



Connective Cities Sub Saharan Africa

Virtual series on municipal response to Covid-19

Topic: Provision of municipal services during a pandemic

Provisional Dates: 27th & 29th October, 2020

Time: 13:00 – 15:00 Central European Time (CET)

Language: English

Premise

Covid-19 pandemic has caused a lot of negative impacts to many cities and municipalities across the world. According to UN Habitat, about 44% of the total African population live in urban areas of which 47% live in slums and informal settlements characterized by poor access to potable water and safe sanitation, overcrowding and often deficiency in service provision. The inadequate capacity of many Sub-Saharan countries to provide adequate water infrastructure despite being a major necessity in the fight against the covid-19 pandemic has made it difficult to contain the virus spread within many cities. This makes cities more susceptible in the ongoing spread of the pandemic in the region and the enforcement of the WHO guidelines on prevention and fight against the pandemic a challenge. Sub-Saharan Africa's rapid and unplanned urbanization is therefore seen as a huge risk factor of Covid-19.

The impact of this pandemic has been felt worldwide yet cities have responded with different measures to avert the spread and cushion against long-term impacts and even future pandemics. It's against this background that Connective Cities¹ is offering a platform in which cities will share the challenges they have experienced and interventions that have either been implemented or are being planned to safeguard against the negative impacts and future pandemics.

In the first series, we look at the provision of municipal services and specifically water supply and solid waste management services.

Water supply: UN-Habitat's² database shows that only 55% of all Africa's urban residents have access to basic sanitation services, (i.e. improved sanitation facilities not shared with other households) 44% in sub-Saharan Africa) and access to hygiene facilities is low in Africa since only 47% of all urban residents have basic hand washing facilities in their homes (37% in sub-Saharan Africa).

¹ Connective Cities is a joint programme between the Association of German Cities (Deutscher Städtetag), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Engagement Global / Service Agency Communities in One World. The International Community of Practice for Sustainable Urban Development is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

² UN-Habitat. 'Covid-19 in African Cities- Impacts, Responses and Policies'. 2020

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Access to safe water, sanitation and other hygiene facilities is critical in protecting populations during infectious disease outbreaks such as the ongoing spread of the Covid-19 pandemic around the world. However, the inadequate supply of clean water coupled with poor sanitation in many Sub-Saharan cities may hinder the fight against the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. Poor governance and inadequate funding are some of the reasons that have led to inadequacy in provision of this basic commodity.

The informal settlements that constitutes almost half of the urban populations and are more susceptible to contracting the virus because of the living conditions. The access to basic services such as water, sanitation and solid waste management is inadequate. As these services are also often communal, observing social distancing as is required is hard to achieve. The spread of the virus like other infectious diseases is thus rampant in these communities.

Solid waste management: effective solid waste management services is vital in ensuring a sanitary environment for any population. With changes in lives and partial or total lock-downs, the provision of this crucial service was interrupted. With the spread of the virus, the general public is now using a lot of medical equipment including surgical gloves and masks. The unsafe disposal of this waste including the increase of medical waste, increases the risks and hazards especially to the waste handlers both formal and informal. The markets also pose a high risk in spreading the virus because of the crowds and improper solid waste services. Cities need to clearly define proper municipal waste management services and especially during a pandemic.

The Connective Cities Covid-19 Series

This series will attract contribution from cities on their challenges and initiatives in the aforementioned topics.

Questions we seek to answer in the webinar series:

1. What have been the **core challenges** for the municipalities?
2. What **measures** have municipalities put in place?
3. How do the municipalities deal with **vulnerable groups** which were most affected by the pandemic?
4. Have there been any **lessons learned** already for long term strategies to improve cities' resilience (i.e. preparedness for pandemics or similar events in the future)?

Your contribution:

1. Share an experience from your city. The PPT should include:
 - i. A brief description of the practice (also mention if it was initiated before or during the pandemic)
 - ii. Benefits accrued especially in this season
 - iii. Lessons learnt
 - iv. Replicability of the practice
2. Connective Cities has established a platform for cities to continue with the exchange. We encourage active participation on this platform.

3. Possible development of projects on topics discussed during the webinar.

The methodology of the virtual event

The virtual series will offer a buffet of experiences and instruments from municipalities as well as input from experts. The municipalities will be able to exchange on the measures they have been taking, challenges being experienced, and lessons learnt. The exchange could result in new ideas, improved municipal service delivery, but also activities in areas such as research and development, digitalisation, resource mobilisation etc.

The virtual platform that will host the event allows for interactive and mutual exchange among participants. A chat function will offer the opportunity to collect questions and comments during the event. An exchange between the speakers and audience is planned and will be moderated after each presentation. The entire event will be recorded.

Participation and contact

If you wish to participate kindly email Sophia Kamau (sophia.kamau@giz.de)

Please include the following:

1. Your contact information, including position and department in your municipality.
2. Short feedback on the response measures implemented in your municipality highlighting any innovative approaches.
3. Three questions related to the challenges your municipality is facing/ has faced due to the pandemic that you would you like to discuss.