



# REPORT WORKING GROUP 3

Innovative and Inclusive Public and Private Strategies to Help Vulnerable Groups

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## I. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During the month of June 2020, a select group of think tank specialists joined a collaborative effort to produce in a very short period of time recommendations for rapid response strategies to address vulnerable groups especially affected during the COVID-19 crisis.

The co-chairs of **Working Group 3** wish to thank all the members of the group for their enormous contributions. Leaders of subgroups played fundamental roles involving other members and structuring their reports. Different time zones among participants posed an additional challenge for interactions and dialogue in a period of many commitments and adaptation to remote work. At the same time, different time zones indicate a great regional diversity within the group, enriching the views and the recommendations that are presented.

All participants became authors of their own ideas. We hope this policy paper is worthy of your sacrifice.

Last, but not least, this valuable effort would not be possible without the vision and action of professor James McGann, to whom we owe this initiative.

## II. BACKGROUND ON TOWN HALL MEETINGS

### Introduction

Countries across the globe are struggling with the destructive health and economic consequences of COVID-19. However, unlike the devastating pandemic of 1918, there are opportunities in the current context to rapidly share information and collaborate across borders. Think tanks are positioned to serve policymakers and the public as they grapple earnestly with the current and future health and economic consequences of a pandemic on this scale. When stakeholders look to think tanks for research and innovative policy solutions, organizations must be ready with information and easily digestible strategies for government, civil society and private sector decision makers.

The Global Think Tank Town Halls were designed to serve as catalysts for evidence-based, policy-relevant, action-oriented policies and proposals to create solutions for saving lives and livelihoods in the wake of this COVID-19 crisis. The Think Tank Town Halls demonstrated a special moment of unity, as 1226 think tank executives, scholars and policymakers from over 540 institutions in over 87 countries met over the course of the three Town Halls. The objectives were to create rapid and proactive responses to the growing economic, public health and welfare crises that have engulfed countries around the world. The Global Think Tank Town Halls largely focused on the public health crisis, economic recovery, vulnerable populations, international cooperation, and new think tank models. The Town Halls showcased leadership, resilience, and innovation across the world, and evinced the importance of global cooperation, especially in times of crises.

### Global Think Tank Town Hall I

The First Global Think Tank Town Hall on April 7, 2020 brought together close to 400 participants from 278 institutions and 85 countries to discuss the procedural and substantive effects of COVID-19, as well as potential responses to pandemics in a post-COVID-19 world. During the opening panel of the First Town Hall, the participants discussed strategies for how think tanks can continue their work by reorienting towards the current crisis.

Think tank leaders emphasized the importance of creating and maintaining new relationships, especially those between think tanks and local actors and policymakers. Five themes for think tanks to consider going forward were presented: leadership, communication, technology, security and resiliency. By focusing on these themes, think tanks would be able to produce research and recommendations that will have a lasting policy impact.

### **Global Think Tank Town Hall II**

The Second Global Think Tank Town Hall took place on May 13, 2020 and brought together 303 think tank executives, scholars and policy makers from 87 countries. The goal was to produce five action-oriented reports within 45 days that will be conveyed to the T20 Secretariat for inclusion in briefing materials for the G20. The outcomes of these reports would then be discussed at a third and final Global Think Tank Town Hall. These five action-oriented reports were produced by five respective working groups and were centered around:

1. Addressing the Public Health Crisis
2. Preparing National and International Strategies for Economic Recovery and Revitalization
3. Identifying Innovative and Inclusive, Public and Private Interventions Strategies to Help Vulnerable Groups
4. Fostering International Cooperation—Creating Rapid, Responsive, and Resilient Systems to Respond to Future Crisis
5. Being Fit for an Uncertain Future: New Operating Models for Think Tanks—Research, Communications and Funding

### **Global Think Tank Town Hall III**

On June 30, 2020 think tank executives, scholars and policymakers came together for the largest of the three Town Hall meetings with 560 participants from over 80 countries. During this event, the five working groups established at the previous Town Hall presented their research findings from the past month. Their findings included strategic,

action-oriented recommendations, as well as positive interventions occurring in various countries. These action-oriented recommendations were at the center of The Third Town Hall, as key proposals were presented during the Town Hall, and a more detailed list of recommendations was made available after the Town Hall through reports by each respective working group. As the final and main event of the Virtual Town Hall series, the Third Town Hall was essential in establishing what the role and next steps of think tanks should be during this COVID-19 pandemic. Following this Town Hall, from July 6-10th 2020, each working group held a breakout session with 30-80 attendees each to further discuss their findings and recommendations.

The following report was created in preparation for the final Town Hall, as it presents key rapid and action-oriented steps to mitigate the COVID-19 crisis for all. The video recordings of the Town Halls, along with the PowerPoints and reports of all the Working Groups, can be accessed using the links provided below:

*<https://www.gotothinktank.com/town-hall-reports>*

*<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1CJ9zQSNKAnTkx00iPYdgQ>*

### III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is focused on providing recommendations applicable to the problems of the most vulnerable groups of citizens directly affected by the COVID-19 crisis. To highlight the challenges faced by those groups and point out action-oriented recommendations, members of Working Group 3 were distributed in five subgroups to address specific vulnerable citizens: Children and Youth, Elderly, Women in Vulnerable Conditions, Migrants and Racial/Ethnic Minorities.

Ideas and experiences were exchanged by the members of the subgroups to provide an overview of each vulnerable group's situation. Regional diversity within the members of the subgroups complemented views and exposed not only different realities, but also common strategies and best practices for interventions by the public and private sectors.

#### Action Oriented key recommendations

##### Subgroup 1: Children and Youth

- Monitoring the functioning of institutions responsible for the protection of the rights of children and young people and take the necessary measures when deviations from international conventions/regulations occur;
- Equitable delivery of safe and good quality medical services to all families, children and youth, especially those in vulnerable conditions;
- Ensuring that working parents have enough time to support their children's learning and development;

##### Subgroup 2: Elderly

- Follow both WHO and CDC guidelines for Long-Term Care Facilities in the context of COVID-19 Interim Guidance.
- Allow UNFPA to provide demographic data to increase preparedness. UNFPA supports governments to rapidly generate population data that illustrates demographic risks, including the relative and absolute numbers of elderly in different localities, and their living conditions.
- Generate the necessary funding to provide access to phone and video call technology for each Long-Term Care resident. The elderly, especially those in



isolation, those with cognitive decline, and those who are highly care-dependent, need a continuum of practical and emotional support.

