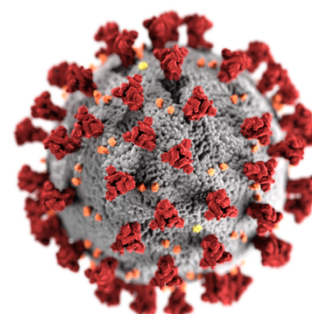


COVID-19

Urban Thinkers Campus

Report of the First COVID-19 Urban Thinkers
Campus Series - May 2020



C  **VID-19**

Take action with us in
cities and communities

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



**COVID-19
RESPONSE**



**WORLD
URBAN
CAMPAIGN**



IMPLEMENTING
THE NEW
URBAN AGENDA

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INTRODUCTION

As the COVID-19 pandemic triggers a diversity of responses around the world, UN-Habitat has launched a global campaign to engage a large range of stakeholders to showcase actions and reflect on key issues. This campaign has been the starting point for a rich learning process engaging a diversity of actors such as city and community leaders, social workers, grassroots leaders, planners and researchers, scientists, business leaders and journalists dedicating time and energy to face the pandemic on the ground and preparing for a post-COVID-19 future in cities.

The format adopted for this global conversation has been the Urban Thinkers Campus, a participatory platform of the World Urban Campaign that has successfully organized more than 150 campuses since 2015, engaging some 45,000 participants. The COVID-19 Urban Thinkers Campus Series started on 4 May 2020 with an event entitled 'Facing Urban Vulnerabilities' followed by sessions to reflect on the many gaps faced during the pandemic: the basic services gaps, the shelter gaps, the safety gaps and, the wage and social security gaps. Subsequent sessions focused on the role of community leaders at the front line, and the role of urban planning and design to build pandemic resilience. The final one of this first series was dedicated to reporting during pandemics.

About 1,110 people have participated in the sessions, including 60 panelists from various regions of the world and backgrounds actively engaged in the COVID-19 response. The nine Urban Thinkers Campus sessions have generated a very rich dialogue that has led to a set of recommendations for the next steps.

The success of this first COVID-19 Urban Thinkers Campus Series has triggered a second round to be held in the months of June and July to cover other key areas or go deeper into emerging issues in order to extract further recommendations for action.

In this global learning dialogue, participants have been encouraged to refer to the Sustainable Development Goals as guides to define the post-COVID-19 recovery efforts and to achieve the goals by 2030 under the United Nations Decade of Action. Ultimately, the global goals constitute a robust framework under which development should be achieved and guide actions for all partners of the 2030 Development Agenda.

Special thanks go to all the partners that have contributed to the organization of these events: Practical Action, Compass Housing, Habitat for Humanity, the Red Dot Foundation, Polycom Development, CJUR International, the Huairou Commission, the World Evangelical Alliance, ActionAid India, Smartly, Arcadis, ISOCARP, the Commonwealth Association of Planners, the Paris Region Institute and First Main Films.

UTC#1

FACING URBAN VULNERABILITIES



Number of participants: 98

Partner organization: Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme

Panelists:

1. Sibyl Harleston, Informal Settlements Upgrading and Relocation Lead, Freetown, Sierra Leone
2. Giulia Maci, Urban Specialist, Cities Alliance
3. Sarah Nandudu, National Slum Dwellers Federation of Uganda
4. Smruti Jukur, Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres
5. Lucy Livesley, Director of Market Transformation, REALL, UK
6. Prof. Marie Huchzermeyer, School of Architecture and Planning, Wits University
7. Kerstin Sommer, Programme Manager, PSUP, UN-Habitat

Session Summary

In times of pandemics, social cohesion becomes key to survival and resilience in the most vulnerable urban hotspots. Rather than pointing at urban informality as a problem, decision-makers need to put communities at the center of their response. The role of community leaders has proven essential in many contexts. They have the intimate knowledge of communities and without them, little can be achieved effectively to face the challenges of the pandemic. This was one of the conclusions of the first COVID-19 Urban Thinkers Campus session.

The COVID-19 crisis is revealing the most difficult aspects of living in informal settlements. "With COVID-19, many in my city feel that this is a worse pandemic than Ebola as we are dealing with an invisible enemy" said Sibyl Harleston, Informal Settlements Upgrading and Relocation Lead at Freetown City Council, setting the tone of the debate. In Freetown, Liberia, the COVID-19 response is based on three pillars: behavior change messaging, behavior change support and isolation and containment. To be effective, the city has relied on a participatory approach engaging the community leaders.

"Governments should recognize the fundamental work of grassroots organizations on the ground" said Rose Molokoane, President of the South African Federation of the Urban Poor, a partner of Slum Dwellers International. In South Africa, the Federation has proposed to the Government the partial road re-paving of informal settlements for instance. So, roads are created to enable ambulances and water supply access into the areas. Also, the government has used civil society groups to distribute food to the communities. "Without the inside knowledge of the organized community groups, such action would not have been envisaged" she added.

The crisis has focused attention on sanitation, water, urban density, but the issues are not new said Smruti Jukur from the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres, based in India. She added that many dense settlements have been lacking access to water for decades, and have very poor primary and secondary healthcare systems. These structural issues are just now revealed with the COVID-19 crisis and will have to be addressed if we want to address future pandemics.

"Let's use this crisis as an opportunity to take action and better prepare for future shocks, and ensure that vulnerable groups don't bear the brunt of crises such as this one and to limit the impact going forward" said Lucy Livesley, Director of Market Transformation at REALL, an innovator and investor in affordable homes in Africa and Asia. "We consider our mission as to contribute to resilience, providing space to socially distance, clean water, toilet within the home, safety and security within resilience and vibrant communities. Housing gives people an asset, security and protection against shocks by reducing their vulnerability. Housing is also a means to kickstart economies and embed future resilience".

"With this new crisis, we are currently adding new urban vulnerabilities that pre-existing vulnerabilities" explained Prof. Marie Huchzermeyer from Wits University, South Africa. Many structural issues that have not been addressed in the past need to be faced now. She also emphasized the need to rely on existing survival mechanisms to build resilience. Care must be taken in order not to disrupt survival mechanisms that heavily rely on social cohesion that is ultimately beneficial to health. "It is important not to quickly identify informality as the problem", she said. Community organizations that are structures of communication and decision-making within informal settlements, from which systems of reciprocity are often built are key to building resilience. The pandemic has generated rapid asset depletion and the emergence of large scale

starvation which has placed extreme stress on social cohesion. Civil society organisations, reaching out to charities and solidarity groups play an essential role in this crisis and the future pandemics to come.

In the COVID-19 response, women play an essential role in informal settlements for many reasons said Giulia Maci, Urban Specialist at Cities Alliance. Women are in the forefront in fighting the pandemic as health and care workers. As those are primarily engaged in family and domestic duties, they are the first to recognize symptoms and take care of the ill in the society. Women are also more active in community organizations, filling the gaps left by existing institutions. They also have an inside knowledge of the needs of the communities, have the trust of the community, deliver foods and supplies to those who need. As a result, it is essential to engage women in defining post-COVID-19 recovery plans, including economic measures to protect and stimulate the economy, from cash transfers to credit loans targeting women. Also, women have to be equally represented in decision-making structures.

Ms. Kerstin Sommer, Coordinator at UN-Habitat, outlined the approach taken by the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme(PSUP) in the COVID-19 crisis. "We need to combine the immediate responses to the long term recovery strategies, particularly through partnerships between people, private sector, informal sector in line with the decade of action and the implementation of the SDGs" she said. Our pillars for action in this pandemic are advocacy for governments to integrate informal settlements and slums in their responses, sharing innovative approaches among partners. It is also crucial to work with national government to ensure community voices are heard in order to design national policies and define protocol for informal settlements. The PSUP has developed guidelines for local authorities, communities and a catalogue of projects to guide partners in different areas of action.

