Urban Regeneration and Viruses: Learning from Past and Present Health Crises
Urban Regeneration and Viruses
Learning from Past and Present Health Crises

Disclaimer
The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations, or its Member States. Excerpts may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated.

First published in 2022, updated in March 2024.

Project Coordinator: Laura Petrella, Katja Schaefer, Javier Torner.
Project Supervisor: Javier Torner.
Authors: Mariana Saraiva de Melo Perinelo, Radu Remus Macovei, Elena Balabanska.
Contributors: Mark Ojal.
Design and Layout: Elena Balabanska, Ekta Rakholiya

All rights reserved
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
P. O. Box 30030, 00100 Nairobi GPO Kenya
Tel: 254-020-7623120 (Central Office)
www.unhabitat.org
Copyright © United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2024
1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the report

1.2 Who is this report for?

1.3 How is this report structured?

1.4 What is urban regeneration?

1.5 Urban regeneration in the context of UN-Habitat’s Flagship Programme

2. Recovery after Disruption: Urban Implications and Opportunities

2.1 How have pandemics disrupted cities historically and how did they recover?

Case Study A: The Influenza Pandemic of 1918-1920 in the United States

Case Study B: The Influenza Pandemic of 1957-1958 in the United Kingdom

Case Study C: The SARS Crisis of 2003 in China

2.2 How have cities adapted during the Covid-19 pandemic?

2.3 What adaptations will stay in a post-Covid-19 world?

2.4 What challenges and opportunities does the pandemic present for the future of cities?

3. Case studies in Urban Regeneration Worldwide

3.1 Quito, Ecuador: The Quito Agrifood Pact (region)

3.2 Paris, France: The 15-minute City (city)

3.3 Chiang Mai, Thailand: Chiang Mai Urban Farm (neighborhood)

3.4 New York City, USA: Chinatown Economic Recovery Project (street)

3.5 Cairo, Egypt: Al-Darb al-Ahmar Housing Rehabilitation Programme (building)

4. Conclusions

4.1 Approaches to urban regeneration

4.2 Recommendations

Contents

1. Introduction 06

2. Recovery after Disruption: Urban Implications and Opportunities 16

3. Case studies in Urban Regeneration Worldwide 30

4. Conclusions 62

Preface

About UN-Habitat

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-Habitat, is the United Nations Programme for sustainable towns and cities. Headquartered in Nairobi, it works in over 90 countries worldwide to promote transformative change in cities and human settlements through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance and collaborative action. UN-Habitat is responsible for the coordination of all urban activities and relationships with local governments in the UN system and monitoring the progress of Sustainable Development Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities as well as the New Urban Agenda.

Over the last 40 years, UN-Habitat has implemented urban projects and programmes in cities all over the world. Inclusive and integrated approaches are inherent in UN-Habitat’s modus operandi. Technical elements such as urban planning, innovation and research are always combined with capacity building and fostering value-add, inclusive partnerships and dynamic stakeholder engagement processes. As a United Nations agency, engagement, and coordination of various stakeholders - bringing together governments, research institutions, companies and citizens - is our core mandate. Alongside our focus on human rights and vulnerable groups, these factors are our “convening power” and a core strength of the UN system.

UN-Habitat’s Strategic Plan 2020–2025 defines four interlinked domains of change (DoC) that overlap and are mutually reinforcing to promote sustainable urbanisation. The domains of change are:

1. Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban–rural continuum;
2. Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions;
3. Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment;
4. Effective urban crisis prevention and response.

To reduce spatial inequalities and eradicate poverty, planned urban growth must be accompanied by effective urban renewal through in-situ upgrading and urban regeneration. Such efforts would also offer the benefit of preserving cultural heritage and helping to build a sense of identity and belonging in cities.

Five different flagship programmes have been defined in the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025. UN-Habitat Flagship Programme 1 ‘Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities’ works to address spatial inequality and in this process, it identifies urban regeneration as a key component.
Urban regeneration represents a powerful tool for local governments for an inclusive and green socio-economic recovery. Inclusive urban regeneration can be a key tool to transform and recover socially, economically and ecologically affected urban areas, building them back better into dynamic, diverse and vibrant places.

Maimunah Mohd Sharif, October 2020
1.3 How is this report structured?


1. Purpose of the report

The Covid-19 pandemic magnified some of humanity’s most pressing challenges, such as the inequitable provision of basic services, infrastructure and environmental resources, and impeded progress on poverty and inequality reduction. The health crisis, however, has demonstrated the decisive and agile role of urban areas in the face of this crisis. Building on their ability to concentrate knowledge, infrastructure and capacity, many cities managed to deliver innovative solutions – from enhanced service provision to the repurposing of local economies to meet the changing needs of residents. Urban regeneration has been brought forth as a comprehensive approach that through multi-level coordination could provide an urban form generating wide and interrelated public benefits – physical, social, ecological, and economic – from enhanced service provision to the repurposing of local economies and assets.

1.1 Purpose of the report

This report presents to city leaders, planners, researchers, civil society, investors and private sector some of the lessons learnt from urban regeneration practices around the world and provides a basis for the changing needs of residents. Urban regeneration has been brought forth as a comprehensive approach that through multi-level coordination could provide an urban form generating wide and interrelated public benefits – physical, social, ecological, and economic – from enhanced service provision to the repurposing of local economies and assets.

1.2 Who is this report for?

This report presents to city leaders, planners, researchers, civil society, investors and private sector some of the lessons learnt from urban regeneration practices around the world and provides a basis for the changing needs of residents. Urban regeneration has been brought forth as a comprehensive approach that through multi-level coordination could provide an urban form generating wide and interrelated public benefits – physical, social, ecological, and economic – from enhanced service provision to the repurposing of local economies and assets.

1.3 How is this report structured?

This report presents to city leaders, planners, researchers, civil society, investors and private sector some of the lessons learnt from urban regeneration practices around the world and provides a basis for the changing needs of residents. Urban regeneration has been brought forth as a comprehensive approach that through multi-level coordination could provide an urban form generating wide and interrelated public benefits – physical, social, ecological, and economic – from enhanced service provision to the repurposing of local economies and assets.

1.2 Who is this report for?

This report presents to city leaders, planners, researchers, civil society, investors and private sector some of the lessons learnt from urban regeneration practices around the world and provides a basis for the changing needs of residents. Urban regeneration has been brought forth as a comprehensive approach that through multi-level coordination could provide an urban form generating wide and interrelated public benefits – physical, social, ecological, and economic – from enhanced service provision to the repurposing of local economies and assets.

1.3 How is this report structured?

This report presents to city leaders, planners, researchers, civil society, investors and private sector some of the lessons learnt from urban regeneration practices around the world and provides a basis for the changing needs of residents. Urban regeneration has been brought forth as a comprehensive approach that through multi-level coordination could provide an urban form generating wide and interrelated public benefits – physical, social, ecological, and economic – from enhanced service provision to the repurposing of local economies and assets.

1.2 Who is this report for?

This report presents to city leaders, planners, researchers, civil society, investors and private sector some of the lessons learnt from urban regeneration practices around the world and provides a basis for the changing needs of residents. Urban regeneration has been brought forth as a comprehensive approach that through multi-level coordination could provide an urban form generating wide and interrelated public benefits – physical, social, ecological, and economic – from enhanced service provision to the repurposing of local economies and assets.

1.3 How is this report structured?

This report presents to city leaders, planners, researchers, civil society, investors and private sector some of the lessons learnt from urban regeneration practices around the world and provides a basis for the changing needs of residents. Urban regeneration has been brought forth as a comprehensive approach that through multi-level coordination could provide an urban form generating wide and interrelated public benefits – physical, social, ecological, and economic – from enhanced service provision to the repurposing of local economies and assets.
1.4 What is urban regeneration?

It is a challenging and conflicting effort to construct a universal definition for urban regeneration. According to the country and local context, the objectives of the urban regeneration process can be similar, yet adopt different approaches, influencing its perceived meaning. The definition also varies among scholarly perspectives and theoretical ideas. As such, this comprehensive process can be similar, yet adopt different approaches, and local context, the objectives of the urban regeneration process, as discussed in the EGM in Bilbao, 2021. Governance, urban policy, planning and design and finance as a tool for inclusive and sustainable development (2016).

Environmental benefits across different domains. The multidisciplinary project entry points and opportunities to generate interrelated co-benefits, the process is complex and requires the participation of diverse urban actors, especially existing residents and local stakeholders. It developed through its participatory and comprehensive approach, urban regeneration processes, as discussed in the EGM in Bilbao, 2021. Governance, urban policy, planning and design and finance as a tool for inclusive and sustainable development (2016).

Key components in urban regeneration

As a holistic process, urban regeneration offers multiple entry points and opportunities to generalised interrelated co-benefits of the targeted area. The multidisciplinary Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration (illustrated by the grey vertical arrows). Six cross-cutting thematic areas (illustrated by the coloured arrows) are central to a successful and sustainable urban regeneration process. Multi-level coordination and engagement with all relevant urban actors could activate the synergistic and strategic use of these enablers.

Dependent on the characteristics of the targeted area, the initiatives can combine hard (e.g., construction of physical elements, tactical urbanism interventions) and soft measures (campaigns, programmes, incentives). Interventions typically address demands for infrastructure and services, such as basic services, green and public space, housing, affordable renewable energy, food accessibility, mobility, job opportunity and others.

Enablers and thematic areas in urban regeneration >>

Participation is essential for successful urban regeneration

While urban regeneration is a transformative approach to urban development, capable of promoting significant co-benefits, the process is complex and requires the participation of diverse urban actors, especially existing residents and local stakeholders. It developed through its participatory and comprehensive approach, urban regeneration processes, as discussed in the EGM in Bilbao, 2021. Governance, urban policy, planning and design and finance as a tool for inclusive and sustainable development (2016).

Six cross-cutting thematic areas (illustrated by the coloured arrows) are central to a successful and sustainable urban regeneration process. Multi-level coordination and engagement with all relevant urban actors could activate the synergistic and strategic use of these enablers.

Dependent on the characteristics of the targeted area, the initiatives can combine hard (e.g., construction of physical elements, tactical urbanism interventions) and soft measures (campaigns, programmes, incentives). Interventions typically address demands for infrastructure and services, such as basic services, green and public space, housing, affordable renewable energy, food accessibility, mobility, job opportunity and others.

Enablers and thematic areas in urban regeneration >>

Participation is essential for successful urban regeneration

While urban regeneration is a transformative approach to urban development, capable of promoting significant co-benefits, the process is complex and requires the participation of diverse urban actors, especially existing residents and local stakeholders. It developed through its participatory and comprehensive approach, urban regeneration processes, as discussed in the EGM in Bilbao, 2021. Governance, urban policy, planning and design and finance as a tool for inclusive and sustainable development (2016).
Furthermore, inclusive and context-sensitive interventions translate to a diverse range of individuals across society with considerable variation by income, gender, ethnicity, age, and disability.22

Physical
Physical benefits refer to improvements in the built environment – the requalification of undervalued land and deteriorated urban areas with the aim to restructure or create new functions, improving livability and urban sustainability. Examples of such interventions could be activation of public spaces, integration and rehabilitation of green areas, installation of liaison and pedestrian areas, urban life and retrofitting, urban farming, and others. The physical improvement could generate gains related to all six cross-cutting areas.