### **Subgroup 3: Women in Vulnerable conditions**

- Economic empowerment that provides tools for women to be financially independent and aware of how financial dependence on men pushes women into vulnerability.
- Creating awareness among women for what constitutes violence against women by enabling access to on-time, specific and relevant knowledge.
- Institutions and mechanisms created to protect women in vulnerable situations should adapt, and be flexible to meet the needs of women in situations of domestic violence and/or gender-based violence.

### **Subgroup 4: Migrants**

- Calls for immediate protective measures to ensure all migrants' right to personal security, freedom from discrimination, and access to nutrients, clean water, and healthcare.
- Eliminates custodial detention methods and encourages non-custodial, community-based alternatives aiming towards greater inclusion;
- Request platforms for migrants in vulnerable situations to contribute their skills and knowledge for the greater welfare of the community

### **Subgroup 5: Racial/Ethnic Minorities**

- Localization and diversification of services and supply chains in order to help minority owned businesses, minority services providers and assure the basic items of consumption for minority neighborhoods.
- Local Governance and programming to support housing and employment stability, and technology and internet access.
- Prioritize public health programming focused on non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) and with a deep consideration of the social determinants of health.

## IV. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 epidemic outbreak will expose the world to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis with significant consequences to our near future. On the one hand, the disease outbreak is a general phenomenon, affecting the lives of every citizen in the globe. However, on the other hand, there rests no doubt that it's most cruel effects will fall on the most vulnerable groups of citizens who find themselves in the margins of economic activities and excluded from the most basic social safety net.

To illustrate the magnitude of the crisis, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) estimates a decline in the Human Development Index for the first time since the beginning of the concept. Global per capita income is expected to fall four percent in 2020 and mass unemployment is expected to arise, pushing 40 to 60 million people into extreme poverty.<sup>1</sup>

Under these circumstances, action is imperative. Huge crises, like the one we are living in today, tend to reveal and expose systematic fragilities within our societies. Governments have an obligation to act to prevent even more social damage and poverty. Private institutions may find ways to contribute to a better social inclusion through innovative interventions.

In order to highlight some of the major challenges faced by vulnerable groups during the crisis and to point out the needs for specific interventions addressed to these citizens, **Working Group 3** elaborated recommendations based on examples of best practices and innovative ideas.

In following lines, the reader will be introduced to challenges faced by specific five groups of vulnerable populations that deserve special attention during this crisis,

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<sup>1</sup>Features.undp.org.2020. Coronavirus vs. inequality. [online] Available at: <[https://feature.undp.org/coronavirus-vs-inequality/?utm\\_source=social&utm\\_medium=undp&utm\\_campaign=covid19-inequality](https://feature.undp.org/coronavirus-vs-inequality/?utm_source=social&utm_medium=undp&utm_campaign=covid19-inequality)> [Accessed 11 June 2020].

namely: children and youth, elderly, women in vulnerable conditions, migrants, and racial/ethnic minorities.



## SUBGROUP REPORTS





# Subgroup 1

## Report on CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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## 1. HEADLINES

- *“One in three children are not growing well because of malnutrition”<sup>2</sup>*
- *“Climate change will affect all four dimensions of food security [...] People who are already vulnerable and food insecure are likely to be the first affected.”<sup>3</sup>*
- *“Every day around 93% of the world’s children under the age of 15 years (1.8 billion children) breathe air that is so polluted it puts their health and development at serious risk.”<sup>4</sup>*
- *“It has been around two months since schools closed in more than 190 countries, affecting 1.57 billion children and youth - 90% of the world’s student population.”<sup>5</sup>*
- *“In 71 countries worldwide, less than half the population has access to the internet. Despite this disparity, 73 per cent of governments out of 127 reporting countries are using online platforms to deliver education while schools remain closed”<sup>6</sup>*
- *“Almost 1.6 billion informal economy workers are significantly impacted by lockdown measures”<sup>7</sup>*
- *“More than one in six young people have stopped working since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic while those who remain employed have seen their working hours cut by 23 per cent”<sup>8</sup>*
- *“At the end of 2019, an estimated 46 million people were internally displaced by conflict and violence. More than 4 in 10, or 19 million, were to be children”<sup>9</sup>*
- *“COVID-19: Children at heightened risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence amidst intensifying containment measures”<sup>10</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Features.unicef.org. 2020. *The Changing Face Of Malnutrition*. [online] Available at: <<https://features.unicef.org/state-of-the-worlds-children-2019-nutrition/>> [Accessed 5 June 2020].

<sup>3</sup> Features.unicef.org. 2020. *The Changing Face Of Malnutrition*. [online] Available at: <<https://features.unicef.org/state-of-the-worlds-children-2019-nutrition/>> [Accessed 5 June 2020].

<sup>4</sup> Who.int. 2020. *More Than 90% Of The World’S Children Breathe Toxic Air Every Day*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/29-10-2018-more-than-90-of-the-world%E2%80%99s-children-breathe-toxic-air-every-day>> [Accessed 7 June 2020].

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO. 2020. *Latest Articles*. [online] Available at: <<https://en.unesco.org/news/reopening-schools-when-where-and-how>,> [Accessed 5 June 2020].

<sup>6</sup> Unicef.org. 2020. *Unequal Access To Remote Schooling Amid COVID-19 Threatens To Deepen Global Learning Crisis*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unequal-access-remote-schooling-amid-covid-19-threatens-deepen-global-learning>> [Accessed 6 June 2020].

<sup>7</sup> 2020. [online] Available at: <[https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our\\_work/ICP/MPR/migration\\_factsheet\\_6\\_covid-19\\_and\\_migrants.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/ICP/MPR/migration_factsheet_6_covid-19_and_migrants.pdf),> [Accessed 5 June 2020].

<sup>8</sup> Ilo.org. 2020. [online] Available at: <[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_743146.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_743146.pdf)> [Accessed 5 June 2020].

<sup>9</sup> Ilo.org. 2020. *ILO: More Than One In Six Young People Out Of Work Due To COVID-19*. [online] Available at: <[https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_745879/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_745879/lang--en/index.htm)> [Accessed 5 June 2020].

<sup>10</sup> Unicef.org. 2020. *Lost At Home*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.unicef.org/reports/lost-home-2020>> [Accessed 5 June 2020].

## 2. CONTEXTUALIZATION

Children depend on adults and organizations to provide them access to food, shelter and clothes. They typically lack the resources and ability to enact change within the public policy sphere on their own. As such, they prove to be one of the most vulnerable groups, especially in the context of COVID-19.

During the COVID-19 crisis, rule of law principles have been challenged. The enforcement of legal provisions on rights and protection of children have been adversely affected. Thus, it is necessary to define and sustain social safety nets, capable of quickly identifying the needs of children and youth in vulnerable conditions. It is time to rethink and improve existing social safety nets in order to address existing problems and future challenges.

