Produced by: **Professor Duncan Shaw, Róisín Jordan, and Alan Boyd, The University of Manchester, UK**
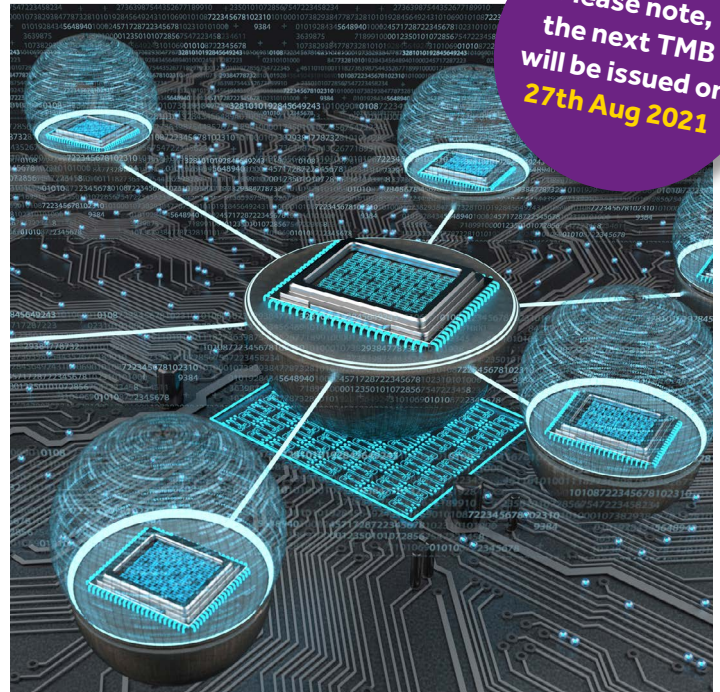
The Manchester Briefing COVID-19

International lessons for local and national government recovery and renewal

Please note, the next TMB will be issued on 27th Aug 2021

What is 'The Manchester Briefing on COVID-19'?

The Manchester Briefing on COVID-19 is aimed at those who plan and implement recovery from COVID-19, including government emergency planners and resilience officers.

We bring together international lessons and examples which may prompt your thinking on the recovery from COVID-19, as well as other information from a range of sources and a focus on one key topic. The lessons are taken from websites (e.g. UN, WHO), documents (e.g. from researchers and governments), webinars (e.g. those facilitated by WEF, GCRN), and other things we find.

We aim to report what others have done without making any judgement on the effectiveness of the approaches or recommending any specific approach.

This week we have provided information on our webinar series and three briefings:

Click here to explore the new database

Contribute your knowledge to the briefing (via a 30-minute interview) by contacting duncan.shaw-2@manchester.ac.uk

We also produce a blog series which you can access here along with other news about our team and our work.

Join the conversation
#RecoveryRenewal #Covid19Recovery

Previous briefings. If this is the first briefing you have received and you'd like to access more, they can be found here.

>>>>>>>> Please register at ambs.ac.uk/covidrecovery to receive future briefings <<<<<<<<

Recovery, Renewal, Resilience:
The Manchester Webinar Series

Over the coming months, our team, in collaboration with partners, will be running a series of webinars that will explore recovery and renewal from COVID-19. The webinars will mark key dates, discuss the themes emerging and developing through our project and report on key findings, good practice and global learning. We will sometimes also share webinars external to our project that we think might be of interest. Register for our upcoming and watch our most recent webinars:

Upcoming Webinars

05/08/2021, 10:30am BST: Making Cities Resilient 2030 - UNDRR - CBI

This webinar, 'The Power of Resilience: Developing Local Sustainable Finance', will examine how the challenges and opportunities for cities to become greener are impacted by the pandemic, and how resilience can set the tone and pace of developing sustainable finance.

Register: https://tinyurl.com/29varu7r

12/08/2021, 2pm BST: Private Sector Engagement in Urban Resilience

This webinar is the 14th session of the 2021 Cities on the Frontline series, jointly organized by Resilient Cities Network & the World Bank.

Register: https://tinyurl.com/chtts775

03/09/2021, 1pm BST: Continuity & Resilience Series: Human Aspects of Resilience

In this, the third in our three-part series of webinars co-produced with the British Standards Institute (BSI), we examine the human aspects of resilience.

