Future of Asian and Pacific Cities in the post-COVID19 era

ESCAP Virtual Expert Group Meeting

Agenda

- Team Introduction
- Rationale of the discussion paper
- Setting the Scene
- Individual Pillars
- Breakout Sessions

Team Introduction

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Rationale of the discussion paper

- The Future of Asian & Pacific Cities report (2019)
    - 4 key pillars and 15 pathways to support sustainable development
- Cities at the forefront of the COVID-19 pandemic
    - Health / human impacts (i.e. illness & death)
    - Economic impacts (e.g. loss of jobs)
    - Shut down of basic service systems (e.g. schools, health care)
    - Fiscal impacts (e.g. loss of revenue)
- How to respond, recover, and build back better?
    - From crisis response to a sustainable recovery
    - COVID-19 won't be the last pandemic
    - Increased risk on zoonotic diseases (planetary health emergency), increased prevalence of chronic diseases (much related with the physical and social environment)
    - COVID-19 highlighted importance of addressing health inequities as part of sustainable and inclusive development
    - Depart from business-as-usual, embrace transformative change

    COVID-19 as catalyst for Systems Change

Setting the Scene (1)

Promote sustainable urban development for improved public health

► The social-ecological model of health

    Health determined by three major factors:

1. Genetics
2. Individual behaviour
3. **Physical and social environment**

► Implications

    ► Strong linkage between health and urban development

    ► Public health approach, beyond medical approach

    ► Promoting health: healthy environments and healthy behaviours, beyond health services

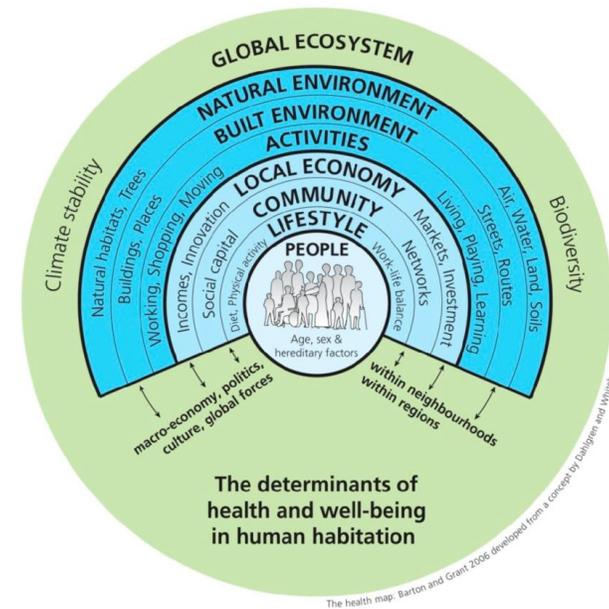   ► Importance of policy coherence (intersectoral, multi-level)

Figure 1: A health map for the local human habitat (Source: Barton and Grant 2006)

Setting the Scene (1)

Promote sustainable urban development for improved public health

▶ Opportunity to strengthen an Urban Health Approach

    ▶ Highlight local governments policy domains to address physical, socio-economic and environmental determinants of health

    ▶ Build capacity of local governments to identify strongest relationships between urban environment and citizen's health

    ▶ Develop urban resilience

Figure 2: Urban Health Framework (adapted from International Society of Urban Health)

Setting the Scene (2)

The urban context and determinants of health

▶ List of health determinants

   ▶ Basic services & infrastructure

   ▶ Physical and natural environments

   ▶ Socio-economic and governance issues

▶ Their relationship to health

▶ Their relevance to COVID19

   ▶ The disease itself

   ▶ The impact of response

▶ Reference to the pillars

Conclusions:

- COVID-19 and cities is not about density
- COVID-19 and cities is about urban equity (poverty, services, environment, social protection)

Pillar 1: The Future of Urban and Territorial Planning

Urban and Territorial Planning as Spatial Vaccine

Pillar 1: Health Considerations

- **UTP and healthy environments**

    How UTP supports public health

    - Dimensions of planning for health (Basic planning and legislative standards, Planning codes, Spatial frameworks, Urban and territorial processes)
    - Health in all planning phases (Diagnosis, formulation, implementation, M&E)

    UTP and public health have complementary skill sets, similar work methods, long-term outcomes, shared values.