To counter the effects of the pandemic we need to find ways to improve social safety nets, so that they can be better prepared to protect the rights and lives of children and youth. In order to deliver an effective and efficient public policy response, it is important to use technology to improve the accuracy of data reporting on children's needs and the resources available to them.

For vulnerable children, the COVID-19 pandemic is an experience that will be hard for them to forget. It is up to us to turn this difficult situation into a time when we can focus our efforts to improve mechanisms and institutions. More than anything, it is imperative for us to use this time to imagine and implement the necessary steps toward bettering the lives of our children.

## 3. MAIN PREOCCUPATIONS AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH DURING CRISES

The strategies that can be used to address the needs of children and youth during the COVID-19 crisis and future crises, are briefly illustrated below, and are centered on:

- Ensuring that policy, business and technology systems maintain “the continuous functioning of supply chains” in order to deliver “essential goods and medical supplies during the pandemic;”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Unicef.org. 2020. *COVID-19: Children At Heightened Risk Of Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation And Violence Amidst Intensifying Containment Measures*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid-19-children-heightened-risk-abuse-neglect-exploitation-and-violence-amidst>> [Accessed 5 June 2020].

- Monitoring the functioning of institutions responsible for the protection of the rights of children and young people and take the necessary measures when deviations from international conventions/regulations occur;
- Equitable delivery of safe and good quality medical services to all families, children and youth, especially those in vulnerable conditions;
- Establishing a social protection program for families, particularly those with children and youth, of medical staff and other critical workers who become infected during the pandemic;
- Delivering gloves, “sanitizers, and face masks” and “checking on the children and families in isolation”<sup>12</sup>
- Family-friendly policies that give “working parents the time, information, services and resources they need to cope with the crisis;”<sup>13</sup>
- Ensuring that working parents have enough time to support their children’s learning and development;
- Ensuring paid time off in the instance of family illness, in order to take care of family members without jeopardizing income security;
- “Financing, purchasing and freely distributing IT equipment to low-income families;”<sup>14</sup>
- “Adopting online alternatives to the traditional classroom, such as providing lessons and worksheets, online learning platforms and messaging

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<sup>12</sup> Unicef.org. 2020. *UNICEF In Romania Provides Protective Equipment To Frontline Community Workers During The Pandemic*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.unicef.org/romania/stories/unicef-romania-provides-protective-equipment-frontline-community-workers-during-pandemic>> [Accessed 7 June 2020].

<sup>13</sup> Unicef.org. 2020. [online] Available at: <<https://www.unicef.org/media/66351/file/Family-friendly-policies-covid-19-guidance-2020.pdf>> [Accessed 5 June 2020].

<sup>14</sup> Unicef.org. 2020. [online] Available at: <<https://www.unicef.org/romania/media/2276/file/Assessment%20of%20the%20situation%20of%20children%20and%20families,%20with%20a%20focus%20on%20vulnerable%20ones,%20in%20the%20context%20of%20the%20COVID-19%20outbreak%20in%20Romania.pdf>> [Accessed 5 June 2020].



platforms,” or if available providing “radio programs and national television;”<sup>15</sup>

- Developing young people’s digital skills to access changing markets in both technical and non-technical jobs, such as customer service, healthcare and social care; Linking education to job training programs;
- Establishing youth-driven innovation hubs aimed at supporting start-ups that meet increasing demand for online services;
- Expanding life skills training programs for young people, especially those in poverty and disadvantage, to increase resilience, develop healthy lifestyles and assume responsibility for their own lives;
- Fostering partnerships between young people, the private sector and the government aimed at innovating new ways to provide services for the community such as the distribution of groceries and medicines, and training in the field of information and communications technology (ICT).

## 4. EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE INTERVENTIONS

### **Establishing Green Lanes for transports of goods and medical supplies at EU level**

After a period of actions hastily taken by the European Union member states, when they completely close the borders, even the borders between member states signatory of the Schengen Agreement, European Commission intervened and issued guidelines “to ensure continuous flow of goods across EU via green lanes.”<sup>16</sup> By applying this crucial measure, the supply chains were not disrupted or were reestablished, and the medical crisis were prevented to become a much greater one food security crisis.

### **Expanding youth employment opportunities**

Many countries have implemented different schemes to improve youth’s access to the labor market but the most successful ones seem to be those offering a wide range of

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<sup>15</sup> Ilo.org. 2020. [online] Available at: <[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_dialogue/---sector/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_742025.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/briefingnote/wcms_742025.pdf)> [Accessed 5 June 2020].

<sup>16</sup> European Commission - European Commission. 2020. *Press Corner*. [online] Available at: <[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_20\\_510](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_510)> [Accessed 1 June 2020].

services, such as the employment Success Package (ESP) in the Republic of Korea. This program provides a customized three-stage package support: 1) counseling, diagnosis and direction setting 2) job skill improvement through vocational training and internship, and 3) job placement for up to a year for struggling job-seekers.<sup>17</sup>

## **S2 (E 112) Form**

The S2 Form is issued in accordance with the European Council Regulation (EEC) no. 1408/71 on the application of social security schemes in relation to employed persons, self-employed persons and their families moving within the Community. It allows access to planned medical services in all European Union or European Free Trade Association countries. The applicant will be entitled to the same treatment as the residents of that country.<sup>18</sup>

Other examples of positive interventions:

- Providing free bandwidth for poorer students while schools are closed during the state of emergency;
- Suspending payments for rent, utilities, telecommunication during the state of emergency;
- Delivering cash and/or in-kind transfers for food or other [necessary] allowances, through electronic vouchers or cards.<sup>19</sup>

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report makes the following recommendations:

- The positive measure of the European Union to ensure the continuous operation of the main international transport routes at European level (27

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<sup>17</sup> APEC. 2020. *Best Practices Of Youth Employment Policies In Selected APEC Economies*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.apec.org/Publications/2019/01/Best-Practices-of-Youth-Employment-Policies-in-Selected-APEC-Economies>> [Accessed 7 June 2020].

<sup>18</sup> Europa ta - Cetățeni. 2020. *Formulare Standard În Domeniul Securității Sociale*. [online] Available at: <[https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/work/social-security-forms/index\\_ro.htm](https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/work/social-security-forms/index_ro.htm)> [Accessed 6 June 2020].

