and cooperation in the whole city. Thanks to this, we were able to create more resources and accomplish more effective crisis management. Through inclusive public governance and solidarity, we achieved to protect the right to life of our citizens better and created the necessary conditions for providing services in a more just way.

"WeTheIzmir platform made it possible to match people who need support with those who are willing to provide help. For example, 230,000 food packages were donated by the citizens during the spring 2020 lockdown period."

– Onur ERYUCE and Barış KARCI, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, Turkey

"In many countries, wealth is concentrated primarily in large cities. They serve the purpose of business, social commoditization, the availability of infrastructures, security as well as outward representation. The analysis of both poverty and wealth makes the overall view of social reality possible."

– Holger KUHLE, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, Berlin

Piero PELIZARRO
Municipality
Milan, Italy

Resilience from theory into practice. Elements from the Milan experience

Resilience is about scaling up existing responses to meet new needs in times of crisis. Our experience in Milan is very a practical one: To be resilient means to be able to deliver in an emergency situation. The foundations for this resilience were built in the past years are based on three long-term strategies.

digital infrastructures (top-down)
Three years ago, Milan has launched a "digital agenda" to improve our external digital services to the people. During the pandemic, the municipality was able to serve more people that way.

food initiative via food app (bottom-up)
The Milanese were able to move up to 1 million meals per day (basic needs), connecting to the local farmers, which had been mapped. Some of these initiatives begin to turn into new services – new business for the new normal.

mobility
During the lockdown, the restrictions of access to public space have just highlighted how precious public space as a common resource is. Over the last two months, Milan municipality has launched two initiatives: "open street" and "open square." Both initiatives follow the logic of tactical urbanism that allows to test and to explore potential new conditions for public space. One outcome was 40 km long bike line that was rather quickly implemented.

When an emergency comes, we don't have to reinvent the wheel, but we need to scale what we already have to the new needs. As a municipal institution, we do not have the time to discuss all the options; instead we have to quickly respond to the demands.

For future studies to come, we need to look further into the unpredictable in order to find solutions on how to act and to better manage these situations. We ought to incorporate in to these studies the higher risks for our community, like climate change and pandemics.

https://twitter.com/pieropelizzaro

"Resilience is about scaling up existing responses to meet new needs in times of crisis. In Milan, the foundations for the pandemic resilience were built in the past years and they are based on three long-term strategies."
– Piero PELIZARRO, Municipality Milan

Image Source: https://twitter.com/demescope/status/1344666562444341249/photo/1

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons. April 19, 2020. A food basket for the needy hung in Bologna, Italy, during the COVID-19 crisis. Image by Pietro Luca Cassarino. https://www.flickr.com/photos/184568471@N07/49797489096/

Gautam BHAN
Indian Institute for Human
Settlements (IIHS)
Bangalore, India

Southern urbanism and collective life

Worldwide, countless initiatives led by cities, communities, NGOs, and citizens have helped people dealing with the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis. However, they have rarely been connected with or supported by government's initiatives.

COVID-19 affects people of all social geographies. It's different from cholera and malaria, the so-called poor people's diseases, which further marginalise and criminalize the poor. The kind of community that has been hit the most by the pandemic is the proportion of the population that cannot work from home such as janitors, bus drivers, nurses, street cleaners and so on. These are also often people who are living in overcrowded conditions and multi-generational households.

When the pandemic started, everyone was convinced that density would be the matchstick for the corona virus to spread. Informal settlements all over the world, places like Dharavi as one of the most densely populated areas in the world, were expected to perform the worst. However, the opposite seems to occur, because there is another form of density within the informal settlements, which is the density of social connections and networks. Practices of reporting, isolation and sanitation were community-designed and new infrastructure was created for them. The community manages the pandemic at the street level.

If communities are actually given the resources to leverage the social density that they require and to mitigate the accompanying challenges of spatial density, these informal communities are able to actually self-regulate themselves. That is, when communities can come up with solutions rather than the constraints, a shift in scale occurs. For example, in terms of isolation, the unit of spatial isolation is the communal street rather than the private home. In terms of sanitisation, the unit of sanitisation is the public water tank rather than washing hands. In terms of restricting of movement, this meant that the local community controls the various entry and exit points of their streets.

In India, the reporting of COVID-19 cases to the government was done via the community level. It was not done through the government surveyors and the municipal health inspectors. Community resilience works when reporting respects people's privacies and the control of the reports is shifted back to the community. Some of these community-based

organizations have been the intermediaries between the state and the community. During the COVID-19 pandemic completely informal community-level organization at the street level popped up everywhere and filled the gap where there is no underlying formal organisation.

https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/the-pandemic-southern-urban-isms-and-collective-life

"There is another form of density within the informal settlements, which is the density of social connections and networks. Practices of reporting, isolation and sanitation were community-designed and new infrastructure was created fro them. The community manages the pandemic at the street level."

– Gautam BHAN, Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Bangalore

Image Source: A health worker screens for symptoms of COVID-19 in Dharavi, one of Asia's biggest slums in Mumbai. The number of people infected with the coronavirus in India rose by another 80,000 and is near Brazil's total, the second highest in the world. Image by AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool. Note: We apologize for the low image quality.

Luisa FENIZOLA
Casa Fluminense
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Vitor MIHESSEN
Casa Fluminense
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Food baskets and baskets of indicators: Actions by Casa Fluminense's network in the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro

In light of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Rio de Janeiro-based NGO Casa Fluminense, which brings together people and organizations to promote a more equal, democractic and sustainable metropolis, has been working with grassroots organisations to localize the SDGs and build Local Agendas in the outskirts of the Rio de Janeiro Metropolitan Area.

The process of developing a diagnosis of challenges faced by residents and choosing the priorities to be tackled

was undertaken in 2020 and led by black women and/or LGBTQI+ people from organisations in five different locations with support from Casa Fluminense. The diagnosis incorporated technological innovations, including the use of online questionnaires and digital communication tools, and the digital collection and analysis both of official and of citizen generated data (CGD).

After diagnosis and discussions, actionable solutions and targets were proposed and documented in the form of Agendas and will be used to influence public policies and strategies. This resulted in the Santa Cruz 2030 Plan, the 2030 Commitment Letter for Basic Sanitation in Maré, and the Japeri, the Queimados and the São Gonçalo 2030 Agendas, which were all pre-launched online last year. They are unprecedented in their respective territories and will greatly contribute to the public discussion around social justice at local - and potentially at national - level.

Immediate actions in response to the pandemic have gone side-by-side with the elaboration of the Agendas - all five grassroots organizations had to reorganize their activities in 2020 to coordinate distribution of basic food baskets during the pandemic in order to support families in their territories. Engaging people in the discussion about sustainable development demands their nutritional and health needs are properly met.

Casa Fluminense, as a supporting organisation, raised and

distributed financial resources to local organisations, destined both for the immediate purchase of food, cleaning and personal hygiene materials (making it possible to assemble and deliver around 30,000 baskets), as well as for fostering political incidence in their territories. The strengthening of grassroots organizations is sought not only for its political impact, but also for the potential income that might be generated from the promotion of local development and solidarity economy.

Casa Fluminense is currently seeking resources for the improvement and multiplication of the agendas, which will include the distribution of printed materials. Despite technological advances, this is important in face of the low levels of digital literacy and access to speedy internet in these territories, in addition to promoting trust in the work developed and ownership by local residents. Elaboration of the booklet "How to Make a Local Agenda" is also expected in 2021 to multiply the impacts of the efforts carried out in 2020, which will present guidelines for building new documents aligned with the SDGs and the expansion of a culture of citizen participation and monitoring of public policies.

