

The Platform for Cities of the Global South

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SESSIONS
BETWEEN LATIN AMERICAN
AND ASIAN CITIES

MAY 2021





1. The #PlatformforCitiesofGlobalSouth

Peer to peer exchange and peer-learning have been adopted for knowledge dissemination amongst national and sub-national governments and other stakeholders in the development sector.



The exchange at the city level has been formalized through sister city agreements, Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and exchange visits. However, such exchanges have focused on broader policy issues and amongst political and executive leadership at the national and sub-national level. There have been few exchanges amongst city/municipal functionaries/supervising staff managing delivery of key municipal services to promote learning across the executive hierarchy of city governments. Cities Alliance has been supporting successful exchanges among practitioners in Latin America through the Urban Housing Practitioner's Hub - UHPH, and more recently in

Africa, especially in response to Covid-19. The pandemic is spreading across cities and countries with increasing speed globally though the case load and position on trajectory of the spread varies across countries and cities in a country. Since the outbreak, the contagion has moved from east Asia to south-east Asia, US, Europe, south Asia, Africa and Latin America. While the pandemic has peaked and declined in east and parts of south-east Asia and Europe, the pandemic continues to accelerate in south Asia, US and Latin America. Even in a country, the spread has peaked in some cities while it is on growth trajectory in other cities.

The role played by local governments in successfully restricting the spread of the pandemic in cities and mitigating its impact has been extensively acknowledged. This is particularly exemplary in the perspective of limited mandate, finances and capacities of local governments in most cities.

When most countries adopted emergency measures, including lockdowns, the local governments ensured delivery of WASH services, regular disinfection of



shared facilities and identification of infected people - provision of social and economic support, legal advice to women affected by domestic violence, protection equipment, communication campaigns on prevention and access to health facilities, measures which contributed to breaking the chain/slowing the spread of infections.

The measures were particularly critical for managing the situation in low-income dense settlements where it is difficult to adopt the recommended social distancing and hygiene practices.

Cities Alliance, in collaboration with UCLG ASPA, AILSG and RCUES Mumbai are proposing to facilitate an interactive platform for Cities in the global south across the development regions - Africa, Asia and Latin America, and with institutional anchoring.

This platform was intended to identify good city practices in managing the spread of COVID 19 in the informal communities and mitigating its impacts in the vulnerable urban territories; and invite the city functionaries managing such practices for virtual peer exchange with functionaries from other cities.

It is also well documented that cities are an important actor in the global efforts in climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, achieving the SDGs and promoting gender equitable, inclusive and sustainable cities. The interactive platform facilitated virtual peer exchange amongst city functionaries on related global issues. The city functionary participants included field officers and supervisors/ sanitary inspectors/ medical officers/ junior

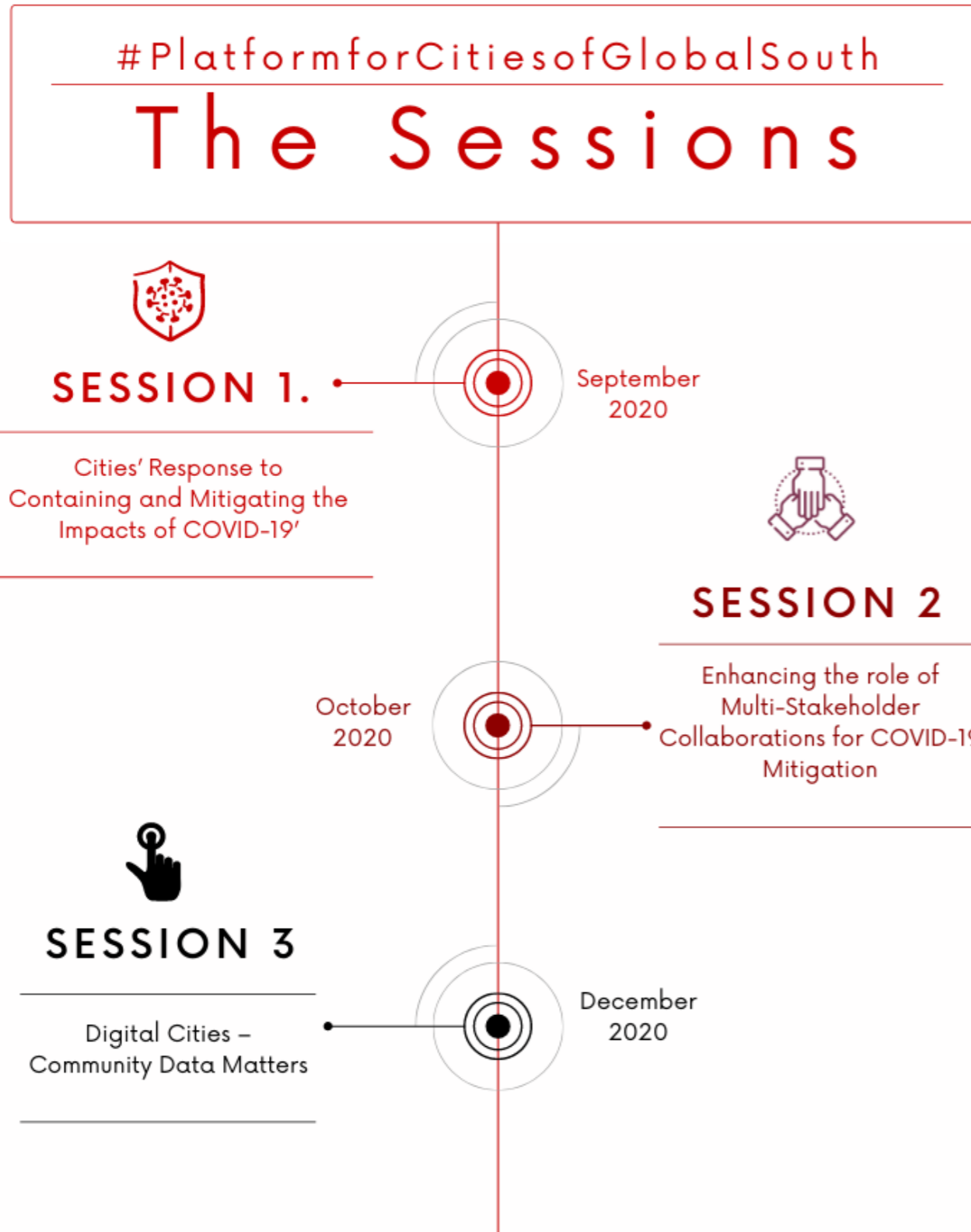
engineers/ executive engineers/ environment officers, among others.