<sup>19</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2020. *Analyses And Solutions*. [online] Available at: <[http://www.fao.org/2019-ncov/analysis/en/?page=5&ipp=10&no\\_cache=1&tx\\_dynalist\\_pi1\[par\]=YTtoxOntzOjE6lkwiO3M6MToiMCI7fQ==>](http://www.fao.org/2019-ncov/analysis/en/?page=5&ipp=10&no_cache=1&tx_dynalist_pi1[par]=YTtoxOntzOjE6lkwiO3M6MToiMCI7fQ==>)> [Accessed 6 June 2020].

states) and to maintain operational the food, medical and other critical supply chains during pandemic through the *green lanes*, should be replicated worldwide;

- Policymakers must act to protect the health and well-being of children. Food security programs (centrally SNAP and Pandemic-EBT) must be strengthened and expanded immediately.
- To ensure a rapid, accurate and unified response to the challenges raised by the Covid-19 pandemic, it is necessary to transfer competencies (i.e. competencies of coordination of the emergency management) from national level to supranational level, measures that have to be coupled with complimentary measures of building new institutions and of improving the existent institutions;
- Special attention must be given to the oversight bodies who monitor at the international level the implementation of policies related to welfare, safety and health of the children and youth. They have to possess the means to deter any actions that may contravene to the provisions of international conventions and regulation on protection of children and youth;
- Greater attention should be paid to integration of public policies targeted on providing food, shelter and clothes with public policies on education and health;
- In order to ensure an adequate protection of kids and youth against human trafficking/exploitation, greater attention should be given to establishing at national level of dedicated agencies with attributions in combating human trafficking;
- The social safety net should be redesigned and strengthened in order to develop capabilities not to preserve poverty, but to improve people's equal access to services and opportunities to overcome it;
- To improve social safety nets is also necessary to use innovation and technology for developing accurate solutions to identify the members of the target group, in order to achieve better results of the intervention measures; the identified solutions must be developed in full compliance with the regulations on fundamental human rights;

- An essential step is to provide access to digital devices, activities, resources and online services to families with vulnerable children and youth; Those who cannot afford the technology should be trained to properly use it.
- Since the public policy options will differ between countries and cultures, it is necessary to measure the results of the programs developed and to determine which works best and then to replicate them;
- Including social safety net strategies within country's recovery plans as soon as health threats decrease, so that the needs of vulnerable populations, especially children and youth, are being considered. Governments can accelerate this by expanding how they provide connected welfare, progress and societal benefits to vulnerable groups, whether in their social safety net or ancillary digital services;
- To gain work experience during a pandemic may be extremely difficult. It is necessary to promote youth employment by expanding access to employability skills, training programs and creating stimulus to hire young people within economic recovery packages.



## **Subgroup 2**

# **Report on ELDERLY**

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## 1. CONTEXTUALIZATION

Globally, the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on population groups has shown differences, with marked negative effects amongst older adults. Generally, the epidemiology of the novel coronavirus has been associated with common cold, bronchitis and pneumonia that typically, severely weakens the respiratory system (SARS) and can also affect the gut. The explanation of higher morbidity rates amongst adults aged beyond 60 years and those in their 70s, has been shown to result from the fact that, generally, almost everyone in this age group already has an underlying health condition.<sup>20</sup>

“Although all age groups are at risk of contracting COVID-19, older persons are at a significantly higher risk of mortality and severe disease following infection, an estimated 66% of people aged 70 and over have at least one underlying condition, placing them at increased risk of severe impact from COVID-19 with those over 80 years old dying at five times the average rate.”<sup>21</sup>

Demographic fatalities by the United Nations (UN) shows that 95% of European fatalities, and 80% of Chinese fatalities due to COVID-19 have been people 60 years or older, and in the United States, 80% of deaths were among adults 65 and over. <sup>22</sup>

Additionally, public and private health systems placed under extreme pressure have witnessed age discrimination decisions on medical care and triage, with hospitals allocating priority towards younger patients at the expense of the elderly. More significantly, abuse and neglect of older persons was registered in almost all care homes in Europe and the United States. With lockdowns and reduced care, violence against the elderly is on the rise. Given the global economic downturn, the elderly are particularly at risk as the pandemic significantly lowers incomes and living standards amongst communities where less than 20% of retirees receive a pension.<sup>23</sup> In Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States, and other European countries, care homes have emerged as the epicentre of fatalities, as staff contracted the virus and abandoned residents. Furthermore, according to UK Sky News report, 8 out of 10 care home directors

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<sup>20</sup> UN Policy Brief May 2020. The Impact of COVID-19 on Older Persons.

<sup>21</sup> UN PRESS STATEMENT 23 April 2020 UNIC/PR/2020/04/23 United Nations commends South Africa's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

<sup>22</sup> UN Policy Brief May 2020. The Impact of COVID-19 on Older Persons.

<sup>23</sup> UN Policy Brief April 2020: 1-4).

confirmed that residents experienced psychological impacts of COVID-19 when the patient felt rejected due to the prohibition of visitors during the lockdowns.

## 2. MAIN PREOCCUPATION AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE GROUP

- Follow both WHO and CDC guidelines for Long-Term Care Facilities in the context of COVID-19 Interim Guidance.
- Generate the necessary funding to provide access to phone and video call technology for each Long-Term Care resident. The elderly, especially those in isolation, those with cognitive decline, and those who are highly care-dependent, need a continuum of practical and emotional support.
- Allow UNFPA to provide demographic data to increase preparedness. UNFPA supports governments to rapidly generate population data that illustrates demographic risks, including the relative and absolute numbers of elderly in different localities, and their living conditions.<sup>24</sup>

## 3. EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE INTERVENTIONS

In Switzerland and Spain, the elderly and those with disabilities living in care homes and institutions were moved out to live with their families, if possible. Given that these care facilities have proven to be conduits for transmitting COVID-19, an effective first step is to identify lower risk individuals. Older people with no underlying conditions and patients who are solely treating disabilities make an ideal population to move out of the facilities. These parties do not need immediate attention, meaning it is beneficial for both the facility and the patient to temporarily remove them.