Economic
Economic benefits can also bring about environmental benefits and contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts through the preservation, strengthening or creation of ecosystems, blue and green infrastructure which can improve biodiversity, reduce carbon emissions. By improving the thermal comfort of urban areas, such as alleviating heat stress, improving biodiversity and offering significant opportunities to vulnerable communities, elderly, youth, and women. Furthermore, urban regeneration could leverage co-benefits of nature-based solutions (e.g., preserving, representations, knowledge, skills, and other forms of cultural expressions transmitted from generation to generation). By improving the public realm, reorganizing or changing the use of existing or revitalised public spaces, efforts to create new activities with respect to the urban context, it promotes the preservation and restoration of tangible and intangible heritage. The social benefits of urban regeneration relate to the impact on social governance of the targeted areas. The process could allocate spatial segregation and social inclusion by, for example, providing accessible access to infrastructure, land and housing, services, and livelihood opportunities to vulnerable communities, elderly, youth, and women. Furthermore, urban regeneration could leverage co-benefits of nature-based solutions (e.g., preserving, representations, knowledge, skills, and other forms of cultural expressions transmitted from generation to generation). By improving the public realm, reorganizing or changing the use of existing or revitalised public spaces, efforts to create new activities with respect to the urban context, it promotes the preservation and restoration of tangible and intangible heritage.

The social benefits of urban regeneration relate to the impact on social governance of the targeted areas. The process could allocate spatial segregation and social inclusion by, for example, providing accessible access to infrastructure, land and housing, services, and livelihood opportunities to vulnerable communities, elderly, youth, and women. Furthermore, urban regeneration could leverage co-benefits of nature-based solutions (e.g., preserving, representations, knowledge, skills, and other forms of cultural expressions transmitted from generation to generation). By improving the public realm, reorganizing or changing the use of existing or revitalised public spaces, efforts to create new activities with respect to the urban context, it promotes the preservation and restoration of tangible and intangible heritage.

The social benefits of urban regeneration relate to the impact on social governance of the targeted areas. The process could allocate spatial segregation and social inclusion by, for example, providing accessible access to infrastructure, land and housing, services, and livelihood opportunities to vulnerable communities, elderly, youth, and women. Furthermore, urban regeneration could leverage co-benefits of nature-based solutions (e.g., preserving, representations, knowledge, skills, and other forms of cultural expressions transmitted from generation to generation). By improving the public realm, reorganizing or changing the use of existing or revitalised public spaces, efforts to create new activities with respect to the urban context, it promotes the preservation and restoration of tangible and intangible heritage.

The social benefits of urban regeneration relate to the impact on social governance of the targeted areas. The process could allocate spatial segregation and social inclusion by, for example, providing accessible access to infrastructure, land and housing, services, and livelihood opportunities to vulnerable communities, elderly, youth, and women. Furthermore, urban regeneration could leverage co-benefits of nature-based solutions (e.g., preserving, representations, knowledge, skills, and other forms of cultural expressions transmitted from generation to generation). By improving the public realm, reorganizing or changing the use of existing or revitalised public spaces, efforts to create new activities with respect to the urban context, it promotes the preservation and restoration of tangible and intangible heritage.

The social benefits of urban regeneration relate to the impact on social governance of the targeted areas. The process could allocate spatial segregation and social inclusion by, for example, providing accessible access to infrastructure, land and housing, services, and livelihood opportunities to vulnerable communities, elderly, youth, and women. Furthermore, urban regeneration could leverage co-benefits of nature-based solutions (e.g., preserving, representations, knowledge, skills, and other forms of cultural expressions transmitted from generation to generation). By improving the public realm, reorganizing or changing the use of existing or revitalised public spaces, efforts to create new activities with respect to the urban context, it promotes the preservation and restoration of tangible and intangible heritage.

The social benefits of urban regeneration relate to the impact on social governance of the targeted areas. The process could allocate spatial segregation and social inclusion by, for example, providing accessible access to infrastructure, land and housing, services, and livelihood opportunities to vulnerable communities, elderly, youth, and women. Furthermore, urban regeneration could leverage co-benefits of nature-based solutions (e.g., preserving, representations, knowledge, skills, and other forms of cultural expressions transmitted from generation to generation). By improving the public realm, reorganizing or changing the use of existing or revitalised public spaces, efforts to create new activities with respect to the urban context, it promotes the preservation and restoration of tangible and intangible heritage.

The social benefits of urban regeneration relate to the impact on social governance of the targeted areas. The process could allocate spatial segregation and social inclusion by, for example, providing accessible access to infrastructure, land and housing, services, and livelihood opportunities to vulnerable communities, elderly, youth, and women. Furthermore, urban regeneration could leverage co-benefits of nature-based solutions (e.g., preserving, representations, knowledge, skills, and other forms of cultural expressions transmitted from generation to generation). By improving the public realm, reorganizing or changing the use of existing or revitalised public spaces, efforts to create new activities with respect to the urban context, it promotes the preservation and restoration of tangible and intangible heritage.

The social benefits of urban regeneration relate to the impact on social governance of the targeted areas. The process could allocate spatial segregation and social inclusion by, for example, providing accessible access to infrastructure, land and housing, services, and livelihood opportunities to vulnerable communities, elderly, youth, and women. Furthermore, urban regeneration could leverage co-benefits of nature-based solutions (e.g., preserving, representations, knowledge, skills, and other forms of cultural expressions transmitted from generation to generation). By improving the public realm, reorganizing or changing the use of existing or revitalised public spaces, efforts to create new activities with respect to the urban context, it promotes the preservation and restoration of tangible and intangible heritage.
1.3 Urban regeneration in the context of Flagship Programme

UN-Habitat through its Flagship Programme 1 ‘Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities’ supports governments and other urban actors to build more inclusive and climate-resilient cities through comprehensive urban regeneration. It aims to bridge the urban divide, nurturing multi-stakeholder collaboration to make cities, neighbourhoods, and communities more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable.

The programme contributes to the commitment of the New Urban Agenda and Toledo Declaration to prioritise the in-fill, renewal, regeneration and revitalising of urban areas, promoting participatory planning with all relevant stakeholders, and public-private partnership, including private sector participation in urban and infrastructure development.

In the case of the Grota do Cigano, Maceió, the UN-Habitat Alagoas team in collaboration with the Alagoas government facilitated a co-creation process based on UN-Habitat’s Block by Block methodology. In a co-creation workshop, the local residents proposed a design of the space which reflects the community’s vision, but is also feasible to be implemented within the allocated budget. The activity involved 30 young people and children who worked collaboratively to incorporate their needs and values in the design.

1.4 UN-Habitat’s approach

UN-Habitat’s comprehensive approach to urban regeneration is based on the entity’s global experience in integrated urban planning and human rights-based processes.27 It places people at the centre with the aim at mitigating gentrification, exclusion, and addressing possible risks for human rights in accordance with international law and related standards, such as aspects of eviction, displacement, compensation, loss of livelihoods, coercive actions by state and setting in place a strategy to prevent, mitigate and manage potential resettlement.

The programme ‘Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities’ addresses the need to establish and mainstream an inclusive and sustainable approach to urban regeneration that aims to build:

- Social value creation
  - Reduction of poverty, exclusion and improvement of living conditions with a priority on the fundamental right to an adequate standard of living under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

- Environmental resilience
  - Enhancing and protecting the natural assets, addressing issues of connectivity, functionality and resource degradation with a city-wide perspective, improving land use efficiency and circularity of resources.

- Shared economic prosperity
  - Promotion of economic activities and socio-economic diversity in the revitalised areas. Inclusive urban regeneration should aim at benefiting the city as a whole, directing private investments for the commons while expanding revenue streams for the city.

Working closely with different stakeholders, this approach aims to unlock the value of underutilised assets and community resources, leveraging their potential and attracting medium- and long-term investments. It aims to provide job opportunities, affordable homes and infrastructure, paving the way towards sustainable and inclusive cities and communities that are resilient to shocks and stresses.


Introduction

Gente do Cigano, Maceió, UN-Habitat Alagoas team in collaboration with the Alagoas government facilitated a co-creation process based on UN-Habitat’s Block by Block methodology. In a co-creation workshop, the local residents proposed a design of the space which reflects the community’s vision, but is also feasible to be implemented by the Alagoas government in a short timeframe and within the available budget. The activity involved 30 young people and children who worked collaboratively to incorporate their needs and values in the design.
“Disease can be prevented by focusing our attention on the design, creation and management of environments in which people live.”

Integrating Health in Urban and Territorial Planning, UN-Habitat, WHO, 2020

Recovery after Disruption: Urban Implications and Opportunities

In Wuhan, China, high school students return to school with social distancing measures in place during the Covid-19 pandemic.
Major transformations in urban history that transformed urban form and policy are intrinsically linked to disruptions. Public health crises have been common throughout the history of cities and have led to radical changes in areas as vast as building codes and standards, the share of green areas, and infrastructure development. For example, in 1904, after physicians John Snow discovered that the cholera outbreak in a neighbourhood in London had been caused by a contaminated water fountain, the city developed sanitary measures that would increase the share of green areas, as well as housing policies that would regulate building form and layout to ensure access to light and air in homes.

Speculation abounds as to how the Covid-19 pandemic is reshaping our cities. Many hope that some of the adaptations to the ongoing pandemic, notably those that have increased the share of pedestrian public open space through the closure of vehicular arteries, are here to stay long-term. Urban core's vacant building stock may become more mixed-use as well as lower demand for office space in the long-term, the increase in remote work and office space vacancies, are here to stay long-term¹. With the share of pedestrian public open space through the ongoing pandemic, notably those that have increased urban mobility, activate neglected areas and improve quality of life. Collectively, recovery after disruption inherently means investing in urban regeneration.

Major breakthroughs in urban history that transformed urban form and policy are inextricably linked to disruptions. Public health crises have been common throughout the history of cities and have led to radical changes in areas as vast as building codes and standards, the share of green areas, and infrastructure development. For example, in 1904, after physicians John Snow discovered that the cholera outbreak in a neighbourhood in London had been caused by a contaminated water fountain, the city developed sanitary measures that would increase the share of green areas, as well as housing policies that would regulate building form and layout to ensure access to light and air in homes.

Speculation abounds as to how the Covid-19 pandemic is reshaping our cities. Many hope that some of the adaptations to the ongoing pandemic, notably those that have increased the share of pedestrian public open space through the closure of vehicular arteries, are here to stay long-term. Urban core's vacant building stock may become more mixed-use as well as lower demand for office space in the long-term, the increase in remote work and office space vacancies, are here to stay long-term¹. With the share of pedestrian public open space through the ongoing pandemic, notably those that have increased urban mobility, activate neglected areas and improve quality of life. Collectively, recovery after disruption inherently means investing in urban regeneration.

Major breakthroughs in urban history that transformed urban form and policy are inextricably linked to disruptions. Public health crises have been common throughout the history of cities and have led to radical changes in areas as vast as building codes and standards, the share of green areas, and infrastructure development. For example, in 1904, after physicians John Snow discovered that the cholera outbreak in a neighbourhood in London had been caused by a contaminated water fountain, the city developed sanitary measures that would increase the share of green areas, as well as housing policies that would regulate building form and layout to ensure access to light and air in homes.