Overall, participants agreed that this pandemic should be seen as an opportunity to reflect on basic structural issues in urban areas and the most vulnerable spots that the COVID-19 crisis is revealing. The role of communities is crucial in the immediate response but also in the next steps from the immediate recovery plans to long-term resilience. An integrated approach will be needed to evaluate the different responses. This should be done by engaging all stakeholders and bringing communities at the center.

Recommendations

- Governments should effectively support the civil society and recognize the fundamental work of grassroots organizations on the ground in informal settlements. Without the inside knowledge of organized groups in communities and neighborhoods, some key actions would not have been envisaged during the pandemic. Rather than pointing at urban informality as a problem, decision-makers need to put communities at the center of their response.

- Given their multiple and prominent roles in the pandemic, it is essential to engage women in defining a post-covid recovery plan, including economic measures to protect and stimulate the economy, from cash transfers to credit loans targeting women. Women have to be equally represented in decision-making structures.
- In countries with a large proportion of informal settlements, basic needs have to be addressed such as water and sanitation, health and food security. Housing is an essential asset to be considered and the private sector should be enabled to produce at an affordable price. This crisis should be used as an opportunity to do things differently in future, focusing on improving living conditions, particularly housing, unlocking the economic value and embedding future resilience.
- Governments need to integrate informal settlements and slums in their responses to the pandemic. They need to ensure community voices are heard and reflected in the design of national policies and protocol for informal settlements.
- There is need for better vertical and horizontal coordination between different levels of governments and between sectors. An integrated approach will help evaluate the different responses, bringing together the socio-economic and health support in particular.
- There is a need to combine immediate response to long term recovery strategy particularly partnerships between people, private sector, informal sector in line with the decade of action and the implementation of the SDGs.
- In future it will be important to collect sex-disaggregated data collected by women and the community in order to understand the gender specific impacts of outbreaks. This should be combined with qualitative assessment carried out by and with women focus groups.

UTC#2

THE BASIC SERVICES GAP

COVID-19 UN HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE COVID-19 RESPONSE #TakeAction4Cities

UTC #2 JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON: **The Basic Services Gap**

e-sessions

6 MAY 2020
14:30p.m. —
16:00p.m. C.E.T

Practical ACTION

Number of participants: 117

Partner organization: Practical Action

Panelists:

1. Dr. Lucy Stevens, Head of Urban Services Programme, Practical Action
2. Sri Sofjan, Huairou Commission, Chair, World Urban Campaign
3. Dr. Birupakshya Dixit, Practical Action, India
4. Peter Ogwell, Kisumu County Government, Kenya
5. Rokeya Rafiq, Executive Director, Karmonjibi Nari, Bangladesh
6. Dewan Kamal Ahmed, President of Municipal Association of Bangladesh and Mayor of Nilphamari Municipality
7. Graham Alabaster, UN-Habitat

Session Summary

The COVID-19 crisis has revealed the immense gaps faced by the most vulnerable communities in accessing basic services such as water and sanitation and how it can ultimately impact everyone. Without access to these basic services, people are at higher risk of becoming seriously ill if

infected by COVID-19, and in turn can infect others. The pandemic has shone a light on the poor levels of access to basic services in urban slum communities, and has added urgency to tackling this. This can be particularly challenging where people rely on shared facilities, have small living spaces and use the streets and public spaces for their daily livelihoods. People rely on earning money daily, and often need to pay-per-use for essential services. Also, in informal urban settlements, people may have existing health conditions, aggravated by the difficult shelter conditions and have limited ability to pay for health care.

In 2020, about 621 million urban residents still do not have access to basic sanitation facilities worldwide. “This daunting gap is hampering the response to the pandemic” stated Graham Alabaster, UN-Habitat water and sanitation expert. Without water and sanitation, communities are extremely vulnerable, and all hand-washing measures are almost impossible to implement in informal settlements. Most residents do not have the facilities at home to wash their hands with soap and running water. Maintaining physical distancing is equally difficult as most water and sanitation facilities are communal. Water availability is also affected due to increased need for handwashing. Even when water is available, soap can be an expensive commodity for households.

The situation of utility workers was also highlighted by the panelists. While medical workers are playing a central role in addressing the pandemic, the millions of workers at the frontline of water and sanitation services play a crucial role to face the spread of the virus. “Their contribution is not fully recognized” emphasized Rokeya Rafiq, Executive Director of Karmonjibi Nari, Bangladesh. Without legal recognition, these workers are challenged in their livelihood hence not able to ensure full continuity in the services. “This is a big concern in our contexts and should be addressed by our Governments in the future”, she added.

In civil society organizations such as Practical Action, social workers are using their knowledge of local systems and links with key stakeholders in the towns and cities where we work to put ingenious ideas to work in the context of this crisis. “An important aspect of the response to the current pandemic is to promote and facilitate good hygiene practices by leading awareness campaigns about COVID-19 transmission” said Lucy Stevens, Practical Action's Senior Policy and Practice Advisor in the areas of Energy, WASH and Urban Services. It is about setting up handwashing stations in high-risk locations and attend to the most vulnerable groups. Practical Action has been particularly active in Bangladesh, India and Kenya. Mr. Birupakshya Dixit, Coordinator at Practical Action India, emphasized the need to conduct water and sanitation assessments and ensure regular monitoring with key players in communities. Many new challenges have arisen during the COVID-19 crisis around the use of community toilets and separation of wastes for instance with the new rules of social distancing. Social distancing rules mean that access to water and sanitation services is severely limited and people are unwilling to have social contacts in communal facilities, therefore make less use of adequate sanitation.

Mr. Dewan Kamal Ahmed, President of Municipal Association of Bangladesh and Mayor of Nilphamari Municipality, described the increasing issues faced in vulnerable settlements. The crisis has created several layers of complexities that are difficult to address with the current staffing and expertise. Peter Ogwel from the Kisumu County Government, explained that the crisis has become multi-dimensional since his municipality has to also address the impact of the on-going devastating floods affecting Western Kenya. Without the most basic requirements of water supply and sanitation infrastructures in many settlements, the situation is daunting. It requires extra capacity and the local government has to rely on the support of volunteers that are not trained to face the challenges. In many contexts, the access to facilities is likely to be further exacerbated by climate and monsoon seasons, like in Kenya at the moment, emphasized Alabaster.

As demonstrated during the Ebola crisis, the critical key to success in the response to a pandemic is effective partnerships between municipalities and organized communities in order to ensure functional water and sanitation utilities, maintain services and provide support such as free water in some cases. Also, in such crisis, municipalities generally lose revenue and the continuity of essential services is threatened. The support of central governments become essential to the survival of communities.

The COVID-19 crisis is revealing the huge inequities that exist in terms of access to basic services. Participants agreed that this should be used as an opportunity to reflect on the notion of basic services, and the minimum requirements for survival in times of pandemics to bridge the basic services gap. Longer-term investment will be needed to build back better in order to face future crisis.

Recommendations

- One of the first essential steps of the COVID-19 response is to conduct assessments to establish basic services gaps and areas of low service provision where it is essential to supply water and sanitation in order to reduce both the coronavirus transmission and secondary impacts.
- During the pandemic, it is essential to continuously monitor water supply in the different settlements, as well as to regularly disinfect water points and water sources.
- Working with small scale providers is needed to increase water and sanitation coverage. Small private vendors providing WASH services in informal settlements should be empowered and encouraged to ensure service continuity. They should also be protected.
- Strategies and responses should be build on adequate knowledge of social norms and practices in informal settlements by working with community leaders and social workers, women and youth groups.