The 'Global South' includes the most populous countries and comes with wide diversity. It is, in fact, this variation amongst cities from countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia which provided major learning experiences to field officers. The real challenge now is the accelerated speed with which actions are taken on ground. These accelerated actions are most crucial and most relevant to the functionaries who are actually working in the frontline and shape the future of the informal settlements and workers from our cities.





2. The thematic sessions



First Session:

'Cities' Response to Containing and Mitigating the Impacts of COVID-19



1. The current situation

Since the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic and its spread with increasing speed globally, the contagion has moved from east Asia to south-east Asia, US, Europe, south Asia, Africa and Latin America. However, while the pandemic has peaked and declined in east and parts of south-east Asia and Europe, the pandemic continues to accelerate in south Asia, US and Latin America.

In order to slow the worldwide spread of infections, governments adopted emergency measures, including lockdowns, delivery of WASH services, regular disinfection of shared facilities, fast identification of infected people, as well as provision of socioeconomic sup-

port and legal advice to women affected by domestic violence, among others.

In this context, this webinar was conducted on 8th September 2020 and facilitated a dialogue among the Urban Local Body (ULB) officials for sharing on-ground experiences in managing the pandemic, discussing specific challenges faced by the cities of various scales and actions taken by them to manage the challenges related specifically to the informal sector, frontline workers and other vulnerable communities.

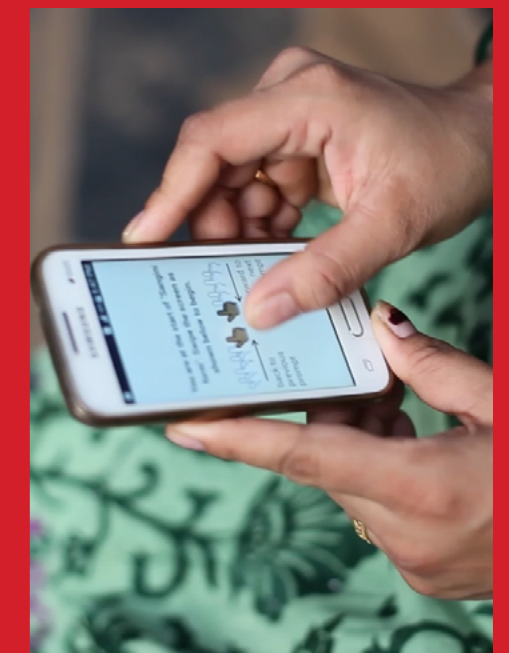
Surat, India: integrating vulnerable communities



Surat has an overwhelming majority of migrants and employs almost 0.2 million workers. Following the national lockdown and the closure imposed on industries and factories from March 2020, these migrant workers lost their jobs and faced harsh living conditions, including overcrowding and hunger. To address this situation, civil society and local NGOs collaborated with the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) in distributing and providing kits of food to the marginalised and vulnerable communities. In addition, under the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM), the ULB supported 100 self-help groups (SHG) and a Shelter for the Homeless. 100 SHGs were also employed in micro-level enterprises such as mask-making to manage the pandemic challenges.