In Canada, priority testing guidelines were issued with specific measures for institutional settings. Included in this priority testing group were health care professionals. Increasing the access to testing for these workers is vital because they come into frequent contact with an extremely vulnerable group. Managing health care

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<sup>24</sup> UNFPA30 April 2020. Blog: Our Humanity in Times of Crisis **By Dr Julitta Onabanjo**, Respect and protect our elderly as valued citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic at: <https://esaro.unfpa.org/en/news/respect-and-protect-our-elderly-valued-citizens-during-covid-19-pandemic> accessed 5 June 2020.

workers is the most efficient way to manage the safety of the patients they care for. This priority testing expansion is an effective way to mitigate risk.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Based on current guidelines and prevalence data from GBD, we estimate that one in five individuals worldwide has a condition that is on the list of those at increased risk of severe COVID-19 disease. There is an urgent need for robust analyses of the risks associated with different underlying conditions so that countries can identify the highest risk groups and develop targeted shielding policies to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Discharge and release persons with disabilities from institutions and promptly ensure provision of support in the community through family and/or informal networks, and fund support services by public or private service providers.
- In the interim, prioritise testing and promote preventive measures within institutions to reduce transmission<sup>25</sup>
- Increase funding and resources for Long-Term-Care patients because LTC is typically a department that is conducive for quickly spreading infectious diseases
- Ensure that there is proper funding to allow each resident of LTC to have access to phone/video call technology to contact family and friends
- Consider additional staff capable of increasing the technological literacy of the elderly, to suppress the effects of social isolation
- Screen visitors and post signs around entrances to encourage people to follow visiting restrictions. Also post instructions to disseminate protocol in the event that visitors gain symptoms within 14 days of entering the facility.

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<sup>25</sup> UN Human Rights COVID-19 AND THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES 29 April 2020, Office of Commissioner.



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## Subgroup 3

# Report on **WOMEN IN VULNERABLE CONDITIONS**

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## 1. CONTEXTUALIZATION

This report examines the ways in which the vulnerabilities of women are especially exploited during the COVID-19 crisis. Vulnerable women are defined as women who are trapped in abusive relationships, women who are living in poverty or have lost an income, women who are malnourished, and women who are pregnant. This pandemic is pushing women further into these vulnerable situations due to being forced into confinement with their abusers and experiencing loss of income because of rising unemployment rates.

During times of crises, the vulnerabilities of women are certainly amplified. COVID-19 has proven to be no different, being that within the rising unemployment due to the pandemic, women are losing jobs at disproportionately higher rates across many industries. According to the National Women’s Law Centre (NWLC), “in the education and health services, women made up 77% of the workforce, but accounted for 83% of job losses. In retail, women made up 48% of the workforce, but accounted for 61% of job losses. And in local and state government jobs, women made up 58% of the workforce, but accounted for 63% of job losses.”<sup>26</sup> These rates show that while the unemployment rate is rising for many countries, within this trend of unemployment, women are being affected at a greater rate than men. This leads to higher rates of economic instability among women and possibly, a higher reliance on abusive partners.

During the pandemic, women have been experiencing an increase in domestic violence and gender-based violence. A 2020 report by the United Nations Women shows that domestic violence has recently escalated for women due to COVID-19. According to this report, France has seen a 30% increase in domestic violence reports since the lockdown, Argentina has seen a 25% increase in emergency calls for domestic violence, and Cyprus and Singapore have both seen a 30% increase in calls to their domestic violence helplines.<sup>27</sup> Canada, Germany, Spain, the United States, and the United Kingdom have also seen a COVID-19-related spike in domestic violence. Since women are disproportionately affected by the violence and joblessness brought on by the pandemic, it is important incorporate strategies that specifically target women when addressing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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<sup>26</sup> Emily Martin, VP for education and workplace justice at NWLC

<sup>27</sup> Women, U. (2020). Issue brief: COVID-19 and ending violence against women and girls: Digital library: Publications. Retrieved June 17, 2020, from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/issue-brief-covid-19-and-ending-violence-against-women-and-girls>

## 2. MAIN PREOCCUPATION AND STRATEGIES THAT GUIDE THE INTERVENTIONS

- Ensuring that institutions and mechanisms created to protect women in vulnerable situations adapt to the current crisis in order to continue to be a valuable resource for women during the pandemic. Institutions and mechanisms should not be rigid in nature during these times, but should be flexible to meet the needs of women in situations of domestic violence and/or gender-based violence
- Economic empowerment that provides tools for women to be financially independent and aware of how financial dependence on men pushes women into vulnerability
- Creating awareness among women for what constitutes violence against women by enabling access to on-time, specific and relevant knowledge
- Educational awareness in schools and workplaces for children and men, for what constitutes violence against women. This can be carried out by NGOs, shelters, women’s rights groups, and media platforms

## 3. EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE INTERVENTIONS

The core issue confronting vulnerable women in a pandemic scenario is that their movements and freedoms become severely restricted, and access to solutions and rescue become blocked. As we grapple with these ideas and previous understandings and experiences, let us consider some previous public and private interventions that have been run successfully to achieve various outcomes under various conditions:

- The organization, SASA!, which is a Kiswahili word that means “now”, has created community workshops to raise awareness about gender-based violence in Uganda. SASA! is run by Raising Voices in Uganda and has worked with local

volunteers in the region to give trainings aimed at decreasing behaviour that perpetuates gender-based violence (GBV).<sup>28</sup>

- UNiTE: The UN Secretary General’s Campaign to End Violence against Women, which calls for a multisectoral response to ending GBV using education and advocacy interventions.<sup>29</sup>
- Phaphama Programme in South Africa: Phaphama is an organization that gives “alternatives to violence” workshops to individuals within schools, prisons, and communities in an effort to combat gender-based violence. They also distributed leaflets at informal bars (sheebans) about safe sex. Increased condom usage was found a full year afterwards.<sup>30</sup>

These interventions provided success rates ranging from 30% to 55%, but long-term sustainability has not been achieved to any level of confidence. Most interventions worked well for the short term of 6 months to 1 year, but have not had much degree of success beyond 2 years.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

In our recommendations, we place core importance on ensuring the protection of women against violence during the pandemic. With restricted travel, and isolation guidelines, it is essential to alter and expedite processes to reflect these unprecedented times and keep women as safe from violence possible. Our recommendations are as followed:

1. Protective measures specifically designed for female victims of violence should remain accessible and open despite travel restrictions and quarantine orders:
  - While quarantine orders and restrictions are in place, judicial authorities should consider abolishing prerequisite formal requests and other requirements for issuing restraining orders

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<sup>28</sup> Abramsky T. et al. 2014. Findings from the SASA study: a cluster randomized controlled trial to assess the impact of a community mobilization intervention to prevent violence against women and reduce HIV risk in Kampala Uganda. *BMC Medicine* 12, 122-139

<sup>29</sup> WHO. 2019. 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence 25th November - 10 December, Concept Note. WHO

<sup>30</sup> Kalichman SC, Simbayi LC, Cain D, et al. 2014. Randomized community-level HIV prevention intervention trial for men who drink in South African alcohol-serving venues. *Eur J Public Health* 24(5):833-839. doi:10.1093/eurpub/ckt172