- It is essential to recognize gender issues of increased burdens, reduced incomes that women control, and risks of violence. Also be aware of excluded groups such as people with disabilities, lowest caste (in some cultures).
- One should recognize the difference between those accessing services from formal providers whereby payments are done monthly or through rates, and where charges can be reduced by government, versus those who use informal service providers where users pay at the point of use. Different systems needed to ensure continuity of these services.
- Sensitization of residents in informal settlements is essential to explain social distancing at water collection points, where the virus transmission is likely to increase. It should also encourage people to use public toilets rather than open areas. Separation of waste should be explained as well (such as not mixing used masks and gloves with regular waste).
- It is essential to find ways to build trust in shared facilities with increased cleaning and good management. To ensure cleanliness of public toilets, it is also crucial to provide cleaning supplies.
- Advocacy and sensitization is also needed to explain water utilities, that it is essential to maintain water supply services even to the households unable to pay for the services.
- In many contexts, municipalities are facing revenue loss during pandemics and essential services are at threat. Central government needs to protect them.
- A critical key to success in addressing the pandemic is the linkages between municipalities and community resources to maintain services and supporting water and sanitation utilities, and if needed, providing free water.
- The success of managing a pandemic is determined by how municipalities work together with community groups to put in place inclusive strategies. This has to go beyond working with healthcare providers. Community leaders play a key role in surveillance and contact tracing in prevention of transmissions into the communities.
- In the long term, it is essential to better understand basic services inequalities and gaps that exist and upscale improving basic hygiene and living conditions of people in informal settlements in order to face future pandemics.

UTC#3

THE SHELTER GAP

COVID-19
Take action with us in cities and communities

JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON:
The Shelter Gap
7 MAY 2020
14:30 pm-16:00pm C.E.T

URBAN THINKERS CAMPUS

e-session

Habitat for Humanity | compass housing services | WORLD URBAN CAMPAIGN

Number of participants: 112

Partner organizations: Habitat for Humanity, Compass Housing

Panelists:

1. Jane Katz, Director of International Affairs and Programs, Habitat for Humanity International
2. David Adamson, Group Executive Manager - International Development and Advisory Services, Compass Housing Services
3. Kathy Kline, International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, Co-chair, GAP Older Persons Partner Constituent Group
4. Lorena Zarate, President, Habitat International Coalition
5. Giulia Lavagna, Housing Policy Expert, UN-Habitat
6. Bert Smolders, Arcadis, World Urban Campaign Co-Chair

Session Summary

Jane Katz, Director of International Affairs and Programs at Habitat for Humanity set the tone of the session by stating that "COVID-19 has shattered the reality for more than 1 billion people in need to adequate housing and 2.2 billion people who live without improved sanitation. A

safe and secure home is the first line of defense in the pandemic. The crisis has exorbitated the preexisting conditions and unforeseen impacts are tremendous for families living in inadequate conditions, deprived from livelihood, food, education, medical services, access to transit, increasing domestic violence, and evictions. People living in inadequate settlements and slums face poorly constructed homes, lack of services and overcrowded conditions, where residents do not possess security of tenure including lack of title or rental agreements. This means for many, to live in constant fear of evictions. With the spread of Covid-19, around the world, families are facing both a public health and an economic crisis, further worsened by a housing crisis. ILO has reported that 38% of the global workforce is vulnerable during this crisis.

For Habitat for Humanity, the response includes the following steps:
1/ Advocating to Governments about the Covid-19 response to protect the adequacy, affordability, accessibility and stability of housing during and after the crisis; 2/ Advocating for moratorium on forced evictions, freezing rents, delaying mortgage payments and stall payments for those with micro loans; 3/ Addressing the financial needs of individuals and ensure the sustainability of housing construction markets; 4/ Providing direct financial support to households facing economic loss, aid and relief to households through local housing-market actors, in some cases providing cash-based programming; 5/ Supporting household-driven home improvements and community-based housing production and neighborhood physical improvement; 6/ Addressing housing needs of informal settlements, including household sanitation and hygiene kit support; 7/ Conducting public awareness campaigns to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in Habitat communities through a comprehensive healthy housing approach; 8/ Integrating locally data on demographics and needs from community members to best prepare responses. Working with communities to get data and using data to track where the virus is, how many people are dying, how many are in need. 9/ Convening key public and private-sector stakeholders engagement processes on the recovery of housing market.

David Adamson, Development Manager at Compass Housing Services, reminded participants that historically, inadequate housing is strongly correlated with poor health. For instance, homelessness in the developed world means a huge drop in life expectancy for people with associated co-morbidity through lower mental and physical health. Studies in the U.K. have demonstrated that life expectancy for a male experiencing chronic repeated homelessness is 47 years, and 43 years for a female compared to a population average of 77 years. Inadequate housing in least developed countries is related to poor indoor air quality and temperature control, water borne diseases, parasite and malarial prevalence. In the current COVID-19 crisis, vulnerability has increased for poorly homed families and the homeless have become the most fragile, considered as potential vectors of the disease. This has prompted an instant response from some governments that have provided accommodations to people without homes such as in the UK, in the EU, Australia and New Zealand.

Another important vulnerable group was brought to the debate through Katherine Kline from the International Network for the Prevention of Elder

Abuse. She described how governments have to deal with a growing ageing population that have been invisible in many countries since the beginning of the pandemic. The crisis is making much more visible the growing population of those 60 years and older. Fatality rate from Covid-19 for those over 80 is 5 times the global average mortality rate and 66 percent of those who are 70 and older have at least one underlying condition that makes them much more at risk of getting the virus and having a bad outcome. Many people who are living under institutional care, more often by choice as they age, are victim of neglect and abuse, living in overcrowded nursing homes and senior residences lacking protective gears and staffed with underpaid workers. 'However, we have little data on the conditions on these institutions' she said. This is an area of knowledge that we miss and that needs to improve. She also drew the attention of participants to those living in refugee camps and prisons which are other forms of institutional 'homes' where conditions are inadequate.

Lorena Zarate, President of the Habitat International Coalition also reminded participants that the COVID-19 pandemic is a new crisis amplifying the pre-existing inequalities in terms of housing. 'This COVID-19 crisis is a human right crisis' she said. 'In the last three decades, housing has been increasingly treated as a commodity in most contexts'. Since 2008, homelessness has consistently increased and the housing crisis has intensified. The current pandemic reveals the limitations of current housing policies. Alternative models need to be explored starting with auto-construction, cooperative and other collaborative models.

On the way forward, Giulia Lavagna, Housing Expert at UN-Habitat outlined the immediate short-term actions that should focus on containing the spread of infection, as well as the longer term interventions that call for a shift towards a human right-based approach to housing. Policies need to be revisited to address shortages through inclusive housing development and alternative models to increase the social housing stock. It is also essential to recognise housing provision as a shared responsibility of different actors. The private sector is a key provider of housing and should be part of the response to provide sustained affordable housing solutions for all.

Participants agreed that an effective response to the pandemic will rely on ensuring adequate, affordable, accessible and stable housing during and after the crisis, including household and community-based WASH initiatives. Currently, many civil society organizations are advocating for moratorium on forced evictions, freezing rents, delaying mortgage payments and micro loans. Also, many have requested governments to declare construction and housing services as essential in order to continue during the crisis, support household-driven home improvements and community-based housing production and neighborhood physical improvement. One essential action is also to convene key public and private sector stakeholders on the recovery of housing markets and future affordability, as well as future investments in adequate housing as a driver of health outcomes and economic recovery.

Ultimately, during the recovery from the pandemic, all stakeholders need to establish clear strategies towards building a more secure urban future by putting housing at the center of policies. In particular, they need to ensure access to adequate, affordable housing, promote the right to secure tenure and an equitable access to land for shelter, foster resilient and responsive communities for planning and implementation.

Recommendations

Immediate short-term actions recommended to governments:

- Provide emergency accommodation to all people without secure housing – include the homeless and people living in slums and informal settlements.
- Put in place and strengthen emergency handwashing facilities in key locations in local communities, informal settlements and slums, as well as refugee camps.
- Suspend relocations and evictions during this crisis period.
- Explore options for the provision of basic needs to vulnerable communities or neighbourhoods, particularly food and hygiene essentials.
- Try to enforce deferral of payment of rents and mortgages to provide relief to those affected by the crisis.