Agra, India: technology as a tool to deal with Covid-19

Agra has been a clear example of a successful management of the pandemic through technology. The Agra Municipal Corporation, in collaboration with Agra Smart City team, through digital technology and the incorporation of an artificial intelligence system, strategically managed the pandemic situation using existing infrastructure with necessary upgrades. For that purpose, the Smart City Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) was established and a 24/7 COVID-19 War Room was set up under the Smart City Mission. All the functions of the district administration were integrated in the War Room and were managed by a 25-member rapid response team working round the clock. The ULB generated a map that identified sensitive and non-sensitive areas of the city so that containment plans could be drawn up according to need. A Food Bank was also set up, from where several NGOs distributed packages to thousands of workers every day.



Belo Horizonte, Brazil: a four-point response to address informality



Similarly, Belo Horizonte also presents multiple challenges when it comes to responding to the covid-19 crisis. One in five residents live in low-income informal settlements and around one third live in precarious housing without access to basic water and sanitation services. Belo Horizonte City Council used a four-point response and mitigation measure to contain covid-19: planning, management and control; investment in public health, social action and communication. The city quickly declared a health emergency, mandated the use of masks and ordered people to stay indoors. A Scientific Advisory Committee and a Stakeholder Working Group were set up to plan and oversee the response. Money was allocated to strengthen public health infrastructure and emergency shelters, temporary housing and toilet facilities were set up for homeless and affected residents. In addition, to disseminate information on covid-19 protection measures and to recognise the importance of local wisdom, an intensive communication campaign was conducted and leadership networks and dialogue in informal settlements were strengthened.

Buenos Aires, Argentina and its Immediate Suppression Strategy



Buenos Aires, Argentina began with an Immediate Suppression Strategy to flatten the infection curve – quarantine, early identification and isolation, especially the elderly. In collaboration with the Metropolitan Area, the State augmented health capacity and set up health assistance channels for information dissemination, such as BOTI (City WhatsApp Chat) and SAME (Emergency Services Reinforcements), which were pressed into service to answer queries and make referrals. Additionally, other measures were quickly implemented: hotels were repatriated for patients, people were vaccinated for flu and volunteers were signed-up to assist the elderly. The DetectAR Program and DetectAR Mobile were used to make active searches of neighbourhoods for early identification of infection, contact tracing, referral and isolation. At the informal neighbourhood level, the city focused on four aspects; providing health assistance, delivering food security through ration and meal distribution at special pick-up points; promoting urban hygiene by disinfecting community kitchens, house facades and interiors and more effective waste collection; and creating contagion awareness through social media and local religious leaders.

Bogota, Colombia: a community building trust approach



Bogota has less than 1% people in informal settlements, but nearly half (42%) the workforce in the informal sector. The City's response strategy has been centred on community engagement, collective responsibility and open data sharing, recognizing that city-community collaboration is key to sustainable compliance of social norms. Besides the usual investment in enhancing testing, isolation, treatment, emergency care and hygienization, information and data on the illness and measures for protection against violence were disseminated in order to reach all the population. Additionally, recognizing the need for an economic recovery process as well as to ensure good quality housing and public services, the city launched several initiatives. Firstly, the Housing Improvement Programme helped improve bathrooms and kitchens to enable biosecurity measures of handwashing. Secondly, a Solidarity Rent Scheme supported poor households to pay rent and the Public Services Subsidy scheme granted three-month relief on payment of utility bills. In the

same line, the Bogotá Solidarity at Home provided cash transfers to the poor during the lockdown. Money for this was collected through the #DonatónBogota - a city donation campaign. Public and private construction works complying with biosecurity protocols were reactivated. Emergency-temporary employment for 3 months was created for low-skilled workers as guardians of public spaces, environmental managers and watchmen and local road maintenance. Monetary incentives and credit access were provided to SMEs to maintain work and labour. The My Bogota Week - a digital marketing fair, supported promotion of local production.

Mumbai, India: community engagement to mitigate the pandemic



With a population density of 2,77,136 people per square kilometre, Dharavi is the largest slum in Asia. In a context where 80% of this population depends on communal toilets and where social distance is necessary to reduce the infection, the ULB adopted a model based on the "timely separation" and active monitoring of the three T's: tracking, testing and treatment. Thus, proactive screening was carried out according to the needs of each group of people, paying special attention to those at high risk, and a protocol of cleaning and disinfecting the toilets twice a day was implemented. To manage this action plan, the ULB forged strategic community-public-private partnerships in containment measures and mobilised all available "private" professionals. In addition, institutional quarantine facilities were set up in all schools, marriage halls and sports complexes as well as the distribution of masks and food packages.



Each city has particular characteristics, circumstances and contexts, as well as great differences in terms of population numbers or geographic difficulties, among others. Although it is true that each government and city administration will encounter different challenges and will therefore have to apply different strategies and policies, what is clear is that these unprecedented challenges cannot be tackled alone. A global pandemic will require global responses, but above all, it will require a participatory approach, with local communities playing their part.