Register: https://tinyurl.com/4enx9685

Past webinars

29/07/2021: Emergency Planning Society

'Food for thoughts - Lunchtime Learning Sessions' explores how a narrative approach can be used to strengthen community resilience and improve relationships across communities and with the agencies that support them.

Watch: https://tinyurl.com/c97kek56

Briefing A:
Tools to support Recovery and Renewal

This week's briefing launches our searchable database of international lessons on Recovery and Renewal, and we also take the opportunity to share some brief details our activities and progress so far in the Recovery, Renewal, Resilience (RRR) project.

The database has been designed to create an easy-to-use searchable function for all of the 575 individual lessons that we have shared through *The Manchester Briefing on COVID-19: International lessons on Recovery and Renewal*. We hope that you find the database helpful when navigating lessons produced through The Manchester Briefing[1].

## Recovery, Renewal, Resilience project

The following infographic captures the range of activities within our project:

Developing a recovery framework

Our project team takes a systems approach to support resilience partners as they design strategies for recovery and renewal from COVID-19 that will build resilience.

1 new ISO 22393 for recovery from COVID-19

1,200+ hours of meetings with government response, recovery and renewal groups

55+ webinars and workshops organised

Expert insights from governments, the UN, WHO, WEF, The World Bank and more

17 academics from a wide range of disciplines

120+ interviews with a global community of experts

RECOVERY RENEWAL RESILIENCE

12 research projects

Recovery planning · Renewal initiatives · Community resilience · Entrepreneurial business · Disaster reparations · Minorities refugees · Resilience capability · Tourism heritage · Resilient healthcare · Partnership working · Vulnerable people · Volunteers

The Manchester Briefing

Our project team produces 'The Manchester Briefing on COVID-19', a fortnightly document that brings together international lessons inspiring thinking on recovery and renewal from COVID-19.

Database of lessons on recovery and renewal

480+ international lessons on recovery and renewal from…

95+ countries worldwide

39 issues each including 4 briefings

42 case studies

40 impactful 'think pieces'

RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK

CANADA · USA · CHILE · SCOTLAND · ENGLAND · PALESTINE

16 local resilience partners

RRR July 2021

MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester
Alliance Manchester Business School

UKRI
Economic and Social Research Council

hcri

ambs.ac.uk/covidrecovery

54,000+ global audience from local governments

4,000+ cities

20+ global distribution partners

The Manchester Briefing

RRR project progress so far and key updates:

Launch of The Manchester Briefing on COVID-19: Database of international lessons for Recovery and Renewal which can be found at https://recoverydatabase.manchester.ac.uk/
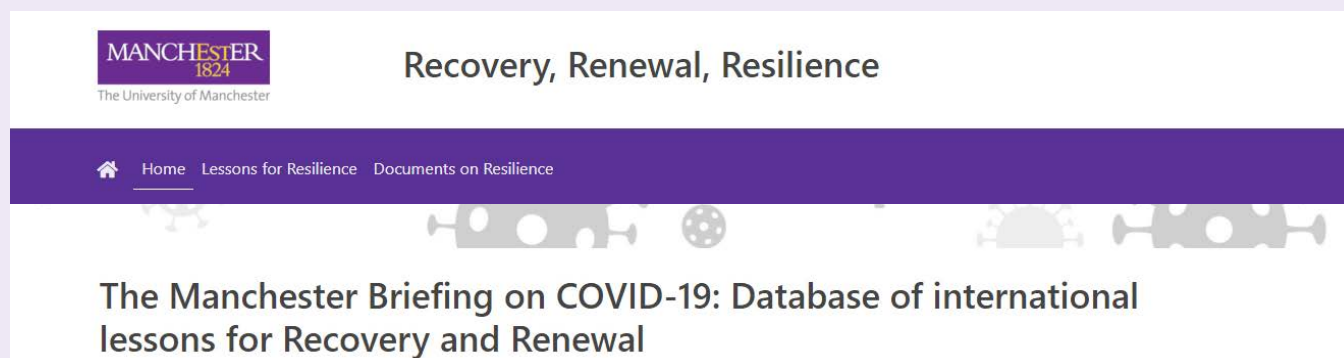
The Manchester Briefing searchable database is comprised of:

- Lessons for Resilience which are organised according to the six core Recovery and Renewal themes of: Communities; Economic; Infrastructure; Environment; Health; and Governance
- A total of 575 lessons, think pieces and case studies from 40 briefings. This will continue to grow as we provide ongoing international lessons on Recovery and Renewal
- A *free text search* function which enables you to enter your own keywords or sector/groups to find lessons on the topics that interest you
- A *filter* function which enables you to search lessons using the six Recovery and Renewal themes, associated keywords and country
- Documents on Resilience which details our project outputs such as written evidence, articles and publications that have been produced through the RRR project

In addition to the database we a couple of updates include:

- We recently achieved a project goal of writing the international standard '**ISO/TS 22393 Guidelines for planning Recovery and Renewal**'. ISO/TS 22393 provides a framework for how to assess the impacts of COVID-19 on communities, and address these through transactional recovery activities and transformational renewal initiatives. TMB Issue 39 describes the background to our international standard and offers an insight to the content of the guideline. The British Standards Institute[2] (BSi) will make the guideline freely available and this is scheduled to be available on 31st August 2021

- Our team, in collaboration with partners, have organised 55+ webinars and workshops over the last 16 months to support those who are planning response, recovery and renewal. These free webinars mark key dates, discuss the themes emerging and developing through our project and report on key findings. Our next webinar (in association with the British Standards Institute) in our Continuity & Resilience Series on September 3rd 2021 will examine the human aspects of resilience. You can register here. We provide links to the recordings of a few of our recent webinars below:

  o Continuity & Resilience Series: Building the resilience of essential services post-Covid (July 2021) examines the contribution of standards to resilience planning, business continuity, and city resilience to recovering from COVID-19
  o A Collective Memory: A webinar examining post pandemic commemoration (June 2021) discusses how we might collectively remember the COVID-19 pandemic, exploring lessons from history on building resilience through coproduced commemoration
  o Continuity & Resilience Series: Looking beyond COVID-19 (June 2021) examines the inter-dependencies between business continuity and resilience planning and looks at how we will move beyond the responses to the pandemic
  o COVID-19: Resilience Planning & Emergency Management (May 2021) concentrates on perspectives of strengthening resilience planning and the implications for the emergency management profession moving forward
  o Recovering from COVID-19 (April 2021) explores how academic research can have a real world impact through the application of tools, theories and social science
  o Communities - the new local resilience capability (April 2021) asks whether community resilience can be a new local and national resilience capability and discusses different international models of community action
  o Recovery and renewal from COVID-19: A year of The Manchester Briefing (March 2021) collates the key lessons and themes that have emerged from around the world during the pandemic
  o One year of COVID-19: Delivering a Green and Just Recovery (March 2021) reflects on the lessons learned since the pandemic struck, jointly organised with Resilient Cities Network and the World Bank

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2 https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/

- Development during the research process has progressed our Framework for Recovery and Renewal, first shared in [TMB Issue 5](#), 8th May 2020. The updated framework detailed below reflects the Recovery and Renewal themes and sub-categories which have emerged from our extensive consultation across the sector, especially with those who have been planning response activities from 23 countries and 5 continents:

Communities	Economic	Infrastructure
- Vulnerable people - Volunteers - Community participation - Public protection - Emergency housing (incl homelessness) - Welfare (incl social care) - Education and skills - Cultural	- Economic strategy (national & local) - Business regeneration/ rejuvenation - Public sector support mechanisms - Voluntary, community and social enterprise sector - Personal finance - Innovation - Labour and workforce	- Infrastructure providers - Infrastructure customers - Energy (utilities) - Telecommunications (incl digital) - Urban & rural infrastructure - Transport - Waste management - Supply chain & logistics
Environment	**Health**	**Governance**
- Spatial planning (incl public spaces) - Environmental health - Living sustainably - Resilience to climate change	- Healthcare - Public health and wellbeing (incl psycho-social supports) - Excess death management - Connectivity between health and the wider system	- Legislation, policy, guidance - Information & data - Resourcing & financial frameworks - Partnerships & coordination (national, subnational, local) - Strategic communications - Governance of delivering Recovery and Renewal