Medium to Long-term measures to be considered by partners and governments:

- Address shortages of adequate housing by promoting policies that encourage inclusive housing development – recognizing housing as not just a roof but as a human right.
- Consider alternative ways to increase social housing stock - See housing as a shared responsibility, not just the responsibility of local, national government or the private sector. Look at different ways of accessing housing that are affordable and sustainable.
- Set in place relief programmes that do not simply postpone evictions to the aftermath of the pandemic.
- Explore solving homelessness in a longer-term strategy.
- Consider housing from a commodity to a human right and how this is translated into policies and regulations.
- Reduce overcrowding by enhancing systems for land use planning and securing tenure mechanism.
- Revisit regulatory environment with governments to promote physical improvements in safe constructions at all levels.
- Prioritize and subsidize upgrading of informal settlements to face future pandemics.

- Expand affordability through housing finance options – provide funding that is necessary; working with the private sector to meet the demand for some of the low income housing demand.
- Promote secure tenure rights and equitable access to land for shelter – includes influencing customary practices and discriminatory laws that exclude women and vulnerable groups; ensuring strong land governance and administration frameworks; endorsing a continuum of land rights to increase housing stability and security of tenure and investment and; preventing arbitrary forced evictions.
- Enable stakeholder engagement – working through coalitions and groups to establish alliances and people public partnerships to address issues.
- Increase advocacy work such as through the World Urban Campaign in the coming months to influence new frameworks using the the New Urban Agenda and SDGs.
- Ensure we don't return to business as usual and address the shortages of adequate housing both in developed and less developed world.

UTC#4-5

THE SAFETY GAP

UTC #4

COVID-19
Take action with us in cities and communities

JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON:
The Safety Gap

URBAN THINKERS CAMPUS

e-session
11 MAY 2020
14:30 pm-16:00pm C.E.T

Red Dot Foundation, CNJUR, WORLD URBAN CAMPAIGN

UTC #5

COVID-19

WEBINAR CAMPUS
PENSADOR@S URBAN@S
COVID-19 y Seguridad

URBAN THINKERS CAMPUS

11 de Mayo 2020
10:00 am-11:30am
GMT-5

HUAIROU COMMISSION Women, Homes & Community, WORLD URBAN CAMPAIGN

Number of participants: 119

Partner organizations: Huairou Commission, Red Dot Foundation, CJUR International, Polycom Development

Panelists:

UTC#4

1. Rekha Sharma, Commissioner, National Commission for Women, India
2. Pablo Aguilar, President CNJUR International, Mexico
3. Jane Onyango, Polycom (Huairou Commission), Kenya
4. ElsaMarie DSilva, Red Dot Foundation, India

UTC#5

1. Olenka Ochoa FEMUM-ALC/CP, Peru
2. Nadine Gasman, President National Institute for Women (Instituto Nacional de la Mujer-INMUJERES), Mexico
3. Haydee Rodríguez, Director, Cooperativa Las Brumas, Nicaragua
4. Sara Valadez, CampusPensadorasUrbanas, MIRA, Mexico
5. Ingrid Ciego, CampusPensadorasUrbanas, Guatemala
6. Relinda Sosa, Coordinadora Groots, Peru
7. Vanessa Villegas, CampusPensadorasUrbanas, Argentina
8. Sri Sofjan, Huairou Commission, World Urban Campaign Co-Chair

Sessions Summary

The Third and Fourth COVID-19 Urban Thinkers Campus discussed safety issues revealed by the pandemic. The first session was hosted by the Red Dot Foundation (India), Polycom Development (Kenya) and Colegio Nacional de Jurisprudencia Urbanística (CNJUR, Mexico). The second session was hosted by the Huairou Commission and held in Spanish in order to engage participants from Latin America, with key speakers from Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, Argentina and Nicaragua.

As the pandemic makes progress around the world, reports of domestic violence have increased in many countries. While, according to UN Women, one in three women globally experience violence over their lifetimes, the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to become an opportunity for violence to manifest in families, affecting women and girls in particular. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic violence was already a global emergency but measures to control the spread of coronavirus like restrictions on movement, while important for public health, have exacerbated conditions that too often lead to violence. Mandatory curfews and lockdowns of tens of millions of people, sudden loss of jobs, and the looming possibility of a global depression threaten to vastly exacerbate conditions that give rise to domestic violence. Those who face gender-based violence and discrimination and persecution on the basis of race, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, caste, or class, are at further risk and often have access to fewer resources. All participants came to those same observations in their different contexts confirming that the pandemic is currently exacerbating the problem, forcing families to stay at home and allowing more abuse, leaving victims with less opportunities to seek refuge.

As the United Nations Population Fund reported recently, pandemics increase the risk for gender-based violence. Intimate partner violence has been on the increase, with two in three women experiencing violence as compared to one in three before Covid. In times of crisis, the [report](#) says, women and girls may be at higher risk of intimate partner violence and other forms of domestic violence due to increased tensions in the household. The pandemic diminishes the coping capacities of women and girls in particular, increasing their vulnerabilities. Rising unemployment and economic uncertainty add an additional pressure on families. In such situations, community structures help protect and support women and girls from the risk of intimate partner violence with the changing dynamics of risk imposed by COVID-19.

Ms. Rekha Sharma, Chairperson of the National Commission for Women, India, explained the practical measures in place to help women get support as facing increasing abuse during the pandemic such as through helplines. While call centers have been put in place in India, an effective response relies on the level of collaboration with communities and police personnel, including building their capacity to support victims.

ElsaMarie D’Silva, Founder and CEO of the Red Dot Foundation, a platform that crowdsources personal experiences of sexual violence and abuse in public spaces based in Mumbai, explained that the solution relies on awareness but also on better data and organized safe anonymous reporting for victims. “We should not wait for a crisis such as the COVID-19 crisis to act on better knowledge and education on sexual violence. The current pandemic is just revealing the safety gaps women and girls face” she said. This can be done by expanding safe reporting mechanisms for the victims and using open-source data, but also by building trust between institutions and community-based services.

Jane Anyango, from Polycom Development, a grass-roots organization working in Nairobi and Kisumu, Kenya, explained the current scenarios of increased family violence in slum areas where women and girls are particularly affected. With family members deprived of daily income as casual labourers, women are looking for alternative survival, unable to cope with the children, left alone and ‘roaming around’ in unsafe neighbourhoods. Also, slums areas often weak in terms of access to water are potential breeding grounds for the virus. Indispensable basic hygiene is not possible in many areas. As support is delivered, water, masks and sanitizers are not always reaching the most vulnerable. “The need for better data on communities in the slums has never been so clear as we face the COVID-19 crisis” she said. Without proper mapping of informal settlements, it is difficult to figure out where to deliver food, water, mask and sanitizers in the most effective manner. She outlined the importance of community knowledge and the need for partnering with grassroots organizations in order to better support the most vulnerable during pandemics.

Similar scenarios were described by women groups of Latin America, as presented by Huairou Commission representatives Sara Valadez, from MIRA México, Ingrid Ciego from Huairou Guatemala, Haydee Rodríguez, President of Las Brumas cooperative of Nicaragua, Nadine Gasman, President of INMUJERES Mexico, Relinda Sosa, Coordinator at GROOTS-Peru, and Vanessa Villegas from Argentina. Olenka Ochoa, President of FEMUM Peru, who moderated the session brought together a lively discussion around the impact of the quarantine and the effect of lockdowns put in place in those countries, severely impacting livelihoods and creating spiraling effects on domestic violence. In Latin America, a spike in calls to hotlines in the past months suggests an increase in domestic abuse in some countries while there seems to be a decrease in formal complaints probably due to movement restrictions or fear to report. All participants outlined the crucial role of organized communities and the importance of women’s networks to strengthen their capacity to cope with the multiple challenges. Also, those communities have been able to put pressure on governments to obtain better support and services in the most vulnerable communities.