- Shelters should remain open by law for women and girls seeking protections from their assailants while quarantine orders remain in place. Additional counseling services should also be provided in the form of video and/or telephone
  - If law enforcement officers or soldiers deployed to enforce quarantine orders commit acts of sexual violence, torture, or other gender-based violence, national and local authorities must guarantee immediate impartial investigations
2. Access to justice for female victims of gender-based violence must be a top priority throughout the development of COVID-19 contingency plans
- Government institutions must adopt special measures to strengthen judicial resources for receiving and processing complaints
  - There must be various methods available to victims of gender-based violence to file complaints and seek protection or shelter. Electronic methods should be explored, with travel restrictions and quarantine methods kept in mind
3. States must recognize the disparate effects of COVID-19 on female migrants
- Implement clear mechanisms for migrants to receive essential healthcare services and access to prevention services in contingency plans. Migratory status should not affect access to these systems.
  - Prioritize identification and assistance for victims of human trafficking, especially in areas with closed borders and/or restricted movement due to COVID-19<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> “Guidelines for Protecting the Rights of Women and Girls During the COVID-19 Pandemic.” *Amnesty International*, 15 Apr. 2020, [www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr01/2141/2020/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr01/2141/2020/en/).



## Subgroup 4

# Report on MIGRANTS

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## 1. CONTEXTUALIZATION

The COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately affecting migrant communities all across the globe. Ever since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus a global health pandemic on March 11th, 2020, migrants have been increasingly placed in vulnerable situations in transit and at destinations.<sup>32</sup> In addition to the existing risks of traveling in vulnerable situations, countless governments have been restricting pathways of entry and increasing immigration detention where too many have failed to address the pre-existing, and new issues facing detained migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.<sup>33</sup> In the often overcrowded facilities where migrants are detained and processed, adequate sanitation and physical distancing are almost impossible to achieve. Further, in the prolonged, or in some cases, a non-existent process to long-term placement, migrants are not only deprived of their fundamental human rights in accordance with international law, but also left to be more prone to contract, and suffer from deadly symptoms of COVID-19 from improper treatment in detention facilities and or poor settlement conditions.<sup>34</sup> To that end, it is of the utmost importance to identify and recommend innovative solutions for immigrants in unprecedented times.

## 2. MAIN PREOCCUPATION AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE GROUP

To best assist the migrants in their difficult travel and transition to their target destinations, the United Nations Network on Migration had issued a series of recommendations that have been proven effective in individual examples similar to that of guidelines and examples set by various governmental, and intergovernmental actors.<sup>35</sup> As such, main strategies to protect migrants in vulnerable situations are as followed, but not limited to:

1. Calls for immediate protective measures to ensure all migrants' right to

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<sup>32</sup> WHO Director-General's [opening remarks](#) at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020

<sup>33</sup> [The Global Detention Project, COVID-19 Global Immigration Platform](#)

<sup>34</sup> **International law** here refers to the [Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment](#) of Prisoners that was later adopted by the United Nations into UN General Assembly Resolution 2858, titled "Human Rights in the Administration of Justice", along with the [universal standards](#) imposed by the UNHRC

<sup>35</sup> United Nations Network on Migration, [Working Group for Alternatives to Immigration Detention](#)

<sup>36</sup> More examples can be found in the [interim guidance](#) on *COVID-19: Focus on Persons Deprived of Their Liberty* by OHCHR & WHO, alongside with [principles and guidelines](#) for migrants in vulnerable situations by UNHCR & the Global Migration Group



- personal security, freedom from discrimination, and access to nutrients, clean water, and healthcare
2. **Eliminates** custodial detention methods and encourages non-custodial, community-based alternatives aiming towards greater inclusion
  3. **Requests** platforms for migrants in vulnerable situations to contribute their skills and knowledge for the greater welfare of the community

### 3. EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE INTERVENTIONS

Firstly, humanitarian initiatives have been implemented by aid and international organizations for those who are already excluded from social safety nets or government benefits systems in fragile areas such as central and Latin America, around the Syrian border, and between Myanmar and Bangladesh. UNHCR formulated a COVID-19 emergency response in the MENA region which included delivering assistance, interventions to prevent infections, and disbursement of cash payments to over five million people. Governments with migrant populations are reminded to uphold fundamental norms of refugee and human rights law. At a time when 167 countries have fully or partially closed borders, with at least 57 states allowing no exception for an asylum seeker, a priority is to ensure governments guarantee safety for those attempting to escape conflict and persecution across frontiers. Agencies such as UNHCR and Refugee Rights Europe have insisted on access to testing for the virus and medical treatment for migrant groups to protect migrants' rights and safeguard host communities.

Secondly, NGOs and IOs are attempting enhance the inclusion of migrant and displaced populations in response and recovery measures. With inequality likely to be exacerbated by the pandemic, preventive measures to counter the marginalization of immigrant and displaced people will be an important short and long-term goal. The International Organization on Migration (IOM) has highlighted the importance of assisting remittance flows, which are predicted to fall more sharply than at any time as a result of the pandemic, and which are a vital income component for many developing countries. Mobile and electronic payments to enable migrant groups are also crucial in allowing migrants to meet basic needs. In Kenya, the central bank for example has waived charges for mobile money transactions under \$10.

Uganda’s telecoms company is one of many that have eliminated charges on mobile money transfers. Payments group Mastercard is working with local tech partners in Colombia to facilitate disbursements to several hundred thousand excluded people.

Digital technology is being used to support access to essential services and countering migrants’ social and economic isolation, as well as opening virtual channels for education and training disrupted by the pandemic. UK telecoms’ company BT is partnering with digital skills organizations to help individuals with low or no digital skills to be connected, as well as to improve digital literacy and safety online. In Kenya, an initiative ‘iamtheCODE’ that mobilizes governments, business and investors to support 1 million young women learning how to code has proposed a hub to link the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya with host communities and public and private partnerships. Creating positive connections between migrant and mainstream communities, through digital media, can also help avoid stigmatization of migrant populations, which may increase as a result of the crisis.

Data-activated initiatives require public-private collaboration. Companies are working with governments – for example in Colombia - using existing datasets on vulnerabilities, to identify particular needs of migrant and other marginalized populations groups. Information on what companies are doing to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic is available on the LSE IDEAS ‘[Better Together](#)’ platform.

SMS messaging has also been used to address social and economic isolation, transmit messages by health ministries, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Red Cross. More information is available [here](#).