"We need to adapt from Western social security models to locally serviced security. Driven by models that are already on the ground, it should strengthen the solutions people have already put in place for themselves."
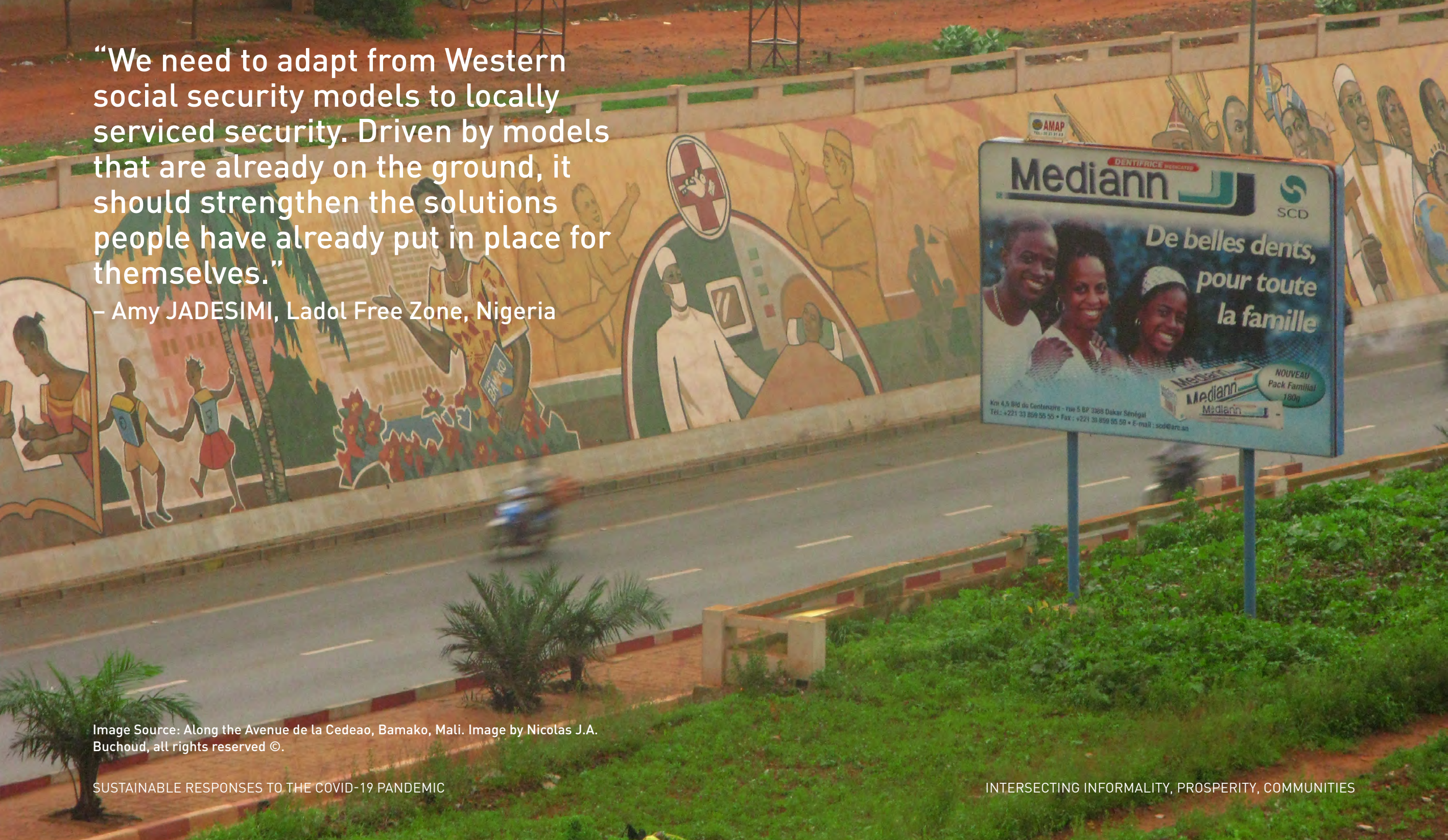
– Amy JADESIMI, Ladol Free Zone, Nigeria

Image Source: Along the Avenue de la Cedeao, Bamako, Mali. Image by Nicolas J.A. Buchoud, all rights reserved ©.

Thai NGUYEN
Young Global Changer of
Global Solutions Initiative
University of Groningen
the Netherlands

**A grounded response to COVID-19:
On informal civil society and support**

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed serious consequences beyond medical concerns at local, national, and global scale (Slater, 2020; Weible et al., 2020). Most national governments have formulated and implemented policy responses, drawing from both existent and makeshift framework(s), to various degrees of efficiency and success. However, efficient crisis handling still requires coordination between government and other actors, such as citizens, civil society including community and nongovernmental organizations, and other network partners (Kapucu, 2006). Much research is still needed to understand how such coordination actually materialises. Understandably, formal NGOs might benefit from a higher level of interaction with institutional actors. Still, the pandemic has also highlighted the responsiveness of local community-led initiatives, as observed, for instance, in Hong Kong by Wan et al. (2020), Latin American cities by Duque Franco et al. (2020), or in China by Hu and Sidel (2020) and Miao et al. (2021).

Thus, to address community resilience, as defined by the main themes of this e-book, requires better understanding of how informal civil society, particularly community-based groups and/or initiatives, as opposed to formal NGOs, can contribute to the resilience of the community in terms of not only medical but also livelihood security, such as food and hygiene, support. White and Banda strongly argued for the capacity of civil society to "bolster defence from the ground up" (2009: 111). Civil society, especially those of grassroots nature, have an edge over institutional actors in terms of (i) providing legitimisation for difficult policy choices via raising awareness, (ii) functioning as a channel for community-based knowledge, providing a clearer picture of human and technical needs and capacities, (iii) providing on-the-ground aid, (iv) identifying gaps in regulation, pressing for compliance, and advocating for change and (v) contributing to policy making process.

Echoing these propositions, there are examples where community-led initiatives have provided much needed on-the-ground aid and ensured compliance with measures. Hong Kong networks of District Councillors, local organisations and shop owners coordinated masks sharing events, using local knowledge to identify and prioritize groups with higher level of exposure risk (Wan et al., 2020).

In China, the pandemic has led to an increase of volunteers, most of whom were mobilised at their own will, albeit in a state-led manner (Miao et al., 2021). The assistance provided by the volunteers ranged from offering pandemic-related support for special need children and families to employing ridesharing platforms to support emergency patient transport, material delivery, rescue, and logistics (ibid., 3). That said, the ability to contribute to regulation and policy remains limited. Looking at bottom-up initiatives in Latin America, Duque Franco et al. (2020) concluded that these initiatives provided valuable help to informal settlements in terms of food security, hygiene, accommodation, and income. Their findings, however, did indicate efforts to influence political participation through preparing analysis and recommendation for local and national governments.

The ability to identifying gaps in regulation is exemplified by One Egg a Day (OEAD), [1] a volunteer group in Vietnam. In the process of providing food and other necessities to workers of informal economy as well as homeless people, the group has used their presence on Facebook to advocate for recognition of such population in the formal systems, since the lack of such recognition have prevented this group from citizenship's benefits. This drawback has been somewhat exacerbated by social distancing measures and the growing discourse on digitalisation that occasionally forgoes the privileged-ness of technological access.

The discussed examples have highlighted how informal civil society, i.e., community-led or volunteer-based groups, have responded to the pandemic in a grounded and practical manner, or in other words, fulling roles (i) to (iii) in broad terms, with a touch on (vi) and (v). An effective coordination, as mentioned earlier, requires these groups to increase their capacity in all roles, particularly (vi) and (v). The question is, then, how can other government and formal NGO actors can contribute to building such capacity without overreliance on citizen volunteerism (Bovaird, 2007) or abrogation of the state's own responsibility (McLennan et al., 2016)?

References:

1. https://www.facebook.com/MNMQT

Bovaird T (2007) Beyond engagement and participation: User and community coproduction of public services. Public Administration Review 67(5): 846–860.

Duque Franco I, Ortiz C, Samper J, et al. (2020) Mapping repertoires of collective action facing the COVID-19 pandemic in informal settlements in Latin American cities. Environment and Urbanization 32(2): 523–546. DOI: 10.1177/0956247820944823.

Hu M and Sidel M (2020) Civil Society and COVID in China: Responses in an Authoritarian Society. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly (Symposium Issue): 1–9. DOI: 10.1177/0899764020964596.

Kapucu N (2006) Interagency communication networks during emergencies: Boundary spanners in multi-agency coordination. The American Review of Public Administration 36(2): 207–225.

McLennan B, Whittaker J and Handmer J (2016) The changing landscape of disaster volunteering: opportunities, responses and gaps in Australia. Natural Hazards 84: 2031–2048.

Miao Q, Schwarz S and Schwarz G (2021) Responding to COVID-19: Community volunteerism and coproduction in China. World Development 137. Elsevier Ltd: 105128. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105128.

Schwartz J (2014) Achieving Effective Pandemic Response in Taiwan through State-Civil Society Cooperation: The Role of the Li Zhang. Asian Survey 54(6): 1136–1157.

Slater DH (2020) Vulnerable Populations Under COVID-19 in Japan: A Lull in the Storm? The Asia-Pacific Journal 18(18). Available at: https://apjjf.org/-David-H–Slater/5482/article.pdf.

Wan KM, Ka-ki Ho L, Wong NWM, et al. (2020) Fighting COVID-19 in Hong Kong: The effects of community and social mobilization. World Development 134. Elsevier Ltd: 105055. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105055.

Weible CM, Nohrstedt D, Cairney P, et al. (2020) COVID-19 and the policy sciences: initial reactions and perspectives. Policy Sciences 53(2). Springer US: 225–241. DOI: 10.1007/s11077-020-09381-4.

White K and Banda M (2009) The role of civil society in pandemic preparedness. In: Cooper AF and Kirton JJ (eds) Innovation in Global Health Governance: Critical Cases. Surrey, England; Burling, USA: Ashgate, pp. 105–127.

"Efficient crisis handling requires coordination between government and other actors, such as citizens, civil society including community and non-governmental organizations, and other network partners."

– Thai NGUYEN, Young Global Changer

Image Source: Distribution of healthy food packages for traditional art performers who were impacted by the pandemic, as a part of ICCN program Aksi Bersama Bantu Sesama (Solidarity Act) for Covid-19 pandemic mitigation. Image Source: Indonesia Creative Cities Network (ICCN). Rescue packet in Indonesia. Image by ICCN, all rights reserved ©. Note: We apologize for the low image quality.