- **UTP and economic resilience**

    - UTP to promote small and medium city development as alternate economic hubs
    - UPT to promote proximity production and consumption patterns, and MSMEs diversification

- **UTP and equity**

    - UTP to upgrade slums, improve housing conditions and secure tenure
    - UTP to ensure a standard of living, equitable access to services and a healthy environment

Pillar 1: Lessons from COVID-19

► Density and health

► Informal settlements and housing rights

► Healthy behaviours and environment for pandemic preparedness

► Supportive environments and infrastructure to cope with response

► Spatial epidemiology

Pillar 1: Policy Pathways

1. **Pathway 1: Integrate sustainability and quality-of-life targets into urban planning**

   ▶ Mainstream evidence-based planning and design monitoring approaches (e.g. health impact assessments, behavioural science)

   ▶ Integrate explicitly health targets in sustainable urban and territorial planning processes on national and subnational levels

   ▶ Bring a health focus in emerging urban planning legislation, education, research and practice

2. **Pathway 2: Co-produce with citizens urban planning solutions / technology and local capacities**

   ▶ Finding local, alternative solutions so to ensure access to basic services

   ▶ Guidelines for placemaking and public space programming for sustainable recovery

3. **Pathway 3: Identify specific urban regeneration and growth strategies**

   ▶ City-region strategies to strengthen economic resilience

   ▶ Functional regional economies, compact urban development, Nature-based solutions

4. **New Pathway: Strengthen housing policies for all**

   ▶ Short-term security for vulnerable residents

   ▶ Medium-term improvement in affordable housing and slum upgrading

Pillar 2: The Future of Urban Resilience

A healthy population is a resilient population

Pillar 2: Health Considerations

- Healthy environments enable conditions for more healthy people.
    - Healthy people are more resilient to withstanding stressors and shocks
- Public health events as a shock or stress
- Health impacts from other disasters
- Threats from different sources (e.g. climate change, pandemics, conflict) converge and create complex conditions with further health implications
- Health features in many resilience / disaster risk management frameworks (e.g. Sendai)

Pillar 2: Lessons from COVID-19

► Health services

► Vulnerable population groups

► Risk Communication

Pillar 2: Policy Pathways

1. **Pathway 1: Nature based solutions and resilient infrastructure**
   - Improve health
   - Reduce risk of climatic and health threats
2. **Pathway 2: Support to urban poor groups and other vulnerable populations**
   - Equity-based approach to urban development
   - Ensure access to and affordability of essential infrastructure & services
3. **Pathway 3: Create and strengthen partnerships**
   - Meaningful community participation
   - Multisectoral approaches
4. **Pathway 4: Data and technology literacy**
   - Improve collection of disaggregated data
   - Address digital divide
   - Consider internet access as an essential service

Pillar 3: The Future of Smart and Inclusive Cities

Bridging the Urban Health Divide through Technology

Pillar 3: Health Considerations

▶ Harnessing the Power of Data-Driven Decision Making in Government

    ▶ Collection and sharing of data with health implications among local governments, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, researchers, and public health practitioners would improve the ability of cities to create effective, evidence-based policies

▶ **Safety and Security:** Real time crime mapping, crowd management, lighting and surveillance of parking lots and public spaces at night

▶ **Environment**: Real time and geographically distributed water and air quality monitoring

▶ **Healthcare**: Telemedicine, wearables, sanitation and hygiene, remote patient monitoring systems

▶ **Mobility**: Smart street lighting, mobile ride hailing applications, bikeshare transit system integration, intelligent traffic signals and injury prevention

▶ **Engagement and social services**: Local civic engagement apps, digital citizen and social services, citizen 'complaint' reporting platforms, local connection platforms

Pillar 3: Lessons from COVID-19

- Technology can aid connectivity with the public, providing critical basic service delivery and reducing infectious disease transmission risk

- Disaggregated, high-quality, and inclusive data has proved essential to governments successfully monitoring, controlling, and ultimately reducing community transmission, infection, and untimely death

- Big data helped to understand more about the risk factors (e.g. air pollution) for COVID-19; identify vulnerable populations (e.g. the elderly, certain occupations); and predicting future hotspots by overlaying data sets onto city maps

- Misinformation generally emerges from gaps in knowledge; disinformation is more intentional

- Health communications can only succeed with ample transparency, reliability, and trust in government (including cyber security concerns)

- Strong broadband connectivity for all Asia Pacific cities is crucial to meeting the SDGs

Pillar 3: Policy Pathways

- **Pathway 1. Improve smart city governance across urban systems, institutions and actors to overcome inequalities and make more informed and integrated planning decisions**
  - Develop a healthy cities peer sharing network