Thirdly, empowerment and capabilities: there is growing recognition that despite their vulnerability, migrants and displaced people should not be seen simply as victims or beneficiaries of emergency support.<sup>37</sup> The skills of migrant groups are a resource in responding to the COVID-19 crisis. Before the pandemic, UNHCR had been working

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<sup>37</sup> A. Betts and P. Collier (2017) *Refuge. Transforming a Broken Refugee System*. Allen Lane

with people who had fled from political crisis in Venezuela to generate new types of economic activities that cater to both host and displaced communities. Migrants provide important seasonal labour for the agricultural sector, and can meet other temporary spikes in demand, such as in tourism. UNHCR collects stories of migrants applying skills in their new host settings, for example an occupational therapist from Venezuela who reinvented herself as a street food vendor in São Paulo serving Venezuelan dishes.

In a sanitised workshop run by the NGO Earth Heir, refugees from Afghanistan, Myanmar and Syria are making PPE sets. “Our goals are to support and honour our frontline heroes, and to continue to provide income to the refugee artisans we serve,” explained Xiao Cheng Wong, Earth Heir’s CEO. “They are one of the most vulnerable groups during this pandemic and are hit the most during an economic slowdown.” (available [here](#) in full).

Support for businesses and new economic activities in host countries will help avoid the risk that migrants become ‘double casualties’ of both infection and destitution as a result of COVID-19 response.

With migration flows at record levels even before the pandemic, a change of perspective to see population mobility as an economic opportunity not an additional threat, will be important not only to mitigating migrants’ vulnerability but also in re-thinking the post-COVID-19 global economy. Government participation in formalising and legalising such arrangements is crucial. Whole of Government approaches (as implemented in South Korea and Colombia) that link action on infection and health with economic measures, and cross-referenced with levels of vulnerability, also ensure that lives and livelihoods are targeted simultaneously. The Sustainable Development Goals Framework which has encouraged multi-actor initiatives with business working with government and NGOs at both national and local level is an important mechanism to encourage private sector contributions in delivering public goods. In order to move beyond corporate philanthropic donations to active co-constructions between public and private entities, initiatives under the slogan ‘Build Back Better’ and the [World Economic Forum’s Great Reset campaign](#), are thinking about how to repurpose development programmes, create novel supply chains and focus on employment opportunities. These are opportunities to improve the inclusion of migrant workers.

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Locations where migrant and displaced people are concentrated such as refugee camps and detention centres should be prioritised for health and sanitation protection. These locations could be organised as economic response hubs and enterprise zones.
- Responses which address risks faced by migrant populations should be addressed through collective efforts by government working with third sector organisations and business.
- Economic recovery initiatives should include a focus on how to utilise migrant labour and skills.
- The digital communications sector should work with IOs such as UNHCR, IoM, NGOs and government to improve mobile connectivity with migrant communities.
- Certification and documentation to enable this mainstreaming should be fast-tracked.



## **Subgroup 5: Report on Racial/Ethnic Minorities**

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## 1. CONTEXTUALIZATION

The circumstances that form the need for innovative and inclusive, public and private intervention strategies for racial and ethnic minorities amid COVID-19 vary with the historical patterns and geography of racial and ethnic populations, local economic trends and global conditions. Among vulnerable racial and ethnic groups within the United States are African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and Hispanics. These groups have experienced negative consequences from COVID-19 at a much greater rate than Whites in terms of mortality, health awareness, treatment, recovery, economic stability and job loss, government lending, education, incarceration, and overall living conditions. Vulnerable ethnic populations also include numerous groups that live in and on the forest, connected smaller groups like the wetland and river fisherfolk, and small agriculturists who have much in common with the tribes because they also eke out an "ecosystem existence."<sup>38</sup> Dwellers in Africa's urban slums, including the largest urban slums in sub-Saharan Africa, are particularly vulnerable to disease spread since they live in overcrowded make-shift buildings lacking proper ventilation and access to running water. These living circumstances make it hard, if not impossible, for residents of African slums to social distance or practice routine hand washing in accordance to World Health Organization guidelines.<sup>39</sup> Other vulnerable populations include refugees and forced migrants with limited ability to abide by public health management protocols.<sup>40,41</sup>

By mid-May, the Navajo Nation, which spans Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah, surpassed New York state for the highest COVID-19 infection rate in the United States.<sup>42</sup> The impact has been similar upon other minority groups, with African Americans comprising 27% of COVID-19 death in 39 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>43</sup> The same study found that the mortality rate for Black American is 2.4 times as high as the rate for Whites, and 2.2 times as high as the rate for Asians and

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<sup>38</sup> Abnik Gupta, notes from Working Group 3 Meeting, May 29, 2020

<sup>39</sup> Obasesam Okoi notes from Working Group 3 Meeting, May 29, 2020

<sup>40</sup> Dina Dajani, notes from Working Group 3 Meeting, May 29, 2020

<sup>41</sup> As Global Democracy Retreats, Ethnic Cleansing Is on the Rise, February 25, 2019, Freedom House, <https://freedomhouse.org/article/global-democracy-retreats-ethnic-cleansing-rise>

<sup>42</sup> Navajo Nation surpasses New York state for the highest COVID-19 infection rate in the US, May 18, 2020, CNN, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/18/us/navajo-nation-infection-rate-trnd/index.html>

<sup>43</sup> APM Research Lab, "The Color of Coronavirus: COVID-19 Deaths By Race and Ethnicity in the U.S.," May 27, 2020, <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/covid/deaths-by-race>

Latinos, and in several states (i.e. New York, Illinois and Wisconsin), Latino Americans were found to die at rates above their population share.<sup>44</sup> A similar study conducted by MarketWatch found the 75% of frontline workers in New York are people of color—and Black Americans are twice as likely to die from COVID-19 in the United States. On the other hand, Whites who represent 61.7% of the combined population, were considerably less likely to die from COVID-19 than expected, given their share of the population and experienced 49.7% of deaths in America where race and ethnicity is known.

With respect to income, less educated workers in low-wage, blue-collar jobs have been hardest hit by COVID-19, worsening an already expanding income inequality gap. For households making less than \$36,000 per year, thirty-seven percent (37%) have been laid off as a result of the coronavirus, and fifty-eight percent (58%) have suffered a loss of income, due to either fewer hours worked or less pay.<sup>45</sup> Seventy-five percent (75%) of front line workers in grocery, convenience and drug stores, public transit, trucking, warehouse and postal service, healthcare, childcare, family services, and building cleaning services are comprised of Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians, previously identified as most vulnerable to COVID-19. Such data shines a light on the devastation wrought upon small businesses owned by people of color, and public school children in communities of color, many of the latter who either do not have access to broadband services, a home computer, or lack the financial means to subscribe to broadband services, or basic health care.<sup>46</sup>

## 2. EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE INTERVENTIONS

A recent [study of the Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918](#) found that cities that implemented early and aggressive non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs), such as social distancing, actually had significantly more robust post-pandemic recoveries than those that did not. This is because NPIs constrain social interactions and dampen any economic activity that relies on such interactions; however, in a pandemic, economic activity will also naturally be reduced in the absence of such measures, as people reduce