MR AJAY SURI
Senior Adviser at National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)

"Cities have played a key role as the frontline warriors in containing the spread of the contagion and mitigating the impact of covid-19"



2. Participants



BERNADIA TJANDRADI
Secretary General, UCLG ASPAC

"This is something that we know that has been a big challenge. The battle is not stopped yet: there is no vaccine yet, and this Covid-19 has been impacting more than 27 million people all over the world but global south has been affected most. What is important is to build back better, faster and stronger"



UTKARSHA KAVADI
Director, Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies, All India Institute of Local Self Government

"We see that the pandemic continues to accelerate in the regions of South Asia, US and the LA. It has produced many negative impacts on most of the SDG's. Where we have seen the progress previously, now we see the negative impacts"



FRANCISCO ANDRÉS RESNICOFF
Undersecretary of International and Institutional Relations of the City of Buenos Aires

"What we needed to do even before the first case as recorded, was to organize the government and implement a suppression strategy that allowed us to flatten the curve"



SUHARTI SUTAR

Deputy Governor for Population and Settlement Control, Jakarta, Indonesia

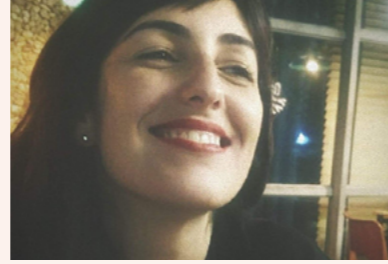
"When we negotiate things with the central governments, we use data, we use facts, we use evidence, so that everyone could understand that every city has different contexts and different situations"



MR ANAND MENON

Member of Agra Smart City Mission

"One of the key lessons that we have learnt in our fight against covid in Agra City is how the integration of departments and how the city administration have come together: everyone came together to fight with a common objective"



MS. LAURA TENENWURCEL

Technical Advisor in the Urban Policy Secretariat of Belo Horizonte

"Even though I believe data is a very important thing and we have to invest a lot on that, I also think it will never be enough, we will need to conciliate with the engagement, collaboration and participation of the citizens"



MR. SURESH KAKANI

Additional Municipal Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai.

"If I ever talk about the final approach, it is a 360° approach, addressing immediate identification, house and premises disinfected, containment, ration and food supplied by MCGM and fever clinics & self-sufficiency"



DR. GAYATRI JARIWALA

Assistant Municipal Commissioner in Surat Municipal Corporation, Gujarat.

"The city administration has taken all the necessary measures against covid-19. The steps go in all direction including strengthening on surveillance, augmenting health infrastructure, capacity building of staff, and setting community covid isolating and health centres"



MR. ORLANDO TRUJILLO

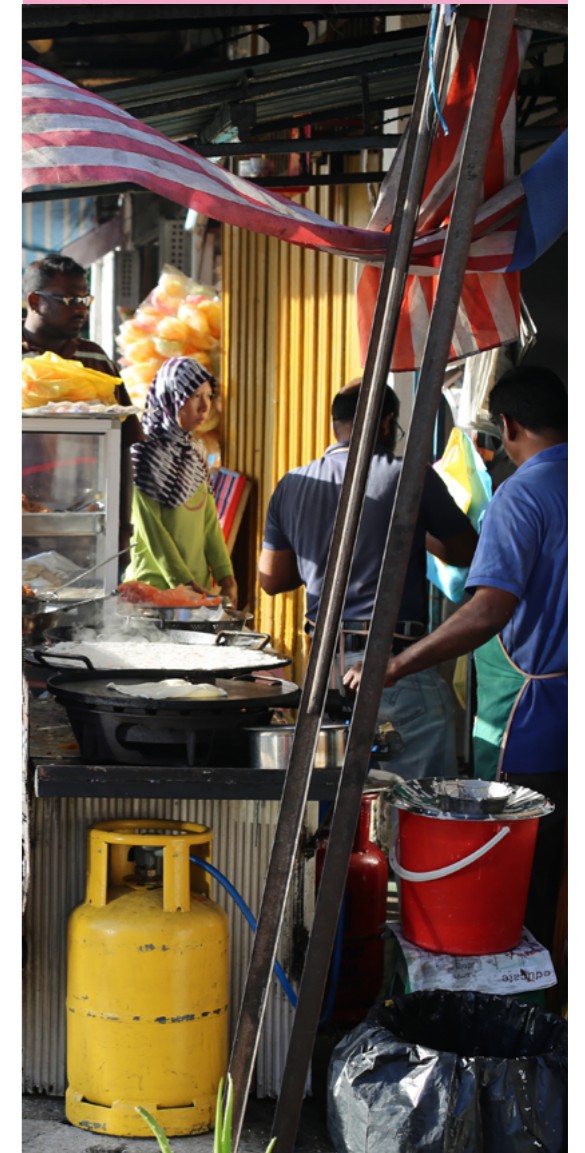
Advisor of the Habitat Secretariat of the Bogotá Mayor's Office.

"We see that the pandemic continues to accelerate in the regions of South Asia, US and the LA. It has produced many negative impacts on most of the SDG's. Where we have seen the progress previously, now we see the negative impacts"



3. Highlights of the session

- The Covid-19 battle is not over yet: it has affected more than 27 million of people and it continues affecting everyone, no matter the age, the society, the country.
- The cities located in the Global South are being the ones most impacted by the pandemic, especially those communities living in rural areas and informal settlements.
- Refugees and informal workers are those suffering the most in terms of employability and loss of lives.
- The pandemic has also negatively impacted most of the SDG's, especially in low income countries and vulnerable groups.
- In terms of socioeconomic consequences, local governments need to provide enabling environments for business to overcome covid-19.