Pablo Aguilar, President of CJUR, an association working on urban jurisprudence in Latin America, also emphasized the fact that urban systems and functions have somehow collapsed with the COVID-19. “The pandemic has introduced a new crisis, one of the basic human rights” he

said. He expanded on the fact that in many countries, people are worried about the violation of their privacy with the increase of State controls but also have experienced a drop in their rights to property, culture and economic activities for instance. As a result, “in the post recovery period, we need to promote a new legal urbanism based in a bundle of protections for the citizens” added Aguilar, in order to safeguard their future rights in cities. His proposal was largely accepted by participants who agreed that it is crucial to reflect on the impacts of the pandemic in terms of human rights in order to propose targeted revisions of current policies, based on the promises of the New Urban Agenda endorsed at the Habitat III conference by member states and their partners.

These two Campus sessions on the safety gaps have allowed an in-dept conversation on a crucial aspect of the pandemic affecting slum and informal settlements in the global South, but not only as some participants pointed out. Domestic violence is a pervasive issue in all countries in times of pandemic like the COVID-19 crisis.

Recommendations

- While domestic violence has been a global pandemic before the COVID-19 outbreak, it is important to continue addressing it, using adapted protocols for victims to be able to report safely.
- Safe reporting mechanisms for the victims is a growing need. This can be done through the use of helplines, mobile or text applications that encourage survivors to report, using open-source data. They should be expanded or established if not available already. This is essential to prevent “an emergency within an emergency”. National and local governments and civil society organizations need to raise awareness on such hotlines and reporting but also by building trust between institutions and community-based services.
- Anonymous reporting of experiences faced without stigma or fear can also help develop data sets to support decision making. Data on violence, from assaults to micro-aggressions, making use of tracking tools, should help document and address safety issues.
- National and local governments need to support community-based organisations and women’s groups to help reach vulnerable groups, including migrants, refugees and the homeless.
- In particular, they need to promote the voices and expertise of community and grassroot leaders to address increasing levels of domestic violence and support social media campaigns asking community leaders to speak out against abuse.
- Additional safe housing is needed during times of quarantine to provide safe accommodation to survivors including accompanying minors to protect them from their abusers. In addition, access to violence-related services should be expanded.
- National and local governments need to incorporate a gender perspective in their responses plans to the pandemic.

- There is a need to compile and develop concrete strategies for local organizations, informed by the grassroots expertise. Community engagement is essential to enable communities address trends and patterns of violence and solve key issues through the most appropriate solutions in their local contexts.
- The relation between epidemics and violence should be thoroughly documented order to better address issues and guide future action. Data collection to document the gendered impact of COVID-19 is essential to further develop research on the issue.
- In order to closely monitor trends, there is a need to create real-time mechanisms for community and grassroots leaders to learn from one another, helping ensure that successful strategies can be replicated.
- There is a need to build capacity to better address gender-based violence in pandemics and other disasters.
- In the post recovery period, we need to promote a new legal urbanism based in a bundle of protections in order to safeguard the future rights of citizens in cities.

UTC#6

COMMUNITIES AT THE FRONTLINE

UTC #6

COVID-19
Take action with us in cities and communities

UN-HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE
COVID-19 RESPONSE
WORLD URBAN CAMPAIGN

**JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON:
Community Leaders
at the Frontline**

URBAN THINKERS CAMPUS

**14 MAY 2020
14:30 pm-16:00pm C.E.T**

HUAIROU COMMISSION
Women, Homes & Community

WEA
WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE

Number of participants: 81

Partner organizations: Huairou Commission, World Evangelical Alliance

Panelists:

1. Violet Shivutse, Chair of Huairou Commission, Governing Council/Coordinator of Shibuye Community Health Workers, Kenya
2. David Boan, Director of Humanitarian Advocacy, World Evangelical Alliance
3. Nadyia Hussain, Violence Reduction Unit Delivery Manager, Education and Faith Lead, Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, UK
4. Josephine Castillo, National Programme Coordinator, DAMPA, Philippines
5. Lana Finikin, Sistren Theatre Collective, GROOTS Jamaica
6. Erik Berg, Chair of Habitat Norway, former Special Advisor for Urban Development, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
7. Sri Sofjan, Huairou Commission, World Urban Campaign Co-Chair

Session Summary

Noting that the Covid-19 pandemic is more than a health crisis and should be seen as larger human crisis, participants emphasized the need to work with organized communities and their leaders, including faith-based organizations. Those have the ability to reach out to large groups, mobilise and share information. "They represent a voice of hope for all and compassion for vulnerable groups" said David Boan, Director of Relief and Development and COVID-19 Global Task Force at the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), an international organization with a Special Consultative Status in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. The organization focusses on impoverished communities and highly vulnerable populations such as migrant workers, people in refugee camps, people living in slums or other areas of extreme poverty and develops alternative mitigation strategies for these groups. Using National Alliances that have built up capital over many years in supporting local communities, the organization is able to respond to Covid-19 quickly. They use existing structures used in responding to past pandemics to support groups which have not received support from the government. A long term strategy to face future pandemics David Boan said should "emphasize on building structure and cooperative relationships that represent capital for future disasters. National and local governments should recognize the unique resources the communities have", he added. "They can often serve as a bridge to building trust with groups that may historically have had difficult relationship with government agencies or other NGOs".

Faith-based organizations represent vast networks of health and education services and represent trusted intermediary between government and local communities. Multi-faith platforms and networks have also shown a strong value explained Nadyia Hussain, Violence Reduction Unit Delivery Manager, Education and Faith Lead at the West Midlands Police Office, UK. Such platforms are very effective to build an interface in order to disseminate the right messages, adapting to different faiths reaching different captive audiences. Organizations are more operational in some countries which have faced the Ebola or Leprosy, explained David Boan, such as in Congo or Sri Lanka, where WEA has been particularly active.

Violet Shivutse, Chair of Huairou Commission and Coordinator of the Shibuye Community Health Workers in Kenya, explained the central role of community leaders in the Covid-19 pandemic. They had to reinvent new modus operandi in a very short time she said, training people on using new technologies to communicate remotely on emergency measures, translating government guidelines in simple language to explain the risk of an invisible disease in the most remote places. As care givers, these associations were not always equipped while facing multiple challenges such as the floods in many parts of Kenya. They had to adapt quickly to respond through health care, food distribution, farming or education. However, without such organized support groups, local

governments would have been unable to reach many vulnerable settlements.

New communication and tracking tools have emerged as fundamental to the work of community leaders. Lana Finikin from Sistren Theatre Collective, a grassroots organization in Jamaica explained how her group started to use safety audit tools to identify danger zones, advising on improvements and empowering women to alert others on safety issues. Using mobile phone apps, they have been able to gather information and assess the needs of the most vulnerable in order to deliver care packages to residents that required specific support and medications, particularly the elderly. Also, the collective has been able to organize local farmers markets by connecting urban communities to rural ones, in partnership with the local governments. Josephine Castillo, National Programme Coordinator of DAMPA Philippines, a federation of 230 women grassroots organizations, explained how, together, they have build a space to exchange in order to better deliver on the ground in collaboration with local governments. Practical operations have been carried out for the distribution of masks, sensitization programmes on social distancing and ensuring food security in the most fragile settlements.

“The pandemic has triggered an unprecedented crisis that is much more than a health crisis” said Eric Berg, Chairman of Habitat Norway, a voluntary, non profit advocacy and information association. This is the result of the lack of attention by decision makers and development agencies to the urban poor in the last five decades. This crisis should be seen as an opportunity to give a stronger role to community organizations because they have the knowledge to reach the most vulnerable. Grassroot and civil society organizations represent the missing link. Multi-stakeholder platforms are also essential to mobilize a diversity of actors and build robust alliances to address current and future challenges.