The framework can be used to:

o Capture and assess the wide-ranging impacts of COVID-19, and consider the dimensions that Recovery and Renewal may need to address

o Develop short-term transactional Recovery activities to reinstate operations, assure preparedness for future events and begin to identify the significant consequences caused by COVID-19

o Develop long-term transformational Renewal initiatives to address inequalities and build resilience to future emergencies, those initiatives which require broad strategic partnerships

- We continue to work with our core partners in England, Scotland, Canada, Palestine, Chile and the US to implement ISO/TS 22393. For example:

o In Canada, we are supporting work on their Impacts and Needs Assessment (INA), lessons learned and contributing ISO/TS 22393 to developing a city framework for recovering in the aftermath of emergencies

o In Chile, we are establishing their first Recovery Coordination Group (RCG) and conducting the analysis needed to prepare for the development of a Recovery Plan

o In Palestine, we have established their first RCG in Ramallah City and are conducting their INA and identification of lessons learned

o In England, we are working regularly with a range of RCGs who have invited us to contribute to their thinking. We have assisted 10+ RCGs on their Recovery and Renewal to COVID-19 using the principles of ISO/TS 22393

o In Scotland, we are understanding how hyper-local community groups are self-organising for recovery and thinking about their future in supporting community resilience

- We have enhanced project data collection and will conduct 3 phases of interviews to gather expert insights on Recovery and Renewal from across the world. We have conducted 2 phases so far and will complete the third in November 2021. So far, our observations have been developed from over 120 formal interviews with experts in local government, emergency planning, risk and resilience on response, recovery and renewal to COVID-19 since April 2020

- Our project was recognised recently by UNDRR[3] (United National Office for Disaster Risk Reduction), joining the global Sendai Framework Voluntary Commitments initiative for disaster risk reduction. You can view our commitment [here](#)

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3 https://www.undrr.org/

A look forward on the Recovery, Renewal, Resilience project

Over the coming months we will:

- Look to scope a new university system to coordinate the deployment of student volunteers to support people and places that have been affected by major emergencies. Students and staff from The University of Manchester have provided substantial and ongoing support to its local communities during COVID-19. This initiative aims to think through how this institutional response can be formalised by working with partners to build a new capability to support local communities in times of disruptive events

- Be developing a new *National Consortium for Societal Resilience* with Thames Valley LRF which will unite a range of interested parties around the important topic of societal resilience. The Integrated Review and the launch of the call for evidence of the National Resilience Strategy have put a renewed focus on whole-of-society resilience. The new *National Consortium for Societal Resilience* will seek to provide support to local government as they focus on a topic that has been so critical to COVID-19

- Continue to work on a range of COVID-19 research topics within three impact areas of: Communities; Systems; Recovery, Renewal, Resilience Frameworks. The research projects that our team are working on are grouped according to their relevance to the aforementioned impact areas. We describe the range of projects we are currently working on in a two part briefing: TMB Issue 35 and Issue 36

- Join the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction within one of their Organizing Teams for Thematic Session 10 entitled 'Are we prepared? Resilient recovery of priority economic sectors in the face of the climate emergency' (May 2022). The Organizing Teams will help to frame the 2022 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction sessions which are focused on inclusive sustainable development in the aftermath of COVID-19

- Progress with the Manchester Webinar Series and participate in a number of conferences, e.g. the National Cert conference, the International Humanitarian Studies Conference and the International Federation of Operational Research Societies conference

And just to reiterate …

Above all, this briefing launches the searchable database so please click to search for lessons that have been transformational across the world and may inspire you.

To get involved or to find out more about our activities please get in touch at RecoveryProject@manchester.ac.uk

Briefing B:

Lessons you may find helpful from across the world

We provide the lessons under six categories, with sub-categories for ease of reference. We have selected lessons that are of specific interest to the process of recovery and renewal although many also relate to the response phase, and the likely overlap between response, recovery, and renewal.