Speculation abounds as to how the Covid-19 pandemic is reshaping our cities. Many hope that some of the adaptations to the ongoing pandemic, notably those that have increased the share of pedestrian public open space through the closure of vehicular arteries, are here to stay long-term. Urban core's vacant building stock may become more mixed-use as well as lower demand for office space in the long-term, the increase in remote work and office space vacancies, are here to stay long-term¹. With the share of pedestrian public open space through the ongoing pandemic, notably those that have increased urban mobility, activate neglected areas and improve quality of life. Collectively, recovery after disruption inherently means investing in urban regeneration.
improved in many indoor spaces to reduce the spread while retaining people's mobility and the New York City government took important measures to reduce congestion on streets and on public transit. Recent research into the economic impacts of the 1918 influenza pandemic in the US found that those cities 'that intervened earlier and more aggressively experienced a relative increase in real economic activity after the pandemic subsided.'

Social and Economic Recovery in Cities

While World War I (1914-1918) caused 11.7% of deaths in the U.S., the influenza pandemic had a death toll of 675,000 in 1918-1919.

In 1921, the federal government deployed a series of large-scale socio-economic-recovery measures that improved urban economic recovery and it's economy with mass-unemployment and business closures triggering a series of economic impacts on urban life and its economy. In the United States, the first cases of the Spanish Influenza were located in the United States and Western Europe. TheSpanish flu was a particularly deadly pandemic which affected roughly a third of the world's population and took the lives of 20-50 million people across four waves starting in 1918 and ending in 1920. The influenza pandemic had a death toll of 675,000 in 1918-1919. In the United States, many industries saw mass unemployment totaling 11.7%, an increase from 1% in 1918, mainly due to post-war ‘recessions’. Urban unrest and violence as a consequence of the economic impacts of the pandemic and the end of World War I were growing in American cities. By 1923, however, the economic impacts of the pandemic and the end of World War I were growing in American cities. Throughout the decade, people's mobility grew and led to the staggering of openings and closings of certain businesses and the growth of the tourism and entertainment industries throughout the decade. People's mobility grew and led to the staggering of openings and closings of certain businesses and the growth of the tourism and entertainment industries throughout the decade.
Summary of Recovery Actions and Outcomes

- Investing in infrastructure
- Disbursing financial support to households to offset the cost of direct additional income
- Improving housing security and tenure
- Improving standards for health and safety at work
- Disbursing financial support for sickness benefits

Context and Impact on Urban Life

In April 1957, thousands of Hong Kong residents had been reported to have contracted a new form of influenza, breaking out into a pandemic. In total, the new virus, transmitted through airborne secretion, killed an upper estimate of 4 million people worldwide. "As an entirely new strain there was no immunity in the populace and the first vaccines were not distributed until August in the US and October in the UK, and then on an extremely limited basis." However, the 1957 pandemic was the first opportunity to deploy mass-vaccination campaigns to stop the spread and to protect vulnerable people. The health crisis sparked a subsequent economic shock which saw worldwide and overall global industrial output shrink by roughly 1.2%. "However, the 1957 pandemic was.

Measures to Mitigate the Impacts of the Pandemic

In the first months of the pandemic, UK authorities largely dismissed the spread of the virus, a fact which led to the death of 30,000 Britons in the winter months of 1957. National UK authorities decided to let Medical Officers of Health implement their own schemes to reduce the spread of infection locally. Authorities in various areas banned meetings with the condition they receive a doctor’s note. In seeking medical attendance when contracting the virus, many areas, factories, offices and mines closed, further improving urban and inter-urban connectivity between urban areas, stimulating commerce. The major road-building programmes triggered an increase in car ownership, further improving urban and inter-urban mobility. The socio-economic recovery plan also included anti-poverty actions, supporting vulnerable groups and older adults in cities with direct additional income. Addressing concerns reared throughout the pandemic about housing tenure, the Landlord and Tenant Act of 1957 emerged to make it harder for landlords to evict tenants and to regulate how and when rents can increase. In an attempt to prevent future health crises, important milestones were reached, including the development of vaccines and the creation of the World Health Organization to coordinate global responses to influenza and other pandemics.

Recovery after Disruption: Urban Implications and Opportunities | Case Study B

"In some areas officials ordered complete closure of schools while in others only assemblies and physical training were banned." In many areas, factories, offices and mines closed, having deep economic consequences. The government advised those with flu-like symptoms to self-isolate and spent £10 million on sickness benefits to support the population in seeking medical attention when contracting the virus, under the condition they receive a doctor’s note.

Social and Economic Recovery in Cities

Thanks to the ensuing containment of the pandemic and the mass-roll out of the vaccines, economic recovery quickly followed in the summer of 1958. After GDP had shrunk by 2.4% in 1958 mainly due to the closure of factories and mines, the national government implemented a wide-ranging socio-economic recovery plan which brought investments in and around urban areas. Central to the recovery plan were large-scale infrastructure investments that built the UK’s first motorway and that led the way to major road-building programmes throughout the 1960s which increased connectivity between urban areas, stimulating commerce. The major road-building programmes triggered an increase in car ownership, further improving urban and inter-urban mobility. The socio-economic recovery plan also included anti-poverty actions, supporting vulnerable groups and older adults in cities with direct additional income. Addressing concerns reared throughout the pandemic about housing tenure, the Landlord and Tenant Act of 1957 emerged to make it harder for landlords to evict tenants and to regulate how and when rents can increase. In an attempt to prevent future health crises, important milestones were reached, including the development of vaccines and the creation of the World Health Organization to coordinate global responses to influenza and other pandemics.

References

5. "Setback in Production — "Recession through Influenza". (Manchester Guardian, 29 November).
8. 'Setback in Production — "Recession through Influenza"'

Further Reading

- https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/may/13/lessons-from...
Context and Impact on Urban Life

In the fall of 2002, a new viral respiratory disease, SARS, transmitted through airtravel, was reported to have infected people in southern China. After first reports, the disease subsequently appeared internationally and received global public media in the spring of 2003 when the World Health Organization issued a global alert regarding SARS. While fatality rates for SARS were reported to be as high as 30%, the virus was slow to spread and was easily contained. Nevertheless, the country’s economic growth dropped from 11.5% to 2.1% in the three months since the outbreak started. The decrease in growth is mainly a result of disruptions in supplies and a slowdown in industrial output as China was battling the epidemic in the first months. In this period, in urban areas across the country, 10 million jobs were lost.

Recovery after Disruption: Urban Implications and Opportunities | Case Study C

Measures to Mitigate the Impacts of the Pandemic

With the onset of the SARS epidemic in the early months of 2003, local authorities took strong action to fight the spread with context-specific measures. “They sealed off villages, apartment complexes, and university campuses, quarantined tens of thousands of people and set up checkpoints to take temperatures. By May 7, 2003, 16,000 people had been quarantined in Beijing. In Guangdong, 80 million people were mobilised to clean houses and streets. In the countryside, (...) roadside booths were installed to examine all those who entered or left.”

The strictest measures were implemented in urban areas which seemed more susceptible to spread. Beijing was shut down tighter than other parts of the country and had cultural activities, bars, shopping malls and sports facilities closed in the first quarter of 2003. Measures to combat the epidemic also included institutional collaboration at multiple levels. The national government funded and set up a three-tiered disease prevention network and improved collaboration between its local and national health agencies.

Social and Economic Recovery in Cities

Social and economic recovery after the SARS pandemic in China hinged on two packages. The first package focused on addressing healthcare-related needs and prevented future SARS outbreaks. The second package aimed at mitigating the economic effects of the outbreak.

When the SARS epidemic started waning in late spring, a national fund of 23 billion (US$2 billion), complemented by local funds of 17 billion (US$1.7 billion), was set up by the national government to control the outbreak and prevent future ones. Because the outbreak revealed key weaknesses in the country’s medical infrastructure, the recovery package centred on upgrading county-level hospitals and healthcare infrastructure. The fund also aimed at improving access to medical resources for farmers and disadvantaged urban communities in both rural and urban areas by purchasing SARS-related medical resources (protective equipment, medical equipment, medication) directly in central and western China.

With a focus on economic recovery, the national government disbursed a stimulus package in the value of $3.5bn to mitigate the economic effects. The stimulus package included temporary tax relief for affected industries and provided subsidies to key areas of the economy. As in the experience of previous pandemics in different parts of the world, the food production industry was seen as key in social and economic recovery and as such received generous subsidies through the recovery package.5

Summary of Recovery Actions and Outcomes

• Upgrading medical infrastructures at county-level
• Improving access to medical resources for farmers and low-income urban residents
• Implementing temporary tax relief for affected industries, particularly the agricultural sector
• Subsidising affected industries, particularly the agricultural sector

References

2.2 How have cities adapted during the Covid-19 pandemic?

The government responses to the Covid-19 pandemic have had a tremendous impact on cities. People, businesses and authorities have rapidly adapted urban environments to ensure the continuous functioning of the economy and the provision of public services.

With office closures came the rise in home offices, which has brought housing tenure, provision and design to the fore. In the wake of lockdowns in spring 2020, many cities urgently adopted eviction bans and rent freezes to ensure housing protest for as many people as possible. Similar to previous public health crises, the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in housing quality, layout and design as well as overcrowding and inflexibility in use being two main concerns. Cities have already responded by adapting vacant urban buildings into emergency shelters for the homeless, with overcrowding and inflexibility in use being two main concerns. Cities have already responded by adapting vacant urban buildings into emergency shelters for the homeless, as part of a series of adaptive reuse actions to mitigate the disproportionate impacts on vulnerable communities. In total, authorities have been challenged with the urgency to house 1.8bn worldwide who would otherwise not have access to safe housing or who are particularly exposed to contagion.

Adaptive reuse has also been a powerful tool for local authorities to extend hospital use and to set up vaccination centres. Use has also been adapted to the public realm with many cities closing streets and cycle lanes that help people commute safely. The new cycle lanes and walkways have been especially helpful in the context of a new green areas, that help people commute safely. The new cycle lanes and walkways have been especially helpful in the context of a new green areas, that help people commute safely. The new cycle lanes and walkways have been especially helpful in the context of a new green areas, that help people commute safely. The new cycle lanes and walkways have been especially helpful in the context of a new green areas, that help people commute safely. The new cycle lanes and walkways have been especially helpful in the context of a new green areas, that help people commute safely. The new cycle lanes and walkways have been especially helpful in the context of a new green areas, that help people commute safely. The new cycle lanes and walkways have been especially helpful in the context of a new green areas, that help people commute safely. The new cycle lanes and walkways have been especially helpful in the context of a new green areas, that help people commute safely. The new cycle lanes and walkways have been especially helpful in the context of a new green areas, that help people commute safely. The new cycle lanes and walkways have been especially helpful in the context of a new green areas, that help people commute safely.
In the context of the urban disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, planning for urban health will be a central departure point of urban regeneration. Given the rapid adaptations cities have undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic, opportunities and challenges abound in the urban regeneration agenda of the post-pandemic world. Making cities more pedestrian- and cycle-friendly and safe, extending public health networks to ensure equitable access across the city, reducing social inequality and increasing the digitalisation of public services are some opportunities lying ahead. Schemes to achieve these goals had been started before the Covid-19 pandemic, yet, the urgency of their implementation has been accelerated by the public health crisis. Nevertheless, several challenges abound. The financing of affordable housing schemes is becoming more urgent in urban contexts with precarious housing supply. In this context, public-private partnerships and public financial commitment to the development of affordable housing in close and close to urban centers will need to be secured. Such financing has revealed and augmented already growing social inequality across the urban landscape with many low-income workers losing their sources of revenue during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the long term, economic resilience, especially that of low-income and vulnerable groups, will need to be brought to the fore. Accompanying urban regeneration efforts that aim to tackle social inequality, meaningful and continuous participatory processes are needed to ensure community consent, input and ownership. With digital transformation accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, notably through the shift of some public services online, such efforts will only be expanded to enhance public participation, provide access to more people and improve governance transparency. Some countries are already extending specific programmes with Kenya pursuing the mobile-first technology in the digital transformation of its services to reach the 87% of people who own a phone. The experience of the pandemic has also revealed the insufficiency of public health infrastructure with many vacant buildings rapidly adapted to accommodate extensions of overcrowded hospitals. These weaknesses need to be urgently addressed to ensure resilience in the face of future public health crises.