Warren SMIT
African Center for Cities
Cape Town, South Africa

A second apartheid: On South African cities and the pandemic consequences on informal settlements

Epidemics deepen and expose existing social inequities. Informal settlements, which are settlements in which residents do not have legal security of tenure or adequate infrastructure, are an important part of African cities, accommodating more than 60% of the urban population of sub-Saharan Africa.

How will, and how should, COVID-19 shape our cities into the future? The danger is that it will shape our cities in the same way that previous epidemics have shaped our cities.

History teaches us that the usual response to epidemics has been the demolition of slums and relocation of residents to the urban periphery, combined with the establishment of new gated enclaves for the middle and upper classes, thus increasing social polarization.

There are multiple possible future urban trajectories: we will see the demolition of slums? new urban strategies on urban sprawl? a greater concern for more effective social safety nets? will communities be included in the decision-making process?

In order to be able to evaluate the impact of interventions in informal settlements and monitor progress, it is essential that disaggregated data on health and socio-economic indicators in informal settlements are regularly collected with the help of residents themselves. Through participatory upgrading processes we can help create cities that are safer, more resilient and more equitable.

Epidemics deepen and expose existing social inequities. The global pandemic has occasioned an impulse to think in monumental terms – totality, catastrophe, portal. This essay commits to a different reading that stops the rush of planning and forecasting, projecting and forecasting. It offers collective life as an analytic that keeps the focus on the ways in which the urban majority is trying to survive and cope within structures of inequality that now bear both the new imprint of COVID-19 while equally holding the continuities of older forms of distancing and exclusion.

The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly done this in African cities, with informal settlements, where the poorest residents of cities live, generally being the areas of African

cities with the highest incidence of COVID-19. Informal settlements, which are settlements in which residents do not have legal security of tenure or adequate infrastructure, are an important part of African cities, accommodating more than 60% of the urban population of sub-Saharan Africa.

For example, in Cape Town, which has had about 74,000 cases of COVID so far, the highest levels of COVID-19 is found in the two districts with the highest concentrations of informal settlements: Khayelitsha (8,247 cases in an area with a population of about 400,000 people) and Klipfontein (9,063 cases in an area with a population of about 380,000 people). These two districts have incidence rates of over 2,300 cases per 100,000 people, compared with an average rate of 1,693 cases per 100,000 people for the rest of Cape Town. That's more than 35% higher.

The reasons for the higher incidence of COVID-19 in informal settlements is that residents of informal settlements are particularly at risk of infectious diseases as it is impossible to practice social distancing in overcrowded conditions, and the lack of adequate water supply and sanitation means that practicing good hygiene practices is extremely difficult. Informal settlements have limited access to economic opportunities, limited opportunities for safe physical activity and healthy food options, and high levels of depression and stress. The net result is that the environment of these areas is not conducive to good health or healthy lifestyles.

How will, and how should, COVID-19 shape our cities into the future? The danger is that it will shape our cities in the same way that previous epidemics have shaped our cities.

History teaches us that the usual response to epidemics has been the demolition of slums and relocation of residents to the urban periphery, combined with the establishment of new gated enclaves for the middle and upper classes, thus increasing social polarization. For example, in Cape Town, the influenza pandemic of 1918-1919, led to a new South African Public Health Act and Housing Act "to ameliorate the wretched housing conditions of the poorer classes" (Central Housing Board, 1920). These new policies essentially encouraged the demolition of slums and relocation of people to new housing areas, for example, it directly led to the establishment of Langa, segregated township for black Africans beyond the edge of Cape Town. On the flip side of the coin, the influenza epidemic also led to the development of Pinelands on the outskirts of Cape Town, a segregated "garden suburb" for middle-class people, based on the ideas of Ebenezer Howard (in his 1898 book, "The Garden Cities of Tomorrow") about healthy residential areas. Pinelands had (and still has) broad tree-lined streets and detached villas, and, as per Howard's philosophy, was meant to have "Pure air and water. Good drainage. Bright homes & gardens. No smoke. No slums". Similar processes to these in Cape Town occurred in numerous other cities in Africa during the course of the twentieth century.

We need to make sure that this does not happen again. On the one hand there need to be strategies to prevent urban sprawl and urban fragmentation. On the other hand there needs to be upgrading of informal settlements. The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the urgency of upgrading informal settlements so as to reduce the risk of infectious disease in these high-risk areas and reduce social inequities. Processes to upgrade informal settlements and provide residents with sufficient amounts of sufficient living space and adequate services need to be participatory, with a range of accompanying social and economic development programs to improve people's lives and reduce their vulnerability to risks (for example, through the establishment of social safety nets and mechanisms such as basic income grants).

It is important to reduce overcrowding through these upgrading processes, but this could be done through the provision of multi-storey housing, there do not necessarily need to be large-scale relocations of residents.

A key precondition for informal settlement upgrading is that informal residents and other marginalized groups are included in decision-making processes, as it is essential that the residents of informal settlements themselves are involved in decision making about the upgrading of the areas where they live and work.
In order to be able to evaluate the impact of interventions in informal settlements and monitor progress, it is essential that disaggregated data on health and socio-economic indicators in informal settlements are regularly collected with the help of residents themselves. Through participatory upgrading processes we can help create cities that are safer, more resilient and more equitable.

"History teaches us that the usual response to epidemics has been the demolition of slums and relocation of residents to the urban periphery, combined with the establishment of new gated enclaves for the middle and upper classes, thus increasing social polarization."

– Warren SMIT, African Center for Cities, Cape Town, South Africa

Luca BIZZARRI
Regional Government of
South Tyrol
Bolzano, Italy

Reshaping cities' development:
Preliminary signs of a post-pandemic urban culture

The performance of urban culture in the traditional sense is one of the losers of the pandemic restrictions, lockdowns and closures. During confinement, the body continued to be fed, but the food of the mind, the urban culture as practice of social encounter with the others, the strangers, with art and performance, was neglected. Bookstores were left open during the second wave, but cinema, theatres and exhibitions are banned. For festival organizers, theatre directors, museum curators, guide speakers and many others, they have paid a heavy price this year for the fight against the Covid-19 virus. It is, in the moment, the triumph of series and television. In these days, we do not know to fear for the after pandemic, should we fear to see people get used to no longer frequenting these public places of public culture? But what can already be predicted against this background: Culture will play an important role for the post-pandemic time. It is conducive to the fact that culture has been seen since a while already playing an increasing role in the development of urban contexts.

In several cities, investment in the culinary infrastructure and charisma has increased, mostly with the intention of attracting tourists and increasing the attractiveness of international competition for locations. Cultural policy, its institutions and processes, has thus also taken an increasingly important position. This shows that, to the extent that urban cultural policy can play an influential role during the post-pandemic period, culture will become a meaningful, creative and intergenerational force of general "recovery" in the coming years.

Cultural policy has a formal, administrative, financial and managerial dimension. In order to mobilize them for an animating recovery culture, the UNESCO recommendations called Culture 2030 are offering a very promising scheme. In the year 2019, UNESCO has launched the Culture 2030 Indicators with the aim of integrating and influencing the Sustainable Development Goals. This already makes the Culture 2030 recommendations so important for the post-pandemic recovery that it is supposed to meet the demands of sustainable development. The 22 Indicators aim to complete the international strategy on sustainable development designing a fundamental role of culture as main driver for (re)shaping new scenarios and encouraging positive changes through processes, skills and above all social cohesion. Thematic areas will cover the essential aspects

of local development culture based and especially Environment & Resilience, Prosperity & Livelihoods, Knowledge & Skills and Inclusion & Participation.

It seems very probable that through the lenses of the post-pandemic perspective urban realities and opportunities will be rediscovered in terms of improvement of living, working, dwelling, producing and experiencing updated forms of community. In this way culture will have an essential stake for assuring social interaction, the open building and encounter of identities and solidarity. Cultural policy following the Culture 2030 Indicators would strengthen these up-coming re-appropriations of spaces and practices of social interaction in a meaningful manner.

From the perspective of medium sized cities in Italy it seems very likely that the re-appropriations of spaces will weave together both the urban and (their surrounding) rural cultural practices. This twist seems very probable considering the growing curiosity over the pandemic period and the before increasing open-mindedness on a shift from the urban-rural divide to a new urban-rural cultural nexus. Preliminary signs have already become visible before the pandemic, the reactivation of inland abandoned villages in Italy where new methods and new social and professional relations have been experimented and more and more noted in the public. There is for instance the project La Rivoluzione delle Seppie[1] (The Revolution of Cuttlefishes in Calabria, South Italy) where the engagement of local people – and among them migrants, locals, national and international students – has shed light on a strong identity of the village following the renovation of public spaces, cultural events and workshops initiated by the community. In the same direction goes the project Camposaz[2] (Trentino, North Italy) where the local community plays an active role in shaping the space through living in together with temporary professional residents from outside. Again, the project Farm Cultural Park[3] (Favara, Sicily, South Italy) boosted some years ago the idea that local development through culture is not just possible but even desirable if this practice brings new people and a new idea of living in the smallest villages which can attract exciting cultural international highlights.