4. To know more

Bibliography & Links

- See the whole webinar on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=978459232674849&ref=watch_permalink
- Learn more about city responses through COVID-19: <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/urban-health/who-european-healthy-cities-network/the-who-european-healthy-cities-network-a-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic-close-to-the-people/city-responses-through-covid-19>
- Learn more about city responses through COVID-19: <https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/urban-health/covid-19/cities-responses-through-covid-19-other>
- Learn more about policy responses to coronavirus: <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/cities-policy-responses-fd1053ff/>



Second Session:

Enhancing the role of Multi-Stakeholder Collaborations for COVID-19 Mitigation



1. The current situation

The pandemic has enormously exposed the vulnerabilities of our societies and has exacerbated inequalities between the population. In a context in which society is suffering a second wave of coronavirus, as well as an increase of infections and mortality rate in almost every city everywhere in the world, it seems obvious that cities and sectors cannot respond to these unprecedented challenges alone.

In this sense, and with the aim of enabling cities to share ideas, information and knowledge, governments are working to build a collaborative approach, as the pandemic has clearly shown that multi-stakeholder collaboration is not only a crucial tool to address urban challenges, but a necessity if we are to rebuild and reshape cities into more sustainable and resilient societies.

As part of the initiative #Platform4CitiesofGlobalSouth, this second webinar, which took place on 14th October 2020, was the result of a collaboration between UCLG ASPAC, AILSG, Mumbai and Cities Alliance and it addressed the short and long-term actions different municipalities from Latin America and Asia are adopting to enhance partnerships and multi-stakeholder collaborations in order to improve the lives of vulnerable communities, specifically front-line workers and families from the informal sector.

In this regard, cities and governments of various municipalities, based on their particular circumstances and needs, have implemented various initiatives and measures with the aim of responding not only to those health challenges, but also to socio-economic ones.

The role of StreetNet International with covid-19

The covid-19 outbreak has not only meant a health crisis, but also a socio-economic one. Informal workers, such as market vendors, hawkers and street workers, have been one of the most impacted group by the pandemic, since these are the workers who are usually not covered by labour laws or receive social and health protections in their countries. StreetNet International represents over 690 000 street vendors, informal market vendors and hawkers in 54 countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas and Eastern Europe, and has been involved in the Global Solidarity Platform and associated campaign '2 Billion Strong - Recovery Starts with Us,' led by WIEGO, with the aim of calling for a new model of work that "recognizes and values all forms of work". Likewise, the organisation and its affiliates also drew up a list of clear and concise demands to governments, calling for these groups of workers to be included in basic universal emergency grants, access to health and social protection and to be considered as essential workers in the food sector.

Sao Paulo and its responses to address informality



Sao Paulo, Brazil, with a population of 12.1 million, was the epicentre of covid-19 in the country, and had to adopt multilevel responses. To this end, firstly, three field hospitals were built in the space previously used for carnivals, and secondly, the "Solidarity City" initiative, which resulted from a collaboration between the office of Human Rights and Citizenship, the office of Urban Development and the Red Cross, distributed more than 2 million food and health kits to organisations and NGOs. The process was monitored through an online platform, with the aim of ensuring that the packages reached all vulnerable groups benefiting from the programme.

In addition, the work carried out by WIEGO (Work of Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing) is worth highlighting, which documented the impact of the virus on informal workers and supported basic income and food security measures. WIEGO's team in Brazil, through a multi-stakeholder geometry approach, collaborated with aid agencies, charities and community organisations to address the challenges of social justice, human rights, relief work and much more.

India: strategic partnerships for solidarity



Pimpri-Chinchwad (India), from the very beginning, has focussed on the integration of various activities to address the challenges posed by covid-19. Through the Smart City Mission, infrastructure has been updated and various strategic partnerships have been created with experts from each sector, including the private sector, academic and research institutions, health services, NGOs, etc., contributing to a more inclusive decision-making process. Thus, community kitchens and food deliveries have been organised, and the provision of medical equipment and health infrastructures in terms of specialised hospitals, ICU beds, isolation centres and shelters has been reinforced. A mobile clinic was also developed to enable health workers to carry out tests in people's homes.

A comprehensive data driven approach has been adopted to create a rich spatial database of all slums within the city of Pimpri-Chinchwad by partnering with a local NGO-Shelter Associates(SA). This data has enabled the Urban Local Bodies to invest in sanitation infrastructure which had been pivotal in delivering home toilets. A sizeable corporate funding was leveraged on the basis of this model 'One Home One Toilet' by the partner NGO who delivered over 5500 home toilets on a cost sharing model to the beneficiary families This provided a huge relief especially during the outbreak of COVID19 pandemic as access to safe sanitation became a critical issue. There was a rise from 24% to 69% in the drainage coverage of the informal settlements and a substantial impact was observed with the increase in household toilets from 9% to 50+%. The city slum data generated by Shelter Associates is available on their web portal and linked to the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation website proving to be a valuable source of information for the ULB and available in the public domain for a wider audience.