Sri Sofjan, Co-Chair of the World Urban Campaign and representative of the Huairou Commission also emphasised the need to develop new modalities to recognize the grassroots communities and amplify bottom-up processes in decision-making. The fundamental role of community leaders has been demonstrated once again during the coronavirus pandemic. They have become indispensable partners of the humanitarian space in urban areas.

Recommendations

- The COVID-19 pandemic should be seen in a broad human development context going beyond health that requires the involvement of community-based organizations and their leaders that can play a central role given their ability to reach large groups, mobilise and share information. This requires the recognition of community leadership, redefining partnerships to recognize communities that at the frontline as important players and not beneficiaries. This also means redefining the position and roles of

community and grassroots key players, including in planning and decision-making at the national and local levels.

- There is a need to reflect on the definition of equality and vulnerability as decision-makers are mobilizing, allocating and sharing resources. This requires consultation and consensus building. Community organizations need active seats at the table in donor consultations.
- At the community level, grassroot and civil society organizations should strengthen savings mechanisms to ensure safety funds during emergencies. Those should be based on existing local practices that are more resilient and easier to manage during this crisis while incorporating elements of innovation using the power of ICTs.
- Community leaders and their organizations need to strengthen and build new alliances with partners locally, nationally and globally. They need to engage with other stakeholders to build their legitimacy. The current crisis is an opportunity for urban community organizations and grassroots movements to present their requirements and interests at the global level. In that context, they need to present realistic and well prepared programs and projects for funding. In order to ensure and increase their credibility, they need to secure audits, ensure accountability and transparency.
- Global platforms are instrumental in promoting key messages on urban issues and solutions through policy dialogue, and run urban advocacy campaigns like the World Urban Campaign or the General Assembly of Partners acting on behalf of a broad multitude of partners including trade unions, faith-based organizations, the youth and women groups. Those should be supported and strengthened to promote globally coordinated citizen actions and push for specific policies and reforms by national governments.
- Faith-based organizations have a particular role to play. They represent vast networks of health and education services and can play the roles of trusted intermediary between government and local communities. It is essential to support their advocacy role of different faith groups where they are a voice for the disadvantaged and those cut off from resources.
- Multi-faith platforms and networks should be used to build an interface with communities in order to disseminate the right messages, adapting to different faiths and reaching different captive audiences.
- For long-term resilience, it is essential to formulate robust pandemic plans and ecosystems that includes community-based organizations with the objective of maximizing solutions and monitoring the multiple impacts of future pandemics. Community mapping should be a requirement to building and consolidating response ecosystems.

UTC#7

THE WAGE GAP, SOCIAL SECURITY AND SMALL BUSINESS

UTC #7

COVID-19
Take action with us in cities and communities

UN HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE COVID-19 RESPONSE

JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON:

URBAN THINKERS CAMPUS

The wage gap, social security and small business during pandemics

20 MAY 2020
14:30 pm-16:00pm C.E.T

Smartly | actionaid | WORLD URBAN CAMPAIGN

Number of participants: 79

Partner organizations: ActionAid India, Smartly

Panelists:

1. K.T. Suresh, National Lead Policy & Campaigns, ActionAid India
2. Tikender Singh Panwar, National Coalition for Inclusive Sustainable Urbanisation (NCU), India
3. Winslow Sargeant, International Council for Small Business (ICSB), USA
4. Florence Nisabwe, Lance d'Afrique Burundi, Burundi and South Africa
5. Analia Pastran, Smartly Social Enterprise on the SDGs Latin America, New York & Buenos Aires
6. Sandeep Chachra, ActionAid India, Co-Chair, World Urban Campaign

Session Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has suspended the lives of hundreds of millions of people and brought jobs to a standstill as the lockdown continues with detrimental impacts on enterprises and livelihoods around the globe. In that context, almost 1.6 billion informal economy workers representing the most vulnerable in the labour market, out of a worldwide total of two billion and a global workforce of 3.3 billion, have suffered massive damage to their capacity to earn a living since the beginning of the pandemic. Unlike formal sector employees, informal economy workers are often not - or only insufficiently - covered by social protection measures, resulting in limited access to health-care services and no income replacement if they stop working. As a result of the closure, some countries experience the most horrific exodus of workers from cities. In India, forty millions unemployed are going "back home" and 120 million have lost their jobs, reported Sandeep Chachra, Executive Director at ActionAid India, an NGO engaged in the COVID-19 crisis response, committed to supporting vulnerable communities by ensuring food security and public health and re-building people's livelihood.

Tikender Singh Panwar, Convenor of the National Coalition for Inclusive Sustainable Urbanisation (NCU), India, explained that the current situation reflects our incapacity to address the massive inequalities. According to the World Bank, there are 450 million internal migrants in India and cities are experiencing a reverse migration of migrant workers. According to Singh Panwar, the primary reason is that cities are not able to retain workers include the inequalities witnessed in the last three decades, and the manner in which cities are being built – the process of city development, land monetization which has alienated the worker and brought exclusion in the process. This is the result of several decades of inadequate policies he said. In particular, local governments have not been sufficiently empowered to play a significant role in running cities in order to reflect citizens and business needs and choices. "The pandemic has exposed the rotten lot. It has revealed the inadequacy of our regulatory frameworks, particularly in cities" he said. The current informality has exposed millions of workers that have no bargaining power anymore, he added. It is crucial to operate a shift in policy responses at all levels in order to protect workers, enterprises, particularly the smaller businesses, and especially those operating in the informal economy.

For Winslow Sargeant, President Elect of the International Council for Small Business, USA, while much of the focus has been on business losses and stay-at-home orders, little attention has been paid to the daily impacts on front line workers and the needs of families across the country. While playing a vital role in maintaining the economic stability of the country, front-line workers often do not have decent wages to face daily expenses. He underlined the lack of safety nets in case of job loss and the steep gender-gaps.

The COVID-19 crisis has especially harsh impacts and undermines the earnings and economic stability of women and people of particular ethnic

origins with cascading effects on families. Also, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises that employ up to 80 percent of the population have been severely impacted. In some countries, they have experienced a larger decline in businesses activity compared to medium and large firms—since most of micro and small businesses are forced to stop operating due to their inability to implement preventative health measures for customers. These companies that sustain millions of workers lack support in most countries. Florence Nisabwe explained how Lance d'Afrique, an NGO working in Burundi and South Africa, is training women in new lines of work such as creative industries in order to convert to new jobs as they have been forced to abandon their activities.

For Analia Pastran, Founder of Smartly Social Enterprise on the Sustainable Development Goals, in the long term, we need to invest in green jobs in the future, and those that are likely to address the SDGs. They will be the most relevant and the most sustainable jobs, less likely to be affected by pandemic events, as contributing to long term development objectives. The world of future employment and jobs should be revisited in line with the SDGs. “The decade of action in which the UN is engaged towards 2030 to achieve the SDG should remain our road map and the goals our guides in the post-COVID-19 recovery”, she said.

As panelists recommended that policy and regulatory frameworks should be revisited in order to address the wage gaps, safety nets and the sustainability of small business, participants also raised the importance of flexible, targeted financing mechanisms to cater for the millions of workers and entrepreneurs at loss in the current pandemic. They suggested that the role of microfinance be explored further to support entrepreneurs and families in the recovery period of the coronavirus crisis.

Recommendations

- Immediate response measures to the pandemic cannot separate health from economic impacts. Those should include protecting the workers from the virus, providing access to health care, income and food support to families particularly in the informal sector that are more vulnerable.
- Mapping and assessments are essential steps to identify priorities in the informal economy to better understand the diversity of situations and needs. This should be done in partnership with grassroot and community-based organizations.
- During lockdowns civil society organizations need to devise advocacy strategies to communicate through appropriate channels about safe workplace behaviours and measures in place to mitigate the impact on the incomes of workers in informal settlements
- Ensuring that infected workers have access to affordable health care is essential. Adjustments to existing social protection schemes may be needed.

