The COVID crisis in cities: a tale of two lockdowns

OECD Champion Mayors Webinar Series: Inequality Matters

14 May 2020 | 16:00 CET | 10:00 EST

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In today's increasingly urban world, **more than half of the population live in cities**, which account for 60% of total employment creation and global GDP. Cities may be better equipped than the rest of a country to respond to the COVID-19 crisis due to their well-developed health care services, but the effects of the outbreak go beyond health. Today, **the sanitary emergency is unfolding into an economic and social crisis exacerbating inequality** in cities around the world.

How citizens experience COVID-19 differs between and within cities. Local factors such as public service delivery, fast broadband connection, fiscal capacity, infrastructure and population density are crucial in tackling the consequences of the virus. What's more, OECD economies are seeing a decline of 2 percentage points of annual GDP for each month of confinement. This could compound the impact on those still recovering from the 2008 economic crisis. Large cities, tourist destinations, intensive energy-producing and trading cities will be among the most affected in the short term with a risk of losing 30% of jobs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a harsh light on inequality. Coronavirus and its spill over effects impact some population groups more than others –women, the elderly, those with chronic illnesses, the poor, the homeless, migrants, people with disabilities and those in precarious employment or housing. The pandemic is revealing the multidimensional nature of inequality. Disparities go beyond income and generate gaps in the right to quality education, health, housing and access to social and environmental services. The epidemic is hitting vulnerable communities the hardest and local governments are taking measures to mitigate the impact on the wellbeing of their residents. The crisis makes some of these vulnerable groups visible and raises awareness of the importance of key workers such as employees with low-wages or precarious contracts, cleaners, delivery drivers and caregivers.

Based on the OECD note *Coronavirus: Cities policy responses*, **'The COVID crisis in cities: a tale of two lockdowns'** will explore how Champion Mayors are leading the way in responding to the pandemic, protecting vulnerable groups and looking beyond the crisis to implement recovery efforts considering inclusion post-COVID-19. This webinar will **highlight cities' efforts to reduce sources of vulnerability**, **collect early data on how the virus is affecting citizens** and **provide useful lessons to build greater resilience** for the future.

Panel:

Moderated by Aziza Akhmouch, Head of Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development Division**, OECD**

- **Lamia Kamal-Chaoui,** Director, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD
- **Zoran Janković**, Mayor, City of **Ljubljana** (Slovenia)
- **Rosannie Filato**, Member of the Executive Committee, Responsible for Public Safety, City of **Montreal** (Canada)
- **Michiel Grauss**, Vice Mayor for Poverty Reduction, City of **Rotterdam** (The Netherlands)
- *Discussant:* **Claire Charbit,** Head of Unit**,** Territorial Dialogue and Migration, **OECD**

Audience Q&A

Key questions this webinar will explore:

- How is the COVID-19 crisis disproportionately affecting vulnerable and marginalised groups in cities?
- What are some promising strategies and initiatives to protect vulnerable groups in the short, medium and long term?
- How are cities planning recovery and resilience beyond the outbreak to protect the least advantaged and enhance social cohesion?

Audience: This webinar is geared toward Champion Mayors cities and open to the public.
Language: English.

This webinar is organised as part of the ***Inequality Matters Series*** *of the OECD Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth Initiative. The series explores thematic topics related to inequality in cities by bringing together the latest OECD research with real-world examples and experiences from Champion Mayors cities.*

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