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Economic

Impact on:
Voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE)

UK:
https://tinyurl.com/mvy3fwhp
https://tinyurl.com/5z82wj4z

Actions

Consider the resources needed to recover and build resilience in the VCS sector. Mobilising Volunteers Effectively (MoVE) project, led by Universities of Sheffield, Hull and Leeds, aims to understand the ways in which communities have mobilised in response to COVID. The project has released a number of reports which set out the findings from the first phase of the project. The 'Resilience of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) across Yorkshire and the Humber' (May 2021) report highlights the challenges created for VCS organisations due to a "rise in demand, diminished donations and restricted opportunities to trade and raise funds". The emergence of multi-agency partnership working (e.g. between local governments, VCS organisations, mutual aid/ informal community groups and businesses) has supported local response capabilities throughout the pandemic, highlighting a need for a more strategic approach to strengthen the partnerships, relationships and capabilities of communities to collectively prepare for future shocks and build resilience. The findings are informed by 407 VCS organisations responses to a 'Resilience Survey'. Consider the key recommendations set out in this report:

- Ensure volunteers and those involved in VCS organisations are included in community **mental health and wellbeing support** in the aftermath of the pandemic
- Support small local VCS organisations, who may lack sufficient infrastructure to secure grant funding, with guidance on grant application. This could also be supported by simplifying the grant application process
- The provision of practical support (e.g. fundraising support) and increasing volunteer **recruitment, retention and training support**, e.g. through partnerships, for example:
  o Sandwell council partner with local VCS organisations to provide free e-learning to volunteers covering topics such as "child protection, fire safety, information sharing" and more
  o A community-run Red Cross Cardiac First Response volunteer group in Ireland, partner with the local fire brigade and other local authority organisations to provide emergency response training to volunteers and support activities to raise vital funds for ambulances and medical equipment
- **Targeted financial support** through government subsidy for VCS organisations who are providing services for "children and younger people" as they were found to be "least financially viable over time". The report recommends that the "art, culture and heritage and community development" VCS organisations should then be prioritised and targeted for financial support

TMB Issue 8 describes how recovery and renewal requires broader strategic partnership working nationally, regionally and locally. The relationships that have been developed through the pandemic can underpin recovery and renewal initiatives, enabling national and local action through multi-departmental and cross-organisational working. Key to these partnerships is recognising that partners have power and place-based relationships that will be crucial to the success of recovery and renewal activities.

Infrastructure	Actions

Impact on:
Transport

UK:
https://tinyurl.com/3hu8bxs9
https://tinyurl.com/424dusby

Consider the priorities of local governments for public transport recovery and renewal. Use of public transport can "reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality and public health". The Local Government Association (LGA) UK note that COVID-19 has exacerbated pre-existing challenges in the decline of the bus industry and recommend that recovery should employ "council's and central government's funding, infrastructure and traffic powers to work in partnership with public transport providers". A study by the LGA aimed to understand local authority (LA) recovery priorities for local transport provision, what can accelerate these priorities, what challenges have prevented these priorities from being successfully implemented previously and what reforms are required for recovery and renewal. Consider the themes for recovery identified by local councils in this study:

'Deliver Local Authority responsibilities effectively'

- Increase the capabilities of LAs to provide school transport, "socially necessary bus services" and to account for the needs of communities e.g. elderly populations:
  - **Increase LAs agency on how local funds are spent** to improve their ability to address their responsibilities and context specific challenges posed by some operating environments (e.g. rural areas)

'Make bus services more accessible for commuters'

- **Affordable, practical and convenient services** are viewed as a new way to "connect new communities, reduce car dependency and congestions, lower carbon emission and fight climate change, improve air quality and health, and tackle social inequalities". Examples of best practice include:
  - More efficient services which reduce travel times and operating costs, renewed branding and increased marketing
  - Integrate service networks with other networks such as rail/tram/cycle lanes, and integrate tickets and payment to improve ease of travel across various networks

'New Approaches to Transport Delivery'

- New challenges caused by the pandemic, pre-existing problems and specific contextual issues (E.g. rural area networks) require innovative solutions, for example:
  - "Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)" can support **improvements to connect rural and isolated networks and communities**, create "flexibility for school transport and be used as model for community led transport schemes" (See Rural and Demand-Led Transport)
  - "Total Transport and Mobility as a Service (MaaS)" can support integration of transport network modes, tickets and payments and sectoral transport (e.g. health, education, tourism)

'Contribute to tackling climate change'

- Address negative impacts of transport on the environment by **improving bus fleets** - replacing older vehicles with low and zero emission vehicles e.g. Coventry All Electric Bus

These themes in this report relate to six case study areas in the UK, with feedback sessions with wider local authorities suggesting that these themes are shared, but their scale and implementation may vary depending on the local context.

