Resilience of the 2030 Agenda in the Pandemic: lessons for SIDS & countries in special situations

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Pandemics WHO

- Chikungunya
- Cholera
- Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever
- Ebola virus disease
- Hendra virus infection
- Influenza (pandemic, seasonal, zoonotic)
- Lassa fever
- Marburg virus disease
- Meningitis
- MERS-CoV
- Monkeypox
- Nipah virus infection
- Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)
- Plague
- Rift Valley fever
- SARS
- Smallpox
- Tularaemia
- Yellow fever
- Zika virus disease
COVID-19 Impacts & Mitigation

Health
- 7.2 million cases
- 407,000 deaths
- 3.3 million recovered

Economic
- Global reduction of about 5.2% of GDP in 2020
- 2.5% in developing economies

Social
- Not Population Size or GDP
- Science-based Government action, Public awareness & action
- Turkey 5.7
- Sao Tome & Principe 5.7
- Dominican Republic 5.1
- Puerto Rico 4.2
- **Russia 4.1**
- Barbados 2.4
- Cuba 0.7
- Singapore 0.4
- Jamaica 0.3
- **China 0.3**
- Senegal 0.3
How did Caribbean SIDS manage COVID?

- They took similar measures
- Some at around the same time
- Puerto Rico DID NOT close its airports
- Deaths are not related to population size
- Not necessarily related to GDP per capita between nations (though may be related to income within)
- Government intervention and people's actions are more important
Jamaica and Puerto Rico have similar sized populations.
Cuba and the Dominican Republic have similar sized populations.
Vulnerability to travelers & tourism

- Infections came from OECD urban centers with tourists or people visiting relatives
- E.g. Italy, Canada, London & New York,
- There was community transmission in all those places prior to the infection in the Caribbean. But this was not known at the time.
What worked, & what didn’t

The better performers (Cuba and Jamaica)
- Started public information campaigns a month before the poorer performers

Spikes in cases
- Parties & Boat cruises (as well as cruise shipping)
- People who refused to be quarantined
- Poor business practices (e.g. call centre in Jamaica)

Responses
- Quarantines of villages
- Curfews & restrictions on gathering, commerce etc.
- Closed Borders and airports
What next?

- Tourism-based economies (most SIDS) will soon re-open to tourism & new infections:
  - Tourists are from countries with much higher infection rates e.g. USA, UK, Italy.
  - The sector will need to operate in new ways to protect their employees, clientele and brand
  - Avoid or ban cruise shipping until ways to make it safe can be found?
What next?

- Set up appropriate border protocols
- Improve data collection & monitoring
  - Test visitors
  - Test workers in the tourism sector
  - Test people living in areas where tourism takes place
  - Monitor new infections.
- Implement restrictions as needed
- Be prepared to re-close borders as necessary & with short notice
Wicked problems

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From Balint, Stewart & Desai 2011
COVID a wicked problem? In some places……..

The virus is new so there are gaps in knowledge

• we don’t know if a vaccine will provide lasting immunity,
• we don’t know how much immunity is caused by previous infections

Stakeholders vary widely on values:

• Are jobs/the economy more important than the premature death of some older people or people from minority groups?
• Some leaders feel the pandemic’s importance is exaggerated
• People who are currently out of work need a source of income
• Who should provide social safety nets?
Risk reduction

- Taming wicked problems requires multi and transdisciplinary approaches and non-traditional approaches to problem solving.
- Not Science vs. economics, but economics based on natural science and an understanding of the natural systems that allow for human wellbeing.
  - It's vital to implement policy and practice based on good science.
  - Investigate the linkages maximize benefits minimize tradeoffs, science-led policy actions.
- Does going back to normal make sense? Not if there was something wrong with normal.
Risk Reduction

Improve the accessibility to internet for:
- Education
- Skills training
- Provision of government services
- Public education about hazards and disaster risk reduction

This would include increased phone & internet coverage:
- Schools, Public libraries and government supported outlets
- Internet shops and cafes
- Improved phone services, cash etc.

Home access through low cost computers and FOSS
Lessons learned

- COVID has exposed pre-existing weaknesses and inequalities in our social and economic systems.
- We should address those and not seek to restart them as we go back to business.
- Resist the urge to go back to business as usual. (Build the economy back better)
- Lead with science-based policies.
- Address the needs of the vulnerable.
- Educate, and find ways to diversify economies.
- Prepare for the next cyclone or drought with COVID-19.