- Providing cash and food support for individuals and families should be done through workers associations and organized workers communities which have a key role to give their inside knowledge and the daily reality of workers.
- In addition to cash transfers, other support may be envisaged such as deferral or reduction of loans, rents or utility bills for low-income people for the duration of the pandemic.
- Social dialogue between national and local governments, workers and employers will be needed in the future to strengthen the pandemic resilience of front-line workers. Sufficient safety nets need to be negotiated to anticipate the impact of job loss and alleviate remaining gender-gaps.
- Prioritizing green jobs and those that are likely to address the SDGs is crucial to ensure resilient communities and livelihoods. The decade of action in which the UN is engaged towards 2030 to achieve the SDG should remain our road map and the goals our guides in the post-COVID-19 recovery.

UTC#8

PLANNING AND DESIGN FOR PANDEMIC URBAN RESILIENCE

COVID-19
Take action with us in cities and communities

UTC #8

JOIN THE CONVERSATION ON:
**Planning and Design
for Pandemic
Urban Resilience**

**URBAN
THINKERS
CAMPUS**

WORLD URBAN CAMPAIGN

27 MAY 2020
14:30 pm-16:00pm C.E.T

L'INSTITUT PARIS REGION | GAP | ISOCARP | ARCADIS

Number of participants: 387

Partner organization: ISOCARP, Arcadis, Commonwealth Association of Planners, Paris Region Institute

Panelists:

1. Bert Smolders, Arcadis - Chair, World Urban Campaign
2. Milena Ivkovic, Coordinator of Urban Planning Advisory Teams, ISOCARP
3. Ian Tant, Vice-President, Commonwealth Association of Planners
4. Eric Huybrechts, Senior Architect and Regional/Urban Planner, Institut Paris Region
5. Didier Vancutsem, Director, ISOCARP Institute
6. Javier Toner, Urban Development Specialist, UN-Habitat

Session Summary

Experts started by reminding the central role of urban planning in the recovery and the unique opportunity to start rethinking the way we plan cities. Metropolis have been the epicenter of the crisis, starting with

Wuhan, reminded Eric Huybrechts, Regional Planner at the Paris Region Institute. As large cities continue to grow such pandemic is increasingly inevitable and new planning and design approaches are essential to prevent and adapt to future crisis, protect citizens and prepare for upcoming pandemics. For that, we need to learn from cities that had the most successful responses so far.

'Planning for flattening the curve should be at the heart of urban planning' said Bert Smolders from Arcadis NV, a firm engaged in urban infrastructures around the world. Currently working in partnership with UN-Habitat to assist cities in the immediate response to the pandemic through a Rapid Response Help Desk, Arcadis is also thinking strategically about resilient planning approaches for the long term, in order to 'build back better' after the crisis by incorporating future needs, towards a 'safe and attractive new normal' Smolders said. However, he added that the task is complex because we have to make secure health-proof cities on one hand while preserving the livability and freedom citizens have enjoyed so far.

One of the critical aspects of future planning will be to incorporate informal settlements, said Huybrechts, and planning for the increasing majority of urban poor that have been impacted by the pandemic. While this will one of the biggest challenges that urban planners will face, the pandemic can also be an opportunity to accelerate the shift towards the 'green new deal', he said. Ian Tant, UK Vice President of the Commonwealth Association of Planners also emphasized the fact that this crisis represents an immense opportunity for planners to fully dive into climate action, redefining green space in cities, revisiting the way city centers are designed for business. Those have the potential to be shaped differently to adapt to changing life styles as a number of workers could review commuting modes, work from home, shop differently. Urban planners can reinvent cities shaped by new 'active' mobilities and new approaches to public transport. Four essential avenues to rethink cities, Tant said, are through new housing standards to make people safer and healthier, promoting active travel through non-motorized transports, improving green space and reshaping city centers.

Isocarp, a global network of urban planners is actively engaging planning professionals in learning from the pandemic and looking at ways to increase urban resilience, rethinking public space and introducing a new health consciousness in future planning. 'Public space has been 'traumatized' in this pandemic, suffering from new social distancing protocols. This requires a major shift', said Milena Ivkovic, Coordinator of Urban Planning Advisory Teams at Isocarp. It is essential to redefine public space and orient the priorities of planners to innovate with optimal solutions. The Isocarp Institute, lead by Didier Vancutsem, is looking at ways to build the future capacities of planners through adaptive, flexible and integrated approaches to designing and planning cities. A new dialogue will be essential in the coming years by engaging citizens and training young planners to address the challenges.

Javier Toner, Urban Development Specialist at UN-Habitat introduced the different scales through which planning should be revisited: regional, city, neighborhood and building. All scales require new thinking. Systems of cities in regions need robust blue and green networks. Cities require adapted urban fabrics, with the right densities and public spaces, mixed-use compact neighborhoods integrating urban agriculture, as well as buildings with adequate space and standards.

Urban planners are at a critical moment as the Covid-19 pandemic unfolds. They are called to rethink the essence of planning by incorporating new requirements to prevent and adapt to future crisis and instill a health and protection in their practice as never before. At the end of the session, planners expressed the importance of such event to reflect on the thinking of the different planning associations and practices, as well as focus on key areas such as urban mobilities and public space. Participants agreed on many points made and requested that more sessions be organized to help share views and contribute to learning and peer-exchanges.

Recommendations

- Planners need to focus their efforts on inclusive planning and management incorporating new health parameters that have emerged during the pandemic. They also need to incorporate collateral impacts such as domestic violence and health issues amplified by inadequate basic services, shelter and infrastructures.
- Planners and their partners need to develop new urban models to 'Build Back Better' towards pandemic resilience that also promote greener cities, enhance public space and city centers and mobilities, sustain job creation and economic diversity, with attention for local production.
- There is a need to reflect on minimum housing standards in light of the pandemic, as well as urban and design planning norms regarding internal space and ventilation, energy security, and access to broadband.
- Reshaping city centres is paramount given possible changing lifestyles and working modalities during and after the pandemic. People working from home and online shopping services may allow to use a reduced amount and different types of business space in city centres. This will provide an opportunity to reshape cities to create more and different homes and green spaces, revisiting urban densities.
- The pandemic offers an opportunity for increased climate action through a 'green' recovery to help achieve the Paris agreement and reduce the carbon urban footprint, improve air quality, reduce motorized traffic flow and increase space such as bikeways for 'active' non-motorized modes of transport.
- The pandemic demonstrates that planning cannot be static and needs to be constantly revisited. Also, managing cities should be flexible and proactive using specific monitoring tools. In that respect, planning networks and open platforms are necessary to develop knowledge on

urban dynamics, develop innovative solutions, build shared strategies and capacities to face new crises that may emerge as new pandemics and disasters.

- There is need to reflect and develop more inclusive and responsive decision-making and policy-making processes which are more flexible and integrated.
- Using the four planning scales, it is recommended to consider the following areas in order to revisit planning to increase pandemic resilience:
 - Regional/metropolitan scale:
 - Establishing rural-urban linkages: interconnectivity between rural areas and cities is essential to continue feeding cities during lockdowns and increase the resilience of both rural and urban areas.
 - While an emphasis has been put on the development of large cities, intermediate and tertiary cities should also matter. They require greater investments to improve quality of services and economic opportunities.
 - Robust blue and green networks should help make cities and regions more resilient. The continuity of open spaces to green, blue networks is a way to release the stress experiences during a pandemic. Nature-based solutions are needed to increase resilience. A balance between urbanization and eco-system preservation should be found.
 - City scale:
 - Land allocation to streets and public spaces is important and critical for access to services, mobility and proximity to public spaces.
 - Density with minimum standards of living with access to basic services and open spaces is important for the environment and economic and social well-being.
 - Public transport is seen as a hotspot for transmissions, many cities have found new alternatives for public transport increasing hygiene, extended cycling lanes.
 - Capacity and access of healthcare system – urban planners should work more with epidemiologists to include healthcare in future plans and expertise.
 - Neighbourhood scale:
 - Self-sustained, mixed-use neighbourhoods which are able to produce energy, food become important for people to access services without commuting for long distances.
 - Public spaces are key - they should be designed in a way that allow interaction and that can adapt to different uses during a pandemic.
 - Rethinking of common spaces and how to appropriate them as spaces to offer solutions in times of crises such as using them for urban agriculture through community gardens or rooftop farming.