City in the Philippines: a tripartite collaborative approach.



In Iriga City in the Philippines, the potential of partnerships was also harnessed to address the consequences of the pandemic. Through a tripartite collaboration with the City Administration, the private sector and civil society, measures were implemented to contain the spread of the virus. Among other responses, to limit mobility during the quarantine, a pass was issued to one responsible person per household, and mobile vans were given to local farmer's markets to enable them to distribute their produce. In addition to the implementation of these satellite markets, fresh seeds and canned goods were distributed to vulnerable communities to ensure food security.

Buenos Aires and the local initiatives



The City of Buenos Aires has also been one of the most active in generating responses to the challenges posed by Covid-19. In a context of significant health and economic inequalities, the Civil Association for Equality and Justice (ACIJ) and the Avina Foundation, Wingu launched the initiatives Caminos de la Villa (Ways of the 'Villa') and 'Aca Hay No Internet (There is no Internet here)', both with the aim of guaranteeing access to information, identifying the difficulties suffered by the most vulnerable groups, and contributing to the creation of awareness and visibility of those who are denied these rights.



Cooperation and solidarity have proved to be key aspects to face this global crisis. The pandemic has created an opportunity for cities to think about long-term measures, but also to be creative and inclusive. Dialogue with local stakeholders and a bottom up approach will be essential if we want to generate innovative partnerships leading to more resilient and inclusive societies.



3. Participants



PATRICIA DICHTCHEKENIAN
Coordinator - Office of the Secretariat for Human Rights and Citizenship; Sao Paulo City Hall, Brazil

"We need new types of partnerships. The type that are needed to address emergencies during wartime. As this is a historical challenge that no one had experience with"



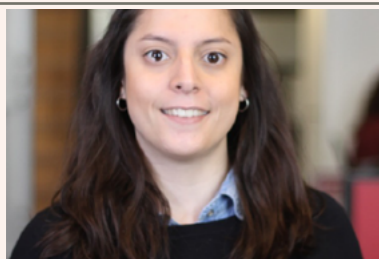
MS. SMITA ZAGADE
Deputy Municipal Commissioner, Pimpri; Chinchwad Municipal Corporation, Maharashtra, India

"We need innovative partners to strengthen our limitations. It is important to improve our policy design and our research analysis capacities"



LUCIANA ITIKAWA
Representative from the Board of WIEGO based in Sao Paulo

"We have evolved to a new type of partnership strategy, promoting a broader stakeholder horizontal relationship with the political system"



ROSARIO FASSINA, Coordinator of the Asociación Civil por la Igualdad de la Justicia (ACIJ), Buenos Aires, Argentina

"The ability to address the impacts of COVID relies heavily in the role of civil society to maintain its voice. This is more likely to be done generating strong and innovative partnerships"



OKSANA ABOUD
StreetNet International Coordinator of WIEGO

"It is crucial to consider informal workers not a problem but a solution; and deal with the issue by building proper relations with the governments."



MADELAINE Y. ALFELORZ-GAZMEN
Mayor of Iriga City; Province of Camarines Sur, The Philippines

"We must learn how to bridge leadership to create partnerships with civil society and become more creative promoting ownership and co-creation processes"



3. Highlights of the session

- It is undeniable that the pandemic caused by covid-19 has caused unprecedented challenges, especially for marginalised groups, fragile communities and informal workers, therefore, now more than ever, it becomes essential to create more inclusive and equal cities.
- The pandemic situation we are experiencing has made it clear that socio-economic systems and equality are closely linked, and in order to address these difficulties, partnerships have proved to be a consistent solution.
- In a context of global crisis, partnerships present an opportunity to build resources, share experiences and knowledge, build learning capacity and reach out to everyone, especially to those communities that lack access to technology or political voice.
- Cities around the world have created partnerships and are actively cooperating. However, these partnerships must not only be appropriate, but also sustainable, i.e. have a long-term vision. Their sustainability, as well as the ability to address socio-economic impacts, will depend on collective action as well as on the degree of collaboration between governments and cities.
- To respond to a global problem and provide responses that ensure solutions at all levels, we need a policy framework that contributes to the creation of more resilient cities that can successfully withstand the crisis.



4. To know more

Bibliography & Links

- Learn more about the initiative Caminos de la Vila and how Buenos Aires is dealing with vulnerability in informal settlements: <https://www.covid-19.caminosdelavilla.org/>
- Learn more about the initiative Acá no hay Internet and its ways to make visible the territories lacking internet access: <https://www.acanohayinternet.org/>
- Learn more about WIEGO'S initiative to respond to the challenges informal workers are facing: <https://www.wiego.org/COVID19-Platform>
- Learn more about local community initiatives in Brazil: <https://citymonitor.ai/community/public-health/a-brazilian-favela-is-combating-covid-through-community>

 **1. The current situation**

The raising of Information and Communication technology (ICT) has allowed cities to be more interconnected than ever before, and therefore, exchange ideas, information and knowledge in a truly boundless way. In this context, this joint webinar aimed to explore the role of data and ICT systems for generating efficient community responses during the Covid-19 pandemic by taking as a reference the cases of Mexico, India and Peru.