1. https://larivoluzionedelleseppie.org/

2. https://www.camposaz.com/

3. https://www.farmculturalpark.com/

"Culture will have an essential role to ensure future social interaction and foster solidarity at the crossroads of individual and social group identities. Post-COVID-19 reappropriation of spaces and practices of social interaction will be a powerful driver for sustainable development."

– Luca BIZZARRI, Regional Government of South Tyrol, Bolzano

Daniel BRIDGE
Co-authored by
Robert Baffour-Awuah
Royal Docks
London
the United-Kingdom

The people's plan for the Royal Docks

1.   2021 will present major tests for London's Covid recovery ambitions. Not only is the city coming to terms with the impacts of the pandemic, it will also need to reconfigure its position as a world city outside of the European Union.

London's communities, its civil society organisations and other sub-city level partners will need to play a leading role in recovery plans. It is in the neighbourhoods that these groups and individuals live and work where the impacts of the pandemic have been most acutely felt. They are also the places where the ingenuity, enthusiasm and networks reside that can build back neighbourhoods and cities on an equitable basis.

The Royal Docks Enterprise Zone regeneration programme is one of the most significant urban transformation projects in Europe. For at least the next twenty years, the area will see major investment, helping to transform the area as a centre of growth for London. Over the last two years of the programme, the Royal Docks Team (RDT), a joint initiative from the Mayor of London and Mayor of Newham, has been exploring ways that decision making around investment can be democratised. These efforts aim to address imbalances in power relations and socio-spatial inequalities caused by historic patterns of investment in the area, and establish a sustainable response to Covid-19.

2.   The Royal Docks sits within Newham, a local authority area in East London, and one of the most diverse and deprived parts of the UK. At one point during the height of the first wave of Covid-19, Newham had the worst mortality rate of any local authority in England and Wales.

The Royal Docks were once the largest enclosed docks in the world. During the late 19th and 20th centuries, the docks were the gateway for cargo from around the world. In 1981, after the decline in dock activity, the national government created a development corporation that had responsibility for regenerating the Royal Docks, particularly focussed on infrastructure investment.

These early investment projects were geared towards creating the conditions for private sector development. There was some success in this approach. London City Airport and the ExCeL Exhibition Centre are two major organisations that were established in the Royal Docks during and just after that early phase of investment.

Despite these positives, early investment was criticized for not involving local communities in decision making. New roads and railways resulted in social-spatial severance and didn't deliver the community and social infrastructure that communities had articulated through the People's Plan for the Royal Docks - a document that captured the spirit of local community activism through alternative proposals for a post-industrial Royal Docks.

When the RDT was established in 2017, it was envisaged as a predominantly development focused vehicle that would accelerate private sector led investment in the area. While this is still one of the team's priorities, it was clear that to avoid the mistakes of the past, and achieve the maximum possible socio-economic benefit for the area, a more balanced approach was needed.

3.   The Royal Docks sits not only at the intersection of significant regional growth corridors, but also at the juncture of policies that place communities at the heart of regeneration. In addition to the Mayor of London's Good Growth agenda, Newham's Community Wealth Building strategy is part of a growing global movement and the first of its kind to be rolled out in London. Embedded across the Council's work, it aims to build an inclusive economy, tackle poverty, race and gender inequality, and address the climate emergency. Newham's Covid recovery strategy adopts a similarly progressive approach - it is the first London Borough to place Health and Wellbeing metrics at the heart

of measuring prosperity and economic recovery.

A Communities Strategy for the Royal Docks Delivery Programme responds to this policy landscape, capitalising on the Royal Docks status as an Enterprise Zone to galvanise innovation and be a place for purpose driven investment. As a project whose success is dependent on driving investment, this poses both a challenge and an opportunity.

A two-person Communities Team works across the Programme to integrate outcomes for communities into each of the RDTs strategic work streams. Work to co-develop a Communities Strategy with stakeholders and communities was set to begin when the pandemic broke out. Responding to local demand, the Team convened regular multi-stakeholder video-calls providing a forum for local and city authorities, businesses, developers, education institutions and community organisations to support each other in their Covid response.

Amid the crisis new neighbourhood networks formed, producing an 'infrastructure of care.' Multi-stakeholder collaborations supported the rapid construction of the NHS Nightingale emergency hospital; created a makerspace to produce PPE equipment and coordinated local food and essentials distribution by patching gaps in supply chains. This opened a new horizon of possibilities for how multiple stakeholders might work together post-covid, in a long-term project place-based transformation, built on resil-

ience and shared prosperity.

This experience affirmed the role of the RDT as a convener and coordinator. It also facilitated multi-stakeholder co-development of the Communities Strategy with a shared Vision, Principles and Guidelines which include co-design and capacity building, and four key approaches:

Knowledge: Facilitate the transfer of knowledges
Relations: Cultivate collaborative relationships
Innovation: Catalyse experiments and learning
Leadership: Influence investment and decision-making

4.   The priority for the RDT over the next five years is to ensure the needs and ambitions of communities can support sustainable infrastructure projects. As highlighted above, the docks maritime history and early wave of infrastructure investment left a legacy of urban fragmentation.

Over the next five years major transport infrastructure projects will open in the Royal Docks, including a new river tunnel crossing and a high speed rail project. In 2019, the RDT began working with a wide range of local partners, architects and planners, to develop design guides that would provide overarching guidance for investment in the public realm.

Using the opportunity to pilot a co-design approach, the guides were developed using human-centred design methodologies which emphasised local people's everyday experiences of public spaces. Community organisations and residents built their capacity to contribute in informed and creative ways to an urban design process that will determine the look and feel of their neighbourhoods. The Guides are intended to serve as tools for local stakeholders and community groups to commission their own public realm projects.

The challenge now is to transform the outcomes from this and other community centred processes into governance and accountability mechanisms. Within complex stakeholder and land-ownership environments, like the Royal Docks, 'reconstituting urban governance networks' is difficult to achieve. However, through detailed decision and influence mapping, the RDT is exploring how to use their position to either support new spaces for communities to have an equal voice with other local stakeholders, or to shift power within existing structures to facilitate more balanced outcomes from investment decisions.

This is just the start of a new chapter in the journey for the Royal Docks. Like similar neighbourhoods across the globe, Covid-19 has badly impacted the area but the strong links and new relationships that communities and different stakeholders formed to support their neighbours through the crises have provided clear examples of ways to create new partnerships that build resilient places for the future.

"The challenge now is to transform the outcomes from this and other community centred processes into governance and accountability mechanisms. Within complex stakeholder and land-ownership environments, like the Royal Docks."
– Daniel BRIDGE, Royal Docks London

Amitabh KUNDU
Research and Information
Systems for Developing
Countries (RIS), India

A constitutional perspective: Labour market and inclusive urbanization in post COVID-19 India

In the past two decades, the infrastructure finance gaps have been high on the agenda of developing countries, such as in India, in a context of rapid urban growth and messy urbanization accelerating such trends as shrinking cities or premature de-industrialization. The federal government has launched several initiatives in the immediate past years focusing on environmental and climate change parameters, as illustrated by the climate smart city initiative.

Yet, the demand side has rarely been taken into consideration by those programs, whereas the issue of inclusivity has not been a priority. In fact, in most cities or rural centres that have benefited from new infrastructure investments, density has not been going up and migration flows have not accelerated.

The COVID-19 crisis has triggered a paradigm shift. Since March/April 2020, there has been an increasing emphasis on investing into smaller and medium-size industries that can attract labour (labour-intensive industries) and generate employment (and therefore supporting poorer parts of the population). However, the crisis has also illustrated many shortcomings in transforming ambitions into reality. Furthermore, the priority given to recovery has allowed for many restrictions of workers' rights.

Measuring informality
As India experienced lockdowns and large amounts of migrants wanted to go back to their rural communities, they did not have any transport. In fact, the central government had no idea how many citizens had moved from one district to another. A report from the ministry of urban development issued in 2015 used migration data (moving from district to district) from 2001 (!) and not 2011 for which census data was available.

It was only with the crisis that the ministry of labour constituted a committee to look at the vulnerable sections of the population, i.e., their access to income, sustainable livelihood, also basic amenities.

Suspension of worker's rights
Different states and different state governments have been differently affected by this pandemic. States that are more affected want to push up the recovery process by liberaliz-

ing the labour laws and introducing more flexibility. Some acts have been paused for duration up to 1.000 days.

Restrictions in the labour market
Due to high unemployment rates, several state governments have put restrictions on the migration coming from other states, with public and private jobs reserved to the local population. This trend is to some degree a disturbing trend, since it destroys the national labour market and it is unconstitutional (no restrictions against interstate mobility).