Within a reorganisation of home-office settings, a reduction in car dependency, the public realm has to be reimagined to become more inclusive and to accommodate new uses in a more equitably distributed public space and blue-green networks. Temporary and permanent playgrounds, parklets, new urban developments, pedestrian walkways, cycling lanes, green areas and recreational uses need to be accommodated in newly pedestrianised streets, underused and vacant lots across the city. With a rethink of public realm programming, an opportunity emerges to integrate diverse cultural activities in public spaces to nurture a more inclusive sense of belonging. The large-scale clean and challenge also provides an opportunity to incorporate strategies of urban environmental resilience and climate action in new, vibrant public open spaces.
“Through a multi-sector effort and inclusive approach, urban regeneration enables cities to provide access to residents to fundamental human rights: the right to the city, to adequate housing and land, the right to water, healthcare and sanitation and the right to gender equality, ensuring equal access to public and green spaces.”
Maimunah Mohd Sharif, October 2020

Case studies in Urban Regeneration Worldwide

Over 100 buildings have been rehabilitated through the al-Darb al-Ahmar Housing Rehabilitation Programme in Cairo, Egypt.
Knowledge exchange is an essential component of the recovery process within the field of urban regeneration. As recovery schemes and project financing kick in globally, specific case studies about how cities in different regions have developed successful urban regeneration projects in response to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic or other specific urban challenges will suggest how urban regeneration can be approached at different physical scales and across culturally different communities. The following five case studies are organized along the size of the object of intervention of the specific urban regeneration project, from big to small: region, city, neighborhood, street and building. Opening the list, the regional scale takes on city-specific dimensions and meanings. Urban regeneration projects taking on this scale need to be adapted to specific local contexts. In this case study, located in Quito, Ecuador, civil society took on the initiative of bringing together local and regional public authorities, large corporations, local farmers, and representatives of local communities to change the governance structure of regional food production and its urban distribution. The second case study, located in Paris, France, hones in on a city-scale urban regeneration project and policy, the implementation of which has been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The project takes on a holistic approach to sustainable urban development, quality of open space and housing tenure. The neighborhood takes multiple definitions depending on urban form, density, environment, socio-economic, make-up and must therefore be identified within the context of the city where the intervention takes place. This case study, located in Chiang Mai, Thailand, identifies an urban farming intervention on a single lot, but whose object of impact is at the scale of an entire neighborhood and its food security, notably within its vulnerable communities. The fourth case study, located in New York City, USA, focuses on a small-scale urban regeneration project in direct response to the Covid-19 pandemic, its object of intervention is a single street where community organizations, small businesses and city agencies come together to support safe economic development. Closing the list of case studies, ‘building’ implies that the object of intervention of the urban regeneration project is a physical building, while the actual urban regeneration plan may be covering an entire neighborhood. This case study, located in Cairo, Egypt, focuses on improving housing quality, public safety and preserving the historic built fabric through urban regeneration approaches. This organization challenges conventional approaches to urban regeneration which start from large-scale plans or which are formulated by city agencies. Instead, the following examples showcase that urban regeneration could, for example, take place at the scale of a single street where the physical, social and economic elements are reshaped to improve specific aspects of urban life. While the fundamental organizational principle of the case studies is that of the scale of the object of intervention, each case study is selected from a different geographical and cultural region to showcase how urban regeneration schemes adapt to local specificities. The geographic diversity emphasizes that there is no blanket approach to urban regeneration. Instead, urban regeneration approaches have to adapt and respond to local history, culture, economy, and urban form, while always grounded into a community engagement and participation scheme to raise consent and capacity.
Project Description

Quito is the capital city of Ecuador with 2 million inhabitants. Even though agriculture is one of the city’s most lucrative industries with rice, bananas, cocoa, sugar and coffee crops, Quito depends heavily on food imports from other regions in Ecuador. This is because the city exports most of its agricultural products and depends on few large food distributors who rely on large-scale supply chains. The city region only supplies 5% of the food its population needs locally and a further 12.7% of its food is supplied by the province the city is located in. Moreover, Quito struggles to feed its population with growing food insecurity due to lack of affordable food, increasing food prices and potential supply problems. The latter is mainly due to Quito’s physical location which makes it vulnerable to volcanic threats that may disrupt large food supply chains, but also to poor road infrastructure which urban food provision is dependent on. This is further exacerbated by a population projected to reach 2.8 million inhabitants by 2022. The three main food markets of meat, bread/grain and dairy are heavily dominated by large food distributors with prices local farmers cannot compete with. Due to gradual lockdown increases, only 17% of food purchases of Quito families are from supermarkets with farmers markets and the informal food sector being the other source of food procurement. The increasing dominance of large food distributors via supermarkets who promote modernisation and concentration of food supply systems excludes small- and medium-sized producers and low-income consumers from access to food chains. However, supporting small and medium-sized producers and businesses can be beneficial in the context of an urban crisis as they have stronger ties to local communities and their specific needs and, given their size, can be more nimble and adapt to changing circumstances. In addition, smaller local food producers can provide fresh nutritious food to improve Quito’s general public health in a city where almost of adults suffer from obesity and where a healthy diet is 60% more expensive than a regular diet. With the aim of developing a solid food system with little waste, a healthy offering to consumers and fair prices for local farmers, Rikolto and RUAF, in collaboration with the Center for Rural Development in Latin America, the Municipality of Quito and the RUAF Global Partnership on Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems, the Center for Rural Development in Latin America and the Municipality of Quito partnered up to create the multi-stakeholder platform Pact Agro-Food Quito (PAQ). Founded by civil society and local authorities, this platform has aimed at influencing the city’s food policy as a new body consisting of the private and public sectors, academia, civil society and cooperation agencies. This new governance structure augments the voices of small farmers, producers and low-income consumers from access to food systems, permits the development of inclusive food policy and ensures the right to food for all by redirecting surplus and waste to communities which are most in need. The governance platform has also been able to strengthen urban-rural linkages within the Quito region to leverage local agricultural production with large-scale distribution and to increase the shares of fresh and affordable food on Quito’s food market. The project initiates, Rikolto and RUAF, deployed mapping tools to identify the city’s food supply distribution chains and the city’s vulnerable areas, such as, for example, localities with high numbers of people on food assistance programs. These mapping outputs have been instrumental in setting up the new governance of Quito’s food policy as they revealed gaps in food distribution, vulnerabilities in food storage and lack of affordable food options in many urban areas. In this context, the Quito Agrifood Pact is an urban regeneration process that sets out to improve a specific aspect of urban life - food security - by restructuring its governance to make it more inclusive. This goal is made possible by continuous data gathering towards the development of evidence-based public policy. The Quito Agrifood Pact (PAQ) • Key Project Financing Sources
- Quito Municipality
- Rikolto
- RUAF
- Center for Rural Development in Latin America

Key stats
- Project Dates = 2018 - ongoing
- Project Description

Key terms
- Participatory planning practices
- Public health outcomes
- Food security
- Urban governance
- Evidenced-based public policy
- Multi-stakeholder engagement
- Community resilience

Key Project Financing Sources
- Quito Metropolitan District
- Quico City
- Regional Food Storage/Distribution Centers
- Provincial and National Food Distribution Connections
- $134,000

Quito, Ecuador

Legend

Key project outputs
- Governance platform bringing together civil society, private companies and local and regional authorities
- Participatory strategy for developing food policy
- Workshop around food economics, security and policy
- Collaborative platform with private sector to redirect surplus to communities in need and schools
- Map of the city’s food production, distribution and consumption system to identify vulnerable areas
- Food hub mobile units using municipal buses
- Local organic production farms

Quito, Ecuador

**Covid-19 Implications for the Project**

The Quito Agrifood Pact and the city’s new food policy governing bodies were launched in 2018 shortly before the Covid-19 pandemic and its ensuing disruptions started, but proved to be an essential platform to ensure the right to food in a period of urban crisis and broken urban-rural linkages. The disruption’s impacts are especially concerning in Quito, where supply gaps are concentrated in two opposite points of entry into the city: connecting the region to national supply chains in areas of the country that are particularly vulnerable to climatic events. Given that the pandemic has hit low-income communities with mass unemployment, lack of access to healthy food makes these communities especially vulnerable. The Quito Agrifood Pact brought together local producers, businesses and large-volume food distribution and consumption systems and their vulnerabilities. The new governance structure has identified the locations of people in need of food assistance, including people with disabilities or older adults. The new governance structure that amplified the voices of local communities and food producers, distributors and consumers thus ensured community resilience in a period of urban crisis and broken urban-rural linkages. The new governance structure thus ensured community resilience in the face of public health crisis. Moreover, by increasing the share of locally produced food and access to affordable fresh, more nutritious food, the new governance structure also improved the population’s nutrition.


**Diagram**

The diagram maps the contribution of the six crosscutting areas to urban regeneration processes in the current context.

**Considerations for Inclusion and Sustainability**

The adapted lens identified at UN-Habitat’s Expert Group Meeting ‘Urban Regeneration as a tool for resilience, recovery and sustainable recovery’ enables a reflection on the new contexts in which urban regeneration takes place today. The Quito Agrifood Pact was developed to integrate the multiple scales of the agri-food network from the neighborhood to the region and beyond with the aim of developing a more resilient system that is able to respond and adapt to changing circumstances. In this context, the Quito Agrifood Pact is a model for an inclusive participatory approach to urban regeneration. Firstly, it is a platform that brings together city leaders, city planners, policymakers, the private sector and academia to work together to strengthen and adapt food distribution. Secondly, the Pact commits to meaningful and continuous engagement with residents. Lastly, the Quito Agrifood Pact and the Water, Land, Ecosystems Programme (WLE) generated GIS maps visualizing food distribution across the Quito area which enabled the municipality to target local disruptions. This action specifically addresses the challenge of spatial inequality by leveraging digital foods. Targeting SDG 2, the Pact focuses on improving urban health and supporting local communities to become more resilient in the face of climate change and its disruptive effects on food production and supplies in the long-term. Through a programme that started in the 2000s, Quito’s heads of household to support their access to nutritious food produced locally in urban gardens*, addressing the gender dimension within the food systems’ distribution and leveraging urban agriculture as a bridge to community-led processes.