One of the biggest impacts derived from the Covid-19 out-

break has been an enormous increase of inequalities among the population, particularly concerning the use of information and communication technologies. This has become even more visible in informal settlements, where the population has no access to devices or connectivity. In this regard, the webinar highlighted how the use of ICT has contributed to the creation of a more inclusive and sustainable cities.

The Mexican case: providing access to Wi-Fi coverage for everyone



To respond to the pandemic challenges, the use of ICT and data not only has allowed cities and governments to be connected both at administrative, technical and financial levels, but also has served as a tool for keeping the population informed about decisions, educating communities and monitoring responses. In Mexico City, which has more than 8 million inhabitants, the creation of a digital identity for each citizen, together with a connectivity plan and the conversion of more than 50 procedures to online mode. This has situated Mexico City as the second largest city globally with free Wi-Fi coverage that has greatly improved processes related to medical care and attention to neighbourhoods.

Addressing major challenges: the cases of Peru and India

Other relevant initiatives worth mentioning are the cases of Peru and India. These countries have been confronted with major challenges and particular conditions, such as problems related to internet connection in several geographical areas or the lack of social networks. In Lima, those challenges were addressed through the use of low-technology. Among other measures, the cooperation with informal workers resulted in certain groups of them working as data gatherers or researchers, and the implementation of phone surveys allowed governments to reach those people not knowing how to read or write. In India, the use of micro and macro data has played a key role in the decision-making process, by contributing to the preparation of plans and localizing solutions to overcome the difficulties from Covid-19.



While it is true that city contexts and their capacity to generate and use ICT and data collection differ from city to city, and therefore, they may require different approaches to address challenges, what is clear is that ICT constitutes an essential tool to facilitate and simplify access to information and administrative procedures. However, we must not forget that to achieve effective results from the opportunities that those tools can provide, the pandemic demands consistent responses at all scales, and even more important, cooperation and exchanges of knowledge across the globe.

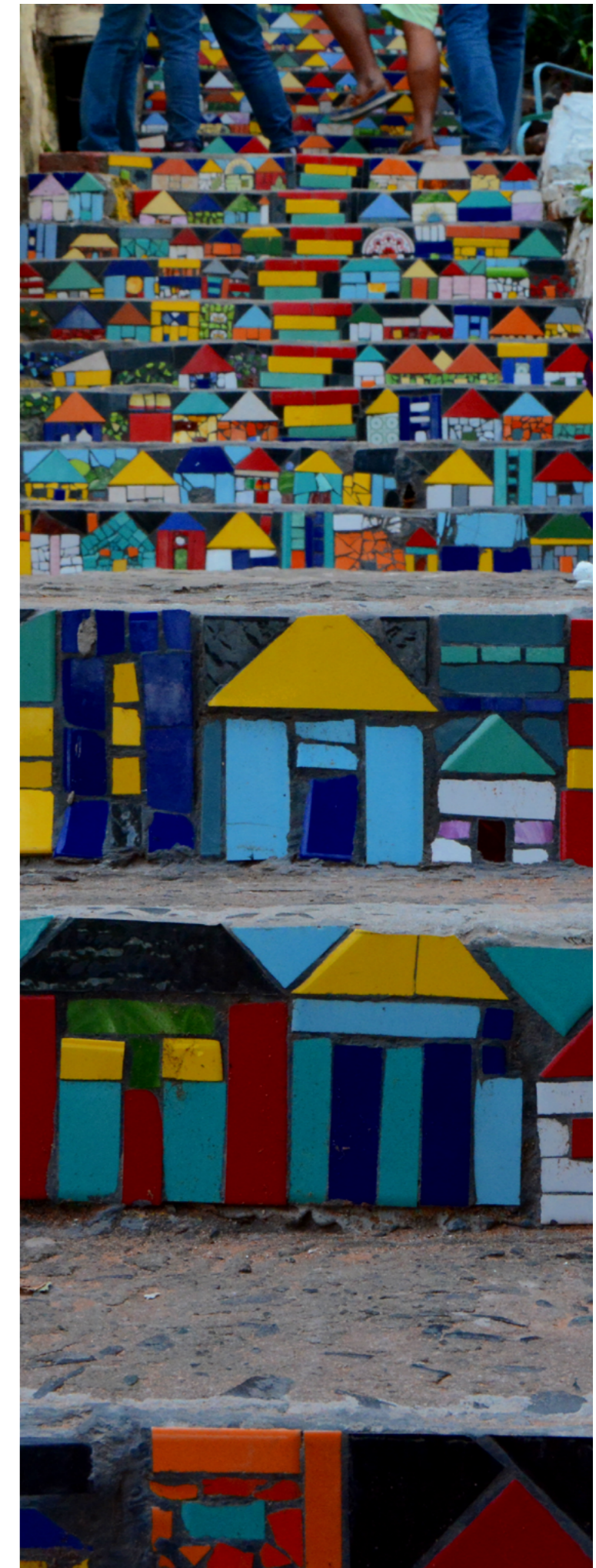


2. Participants



UTKARSHA KAVADI,
Senior Executive Director at the Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies, All India Institute of Local Self Government.