Environment	Actions
Impact on: *Environmental health* Global: https://tinyurl.com/3maach9f	**Consider global funding initiatives for a 'Green Recovery'.** TMB Issue 37 detailed some investment initiatives adopted in France, Sweden, Finland and Chile to stimulate a green recovery. This lesson brings together further examples of how countries are implementing green recovery and renewal plans which aim to cut emissions in the aftermath of COVID-19. Consider: • Italy has deployed a stimulus support package **targeting the agricultural sector**, designing "integrated projects" which include green community initiatives and awareness campaigns around environmental challenges • Ireland committed to "raising the **energy rating of 500,000 homes** by 2030" in 2020. A new green recovery stimulus package includes a "retrofit skills training initiative" and additional funding targeted at the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland to expand the initiative. This is expected to create an additional 3,200 "quality, sustainable jobs" • Spain has included funding for "housing renovation and urban regeneration" which aims to improve the **"energy performance of buildings"**, as part of their Recovery and Resilience plan, which has been submitted to the EU Commission • South Korea has designed an initiative "green transformation of living infrastructure" which aims to s**timulate employment growth and transform "state-run facilities** (e.g. community health clinics, public housing, childcare facilities) to zero-emissions". The plan is to replace "fossil-fuel based utility systems with efficient, green systems, and implement 100 new IT-based systems to help resolve environmental issues, including low-carbon vehicle manufacturing and air quality improvement"

Health

Impact on:
Health and wellbeing

Japan; USA; UK:
https://tinyurl.com/3hf22d4w

Actions

Consider the lessons for post pandemic commemoration to support recovery. COVID-19's prolonged nature, and the intensity of measures taken to respond to it, have brought major disruptions with lasting consequences. Our relationship to mortality and death has been redefined, not least by disruption to traditional rituals that enable societies to cope with and overcome major trauma. A recent webinar, organised as part of the Manchester Webinar Series, considered how we might collectively remember the COVID-19 pandemic. Our speakers reviewed lessons from the past on building resilience through coproduced commemoration and discussed key considerations for policy makers and communities in planning to recognise and remember the huge losses caused by COVID-19. Consider the key lessons offered by our speakers:

- There is **no one way to remember**. Unlike most disasters, each individual's experience of COVID-19 is a personal one and commemoration activities will require careful consideration around ways to bring people together to collectively to remember while also recognising the uniqueness of everyone's experience
- The **co-production of activities** can provide a way to ensure commemoration is inclusive of all of those who would like to be involved, to create a collaborative and bottom-up as well as top-down delivery of remembrance, and enable communities to take ownership of their remembrance
- Consideration for who will lead and be involved in these conversation will be really important, to mediate, and to support communities to find ways to compromise on differing views and perspectives on commemoration
- The **timing of commemoration** is a challenge, considering that COVID-19 is now a long-term chronic problem and we are not at the end of the disaster. The pandemic has seen commemoration since the beginning, demonstrating how communities can begin to create spaces of remembrance even while the crisis persists. Some examples of these commemoration activities can be found in TMB Issue 34 and Issue 29
- **Memorials can be political**, and grand gestures such as monuments can fade, or be contested. This reinforces the need for co-produced commemoration, enabling the voices of those who will benefit most from commemoration activities to be heard and actively participate
- **Education is a good form of remembering**, through storytellers or creating spaces (online or in local newspapers) where people can share their individual experiences of the pandemic. Recording those memories now will enable authentic materials to support education in years to come
- Think about **how those who have lower agency in communities will remember** (e.g. children who have lost grandparents). Commemoration could be done by creating spaces in schools/community youth groups for teachers/youth volunteers to support children