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Black Americans are twice as likely to die from COVID-19 in America: 75% of frontline workers in New York are people of color, June 2, 2020, MarketWatch, <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/75-of-frontline-workers-in-new-york-the-epicenter-of-coronavirus-are-people-of-color-and-black-americans-are-twice-as-likely-to-die-from-covid-19-2020-06-01>

<sup>46</sup> Jeff Hornstein, notes from Working Group 3 Meeting, May 29, 2020

consumption and reduce their work hours in order to reduce their risk of becoming infected. While NPIs lower economic activity, they may solve the coordination problems associated with fighting disease transmission and mitigate pandemic-related economic disruption. In the medium term, flattening the curve and saving lives has a bigger positive economic effect than the negative economic impact of the NPIs themselves. Thus, Taiwan, Singapore, and to a degree, China, which implemented aggressive NPIs swiftly have not only seen lower rates of infection and death but they also appear to have avoided the most severe economic consequences.

Aside from public health solutions, countries and their political subdivisions have dealt with the differential economic consequences of the pandemic in a wide variety of ways. Wealthier countries that had relatively low inequality prior to the pandemic, including northern European nations like Germany, used their fiscal strength to both expand social welfare programs and support businesses to keep workers on payroll, thus minimizing economic disruption in both the short and medium terms. Countries like Spain and Italy, with more pre-pandemic inequality as well as large numbers of workers in the informal economy, had a harder time expanding existing systems and took on debt that will almost certainly be a continued drag on growth in the wake of the pandemic.

In the United States, lack of federal leadership meant that responses across the 50 states varied widely, often along partisan political lines; some states and municipalities embraced NPIs early and aggressively, others less so. As the national economy cratered in mid to late March and as the unemployment rolls swelled to 40 million workers, about 25% of the workforce, the federal government appropriated more than \$2 trillion via the CARES Act to expand unemployment insurance and provide short-term relief to small businesses via the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). As billions of dollars in forgivable PPP loans flowed through the private banking system in April, questions were raised about equitable access to funds; while full accounting is not yet available, it seems as though many minority-owned firms were left behind by the PPP initiative, thereby laying the foundations for an even larger racial wealth gap in the post-pandemic period. As tax revenues drop dramatically, state and municipal governments are being forced to consider draconian budget cuts, many of which will fall disproportionately on poor residents.

In the midst of the pandemic, the highly publicized killing of a Black man named George Floyd by white police officers on May 25 set off more than a week of nationwide



protests and civil unrest, including substantial property damage to hundreds of commercial corridors and main street businesses. While it is too early to quantify the economic impact of the civil unrest, it is likely to be substantial, and municipal governments are unlikely to possess sufficient resources to deal with the consequences.

In terms of solutions, we are still largely in the “response” phase of the crisis. In addition to the federal CARES Act, many states and localities attempted to establish loan or grant programs to mitigate the impact of the NPI regime on local businesses; in Philadelphia, a COVID-19 Relief Fund was established by several local foundations and business leaders, and dozens of grants and loans have been disbursed. In Philadelphia and in several other US cities, anchor institutions like hospitals and universities have come together to leverage institutional purchasing power to create jobs and growth for minority-owned businesses.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

To promote a social safety net for ethnic and racial minorities in a post pandemic environment, the subgroup has identified the following recommendations. These recommendations are specifically designed to promote stability during times of stress, with a focus on food, clothing, and shelter and the need for a long-term social safety net:

- Localization and diversification of services and supply chains – the pandemic has halted all supply chains, affecting economic stability related to the global marketplace, as well as the supply of humanitarian and health workers engaged in providing basic health and resource needs for those communities. Through localizing and diversifying services and supply chains, resources availability in marginalized communities will be strengthened.
- Local Governance and programming to support housing, employment stability, and tech/internet access – housing insecurity is linked to the spread of the pandemic, as can be seen by increasing cases amongst the homeless, refugees and forced migrants, and in slums. Governments should develop housing stability by creating local policy and governance options to promote housing and employment security. A critical component of this is ensuring access to technology and internet to develop employment options and overall

employability. This includes access to low-cost durable tech solutions everywhere to allow for full community participation.

- Public/Private partnerships – Governments and NGOs should develop options for the engagement of private industry in the development of systems, employment, housing and tech.
- Partnership with faith-based communities – joint coordination of activities between social services agencies within faith-based communities and local governments will promote a targeted local response to support local businesses and communities
- Prioritizing local resource base– build linkages in communities to ensure local small businesses are well-integrated into the needs of their local community and can provide services directly to community members for a minimization of disruption in case of shutdown or other disruption. Encourage institutional purchasers such as universities and hospitals and governments to spend money with local firms, especially those owned by and employing marginalized populations.
- Prioritize public health programming focused on non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) and with a deep consideration of the social determinants of health. This will allow responders to focus on those in the community with the largest burden of disease, which increases the likelihood of infection, fatality, and associated long-term conditions.

## I. CONCLUSION

The five subgroups part of Working Group 3 tackled the most important side issue of the current Covid-19 crises. Minorities, children and youths, the elderly, women, and migrants are exposed to a number of threats on a day to day basis. During the pandemic these risks increase due to social isolation, lockdowns and unemployment.

Unfortunately, many of the recommended health measures used to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease also exacerbate the problems these groups experience. Isolation puts women and children at risk, locked in with their abusers. Solitude, neglect and lack of access to basic health services are threats to the elderly stranded at home or at assisted living facilities. Migrants live in sub-optimal conditions or are detained in overcrowded locations without access to public health services. Minorities have also less access to health services, can't afford social distancing, are at risk of losing their homes, and have a higher number of underlying health issues.

The five subgroups approached these issues directly, recommending strategic solutions, as well as specific policies to mitigate the risks their demographic groups face on a day to day basis during the pandemic. Actionable recommendations provided include: access to technology to assist youth learning; improvement in safety nets against abuse and poverty; assuring access to food; making social distancing less distant through technology; supporting minority owned businesses; and, involving migrants in solutions to their problems.

Think tanks exist to tackle the hardest problems society face. Working Group 3 looked into underlying societal issues exacerbated by the pandemic: poverty, unequal access to education, societal neglect and tacit acceptance of abuse, and gaps in social safety nets. These are the hardest problems we face in the construction of a more affluent and peaceful society.

The bespoke strategies and recommendations presented in this report are pertinent to this crisis and beyond it, when countries open up and resume normalcy (a 'new normal') in years to come.