**Key strengths**
- Inclusive participatory planning process
- Promotion of sustainable development and resilience
- Public health outcomes
- Private-Public-NGO partnership and collaboration building

**Key weaknesses**
- Slow progression due to many and diverse stakeholders.
- Project weaknesses
  - Immediate crisis-response projects to the ongoing effort, the Quito Agrifood Pact has insofar successfully implemented immediate crisis-response projects to the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Project strengths**
The strength of the Quito Agrifood Pact lies in its capacity to bring together civil society, private sector and public sector stakeholders operating at a regional scale to provide healthy and affordable food to Quito residents in a more inclusive urban governance format. The project’s success became viable during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the Quito Agrifood Pact was able to rapidly gather residents’ food needs and advance them with concrete solutions. Importantly, the mapping efforts revealed inequality and insufficiency spatially and specifically identified areas not covered by food distribution. Addressing the gender dimension of food distribution, the initiative empowered women to become more self-sufficient in their food supplies through the development of local urban gardens. Throughout, the project is based on an extensive and diverse participatory effort which includes surveys and mapping exercises. These diverse participatory tools engage both qualitative and quantitative data gathering to make personal experience with distribution patterns. The combination of teaching agricultural and entrepreneurship skills and setting up urban gardens has insofar been successful and has led to the production of 1,350,000 kg of organic food per year by 2021.11

**Project weaknesses**
While setting up the new food governance structure is an ongoing effort, the Quito Agrifood Pact has successfully implemented immediate crisis-response projects to the Covid-19 pandemic’s impacts on food security, but whether the agricultural and entrepreneurship skills will support economic independence and resilience will be determined in the long term.

---

**FURTHER READING**


**REFERENCES**


**Further Reading**

The city of Paris is proposing to offer school spaces to local communities during weekends and school breaks. It is also aiming to make the city more child-friendly by revitalising streets around schools into ‘children’s streets’, i.e., temporary pedestrianised areas with reduced access for motorised vehicles. Cutting through the Place de la Bastille is a series of “corona pistes”, cycling lanes set up to encourage cycling across the city during the Covid-19 pandemic. These cycling lanes will become permanent as the City of Paris has secured a large-scale investment from the regional government for the project.

By proposing to bring urban functions closer to one another, the urban regeneration process also depends on increasing the flexibility of uses in public buildings. For example, the City of Paris is proposing to offered spaces to local communities during weekends and school breaks. It is also aiming to make the city more child-friendly by revitalising streets around schools into ‘children’s streets’, i.e., temporary pedestrianised areas with reduced access for motorised vehicles. Cutting through the Place de la Bastille is a series of “corona pistes”, cycling lanes set up to encourage cycling across the city during the Covid-19 pandemic. These cycling lanes will become permanent as the City of Paris has secured a large-scale investment from the regional government for the project.

Urban Regeneration Worldwide | Case study 2 | The Minimes Baracks and the 15-Minute City

essential needs closer to where people live, housing provision is central to the 15-minute city. The Minimes Baracks is an urban block in the centre of Paris where living, working and playing are brought in close proximity. The former military barracks buildings have been transformed into a mixed-use housing complex with 70 ‘social housing units’. The ground floor is occupied by a nursery, a community restaurant, nine maker spaces, an office space and an art gallery, all surrounding a central green public space with a playground.

By programming affordable housing at the city centre, the project aims to provide equitable access to urban amenities to city dwellers of all income levels. It also embodies a model for an inclusive compact mixed-use programme with ample open space which brings together people of different ages, abilities and income levels.

Similar projects are underway across the city and many have been accelerated by urgent needs during the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, a 5-minute walk away from the Minimes Baracks is the Place des Vosges, a partially pedestrianised area with reduced access for motorised vehicles. Cutting through the Place des Vosges is an area of “corona pistes”, cycling lanes set up to encourage cycling across the city during the Covid-19 pandemic. These cycling lanes will become permanent as the City of Paris has secured a large-scale investment from the regional government for the project.

By proposing to bring urban functions closer to one another, the urban regeneration process also depends on increasing the flexibility of uses in public buildings. For example, the City of Paris is proposing to offered spaces to local communities during weekends and school breaks. It is also aiming to make the city more child-friendly by revitalising streets around schools into ‘children’s streets’, i.e., temporary pedestrianised areas with reduced access for motorised vehicles. Cutting through the Place de la Bastille is a series of “corona pistes”, cycling lanes set up to encourage cycling across the city during the Covid-19 pandemic. These cycling lanes will become permanent as the City of Paris has secured a large-scale investment from the regional government for the project.

By proposing to bring urban functions closer to one another, the urban regeneration process also depends on increasing the flexibility of uses in public buildings. For example, the City of Paris is proposing to offered spaces to local communities during weekends and school breaks. It is also aiming to make the city more child-friendly by revitalising streets around schools into ‘children’s streets’, i.e., temporary pedestrianised areas with reduced access for motorised vehicles. Cutting through the Place de la Bastille is a series of “corona pistes”, cycling lanes set up to encourage cycling across the city during the Covid-19 pandemic. These cycling lanes will become permanent as the City of Paris has secured a large-scale investment from the regional government for the project.
Key project outputs
- Adaptive reuse of former military barracks into affordable housing with mixed-use amenities
- Providing affordable housing in urban core
- Making income levels mix
- Making uses in compact urban block
- Increasing share of green open space
- Decreasing car dependency
- Improving air quality

With proximity as a guiding principle for urban programming, the 15-minute city reduces the need to travel long distances for work, shopping and leisure, while it increases the amount of walkable and recreational space in dense urban environments. This contributes to resilience in the face of potential future urban disruptions. Immunity cities, the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns exposed a series of insufficiencies in the urban network, including remoteness to food supplies and other essentials, insufficient or inadequate green spaces, underdeveloped cycling and walking infrastructure, inefficient public transportation networks, among others. In this context, the mixing of varied uses and the availability of essential public services within a 15-minute walking, cycling or public transit radius addresses the specific insufficiencies experienced by urban populations during lockdown periods.

With proximity as a central departure point for city-wide urban regeneration ambitions. By bringing essential needs within walking or cycling distance, this urban regeneration process sees health as an investment. The process looks to adaptive reuse as a tool to bring diverse uses together in compact building envelopes, wherever possible. This enhances local cultural heritage and preserves urban identity, while pursuing development without the associated CO2 emissions. With a polycentric urban approach, the process also aims at reducing spatial inequality, notably generated by monocentric urban models that favour investments in the urban core to the detriment of the periphery. The core aim of the 15-Minute City – access – needs to be measured through context-specific indicators throughout the urban regeneration process. To that end, digital transformation of local governance is essential to collecting quantifiable data efficiently and reliably.

The diagram maps the contribution to the six crosscutting areas – Participatory Process – Mixes uses – Brings public services closer to citizens – Monitors proximity indicators – Reuses and adapts existing buildings – Expands blue-green networks – Stimulates local economic development – Brings public services closer to citizens – Monitors proximity indicators – Based on a continuous participatory process – Increases the quality of public green areas – Based on a continuous participatory process. The 15-Minute City specifically addresses the challenges exposed by the Covid-19 pandemic with a focus on urban health as a central departure point for city-wide urban regeneration ambitions. By bringing essential needs within walking or cycling distance, this urban regeneration process sees health as an investment. It also justifies climate action: through intensified blue-green networks and an increase in urban biodiversity, the 15-Minute City protects health and promotes sustainable economy, while protecting environmental resources. To achieve its proximity goals, the process looks to adaptive reuse as a tool to bring diverse uses together in compact building envelopes, wherever possible. This enhances local cultural heritage and preserves urban identity, while pursuing development without the associated CO2 emissions. With a polycentric urban approach, the process also aims at reducing spatial inequality, notably generated by monocentric urban models that favour investments in the urban core to the detriment of the periphery. The core aim of the 15-Minute City – access – needs to be measured through context-specific indicators throughout the urban regeneration process. To that end, digital transformation of local governance is essential to collecting quantifiable data efficiently and reliably.

Considerations for Inclusion and Sustainability
- Improves air quality
- Increases green open spaces
- Develops cycling infrastructure
- Improves pedestrian and cycling infrastructure
- Improving air quality
- Improving pedestrian and cycling infrastructure
- Improving accessibility
- Improving air quality
- Improving pedestrian and cycling infrastructure
- Improving accessibility
- Improving air quality

The 15-Minute City specifically addresses the challenges exposed by the Covid-19 pandemic with a focus on urban health as a central departure point for city-wide urban regeneration ambitions. By bringing essential needs within walking or cycling distance, this urban regeneration process sees health as an investment. It also justifies climate action: through intensified blue-green networks and an increase in urban biodiversity, the 15-Minute City protects health and promotes sustainable economy, while protecting environmental resources. To achieve its proximity goals, the process looks to adaptive reuse as a tool to bring diverse uses together in compact building envelopes, wherever possible. This enhances local cultural heritage and preserves urban identity, while pursuing development without the associated CO2 emissions. With a polycentric urban approach, the process also aims at reducing spatial inequality, notably generated by monocentric urban models that favour investments in the urban core to the detriment of the periphery. The core aim of the 15-Minute City – access – needs to be measured through context-specific indicators throughout the urban regeneration process. To that end, digital transformation of local governance is essential to collecting quantifiable data efficiently and reliably.
**Strengths**
- Public open space creation
- Adaptive reuse of unused lots and buildings in urban core
- Anti-poverty action
- Increasing community self-sufficiency
- Extensive public participation
- Reducing carbon emissions

**Weaknesses**
- Small-scale and insular development

**Project Strengths**
The 15-minute city’s greatest strength is the provision of a bold vision for a car-free or car-poor environment where living, working and leisure are in close proximity. The project improves urban air quality through car-use reduction, stimulates physical activity through the expansion of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and reduces the impacts of climate change by strengthening blue-green networks, resulting in an improved urban health. It also fundamentally proposes an intelligent housing strategy which promotes social inclusion through mixed income-levels, multi-generational living and equitable access to urban amenities. While the vision is city-wide, its implementation is project-based and determined through extensive localised public engagement processes. Through its application in a dense historic urban fabric, the project demonstrates how the adaptive reuse of buildings can lead to more sustainable construction practices and more equitable housing policies in the urban core.

**Project Weaknesses**
The urban regeneration process requires insular development which, if done unevenly, may weaken the city-wide vision. The public and private amenities on offer in a given neighbourhood can differ greatly in quantity and quality across the city depending on local resources, community engagement and local economic conditions. Defining and ensuring a minimum standard for proximity, housing quality and essential uses is currently lacking, which may lead to exacerbated spatial inequality. Without minimum standards and strong urban networks, the urban regeneration project is susceptible to creating siloed areas. For its success, the project needs heavy investment on a local scale, regional and national levels and coordination for the achievement of city-wide circulation and public space networks and on small-scale, neighborhood-level community initiatives, neither of which are guaranteed.

**References**

**Further reading**

**Urban Regeneration Worldwide | Case study 2 | The Minimes Baracks and the 15-Minute City**

**Case study 2 | The Minimes Baracks and the 15-Minute City**

> Place de la Nation, one of seven transformed squares.
> Source: Dmitry Kosyukov for Bloomberg Business Week
### Case Study 3

#### Chang Mai Urban Farm

**Chiang Mai, Thailand**

**Legend**

1. **Legend**
2. **Chiang Mai Urban Farm**
3. **Mae Kha Canal and Communities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key states</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area = 4,500 sqm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Dates = 2020 - ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key project terms**

- Food security
- Underused lots
- Community building
- Economic development and resilience
- Urban farming
- Poverty alleviation

**Key project financing sources**

- Community Organizations Development Institute (financial)
- Chiang Mai City Administration (bulldozers and equipment for clearing landfill)
- Chiang Mai Province Governorship (planning-related support)
- Various small community donations (seeds)

**Source:** Chiang Mai Urban Farm

**Project Description**

Chiang Mai is a city counting 130,000 inhabitants and has a metropolitan population of 1 million being the largest city in northern Thailand. Its economy is heavily dependent on the tourism industry with the city registering a 15% growth in visitors from year to year since 2011 and counting over 7 million visitors in 2015. In this context, given global travel restrictions starting in the spring of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has severely impacted many residents’ sources of income. These restrictions have disproportionately affected Chiang Mai’s low-income workers who already lost their jobs in the tourism and service sectors. Because Chiang Mai’s low-income residents spend more than half their incomes on food, the loss of their source of revenue and lack of access to affordable food generated mass food insecurity as residents struggled to feed their families. This is further exacerbated by pandemic-related global food supply disruptions which have caused food prices to rise by 38% worldwide and basic food prices such as those of maize to increase by 80%.