Health	Actions
Impact on: *Connectivity between health and the wider system; Health systems* Papua New Guinea: https://tinyurl.com/pptbddem Pakistan: https://tinyurl.com/4uexxppk	**Consider new public-private partnerships to protect health systems during crisis.** Throughout the pandemic, many health systems across the world have come within days of being overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients, and others have been unable to prevent their systems from being overwhelmed. Pakistan have adopted "health stewardship" as an approach to ensure public health is a "joint function of national and provincial governments, where service delivery relies on mixed health systems". The response in Singh district, which has the highest rate of COVID-19 cases in Pakistan, was underpinned by public-private partnerships with local government. This provides insights into how public-private engagement can be accelerated during the crisis and how "existing policy windows can be used for longer-term planning for pandemics and Universal Health Coverage". Consider that: • **Stewarding partnerships enabled rapid acceleration** of testing through private laboratories, supported surge capacity to be met in local private hospitals and increased "critical care training of public sector hospitals" through partnerships with private hospitals • "Health stewardship" can **enable advisory relationships with the private sector** to create a joint operational response and strategic communications during crisis • Procurement (e.g. of PPE) and **supply chain management can be enhanced** through "digitalised data-sharing of cases and hospital capacity across private and public providers" • Stewardship relationships may be transactional (e.g. limited to purchasing arrangements) but can also include "wide-ranging formal agreements for co-production", providing an **opportunity to reform public and private health partnerships** • Devolved operations have proven to offer a flexible and effective response where there is rapid "data sharing for national-provincial coordination, and well-informed local governments who can mobilize inclusive and co-produced responses"

Governance	Actions

Impact on:
Planning for recovery/ Implementing recovery

Global:
https://tinyurl.com/yu57pvb7

Consider the principles of urban economic resilience. The UN-HABITAT City Resilience Global Programme (CRGP) define urban resilience as the "measurable ability of any urban system, with its inhabitants, to maintain continuity through all shocks and stresses, while positively adapting and transforming towards sustainability". This gives rise to the following 'Urban Resilience Principles' to consider:

'Dynamic nature of urban resilience'

- Recognise that **resilience is a fluid condition** and requires that systems "evolve, transform and adapt to current and future conditions". Resilience building activities require **"context-specific" and adaptable plans** and activities which account for the complex and "dynamic nature of risk and resilience"

'Systemic approach to cities'

- Acknowledge that urban areas consist of "**interconnected systems** through complex networks" and even small adaptions can impact the entire network of systems. A wide-ranging and comprehensive approach is required to account for the interdependencies that exist within urban systems and are exposed to disruption during crisis

'Promoting participation in planning and governance'

- **Co-production of resilience planning and governance** can enhance the "prosperity" of stakeholders (e.g. city residents), increase a sense of local ownership and achieve more effective implementation of resilience building plans and activities

'Multi-stakeholder engagement'

- "**Continuity of governance, economic activity and other city functions**" is critical to a resilient system. Facilitating collaborative communication and working between all interested stakeholders such as "public entities, the private sector, civil society, academic institutions and the city community", is essential

'Strive towards the Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs)

- Underpinning **resilience building plans and initiatives with SDGs** can ensure that human rights are "fulfilled, respected, and protected"

Impact on:
Implementing recovery

Finland:
https://tinyurl.com/tc6edhhh

Consider recovery plans that drive ecological, social and economic growth. Finland's 'Sustainable Growth Program: Recovery Plan' sets out the reforms and public investment projects that aim to boost "**competitiveness, investment, skills development and research, and innovation**". The overall objectives of the programme are:

- "Productivity growth;
- Raising the employment rate;
- Faster accessibility to care;
- Progress in equality"

This recovery plan has recently been submitted to the EU Commission for review. The plan is not yet approved, however, this lesson offers an insight into Finland's Recovery and Resilience priorities. The programme is built around four key pillars:

- "A green transition to support **structural adjustment of the economy** and underpin a carbon-neutral welfare society;
- Digitalisation and a digital economy to **strengthen productivity** and increase access to services;
- Raising the employment rate and skill levels to **accelerate sustainable growth**;
- Access to **health and social services** will be improved and their cost-effectiveness enhanced"