- **Pathway 2. Encourage technology firms to become more civic minded and create sustainable smart city solutions with social enterprises**
  - Create an open-data dashboard that collects and shares digital health data

- **Pathway 3. Adopt cybersecurity safeguards in both digital and physical urban infrastructure development planning**
  - Enhance citizen trust and fight digital misinformation via consistent, clear and evidence-driven urban health communication campaigns

- **Pathway 4. Develop smart mobility investment plans that prioritize sustainable urban mobility options for citizens**
  - Prioritize sustainable and active transportation modes digitally integrated into existing transport networks

- **Pathway 5. Expand viable smart city funding mechanisms by enabling cross-sector partnerships and business matching platforms**
  - Partner with private sector companies to provide broadband internet connectivity to all citizens

Pillar 4: The Future of Urban Finance

Investing in Healthy Cities

Pillar 4: Health Considerations

- Investments in basic infrastructure (specifically WASH) and affordable, high quality housing are crucial to facilitating responses to major infectious disease outbreaks and broader health outcomes.

- The financial positions of subnational governments, private infrastructure providers, and service delivery agencies reflect the health of local economies.

- Resilient urban finance systems require regular and predictable reforms to national policy and regulatory frameworks that better account for employment and production changes within local economies.

- The imperative of creating healthy cities means local governments must exercise greater leadership around diversifying and widening their local fiscal base.

Pillar 4: Lessons from COVID-19

- Local and other subnational governments in the Asia and Pacific region that are primarily responsible for disaster management and crisis response do not have revenue and other financial resources commensurate with the wide range of emergency functions they are required to perform.

  - While there currently are no estimates of the direct impact of COVID-19 on local government revenues in Asia and the Pacific, the World Bank conservatively has estimated that local government revenues can be expected to contract 15% in 2020.

- COVID-19 is not just a demand shock, but rather is the century's first health catastrophe prompting restructuring of urban economies.

  - Almost all the core pillars of urban employment and local economic activity in the region were negatively impacted in the initial stages of the global lockdown (IMF 2020).

- Urban finance reform needed

  - municipal financing; more labour-intensive capital and recurrent spending required

  - new spending programs that reach into informal settlements and local informal labour markets

  - investment in urban infrastructure sector to secure better environmental and public health outcomes

Pillar 4: Policy Pathways

- **Pathway 1: Public Private Partnerships for Affordable Housing**
  - Existing PPP contracts and project designs based on previous assumptions around demand and willingness or ability to pay will likely be the most drastically affected.
  - Business models for PPPs in affordable housing will have to integrate new design standards for housing units and the use of space within housing developments

- **Pathway 2: Land Linked Financing Mechanisms**
  - Changes in land use demand, along with national fiscal responses to the diverse impacts of COVID-19, will continue to shift the distribution of costs and benefits during recovery between different land and property owners in different types of cities.
  - The major long-term opportunity with the use of land-linked financing relates to drawing stronger connections between these mechanisms and nature-based and biophilic solutions to climate change.

- **Pathway 3: Congestion and Environmental Fees**
  - Need to refine national regulations to facilitate their deployment in fast growing intermediary cities where car ownership is increasing.
  - National fiscal stimulus packages and reform programs in the wake of the COVID-19 and therefore a major opportunity to strengthen the design of policy and regulatory frameworks to update and integrate pricing structures with environmental objectives.

Breakout Sessions

1. Urban & Territorial Planning
2. Urban Resilience
3. Smart & Inclusive Cities
4. Urban Finance

Breakout Sessions

Objectives

- Share views and experiences
- Discuss the content of the draft discussion paper
- Give input for final discussion paper (lessons learned, recommendation, case studies)
- Moving forward from recommendation to implementation

Key Questions

1. What are the most important learnings from COVID-19 in terms of this pillar?
2. Thinking more broadly about health in the context of this pillar, what is the main existing or new recommendation?
3. Are there additional or alternative case studies at city level that we should consider including in this chapter?
4. What are the next steps in continuing to implement the original pathways and the recommendations from this discussion paper?

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▶ Once on the page:

➢ Select "Sign Up" to create an account with your email address and enter your ***name with your organization in brackets***

➢ A confirmation email will be sent to your email account with a ***verification code***

➢ Enter that code to complete the sign-up procedure

➢ Once completed you should see your name on the Miro board as you move the cursor around the page

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