New rights for basic services (for all?)
In September 2020, the federal government passed significant labour reforms and rights to basic facilities including all sections of the population, including the unorganized workers and the migrant population. However, many questions remain, like will there be restrictions for home-based workers etc. The long-term achievements of the labour movement should not be lost due the impact of the pandemic.

Migrant workers, returning from their native places, stand in queues to get tested for COVID-19 after they arrived in the city of Thane, Maharashtra, India.

– the editors

Image Source: https://images.outlookindia.com/public/uploads/gallery/20201019/
Covid_1_20201019_402_602.jpg Courtesy of PTI Photo/R Senthil Kumar
Note: We apologize for the low image quality.

Iskandar ABDULLAEV
Central Asia Regional
Economic Cooperation
(CAREC) Institute

Qaisar ABBAS
Central Asia Regional
Economic Cooperation
(CAREC) Institute

Ghulam SAMAD
Central Asia Regional
Economic Cooperation
(CAREC) Institute

COVID-19 and micro small medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the CAREC region: Impacts and coping strategies [1,2]

COVID-19 impacted economic activities by disrupting consumer spending and halting production activities at large and small firms level. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) impacts are amplified due to the nature of the businesses and structure it contains globally and in the CAREC region. The intensity of the disruption was largely contingent on the MSMEs regional integration and disrupted economies' origin. The impact of the pandemic augmented if MSMEs are integrated into the shocked economies. In the early phase of the pandemic, the global institutions had projected global recession and stagflation that would cause the MSMEs sector substantially.

United Nations Conference On Trade And Development (UNCTAD, 2020)[3] has projected growth global growth at a decelerated level of 2.5%. The ADB Brief (2020)[4], projected pandemic cost of $ 77 billion to $ 347 billion or 0.1% to 0.4% of global GDP. The ADB revised the pandemic cost to about $ 2 to $ 4.1 trillion, which is approximately 2.3% to 4.8% of global GDP. [5] The IMF projected 3% reduction in Asia growth in 2020 that would be verse than Asian Financial Crisis where the growth was plummeted by 4.7% and 1.3%, respectively.[6] The Asia Pacific growth will bump down by 0.9% point estimated by ESCAP (2020).[7] Finally, (WTO, 2020)[8] expected that the world trade will sluggish between 15-32%, trade in services and value chains will trim down due to the depth and longevity of the pandemic crisis.

These and other organizations [9] have mostly presented the macro picture of the pandemic impacts, however, the impact at the micro level (MSMEs) is rarely considered. Simi-

larly, impact analysis for the MSMEs at the regional level is also not carried out. Therefore, the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Institute and Asian Development Bank (ADB) has studied the impact of the COVID-19 on MSMEs sectors in the CAREC region [10] to dig out MSMEs impact [11] caused by decelerated consumption and production, and to explore MSMEs revitalization strategies proposed by businesses and respective governments.

COVID-19 Impacts on micro small medium enterprises

State of MSMEs

The MSMEs have a substantial share in the economies, almost 90%, of the registered businesses in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Georgia. However, the shares of the MSMEs in the GDPs are varied; for example, the share is highest for Georgia (61%), Uzbekistan (51%), Pakistan (40%) and Kazakhstan (31.2%). The low share of the MSMEs in the GDP indicates that these economies are still dominated by large enterprises, and by strong state owned enterprises. The sectoral distribution of the MSMEs is dominated by manufacturing (including agriculture) for Uzbekistan 35 %, followed by Kazakhstan 28%, Pakistan 21%, and Georgia 10%.

The strong dominance of the large private and state owned enterprises is reflected in MSMEs employment share in total employment; Kazakhstan has the lowest share of 39%,

followed by Uzbekistan 74%, Georgia 64% and Pakistan 80%. It was important to see the integration of the SMEs regionally. The surveyed firms show that Pakistan has the most significant share (14%) who conduct import and export operations, followed by the rest of the economies of around 6%. It means that primarily these economies are focusing more on domestic economies (less integrated), rather reaching out to the regional and global economies.

Operational impacts

The surveyed firms were less integrated regionally and globally; therefore, international market volatility did not cause MSMEs good and services trade largely. However, domestic demand was crippled and caused to reduce sale purchase of MSMEs good and services. The effect was significant for the Georgia, whose domestic demand for services and goods reduced by 69%, followed by Pakistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan of around 40%. These firms were not highly integrated; therefore, the reduction in international demand for goods and services were not significant. However, termination of the contract was prominent for Georgia, 50%. Similarly, acquiring difficulties in the supply of inputs were a problem for Georgia, 20%. Kazakhstan was the second economy whose MEMs operation were closed temporarily, 49%. The first in a row whose operations were closed temporarily was Georgia, 60%, followed by Pakistan 45%, and Uzbekistan, 33%. For all the indicators [12] that are considered for the impact analysis, Georgia shows more

disruptions with respect to other economies. Similarly, the intensity of the disruption was limited to the smaller [13] and micro [14] firms.

Revenue impact

The monthly loss of revenue resulted from the closure and disruption of the MSMEs were higher for Georgia. 44% of the Georgia firms reported that more than 50% reduction in the revenue has happened. Similarly, 34% of the Kazakhstan firms, 19% of the Uzbekistan firms, and 9% of Pakistan firms reported that their monthly revenue is dropped by more than 50%.

However, 7% of the Uzbekistan firms reported that their revenue is increased by more than 20%. The increase in the revenue for the rest of the economies are minimal. Since the pandemic erupted, "no change" in the revenue is also reported significantly high for Uzbekistan, 25%. Similarly, Georgia 14%, Kazakhstan 18%, and Pakistan 22% have reported "no change" in revenue since the pandemic erupted. Overall, in terms of revenue loss, Uzbekistan economy stand out better than the rest of the economies considered for the analysis.

Employment impact

MSMEs employment is not significantly caused by the pandemic. However, Kazakhstan's change in employment was higher because it was difficult for Kazakhstan to find out alternative ways (decrease working hours) for businesses

slowdown. Also, the laid-off of the permanent staff was higher for Kazakhstan, 35%, followed by Pakistan, 16%, Uzbekistan, 15% and Georgia 14%. The primary coping strategy that was suggested is the changes in the employment conditions.[15] Primarily, all firms reported that working hours were decreased, salaries and wages were suspended or decreased, and more remote work was promoted. The decreased working hours were highest in Pakistan (55%); however, the decreased working hours for Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Georgia were around 40%. These economies adopted other coping mechanisms (promote remote working, salaries and wage suspension, more sick leave) to sustain employment shocks.

Coping strategies

Domestic demand for goods and services was crippled and international orders were also cancelled and/or postponed. Therefore, most of the MSMEs were interested in boosting demand both at the domestic and international markets. A sizeable fiscal stimulus was proposed to generate economic activities at the domestic market, however, the actual disbursed fiscal support was limited and untargeted. A targeted support was suggested based on the size and structure of the MSMEs to regain market access. Similarly, targeted fiscal support to the general public was suggested to increase the purchasing power of the general public to generate domestic demand. The volatility in the international markets didn't largely impact CAREC MSMEs, because CAREC

MSMEs were not highly integrated. Integrating MSMEs with the regional economies can provide a coping mechanism, for example, diversifying supply chains to overcome COVID-19 shocks.

Several fiscal stimulus measures (deferring in payments, taxes and debts relief, reducing wages and benefits), and other initiatives (staff layoffs and changing products or services) were adopted, however, these were not considered significant measures across the four countries to revise MSMEs sales and boost domestic demand. Further support from government (tax relief, zero interest rate/collateral free loan, subsidies and grants), financial institutions and insurance companies, suppliers and customers, and family and friends were solicited to overcome COVID-19 impacts.

To overcome the COVID-19 negative consequences, the government and businesses strategies were to explore new potential customers, sales channels, and shift to online trade, among others. Digital transformation is the key coping mechanism that was mainly adopted by the MSMEs so that transition to online trade and sales can be possible. However, digital infrastructure platform and regulatory environment are at the development stage in the CAREC region except for China; therefore, the government should on a priority basis, consider supporting digital transformation so that MSMEs can get easy transition towards online trade and sale in the CAREC region to overcome the negative consequences of the COVID-19.

1.   The brief is excerpted from the CI and ADB joint study on "Covid 19 and MSMEs in the CAREC region". Yet to be published.
2.   The analysis is mainly carried out for Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Georgia. Rest of the CAREC region is not part of the analysis.
3.   UNCTAD, 9 March 2020, "The coronavirus shock: A story of another global crisis foretold and what policy makers should be doing about it".
4.   ADB Briefs No. 128, 6 March, 2020, "The Economic Impact of the COVID-19 Outbreak on Developing Asia".
5.   ADB Outlook April 2020. https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/575626/ado2020-highlights.pdf
6.   https://blogs.imf.org/2020/04/15/covid-19-pandemic-and-the-asia-pacific-region-lowest-growth-since-the-1960s/
7.   https://www.unescap.org/resources/impact-and-policy-responses-covid-19-asia-and-pacific
8.   https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres20_e/pr855_e.htm
9.   To the space limitation we are not going to discuss the detailed literature review. The above paragraph have sufficient information to develop the narrative.
10.   CI is an intergovernmental organization contributing to the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program through knowledge generation and capacity building. CAREC Program is a committed partnership of 11 countries – Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, the People's Republic of China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan
11.   The following section will discuss the detailed impacts indicators/factors considered for the analysis.
12.   Staff shortage, working capital problems,
13.   6-50 employees
14.   2-5 employees
15.   Decrease in working hours, promote remote working, salaries and wage suspension/decreased, more sick leave, etc.