2,500 low-income families live in informal settlements along the Mae Kha canal, a highly polluted urban canal that nevertheless supports an ecosystem of trees that runs through the city’s historic district. The architectural firm Jaaiban Studio pursued community mapping to identify Chiang Mai’s unused lots as potential places for planting trees to mitigate the city’s heavy air pollution. However, when the impacts of the pandemic made it difficult for thousands of Chiang Mai families to access food, Jaaiban Studio identified a landfill site within the Mae Kha canal district that could be cleared and used as an urban farm where community residents could practice urban agriculture for basic foods to increase the low-income community’s food security throughout the pandemic and beyond. The Mae Kha canal community had been at the forefront of Chiang Mai’s community organizing, pooling resources to upgrade the neighborhood’s housing stock, clear the polluted canal and improve the neighborhood’s overall quality of life. Faced with increased food insecurity and led by Jaaiban Studio, the Mae Kha canal community came together in March 2020 to lobby local and provincial authorities to let the residents transform the landfill into a 4,800 sqm urban farm. The Province Governorship supported the initiative with planning approvals and the city’s administration provided bulldozers, equipment and manpower to clear the landfill. After clearing the site, the project organizers added a 1-metre thick soil layer for the gardening beds. Community members started planting with seeds and gardening tools received from private donors.

By June 2020, fruit and vegetables were growing in the newly created urban farm of the Mae Kha canal neighborhood and the most vulnerable community members were supported in feeding their families. After receiving a grant from the Community Organisations Development Institute, Jaaiban Studio designed and built a bamboo-structure market where Chiang Mai urban farmers sell excess produce. In the long-term, the farm is also a motor for neighbourhood economic development.

The Chiang Mai Urban Farm project is an unconventional urban regeneration plan where an informal local leader engaged the community to leverage an underused lot for socio-economic development. With modest private donations and support from provincial authorities, the rapid implementation of the project reduced food insecurity and alleviated poverty while revitalising a former landfill into an economic community driver in both the short- and long-term. Additionally, the active engagement of the local community with the project implementation has given Mae Kha canal’s most vulnerable residents a sense of ownership and belonging, a valuable project feature for building trust and raising consent for future urban regeneration initiatives within the community.
Chang Mai, Thailand and protecting an urban regeneration worldwide | Case study 3 | Chiang Mai Urban Farm

Key project outputs

✔ Productive farm set up in urban core
✔ Food production brought within reach to 2,500 low-income families
✔ Increase in disadvantaged community food security
✔ Public health outcomes in terms of increased nutrition

Economic development through set up of market

Children cultivating their own fruit and vegetables. Source: Chiang Mai Urban Farm, as seen in International Institute for Environment and Development, “Rubbish dump turned lush urban farm”, 2020.

Covid-19 Implications for Project

Chiang Mai Urban Farm project is a direct response to the hardships experienced by low-income communities due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Food insecurity is a specific afflication of Chiang Mai’s Mae Kha canal low-income community who saw its incomes slashed after the fall in the tourism and service sectors in the spring of 2020.

By leveraging a government-owned landfill within the Mae Kha canal neighbourhood, the community-initiated project set up a highly productive farm at the centre of the city where local residents affected by unemployment and the rise in food prices could grow produce. Since opening in June 2020, the Chiang Mai Urban Farm has improved nutrition, lowered food insecurity about urban farming and spread specific knowledge on how to grow food. It has also contributed to local economic development via the physical market space where local producers can sell their excess produce and fruit. Taken together, these accomplishments contribute to the community’s resilience in the face of future urban crises. Additionally, Chiang Mai Urban Farm has also improved the nutritional quality of the food consumed by Mae Kha canal community families which has clear public health outcomes in the long-term.

The farm’s multipurpose public space hosting a socially-distanced public event. Source: Chiang Mai Urban Farm, as seen in International Institute for Environment and Development, “Rubbish dump turned lush urban farm”, 2020.

On the whole, the urban farm is a part of wider community-led efforts to clean the canal and to plant trees with the aims of preserving the urban canal and improving quality of life and urban health.

The diagram maps the contribution to the six crosscutting areas linked to the SDGs. Urban Regeneration Worldwide | Case study 3 | Chiang Mai Urban Farm

Considerations for Inclusion and Sustainability

Addressing SDG 2, Chiang Mai Urban Farm emerged as an urban regeneration process to address spatial inequality exposed by rising food prices during the Covid-19 pandemic. By increasing access to locally-grown nutritious food and by developing programmes to educate local communities on urban agriculture, the urban farm acts as a bridge to community-led processes that would ultimately enable residents to become more self-sufficient in their livelihoods. Prior to the urban farm, the initiative flipped vacant lots into tree-planted gardens along a neglected river bank, thus improving local urban health, contributing to climate change mitigation efforts and protecting an environmental resource. The urban regeneration process builds on community-led efforts to specifically address evictions of residents of informal settlements that started in the 2000s. Then, local communities connected to support housing upgrading, clean the canal and preserve the river bank of the Mae Kha canal in an effort to enforce community ownership and to avoid displacement. In this context, the Chiang Mai Urban Farm contributes to the preservation of local identity and to the enhancement of human rights.
Project Strengths
By being community-initiated and -run, Chang Mai Urban Farm's biggest strength is that it addresses and adapts to the neighbourhood’s specific needs, both during and beyond the conditions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. It is also a model for transforming an underused land in the urban core into high-productive sites with economic and social benefit. The adequacy of food production and farmers’ market brings the urban regeneration project to the scale of the food, activating the public realm in its immediate vicinity, while improving the quality of life of all the neighbourhood’s residents. The project succeeded in alleviating poverty and food insecurity by teaching the local community gardening and entrepreneurial skills and by applying them onto a real-world project. The successful combination of educational and entrepreneurial skills and by applying them onto a real-world project. The successful combination of educational and entrepreneurial skills and by applying them onto a real-world project. The successful combination of educational and entrepreneurial skills and by applying them onto a real-world project.

Project Weaknesses
Chang Mai Urban Farm’s biggest weakness is that it lacks financial support and pressure from regional authorities who should be prime partners to the project. As its initiators struggled to get support from local public officials, the project brought together a wide variety of stakeholders, the most vulnerable groups and would provide a model for scaling up an urban farming project to the scale of the neighbourhood, improving the quality of life of all the neighbourhood’s residents, both during and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic. It is also a model for transforming an underused land in the urban core into high-productive sites with economic and social benefit. The adequacy of food production and farmers’ market brings the urban regeneration project to the scale of the food, activating the public realm in its immediate vicinity, while improving the quality of life of all the neighbourhood’s residents. The project succeeded in alleviating poverty and food insecurity by teaching the local community gardening and entrepreneurial skills and by applying them onto a real-world project.

Further Reading
Project Description

Chinatown is a 100,000-inhabitant neighborhood in Manhattan, New York City, USA, whose main economic drivers are tourism and the restaurant industry. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit and New York City banned on-premise dining in March 2020, the neighborhood’s many small shops and restaurants had to close. While many restaurant businesses in the rest of the city shifted to delivery and takeaway services, the small businesses of Chinatown lost their sources of revenue as they lacked the financial and digital resources to shift their business online. 90% of Chinatown businesses ceased operations as a consequence. The area’s small business owners took an economic hit after business had already slowed down in early spring 2020 due to prejudice against the predominantly ethnically Chinese community of the neighborhood. Within a few months, an economically and culturally vibrant neighborhood became economically precarious and unsafe to many residents facing prejudice.

By the summer of 2020, New York City’s Department of Transportation launched its Open Streets/Open Restaurants programme which eased restrictions on on-premise dining to permit restaurants to service customers outdoors on the sidewalk and/or on the roadway. The programme mapped out which streets would close to vehicular traffic to provide space for temporary seating and table structures where customers could be served in safe environments. While many restaurants took advantage of the new open streets, Chinatown’s businesses struggled to invest resources in setting up temporary structures, made difficult by the neighborhood’s narrow sidewalks and streets, as well as its many restricted parking spaces.

With the aim of revitalising the local neighborhood economy and activating the streetscape as early as May 2020, an Asian/Pacific Islander women-led group of Chinatown architects from three associations (A+A+A, Chaos Built, Think!Chinatown) developed a series of prototypes for affordable physical structures for outdoor dining which would help small local businesses operate anew. To finance their efforts, the community organisation set up ThinkChinatown.org to gather donations to build the affordable structures. This community initiative expanded to propose the neighborhood-specific Chinatown Economic Recovery Project that would bring together local communities, architects, businesses and the City in a formal capacity to find affordable, quick and tangible solutions to extend economic activity in the public realm beyond the neighborhood’s central streets.

In July 2020, The Chinatown Partnership, a local development corporation originally set up to support the neighborhood’s rebuilding after the impact of 9/11, and the Rockwell Group, an architecture firm focused on restaurant design, partnered up to develop, finance and build a 120-seat outdoor dining structure on Mott Street, a formerly vehicular street now pedestrianised at the center of the neighborhood. This permitted many businesses along this central neighborhood artery to Restart operations after months of inactivity and to increase footfall in the neighborhood. The extension of restaurants into outdoor dining on sidewalks and roadways has been accompanied by a series of public programming actions, including Mott Street Public Art Engagement, Outdoor Dining Initiative and DineOutNYC.

Collectively, the efforts of the local community, local authorities, private companies and community organisations led to the successful revitalization of the neighborhood following the immediate impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.
In the Context of the Covid-19 Pandemic

This project is a direct response to the economically devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on small businesses, and especially eateries, restaurants, cafes and bars, which all largely depend on indoor activity. The challenges faced by these businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic have been exacerbated in Chinatown by the businesses’ lack of resources to invest in digital and takeaway platforms and by increased prejudice against the neighbourhood’s ethnic makeup. The intervention at Mott Street showcases how the coming together of resources made available by local authorities, changes in zoning regulations, private investment and the support needed by community organisations can act as an urban regeneration plan to revitalise an economically-struggling area and an inactive public realm.

The project also includes specific public health components which address pandemic-specific concerns. The Open Streets programme developed by NYC’s Department of Transportation permits the safe operation of restaurant services outdoors where Covid-19 transmission is lower. In addition, by closing off Mott street to vehicular access, the project encourages pedestrianisation and increases pedestrianisation, a healthier alternative to the use of the car. Furthermore, with community organisations and private companies activating Mott Street through public art and other cultural events, the project also provides the neighbourhood with new child-friendly public open spaces which encourage outdoor activities for children and families.