- Building scale:
 - Minimum space standards for housing, residential or other uses should be designed with access to some form of outdoor spaces.
 - Access to basic services, ICT and online services – it is important for houses to have these facilities and spaces that allow for work.
 - Designing buildings that adopt to green building standards to be more sustainable and energy efficient.

UTC#9

REPORTING DURING THE PANDEMIC

UTC #9

COVID-19
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UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

COVID-19
RESPONSE

WORLD
URBAN
CAMPAIGN

**URBAN
THINKERS
CAMPUS**

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Reporting
during the Pandemic

29 MAY 2020
5:00-6:30 PM CET C.E.T

FIRST+MAIN
FILMS

Smartly |
Emprendedorismo social en ODS

Number of participants: 117

Partner organization: First+Main Films, Smartly

Panelists:

1. Analia Pastran, Founder of Smartly Social Enterprise on the SDGs (Moderator)
2. Zoe Tabary, Property Rights Editor, Thomson Reuters Foundation
3. Theresa Williamson, Executive Director, Catalytic Communities, Brazil
4. Elijah Kanyi, Founder, Sauti TV, Kenya
5. Alexander Hecht, Journalist Foreign News Desk (Asia), ORF Austrian Broadcasting Corporation
6. Ashley Womble, Director of Communication of Crisis Text Line, USA
7. John Paget and
8. Chris Elisara, Co-founders, First+Main Films
9. Sandeep Chachra, ActionAid India, World Urban Campaign Co-chair

Session Summary

Zoe Tabary, Property Rights Editor at the Thomson Reuters Foundation, initiated the session by outlining the challenges that journalists and reporters face in the new pandemic, starting with the constraints of the lockdown in many countries and the international travel restrictions. The context is imposing huge limitations to properly verify information and getting people's trust to obtain feedback as it was done more easily in person through face to face before. They face safety limitations to meet vulnerable groups such as the homeless, migrant workers and LGBT communities, as they need to ensure that people are not put at risk through physical contact or in identifying them and giving them anonymity. Showing behind the scenes content, and sharing what life is like during lockdowns has become increasingly difficult.

Theresa Williamson, Executive Director at Catalytic Communities, Brazil, emphasized the need to rely on community reporting. Reporting the complex reality of COVID-19 simply and clearly is increasing challenging. In many countries, it has become impossible to obtain reliable information on the number of COVID-19 cases. Those are often biased by changing and unclear methodologies. The narratives from public officials are also sometimes difficult to decrypt. Given the unreliable data and the inability to conduct direct interviews, journalists are chasing alternative data from trust-based networks able to depict a different reality on the ground. Theresa Williamson gave the example of RioOnWatch, a favela 'local to global' news source that reports on what is happening on the ground in the city's favelas in real time, in both Portuguese and English. The reporting aims to support local organizers who are trying to improve their neighbourhoods. Such project is clearly needed and should grow in many parts of the world in order to better reflect the reality of populations conditions and events.

Elijah Kanyi, Reporter and Founder of Sauti TV, a community channel based in Mathare, one of the largest slums of Nairobi, explained how their programmes have exclusively focused on promoting positive stories depicting how people in communities have helped each others during the pandemic.

In the current crisis, community medias such as Sauti TV lack capacity and depend on the mainstream medias to air stories directly affecting the communities such as those on evictions and police violence. However, they play an important role by reaching out to large population groups, in particular the youth living in slum areas in order to explain safety issues, promote positive actions as people in poverty face the additional challenges imposed by the pandemic.

Alexander Hecht, Journalist of the Asia Foreign News Desk at ORF Austrian Broadcasting Corporation, explained how he has been facing the specific challenges of the pandemic. It is often difficult to obtain details and understand decisions made by government officials while following the analysis and data produced by medical experts, he said. However, for journalists, it is important to stand their grounds given their responsibility

to relay messages from the authorities to the public regarding measures against the coronavirus while keeping a critical mind. Their role is to adapt and translate the language used by medical experts into a language that the audience and most people can understand. It is also crucial to maintain a balance between local perspectives and global issues, covering both urban and rural contexts during a global pandemic.

Ashley Womble, writer and mental health advocate, Director of Communication of Crisis Text Line, explained how her organization helps support people in crisis through counselling using a secure online platform based on text messages. Trained crisis counselors receive texts and respond to individuals affected by anxiety, depression, etc. With more than 142 million text messages since 2013, Crisis Text Line has collected one of the largest real-time health data sets in the world that cut across various genders, ages, races, and ethnicities. Quarantines and isolations during Covid-19 have increased texts on depression, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, and racism. The organization shares data on trends during the crisis via the crisistrends.org website. The raw numbers are critical for analysis, provide strong evidence and help tell valuable stories.

John Paget and Chris Elisara, Co-founders of First and Main Films, produce visual documentary-style narratives and films on select subjects. While we need to consider the world of fast news with the mainstream and social media, as well as the medium cycle news of the print, TV and radio, it is important to also rely of the 'slow' medias to produce documentaries and films that explore and investigate issues and reflect on the future. It is also crucial to organize events for the large audiences to reflect on key issues such as the *Better Cities Film Festival*, an urban-focused film event organized in conjunction with the World Urban Forum, the biennial UN-Habitat global conference o cities. Given the complexity and challenges faced by the medias to report in real time during the pandemic, filmmakers are meant to play a vital role in producing stories with emotional power. Connection and collaboration with reporters is essential to build a network of allies in the longer term. Filmmakers can amplify and add additional context to the stories heard in the 24-hour cycle reporting.

Recommendations

- In order to build resilience into journalism as we face pandemics, it is essential to promote an inclusive news ecosystem that help reach different levels from global to local, representing varied groups and viewpoints in a wide range of contexts and communities, addressing and reaching wider audiences. It is crucial to develop networks of freelancers and local journalists on the ground. When there are no local media channels, the alternative is to each out to local NGOs and community-based organizations. Networking is key to help facts checking, interpreting data and numbers and getting local contexts and insights for global effects.
- It is essential to diversify the type of data used by journalists. Alternative data sets produced through open-data platforms provide new types of evidence that enrich the analysis. Raw numbers are

often more robust than percentages to provide evidence and help tell valuable stories.

- It is crucial to build the capacity of journalists to carry out their work during a pandemic:
 - Safety protocols during reporting: ensure the safety of journalists and the people they meet when covering a pandemic.
 - Gathering information and conducting interviews when restrictions on movements and contacts.
 - Verifying facts in situations of information “overload” at a time when journalists need accurate information.
 - Interrogating scientific information and data surrounding the pandemics, drawing on expert science and health reporters.
 - Making use of appropriate terminologies in order to avoid stigmatisation and discrimination.
 - Providing information on public health risks without causing panic.
- While it is essential for journalists to inform people about necessary protective measures and behaviours they need to maintain their watchdog function to highlight key trends and remain credible.
- It is important to rely of the ‘slow’ medias to produce documentaries and films that explore and investigate issues and reflect on the future. Promoting the growth of the city-focused filmmaking community in size, and diversity—gender, race, class, and nationality, is essential to promote better cities. For that, it is important to invest in capacity building to build professional skills in film making so they produce better films, more films, with diverse voices and stories.
- There is a need to develop more connections between filmmakers and journalists, reporters and thought leaders. The World Urban Forum and the World Urban Campaign can help promote such dialogue.