"Most organizations have mostly presented the macro picture of the pandemic impacts, however, the impact at the micro level (MSMEs) is rarely considered. Similarly, impact analysis for the MSMEs at the regional level is also not carried out."
– Ghulam SAMAD, Qaisar ABBAS and Iskandar ABDULLAEV, CAREC Institute

Riatu MARIATUL QIBTHIYYAH
(ed.)
University of Indonesia
(LPEM-UI)
Jakarta, Indonesia

Teuku RIEFKY
University of Indonesia
(LPEM-UI)
Jakarta, Indonesia

Regional integration and cooperation as a response to the crisis: an Indonesian and ASEAN perspective on urbanization, inequality, informality and sustainability

Long-Term Impacts of COVID-19 on Sustainable Development

The United Nations have adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development since 2015, in which they committed to set a long-term goal on a sustainable path for people, planet, peace, partnership, and prosperity. The year 2020 should be marked as a kickstart of one decade of SDGs action where countries all around the world work together ac-celerating efforts and sustainable solutions to the biggest challenges, ranging from eradicating poverty and reducing gender inequality, to addressing climate change. Yet, in only a brief period of time, the COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on all efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A report from the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) finds that the COVID-19 pandemic has reversed much of the economic and social progress already made towards SDG achievement.

The economic damage brought by this pandemic is widely assessed and represents the largest economic shock the world has experienced in decades. Despite the extraordinary efforts of governments to counter the economic downturn with fiscal and monetary policy support, the World Bank in the report of Global Economic Prospect January 2021 envisions a 4.3% contraction in global GDP in 2020, with the most vulnerable countries will be far worse off. Over the longer term, the deep recessions triggered by the pandemic are expected to leave lasting scars through higher poverty and inequality, lower investment, and erosion of human capital through job losses and lower skills. According to the World Bank in the Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report 2020, the pandemic could raise the number of people living in extreme poverty by around 88 and 115 million in 2020. The crisis has exposed harsh and profound inequalities in our societies and is further exacerbating existing disparities within and among countries.

Another research conducted by UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) predicts that around 1.6 billion workers in the informal sectors, which is half of the global workforce, may be significantly affected by the Covid-19 crisis. Notably, the income of informal workers worldwide was estimated to have dropped by 60%, and up to 81% in some regions. The crisis has also significantly increased the vulnerability of the world's one billion slum dwellers, who have already suffered from inadequate housing and limited or even no access to basic infrastructure and services. Moreover, women and children are also bearing the brunt of the crisis. The crisis is creating circumstances that have already contributed to a surge in reports of violence against women and girls, where cases of domestic violence have increased by 30% in some countries. Meanwhile, prolonged absence from school also results in lower retention and graduation rates and therefore worsens learning outcomes for children.

Overcoming the challenges of urbanization: Indonesia and ASEAN Context

The rapid urbanization has been playing significant role in Indonesia's transformation story from rural to urban economy. Today, over half Indonesians live in cities and it is expected to grow even faster in the future. Unfortunately, the increase in urbanization has not been supported by ample infrastructure development. Insufficient infrastructure coupled with population explosion has caused a wide range of urban problems, ranging from social to environmental issues. Many people came to cities to find a livelihood due to the limited job opportunities in their village, but the number of job opportunities in cities grew slower than the urban population growth. As a result, unemployment rate of urban population is now two times higher than in rural area. This condition leaves many newcomers vulnerable to poverty. Further, the rising population puts pressure on existing infrastructure and land availability as the development of several industrial parks and new towns has converted green and agricultural areas into megacity. It brings many environmental issues, particularly in the capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta, which lies in a lowland area. The massive land conversion has caused the regular annual flooding in Jakarta.

A study from World Bank in 2019 has found that Indonesia has not benefitted as much from urbanization as other countries as 1 percent growth in urban population is only correlated with 4 percent GDP growth, while the number can be reached to 10 percent for China and 7 percent for Thailand. Even though the impact is relatively small, urbanization has contributed to the overall rise of living standards. However, the benefits have not been shared equally due to the lack of skill-matching of the migrants that leads them to poverty. The inequality issue is even rising currently due to the health crisis during the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis has affected many economic sectors negatively. A lot of businesses have seen revenue

losses, and subsequently, made many employees have lost their jobs. One of the main issue that is associated with the urbanization during the health crisis is the informality in Indonesia's labor market. Indonesia is one of the countries with high number of informal workers. Indonesia's informal employment rate is 44.1 percent where urban areas contribute 60 percent to total informal employment. This is the most vulnerable community to poverty as many of them came from lower income household. Further, they tend to have limited access to jobs opportunity as they have lower levels of education. Thus, the lack of access to social protection coverage in informal workers will only leave the bleaker condition in Indonesia's livelihood during this crisis.

Other ASEAN countries are also struggling with informality, particularly in Brunei Darussalam, Lao PDR, Malaysia, and Thailand as these countries' urban areas also contribute more to total informal employment (ASEAN Secretariat, 2019). ASEAN leaders did adopt the regional action plan in 2016 to start working together in resolving the informality in ASEAN by establishing the informal employment database. However, the current time of crisis calls for a stronger commitment from this region to construct the long-awaited structural reform agenda for informal sectors in the efforts of sustainable recovery.

National Spending Reformulation and Regional Cooperation in Addressing Inequality

To respond to a potentially deep wound left by the COVID-19 crisis, integration and coordination are needed more than ever. In terms of building back the society and economy towards a better, more sustainable path, it is not enough to conduct traditional policy formulation and implementation, heavily revolving around efficiency optimization. Inequality is a massive fault line built even before the pandemic and is cracking even deeper due to the pandemic. Thus, a more thorough emphasis on accommodating the groups of people most damaged by the pandemic is of utmost importance in regard to the agenda of building back better.

Accommodating the most affected groups of people and narrowing gap inequality gaps needs concrete steps in terms of policy formulation. One way is to implement budget refocusing and reallocation by the government towards more equitable budgetary purposes, such as education, health, and ICT. Regarding education, the government needs to secure education as a top priority and address inefficiencies in education spending. National authorities, central government in coordination with subnational and/or local level, also need to focus on addressing learning losses particularly for marginalized groups, provide support for teaching professionals, offer skills for employability programs, while strengthening international coordination to protect foreign aid for education. ICT plays a key role in

rising inequality to education, which has been shown more blatantly during the ongoing crisis. Thus, national leaders need to put emphasis in their policy and budget allocation towards building better ICT infrastructure to ensure an equitable and just distribution of quality education across population.

Strengthening the integration within ASEAN region is needed more than ever as the uncertainty of pandemic might worsen the condition of each member. However, it is feared that the aforementioned forms of regional cooperation could lead to other important issues, such as social welfare and the environment, being neglected. It is thus an important matter to establish regional initiatives that are also promoting sustainable development, starting with paying more attention to issues of informality in the labor market. According to the ASEAN Report (2019), informal employment in eight of the 10 ASEAN countries (excluding Singapore and the Philippines, which have no data) reaches nearly 57.5 million workers across the accommodation and food service sectors, wholesale and retail trade, transportation, and construction.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a disproportionate crippling effect on the livelihoods of millions of people in informal jobs over those who are formally employed. These people face additional difficulties adapting to this condition, given the various restrictions imposed by the government to contain the spread of the virus. In this case, effective

policy responses must reach them and their families quickly to prevent them from falling (deeper) into poverty. In the short-medium term, we talk about policy responses such as establishing public works programs for informal workers and expanding social assistance programs. In the long run, strengthening regional cooperation by reviewing, scaling up, and adapting existing policies and systems to accelerate the transition from informal to formal workers is also necessary because this is related to the basics of the Southeast Asian labor system itself. One that can be done is facilitating these informal workers to get assistance in the form of skills development.

"In the long run, strengthening regional cooperation by reviewing, scaling up, and adapting existing policies and systems to accelerate the transition from informal to formal workers is necessary, as it relates to the basics of the Southeast Asian labor system itself."

– Riatu MARIATUL QIBTHIYYAH, University of Indonesia, Jarkarta

John NEWBIGIN
Ambassador for the
Creative Economy to
the Mayor of London
the United Kingdom

Human capital as a sustainable infrastructure: Towards an eighteenth Sustainable Development Goal?

As COVID has triggered multiple crises across the world, leaving health services struggling to cope and businesses struggling to survive, it's the resilience, creativity and solidarity of communities that has taken the strain, from the 'Jerusalema' dance challenge to food banks for the self-isolating. There's clear evidence that, even if they are poor or marginalised, communities with the strongest social and cultural infrastructure have done better than their neighbours in terms of saving lives and livelihoods. While finance capital and the formal economy have been disabled, social capital and the informal economy have come to the rescue.