The project benefits local businesses in Chinatown by the easing of restrictions to reactivate economically. The Chinatown Economic Recovery Project is an urban regeneration process that addresses urban health and pandemic recovery with social, economic and environmental benefits. Starting from providing basic support in the form of physical infrastructure to small minority-owned businesses, the project addresses challenges that go beyond economic resilience and aim for long-term positive transformation for Chinatown. Affected by plunging numbers of customers as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and of prejudice against the local community, small businesses in Chinatown suffered unevenly. In this context, the project addresses spatial inequality by enabling small businesses to leverage the easing of restrictions to reactivate economically. The pedestrianisation of streets where vehicles extended service contributes to an inclusive approach to regeneration and involves health gains through the promotion of walking and cycling. The public art interventions supported increased footfall, improving street vibrancy and intergenerational programming, while enhancing local cultural heritage.
**Strengths**

+ Multi-stakeholder collaboration;
+ Community empowerment;
+ Public realm reprogramming;
+ Inclusive urban design;

**Weaknesses**

– Small-scale strategy cannot be replicated

---

**Project Strengths**

The biggest strength of the Chinatown Economic Recovery Project is its community-anchored approach which empowered it to act early on to respond to the negative economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. By focusing on the immediate neighbourhood and fostering relationships of trust with local business owners, it was able to immediately identify needs. Their initial efforts then attracted larger-scale developments which led to the construction of generous outdoor dining facilities. Furthermore, the specific focus on a single street in the neighborhood established the project’s success. Due to sparse resources, the initiators focused their efforts along a single street which, through programming, became a catalyst for reactivating the neighborhood as a whole. Importantly, this Chinatown Economic Recovery Project is not a conventional urban regeneration plan - it is initiated and authored by community organisations which seek to pool resources made available by local authorities and private investment in the neighborhood with the aim of revitalising the social, economic and physical environment of a neighborhood street. NYC’s revitalisation programmes also helped support action at the neighborhood scale. In addition to identifying areas where street closures could benefit local businesses, the Open Streets / Open Restaurants programme of NYC’s Department of Transportation also permitted multiple adjacent businesses to pool resources together to establish a more expansive dining area along the street, thus fostering local partnerships and solidarity.

---

**Project Weaknesses**

Throughout the summer of 2020, similar autonomous projects emerged in the neighborhood. A farther-reaching revitalization project would have come about if the stakeholders behind the various small-scale recovery projects pooled their resources - financial, social and cultural - to amplify their voice and address the comprehensive needs of the neighborhood as a whole.

---

**References**


---

**Further reading**

The al-Darb al-Ahmar Housing Rehabilitation Programme

Project Description
Al-Darb al-Ahmar is a 100,000 inhabitant historic neighbourhood in eastern Cairo, Egypt, which experienced a deterioration of its housing stock and public open space throughout the 1990s. This deterioration implied safety concerns for residents and pedestrians and it impeded local economic development and reduced the neighbourhood's quality of life in one of Cairo's low-income areas. Bounded on the east by Al-Azhar Park, a 32-ha large park completed in 2004, the project focused on housing rehabilitation to revitalise the urban area as a whole while supporting local residents in securing tenure. Launched in 1998 by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, the al-Darb al-Ahmar Housing Rehabilitation Programme brought together local authorities, international organisations and international donors to develop an urban regeneration project for the neighbourhood whose object of intervention is the building.

The plan started off with an extensive participatory process and expert studies to identify the state of the neighbourhood's housing stock, the specific interventions needed to restore structurally precarious buildings and the best ways to include local residents in taking ownership over the rehabilitation works in an effort to avoid gentrification and displacement. Beyond understanding what the community's needs are, the intensive inclusion of residents in all project phases aimed at preventing the eviction of the buildings' residents, at increasing their housing tenure and at raising consent in both the financial and technical components of the project.

The al-Darb al-Ahmar Community Development Company was set up by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the Egyptian State’s Social Fund for Development to implement the rehabilitation works once contracts and individual financing processes were set up by residents and the project stakeholders. Importantly, the Rehabilitation Programme depended on individual tenants and owners approaching the project organisers to initiate the rehabilitation process for their building. In this sense, raising awareness, building trust and actively involving the local community were key to the project outcomes.

In this context, the urban regeneration project is deeply innovative in at least two ways. Firstly, the Rehabilitation Programme diverted from conventional conservation projects which zero in on individual historic monuments and focused instead on the preservation of an entire neighbourhood. Secondly, the Rehabilitation Programme is a fine example in innovative finance with long-lasting positive impact beyond the project timeframe. Because the majority of the neighbourhood’s inhabitants are low-income residents, they had been excluded from accessing loans to maintain a safe and healthy building condition. The project is unique in that it empowers local residents, both tenants and owners, to take ownership of the rehabilitation works. Managed by the Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance, the microcredit scheme granted access to affordable loans to the building’s inhabitants who could otherwise not access classic loans due to their low incomes. Concomitantly with an educational programme to increase residents’ knowledge of financial tools, the microcredit schemes were tailored to individual financial needs. While the scheme required an affordable minimum downpayment, the length and share of repayment was agreed by the resident and the Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance on a case-by-case basis. For every building project, the Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance worked with architects to determine the extent of the rehabilitation works in order to fairly estimate the project cost and the size of the loan.
Key project outputs:
- Rehabilitation of 110 buildings between 2002 and 2010
- 96.5% of microcredit loan repayment rate
- Reduction of evictions through Supreme Council of Antiquities demolition policy shift
- 99.6% of microcredit loan repayment rate
- Rehabilitation of 110 buildings between 2002 and 2010

Covid-19 Implications for Project
Although a decade old, the Al-Darb al-Ahmar Housing Rehabilitation Programme presents valuable lessons in urban regeneration and public health planning in its notable relationship to housing design. Based on findings from the 2003 neighbourhood report compiled by the Arab Human Services Egypt for the project’s second phase, 32% of a Darb al-Ahmar’s housing stock did not have a bathroom and 33% had homes that lacked any form of ventilation. Concomitantly, the survey also found that over a third of residents interviewed suffered from rheumatism and chest diseases. Given the survey findings, the Programme responded by partnering up with architects to leverage the rehabilitation works as an opportunity to improve the quality of the housing stock. The rehabilitation works that had to include the layout of a kitchen and a toilet and the inclusion of ventilation mechanisms for each dwelling room. This approach showcases how urban regeneration processes can be leveraged to improve long-term public health outcomes and the general quality of life for local inhabitants and, implicitly, to render local communities more resilient in the face of public health crises.

Importantly, the Rehabilitation Programme was one of five urban regeneration processes in the current context. Digital transformation is an urban regeneration process that sought to reduce social inequality in Cairo by improving the deteriorated housing stock in low-income communities. By pursuing an inclusive approach in which residents were trained through a series of household finance workshops the programme involved residents to drive the rehabilitation of their homes. The programme also supported residents to own the rehabilitation works full in by providing residents micro-loans and supporting residents with the financial skills to repay the loans. The programme brings together international organisations and donors, residents and beneficiaries, local experts in finance, architecture and engineering, and local authorities in a participatory approach that expanded over a decade through meaningful and diverse engagement, fostering social cohesion and cultural and local wellbeing. The programme demonstrates how local engagement in designing and implementing the process allows for local ownership and accountability, which in turn improves the quality and safety of the local building stock in a low-income community. By pursuing an inclusive approach the rehabilitation works full in by providing residents micro-loans and supporting residents with the financial skills to repay the loans.

Surveys findings, the Programme responded by partnering up with architects to leverage the rehabilitation works as an opportunity to improve the quality of the housing stock. The rehabilitation works that had to include the layout of a kitchen and a toilet and the inclusion of ventilation mechanisms for each dwelling room. This approach showcases how urban regeneration processes can be leveraged to improve long-term public health outcomes and the general quality of life for local inhabitants and, implicitly, to render local communities more resilient in the face of public health crises.

Importantly, the Rehabilitation Programme was one of five urban regeneration processes in the current context. Digital transformation is an urban regeneration process that sought to reduce social inequality in Cairo by improving the deteriorated housing stock in low-income communities. By pursuing an inclusive approach in which residents were trained through a series of household finance workshops the programme involved residents to drive the rehabilitation of their homes. The programme also supported residents to own the rehabilitation works full in by providing residents micro-loans and supporting residents with the financial skills to repay the loans. The programme brings together international organisations and donors, residents and beneficiaries, local experts in finance, architecture and engineering, and local authorities in a participatory approach that expanded over a decade through meaningful and diverse engagement, fostering social cohesion and cultural and local wellbeing. The programme demonstrates how local engagement in designing and implementing the process allows for local ownership and accountability, which in turn improves the quality and safety of the local building stock in a low-income community. By pursuing an inclusive approach the rehabilitation works full in by providing residents micro-loans and supporting residents with the financial skills to repay the loans.

Surveys findings, the Programme responded by partnering up with architects to leverage the rehabilitation works as an opportunity to improve the quality of the housing stock. The rehabilitation works that had to include the layout of a kitchen and a toilet and the inclusion of ventilation mechanisms for each dwelling room. This approach showcases how urban regeneration processes can be leveraged to improve long-term public health outcomes and the general quality of life for local inhabitants and, implicitly, to render local communities more resilient in the face of public health crises.

Importantly, the Rehabilitation Programme was one of five urban regeneration processes in the current context. Digital transformation is an urban regeneration process that sought to reduce social inequality in Cairo by improving the deteriorated housing stock in low-income communities. By pursuing an inclusive approach in which residents were trained through a series of household finance workshops the programme involved residents to drive the rehabilitation of their homes. The programme also supported residents to own the rehabilitation works full in by providing residents micro-loans and supporting residents with the financial skills to repay the loans. The programme brings together international organisations and donors, residents and beneficiaries, local experts in finance, architecture and engineering, and local authorities in a participatory approach that expanded over a decade through meaningful and diverse engagement, fostering social cohesion and cultural and local wellbeing. The programme demonstrates how local engagement in designing and implementing the process allows for local ownership and accountability, which in turn improves the quality and safety of the local building stock in a low-income community. By pursuing an inclusive approach the rehabilitation works full in by providing residents micro-loans and supporting residents with the financial skills to repay the loans.

Surveys findings, the Programme responded by partnering up with architects to leverage the rehabilitation works as an opportunity to improve the quality of the housing stock. The rehabilitation works that had to include the layout of a kitchen and a toilet and the inclusion of ventilation mechanisms for each dwelling room. This approach showcases how urban regeneration processes can be leveraged to improve long-term public health outcomes and the general quality of life for local inhabitants and, implicitly, to render local communities more resilient in the face of public health crises.

Importantly, the Rehabilitation Programme was one of five urban regeneration processes in the current context. Digital transformation is an urban regeneration process that sought to reduce social inequality in Cairo by improving the deteriorated housing stock in low-income communities. By pursuing an inclusive approach in which residents were trained through a series of household finance workshops the programme involved residents to drive the rehabilitation of their homes. The programme also supported residents to own the rehabilitation works full in by providing residents micro-loans and supporting residents with the financial skills to repay the loans. The programme brings together international organisations and donors, residents and beneficiaries, local experts in finance, architecture and engineering, and local authorities in a participatory approach that expanded over a decade through meaningful and diverse engagement, fostering social cohesion and cultural and local wellbeing. The programme demonstrates how local engagement in designing and implementing the process allows for local ownership and accountability, which in turn improves the quality and safety of the local building stock in a low-income community. By pursuing an inclusive approach the rehabilitation works full in by providing residents micro-loans and supporting residents with the financial skills to repay the loans.

Surveys findings, the Programme responded by partnering up with architects to leverage the rehabilitation works as an opportunity to improve the quality of the housing stock. The rehabilitation works that had to include the layout of a kitchen and a toilet and the inclusion of ventilation mechanisms for each dwelling room. This approach showcases how urban regeneration processes can be leveraged to improve long-term public health outcomes and the general quality of life for local inhabitants and, implicitly, to render local communities more resilient in the face of public health crises.