City examples of local economic and financial recovery

The 'Building Urban Economic Resilience during and after COVID-19'[1] produced by UN-HABITAT and partners outlines the different economic recovery initiatives adopted by cities across the world. Urban areas, as "engines of growth" have been severely impacted by COVID-19 and are predicted to take a leading role in recovery. This project is focused on "strengthening the capacities of local governments globally, to design, implement, and monitor sustainable, resilient and inclusive COVID-19 economic responses, recovery, and rebuilding plans". The document presents city case studies from the African Region, Arab Region, Asia and the Pacific Region, Europe Region, and the Latin America and the Caribbean Region. Over the next two issues of TMB, we will present city recovery initiatives from each of these regions. This case study focuses on the Europe Region and the African Region:

Europe Region[2]

Barcelona, Spain, is a city which frequently experiences "flash floods and coastal flooding, as well as heat waves and forest fires". Prior to COVID-19, Barcelona was grappling with rapidly "growing social inequalities powered by low rental housing affordability and growing energy poverty". Barcelona City Council have identified seven strategic economic recovery goals, including[3]:

- "New models to make Barcelona a more resilient city;
- Maintain and strengthen the city's business network;
- Protect jobs and foster employment;
- Promote local consumption as a priority;
- Protect and relaunch the city's international reputation;
- Open up Barcelona to talent, to investment and to visitors;
- Define transformational solutions with a metropolitan vision"

The measures through which the City Council aim to achieve the above goal include:

- Provide subsidies and funding to increase business liquidity and mitigate the damage caused to the "production network" by the pandemic (e.g. cash flow challenges)
- Establish training and advice services to enhance local skills, targeted at high-risk or vulnerable groups within the economy
- Employ strategic communication and marketing programmes to promote and regenerate tourism in the city

- Design economic development tools which will enable "synergies between the city's socio-economic and business networks"
- Review and amend regulations and administrative processes to generate flexibility in the city's economic reactivation

Tirana, Albania, experienced two major earthquakes in 2019 which had devastating impacts on over 2,000 homes. The city was not equipped with an emergency preparedness plan prior to the pandemic or the 2019 earthquakes, which led to the municipality relying solely on central government support and guidance during both events. The municipality is focusing on the following recovery priorities:

- Design and develop a "Crisis and Resilience Management Plan to include pandemic and earthquake response"
- Implement "Orbital Forest", a green recovery strategy which aims to plant a "wall of 2 million trees" around the city of Tirana
- Take advantage of the opportunities resented by COVID-19 to renew and reconstruct the Kombinati neighbourhood which was most severely impacted by the 2019 earthquakes and transform it to be a "smart city neighbourhood"

African Region[4]

Arua, Uganda, is challenged by "heavy run-off water which regularly destroys crops and homes, significantly reducing agricultural production levels and housing quality". Local government COVID-19 recovery initiatives include:

- Focus on the agricultural sector through "community sensitization" on urban farming and **increasing the capacities of farmers** to build and adopt new modern farming methods. This includes local government lobbying for financial and technical funding support for farmers for longer-term recovery
- Provide **business development support** and connect small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to targeted funding
- Provide business continuity support by "automating ICT infrastructure" and helping businesses to build their technical capacities

Harare, Zimbabwe, is faced with "rapid urbanisations, deindustrialisation and increasing numbers of people working in the informal sector, leading to urban poverty, barriers to service delivery and lagging education, health, water and sanitation,

1 https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/03/global-compendium-of-practices-covid-19.pdf

2 Including selected countries in Central Asia, Western Asia, and north America

3 https://www.barcelona.cat/reactivacioeconomica/en/action-plan

4 Ibid.1

and housing systems". The local government recovery priorities include:

- Boost **recovery through the informal sector**, by building "safer and more modern market spaces"

- Improve public sanitation and work to support and **increase accessibility of services**, particularly for women who have experienced increased gender-based violence during lockdown. The local government have partnered with UNDP, the national government and Oxfam on this initiative

- In partnership with Oxfam, the Harare city government are working to engage organised groups (e.g. women's savings groups) to target women and employ them to support city recovery initiatives