None of this is the product of COVID but the pandemic has pushed it to the centre of the stage. What are the implications for public policy and public investment? If the intangible cultural networks of an apparently disorganised community turn out to have provided the most durable in-

frastructure and the most practical and nimble responses to a rapidly changing crisis, might they not also have a role to play in tackling the long queue of crises that stretch ahead of us – climate change, environmental degradation, youth unemployment, growing inequalities of wealth and opportunity?

This is not to entertain some romantic myth about the innate wisdom of the community, but to point out that it would be foolish to ignore the evidence that COVID has placed in front of us. The accelerating pace of urbanisation means the growth of informal communities is sure to continue, and informal communities tend to generate informal economic activity, which is already estimated by the ILO to account for 60% of all economic activity globally, despite being massively constrained by lack of skills, lack of finance, lack of access to markets and by oppression, corruption and criminality. Furthermore, the rapid evolution of digital technologies and machine learning is cutting swathes through traditional labour markets. And while we can expect this 'Fourth Industrial Revolution' to generate new jobs and require new skills, the period of transition is likely to be at least as painful as in previous technology revolutions and youth unemployment is already becoming a global crisis.

It's worth considering a UN report of 2013 into the global creative economy, highlighting scores of case studies from urban communities, mainly in the global South, that observed that it was becoming impossible to disentangle eco-

nomic activity from cultural activity. Cultural and creative businesses are central to most neighbourhood economies, and most of them are in or on the fringes of the informal sector – whether it's festivals, food, music, sport, fashion, traditional artisanal crafts or digital content production and distribution on smart phones. And most of those activities, by their nature, are dependent on the creative, social, emotional and manual skills that are beyond the capacity of artificial intelligence and likely to remain so for some decades to come. These jobs may look vulnerable, and in an obvious sense they are, but they are also strangely 'future-proofed' in a way that is untrue of an increasing number of apparently secure jobs in logistics, retail, finance, health and the law – to name but a few. If we cross-reference that with the fact that the creative industries are generating jobs faster than almost any other sector in every region of the world – South as well as North - then we begin to square the circle between informal community, informal economy and the creative energy that feeds and is fed by culture, heritage and aspiration. That same UN report concluded that the most effective policy interventions in poorer urban communities were those that started by "looking at the community's assets and capabilities, not its needs".

Those assets are human capital or, if you prefer, social and cultural capital that provide a basis for addressing issues of rights, dignity, identity and access as well as livelihood. The economic driver is entrepreneurship from within the community rather than job creation from outside. The challenge

for public policy is that it's more about 'how' than 'what'. A phrase that came up in one of our Global Solutions dialogues was "Process affects outcome" and the truth of that observation is seen both in the failure of many grand public regeneration projects for urban communities and the success of much spontaneous community response to COVID.

It's no accident that several hundred cities around the world now like to style themselves as 'creative', by which is meant not just a focus on their cultural institutions and creative industries, though they may be part of the story, but a creative and inclusive approach to developing and implementing policies – engaging citizens in a way that promotes good planning and growth but also aims to address social equity, emotional well-being, environmental sustainability, civic identity and pride.

During the pandemic there has been a lot of talk about new ways of managing the global economy in the future – a 'new normal'. Here are two suggestions for how we might begin to shape a new normal that works better than the old one.

The first would be to regard the informal economy with more respect, looking at its "assets and capabilities" rather than its shortcomings. While many workers, especially women, may find themselves in the informal sector because of circumstances beyond their control, there are many for whom it works – not because they want to evade tax and regulation but because it allows a flexibility and a

measure of control that suits them. In the same way that governments find it difficult to engage with the creative industries because they are so dominated by informal partnerships of lone entrepreneurs and micro businesses, the informal economy appears messy and inconsequential to many planners, politicians and government administrators who long for the relative simplicity of the 20th century industrial economy – big units of production, stable company structures and an easy-to-trace flow of goods and services. The 21st century economy seems to be less and less like that. The little guys are getting on with surviving and it's the very big guys – the platform operators and their spin-offs - who are the ones evading tax and regulation.

A second suggestion relates to the fact that 2021 is designated by the UN as the year of the creative economy's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals. But there's an anomaly at the heart of this excellent idea – the contribution of the creative economy is as much cultural as economic, yet access to cultural activity and freedom of creative expression are not specifically included in the SDGs at all. There are oblique references to the role of culture in education, mental health and emotional wellbeing but why not tell it like it is: - participation in culture is the glue that holds any society and every community together – without it there is no community and without community there can be no real sustainability, given the impact we humans now collectively have on our planet.

A good place to start building a 'new normal' would be a recognition that there is no infrastructure more fundamental than culture, no form of capital investment more productive than investment in human capital and no better place to start policy planning than by looking at a community's assets and capabilities rather than its needs.

"A good place to start building a 'new normal' would be a recognition that there is no infrastructure more fundamental than culture, no form of capital investment more productive than investment in human capital and no better place to start policy planning than by looking at a community's assets and capabilities rather than its needs."

– John NEWBIGIN, Creative economy to the mayor of London

Image Source: 'Comedies' intersecting on the Piazza Dante in Naples, Italy.
Image by Nicolas J.A. Buchoud, all rights reserved ©.

Bart ORR
PhD candidate
in Public and Urban Policy
The New School
New York, United States

Infrastructure, From Product to Process: For an expansive recovery, use an expansive definition of infrastructure

The release of President Biden's infrastructure plan to bolster the United States' economic recovery from the COVID pandemic set off a flurry of controversy and partisan debate—what constitutes infrastructure? The inclusion of social spending, most notably childcare, challenged the idea that the term infrastructure applied exclusively to construction projects like roads, bridges, and railways. More broadly, the debate has called into question whether the purpose of infrastructure spending is solely economic growth. Viewing recovery spending as a tradeoff between economic growth and improving social equity is not only misguided but may lead to another missed opportunity for a far-reaching, just recovery. Instead, policy makers should adopt a broader idea of infrastructure that, first, recognizes the contributions of social infrastructure to economic growth, and second, views infrastructure not solely as products but as ongoing processes.

This debate around what is and is not infrastructure is hardly new, but actually one that's been happening since the term's first appearance in the English language just over a century ago when it referred to the construction work conducted prior to laying railway tracks—not even the tracks themselves, which were superstructure. By the 1950s the term was entering wider use and already generating disputes about its meaning, or lack thereof, with the New York Times publishing articles on the new government jargon, or "gobbledygook", and the United States secretary of state referring to the term's appearance as "baffling."[1]

However, to point to this lack of consistent historical meaning of infrastructure is not to imply that the term isn't useful, as early critics argued, but the opposite. The term's malleability has allowed it to evolve to meet the needs of people and government at the time, and it should continue to do so. At this current juncture, that means recognizing the ways COVID-19 has exposed how social infrastructures have impacted various groups' ability to both contribute to, and benefit from, the economy. Policymakers have tended to view infrastructure as the physical structures that enable commerce—utilities, public works, transportation, etc.[2] What we've seen during COVID-19 though is that women in the workforce were impacted disproportionately than men, often as a result of the increased burden of unpaid care, such as childcare. This is a social issue, but also an economic one—it's estimated that COVID's impacts on women's employment will lower global GDP by $1 trillion by 2030,

whereas taking action and improving gender equity could boost GDP by $13 trillion.[3] The pandemic has illustrated how human services like childcare are not a luxury but a vital infrastructure, and the economy requires these services to function just as much as it relies on roads, rails and broadband.

Over the past decade, there's been a rapid evolution in infrastructure policy to include nature-based or "green" infrastructure, like parks and conservation areas, as a response not only to the risks of climate change but also a recognition of the wider benefits they provide, including economic ones. Yet, policymakers have often been slower and more reluctant to expand infrastructure to include, or give priority to, more of the human elements that contribute to the economy. This is despite growing evidence to the contrary. For example, a 2020 working paper from the United States Federal Reserve found that increasing college tuition grants for low-income students by 1 percent of a city's income raises income by 2.4 percent over the next two years, with the multiplier effect being higher during times of recession.[4]

Even for traditional built infrastructure spending, there's an opportunity to maximize social benefits by thinking of infrastructure not as a product, but a process. From early planning, design, and procurement to later ongoing maintenance, the human components of built infrastructure offer ways to target groups to increase equity and spread

economic benefits. In what others have referred to as "infrastructures for distribution," infrastructure decisions should focus not just on growth, but how the benefits of that growth can meet those most in need.[5]

One example of using the process of infrastructure, rather than just the end product, as an opportunity to improve equity as well as bolster long-term economic prospects is Solar Libre in Puerto Rico. Solar Libre is an initiative founded in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria to install community solar micro-grids across the island. These solar installations reduce energy costs, lower carbon emissions, and provide a lifeline during times of disaster when the larger grid fails. However, Solar Libre also provides intense apprenticeships where students complete training and become NABCEP certified professional installers in less than one year. Solar Libre's "brigades" of experts and trainees have now completed installations at one hundred and eighty sites across the island. Thus far, over eighty percent of the graduates have been women, whereas within the solar energy industry women account for only around thirty-two percent of the labor force. By incorporating job training into the process of installing solar energy systems, Solar Libre provides economic opportunities, builds the long-term capacity of the island through creating local technical experts, and improves gender equity in the workforce.