"The process of learning from sharing has become easier than ever before"





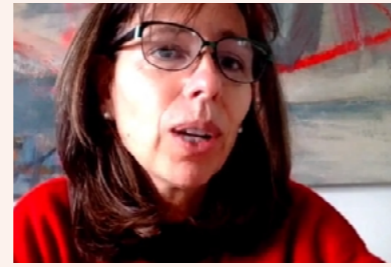
RENU KHOSLA
Director of the Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE).

"City data is not just about infrastructure; city data has to also be about the communities that are part of the cities. It can be magical and localize solutions and make cities far more inclusive and sustainable".



PRATIMA JOSHI
Executive Director at Shelter Associates (India).

"It is not just the community who need to trust data; but governments need to trust data too. It is not about saying my data or your data, but to provide access for everybody for this data".



CARMEN ROCA
Focal City coordinator for WIEGO in Peru.

"It is really thinking of things than can work for the appropriate context"



PRADEEP KHANDELWAL
Chief Engineer at the East Delhi Municipal Corporation.

"Using URBGOV was very effective. With this system, we have mapped all the community alerts and identified gaps"



ANA CLAUDIA ROSSBACH
Regional Manager for Latin America and The Caribbean at Cities Alliance.

"Keeping dwellers and informal workers organized in these times of pandemic is an amazing challenge, an invisible work that is not being really recognized by society"



ALI GONZÁLEZ GARCÍA
Director of Open Government at the Digital Agency for Public Innovation of the Government of Mexico City.

"It has actually been a total game changer. Before Covid-19, we had been building digital infrastructure and digital services, which at the moment of Covid-19 allowed us to have a very quick and strong response".



3. Highlights of the session

- Information and Communication technologies constitute essential tools in order to keep connected cities and governments from all over the world. They allow them to exchange knowledge, ideas and information.
- Data collection and dissemination through ICT systems have contributed to generating community responses to address the many challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The pandemic has greatly exacerbated inequalities among the population, especially in informal settlements, which often lack access to connectivity and information technologies.
- Digital solutions have contributed to the creation of more sustainable and inclusive cities: they have served as a tool for accessing information and procedures, for educating communities and for approaching informal workers.
- Particular contexts and circumstances, such as problems related to internet connection due to their geographical areas need to be taken into account when deciding on the most appropriate approach.
- Now more than ever, we need to create platforms and join forces in order to provide responses at economic, social and political levels.
- The Covid-19 pandemic is not only a health but an economic crisis as well, therefore it will require consist responses at all scales and cooperation across the globe.



4. To know more

Bibliography & Links

- See online the whole webinar: <http://bit.ly/DCities>
- Read the report of the webinar: <https://www.citiesalliance.org/newsroom/news/results/digital-cities-%E2%80%93-community-data-matters>
- Learn more about the benefits in investing in Smart Cities to face covid-19 challenges: <https://www.e-zigurat.com/blog/en/smart-cities-way-forward-face-covid-19/>
- Learn more about technology-based actions cities are in relation to the current COVID-19 pandemic: <https://www.intelligentcitieschallenge.eu/covid-19-good-practices>

3. Conclusions and Next Steps

The Platform for Cities of the Global South initiative has proved the importance of knowledge exchange programs among key urban practitioners in order to improve the development of vulnerable urban territories.



The Platform has pilot-tested successfully a methodology to exchange best practices, challenges and concerns not only among city officials of key cities of the global south, but also among civil society and grass-roots organizations working on urban issues. This horizontal integration of key stakeholders working in an interactive manner through online dialogues, has proven to be essential in order to provide relevant and valuable responses to urban policy-planners and decision makers.

The ultimate goal is to improve the efficiency and efficacy of cities managing emergency responses and planning recovery processes,

learning from each other, enhancing knowledge transfer and exchange, and enabling robust participatory governance processes as guided by the new urban agenda.

While recovering from a post-covid19 era, which has put cities at the center of response strategies addressing development needs, the only way to be able to guarantee an efficient and sustainable global response is to promote initiatives such as the Platform for Cities of the Global South, to allow sharing experiences, lessons learned and help putting into practice measures taking into consideration the experience and advice of their other municipal colleagues.

4. Core partners

This initiative has been a joint project supported by the following key organizations



For more information related to the content of this publication please contact:

Cities Alliance - UN House
Boulevard du Régent 37 - 40
1000 Brussels, Belgium
Telephone: +32 2 880 40 88
Email: info@citiesalliance.org
<https://www.citiesalliance.org/>