Considering growing evidence of a "K-shaped" economic recovery from COVID-19, where the wealthiest household

have seen their assets grow while the poorest continue to struggle, there are valuable lessons from the response to the 2008 global recession. While infrastructure was a central part of the recovery package in the United States, spending failed to target the underserved, leading to a situation where low-income and black households saw their wealth decimated by the recession and never fully recover, even a decade later. Likewise, few countries included green investments as a significant part of their recovery spending in 2008 [6], a trend that analysts are already seeing in COVID-19 recovery proposals [7].

The magnitude of COVID-19's economic impact has been broad, with cascading shocks across sectors. The interdependencies exposed by COVID-19 should be responded to with a view of infrastructure that recognizes and fully supports the human elements that underpin built infrastructure, especially those who have historically been underserved and left behind. Already, Biden's infrastructure package has been drastically pared down both in size and scope as part of bipartisan negotiations. The bipartisan plan largely constitutes funding for roads, bridges, and broadband. The social elements are not abandoned but deferred to a later bill. As the United States is the lead partner in the G7 Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative for infrastructure investment in low- and middle-income countries, the result of the debate may have far reaching repercussions. For a broad economic recovery that benefits everyone, policymakers cannot afford to limit infrastruc-

ture packages to roads and bridges. Instead, an expansive understanding of infrastructure that recognizes interdependencies and equity throughout the process, not just the end product, can make this recovery an opportunity to make the economy stronger, more robust, and resilient.

1.   Carse, Ashley (2017) "Keyword: Infrastructure: How a humble French engineering term shaped the modern world." In Infrastructures and Social Complexity: A companion. Eds. Penny Harvey, Casper Bruun Jensen, and Atsuro Morita.

2.   See for example World Bank (1994). World Development Report 1994: Infrastructure for Development. New York: Oxford University Press.

3.   https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/covid-19-and-gender-equality-countering-the-regressive-effects

4.   De Ridder, M., Hannon, S., and Pfajfar, D. (2020). "The Multiplier Effect of Education Expenditure." Finance and Economics Discussion Series, Divisions of Research & Statistics and Monetary Affairs, Federal Reserve Board. Washington, D.C.

5.   See Cohen (2020)

6.   Barbier (2010)

7.   Vivid Economics (2020)

"Over the past decade, there's been a rapid evolution in infrastructure policy to include nature-based or 'green' infrastructure, like parks and conservation areas. Yet, policymakers have often been slower and more reluctant to expand infrastructure to include, or give priority to, more of the human elements that contribute to the economy."

– Bart ORR, PhD candidate in Public and Urban Policy, The New School, New York

Image Source: Delivery of solar panels to remote areas in May 2019. Image by the courtesy of Solar Libre Porto Rico, https://www.facebook.com/solarlibrecmrc/photos/1532318613571380 Note: We apologize for the low image quality.

authors

Qaisar ABBAS
Chief Research,
Research Division,
Central Asia Regional Economic
Cooperation (CAREC) Institute

Iskandar ABDULLAEV
Deputy Director 2,
Central Asia Regional Economic
Cooperation (CAREC) Institute

Aziza AKHMOUCH
Head of Division, Cities, Urban
Policies and Sustainable
Development,
Organization for Economic
Cooperation and Development
(OECD), Paris, France

Gautaum BHAN
Senior Lead, Academic and
Research, Indian Institute for Human
Settlements (IIHS),
Bangalore, India

Luca BIZZARRI
Head of Unit, Culture Department
at Autonomous Province of Bolzano,
Italy

Daniel BRIDGE
Program Director, Royal Docks,
London, the United Kingdom

Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD
Fellow of the Global Solutions
Initiative, co-chair of T20 Italy
Infrastructure Investment and
Financing taskforce; President at
Grand Paris Alliance for Sustainable
Investments, Paris, France

Milindo CHAKRABARTI
Visiting Fellow, RIS, New Delhi, and
Professor, O.P. Jindal School of
Government and Public Policy,
O.P. Jindal Global University,
Sonipat, India
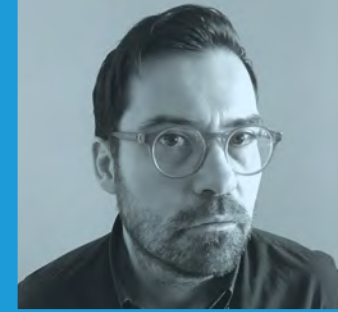
Gunnar HARTMANN
Architect, urban researcher,
publisher, Co-founder of
New Dialogues,
Berlin, Germany

Nella Sri HENDRIYETTY
Former deputy director for the G20
at the Fiscal Policy Agency, Ministry
of Finance, Indonesia, Senior Econo-
mist, Capacity Building and Training,
Asian Development Bank Institute
(ADBI), Tokyo, Japan

Onur ERYUCE
Counsellor to the Mayor
Izmir Metropolitan Municipality
Turkey

Luisa FENIZOLA
Associate at Casa Fluminense,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Barış KARCI
Deputy Secretary General
Izmir Metropolitan Municipality
Turkey

Holger KUHLE
Policy Advisor, Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
(GIZ), Strategic Knowledge
Partnerships, cooperation with the
Global Solutions Initiative,
Berlin, Germany

Amitabh KUNDU
Distinguished Fellow, Research and
Information Systems for Developing
Countries (RIS), former Professor
and Dean of the School of Social
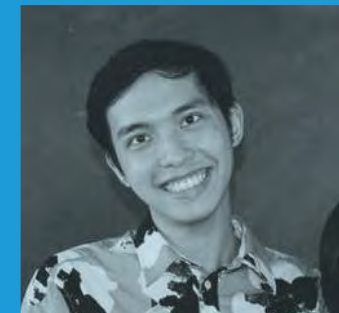Sciences, the Jawaharlal Nehru Uni-
versity, New Delhi, India

Riatu MARIATUL QIBTHIYYAH
Director, Institute for Economic and
Social research, faculty of Economics
and Business, University of Indonesia
(LPEM-UI),
Jakarta, Indonesia

Vitor MIHESSEN
Coordinator at Casa Fluminense,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

John NEWBIGIN
Ambassador for the Creative
Economy to the Mayor of London,
former chairman of Creative
England, Founder, International
Advisory Council for Creative
Industries Policy & Evidence Centre
(PEC), the United Kingdom

Thai NGUYEN
PhD Researcher in Environment and
Spatial Planning, University of Gron-
ingen, the Netherlands, Young Global
Changer of the Global Solutions
Initiative

Bart ORR
PhD candidate
in Public and Urban Policy
The New School
New York, United States

Piero PELIZARRO
Chief resilience officer, Municipality
of Milan, Italy

Teuku RIEFKY
Researcher, Institute for Economic
and Social research, faculty of Eco-
nomics and Business, University
of Indonesia (LPEM-UI), Jakarta,
Indonesia

Ghulam SAMAD
Senior Research Specialist,
Research Division,
CAREC Institute

Warren SMIT
Manager of research, African Center
for Cities (ACC),
Cape Town, South Africa

credits

"Experts are used to converting people on the ground into numbers to feed them into their economic equations. Now, they must listen to the people in the many voices which the people speak."

– Arun MAIRA, Help Age International, India

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons. June 19, 2020. Black Lives Matter - Sit In - Occupy Bay Street - College Street - Toronto Police Headquarters, Toronto, Canada. Image by Jason Hargrove. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Black_Lives_Matter_-_Sit_In_-_Occupy_Bay_Street_-_College_Street_-_Toronto_Police_Headquarters_-_June_19,_2020_-_Creative_Commons_(50025876838).jpg

Large-scale protest demonstrations against COVID-19 restrictions in Berlin.

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons. August 29, 2020. "Querdenken" against Corona restrictions at Friedrichstrasse in Berlin, Germany.
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:29.08.2020_Berlin-Friedrichstrasse.JPG

partners

INTERSECTING is produced in partnership with the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), the Institute for Economic and Social Research at the University of Indonesia (LPEM FEB UI), the Centre for Sustainability at O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU), and the Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development Division at OECD.

INTERSECTING is made possible with the support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

"From 1929 to 1932, the Great Depression was not only economic. It triggered regime changes in countries all over the globe. In colonial Africa, the authority of traditional chiefs came apart with the arrival of colonial administration, before revealing new arenas of conflict and creating new political opportunities."
– From Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart, William Heinemann ed., London, 1958

Image Source: Plenary round table at the first edition of the Global Solutions Summit in Berlin, during the G20 Germany in 2017. Photo: Tobias Koch for the GSI.