Importantly, the Rehabilitation Programme was one of five urban regeneration processes in the current context. Digital transformation is an urban regeneration process that sought to reduce social inequality in Cairo by improving the deteriorated housing stock in low-income communities. By pursuing an inclusive approach in which residents were trained through a series of household finance workshops the programme involved residents to drive the rehabilitation of their homes. The programme also supported residents to own the rehabilitation works full in by providing residents micro-loans and supporting residents with the financial skills to repay the loans. The programme brings together international organisations and donors, residents and beneficiaries, local experts in finance, architecture and engineering, and local authorities in a participatory approach that expanded over a decade through meaningful and diverse engagement, fostering social cohesion and cultural and local wellbeing. The programme demonstrates how local engagement in designing and implementing the process allows for local ownership and accountability, which in turn improves the quality and safety of the local building stock in a low-income community. By pursuing an inclusive approach the rehabilitation works full in by providing residents micro-loans and supporting residents with the financial skills to repay the loans.
Strengths
- Multi-stakeholder participatory planning practices;
- Improved housing tenure;
- Data-driven planning practices;
- Improved institutional collaboration;

Weaknesses
- Weak engagement from local community after data-gathering phase;
- Slow financing and implementation phases;
- Large-scale building code violations and historic building demolitions after project end.

Strengths
The project's strengths are its extensive years-long qualitative and quantitative participatory exercises and its focus on making ownership of the project scope by the residents who were ultimately impacted by the urban regeneration project. By bringing together public institutions, international organisations and the local community, the Rehabilitation Programme leveraged critical expertise for the improvement of people's housing safety, quality and broader needs. Importantly, by financing the rehabilitation works through microloans taken by the project beneficiaries, the rehabilitation project extended financial literacy, a positive long-term impact. In this context, the Rehabilitation Programme is an urban regeneration project which is focused on establishing a strong regeneration process that could outlive the project timeframe.

Weaknesses
The project's weaknesses derive from the lengthy bureaucratic processes due to the fact that the project initiators received weak institutional support from local authorities before the rehabilitation works took off. The project also saw lengthy negotiations between owners, tenants and local authorities on the rehabilitation process for individual buildings. The rehabilitation works required significant initiative on part of the building inhabitants who would have to commit to lengthy processes of financing, design and implementation. Hence the active engagement from local residents took time to pick up. While the financing and implementation processes set in place by the project were intended to outlive the project timeframe, in 2010, after the Programme's initiators concluded the project, the rehabilitation works stopped. The project thus did not achieve the long-term independence the initiators had hoped for early on.

References

Further Reading

“The ‘right to the city’ includes the right to access spaces that promote social cohesion, support healthy lifestyles and deliver economic benefits as well as the right to transform the city by legitimizing leadership from within the community. Considering health impacts can promote fuller participation in urban decision-making by various stakeholders and members of different communities.”

Maimunah Mohd Sharif, October 2020
Across the historic case studies responding to previous public health crises and ongoing responses to disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, urban planning and urban regeneration are at the core of recovery policies. The influence pandemics of 1918 and 1957 respectively elicited specific responses in the form of large-scale investments in physical infrastructure, improving mobility and leveraging new technologies were the planning tools that enabled recovery, stimulating economic activity, integrating multi-level authorities and enhancing quality of life. The experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrate that urban regeneration is necessary for recovery efforts as it is able to integrate social, economic, physical and environmental aspects into concrete projects that have direct positive impacts on people’s lives. Our case studies show that the process of urban regeneration can take place at multiple scales and hone in on specific urban issues, all while tackling interconnected challenges and opportunities.

Whether this means addressing food insecurity, climate change or improving mobility and development processes deployed in the case studies at hand range from participatory tools within the decision-making process to innovative finance processes. The case studies in this document present varied approaches, adapted correspondingly to the urban regeneration project outcomes and outputs. Participatory processes deployed in the document’s case studies presented varied approaches, adapted correspondingly to the urban regeneration project aims and size. The participatory process of Our City Plans to develop its 2030 Vision (SNG2030 City Vision). Tactical urbanism was identified as a process with great potential to trigger positive change on local level. In collaboration with UN-Habitat, the municipality developed a Tactical Urbanism Master Plan, aligned with the themes of the SNG 2030 Vision.

Conclusions

Crowning Ma’s Urban Farm, the urban regeneration project centres on leveraging undersized lots to accommodate urban farming and food market activities. As a central tool for the execution of post-disruption recovery plans, urban regeneration presents opportunities to bring together multiple stakeholders in innovative finance processes. The case studies in this document present urban regeneration financing schemes that range from multi-scale public authority investments to public-private partnerships to microloans for community ownership. These demonstrate the capacity of urban regeneration processes to engage diverse interests for improving urban environments.

Approaches to urban regeneration

Covering a variety of areas of urban life from food security to historic preservation, the case studies in urban regeneration envision how the tool can be used to address specific issues from the scale of the singular building to the systems and processes of entire urban regions in both large and medium-sized cities.

The case studies presented in this document approach urban regeneration with a focus on specific urban challenges. However, due to urban regeneration’s holistic and integrative nature, the specific challenges are addressed through schemes that tackle social inequalities, urban health, physical and environmental aspects into concrete projects that have direct positive impacts on people’s lives. Our case studies show that the process of urban regeneration can take place at multiple scales and hone in on specific urban issues, all while tackling interconnected challenges and opportunities.

In Quito’s Agrifood Pact, the main approach is to restructure the governance of urban food systems and integrate participatory tools within the decision-making process to increase food security. In Paris’s 15-Minute City, the city-centred to city-wide urban regeneration is shifting zoning uses to increase mix use notably that of affordable housing, and tactical adaptive reuse in the city centre. In Chinatown Economic Recovery Project, the main approach is to reprogramme public open space from vehicular-centred uses to pedestrian-centred uses to support economic development and cultural activities. In Cairo’s Al-dharb Al-ahmar Housing Rehabilitation Programme, the initiators implemented rehabilitation works of privately-owned buildings by reaching the urban regeneration project with innovative financing processes which increased ownership for the beneficiaries and brought a variety of stakeholders to the same table.

Across the investigated case studies, an inclusive participatory approach underpins the effectiveness of the urban regeneration project outcomes and outputs. Participatory processes deployed in the document’s case studies presented varied approaches, adapted correspondingly to the urban regeneration project aims and size. In Quito’s Agrifood Pact, the initiators increased ownership for the beneficiaries and brought a variety of stakeholders to the same table. Across the historic case studies responding to previous public health crises and ongoing responses to disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, urban planning and urban regeneration are at the core of recovery policies. The influence pandemics of 1918 and 1957 respectively elicited specific responses in the form of large-scale investments in physical infrastructure, improving mobility and leveraging new technologies were the planning tools that enabled recovery, stimulating economic activity, integrating multi-level authorities and enhancing quality of life. The experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrate that urban regeneration is necessary for recovery efforts as it is able to integrate social, economic, physical and environmental aspects into concrete projects that have direct positive impacts on people’s lives. Our case studies show that the process of urban regeneration can take place at multiple scales and hone in on specific urban issues, all while tackling interconnected challenges and opportunities.

Whether this means addressing food insecurity, climate change or improving mobility and development processes deployed in the case studies at hand range from participatory tools within the decision-making process to innovative finance processes. The case studies in this document present varied approaches, adapted correspondingly to the urban regeneration project aims and size. The participatory process of Our City Plans to develop its 2030 Vision (SNG2030 City Vision). Tactical urbanism was identified as a process with great potential to trigger positive change on local level. In collaboration with UN-Habitat, the municipality developed a Tactical Urbanism Master Plan, aligned with the themes of the SNG 2030 Vision.

Conclusions

Across the historic case studies responding to previous public health crises and ongoing responses to disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, urban planning and urban regeneration are at the core of recovery policies. The influence pandemics of 1918 and 1957 respectively elicited specific responses in the form of large-scale investments in physical infrastructure, improving mobility and leveraging new technologies were the planning tools that enabled recovery, stimulating economic activity, integrating multi-level authorities and enhancing quality of life. The experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrate that urban regeneration is necessary for recovery efforts as it is able to integrate social, economic, physical and environmental aspects into concrete projects that have direct positive impacts on people’s lives. Our case studies show that the process of urban regeneration can take place at multiple scales and hone in on specific urban issues, all while tackling interconnected challenges and opportunities.

Whether this means addressing food insecurity, climate change or improving mobility and development processes deployed in the case studies at hand range from participatory tools within the decision-making process to innovative finance processes. The case studies in this document present varied approaches, adapted correspondingly to the urban regeneration project aims and size. The participatory process of Our City Plans to develop its 2030 Vision (SNG2030 City Vision). Tactical urbanism was identified as a process with great potential to trigger positive change on local level. In collaboration with UN-Habitat, the municipality developed a Tactical Urbanism Master Plan, aligned with the themes of the SNG 2030 Vision.
Conclusions

The case studies presented in this document reveal how the tool of urban regeneration is deployed in various contexts to mitigate the immediate impacts of urban disruptions and to ensure cities become more inclusive, preventing or mitigating gentrification and displacement, social exclusion and anti-gentrification actions. Collectively, the case studies in crisis-response urban regeneration projects present models for the world. From the international perspective of the global case studies which focus on diverse urban regeneration processes across cultural boundaries, the formats urban regeneration can take to improve a multitude of aspects of urban life, demonstrate the effectiveness of urban regeneration in creating more inclusive and vibrant communities.

Recommendations

Multi-Level Coordination

Inclusive Participatory Planning

Engage Many, Meaningfully

To achieve long-term community support, urban regeneration must be developed alongside a continuous, meaningful and inclusive process of community engagement. The community must be defined according to the specific context and scope of the project, but should include a variety of stakeholders: government institutions, the private sector, community associations, NGOs, displaced communities, migrants etc. For example, in Quito’s Agrifood Pact, a series of campaigns ranging from local farmers and two families to academic researchers and big food vendors were consulted as part of the project’s engagement. This engagement process also materialised in specific tangible outputs with a map of the city’s food distribution networks being the most consequential. In the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the map was used to distribute food to areas which lacked supply and was an essential tool for the community in poverty alleviation and food distribution. This case study demonstrates how, when done right, community engagement can be the urban regeneration process itself and result in transformation that improves quality of life and avoids displacement.

Inclusive Innovation

Leverage Private-Public Partnerships and Think Long-Term

While participatory planning and community organisation are key, financing is a crucial component of long-term urban regeneration. For example, in the Agrifood Pact, the rehabilitation projects’ community participation was a project-specific creative financing. For example, the urban regeneration process in the historic precedents reveals the important role public institutions play in effectively managing disruptions explored in the historic precedents reveals the important role public institutions play in effectively managing disruptions and to provide research for public engagement during Covid-19. Source: UN-Habitat.

Innovative Technology

Improve Quality of Life and Well-being

Historically, investments in technological advancement in post-disruption recovery packages led to the expansion of the electric network in the United States through the 1920s and the motorway and road networks in the United Kingdom in the 1950s. The ensuing increased quality of life and mobility stimulated industry and job-creation which reduced unemployment over a short period of time. Some argue that the equivalent recovery of the Covid-19 pandemic includes the deployment of 5G broadband and large-scale innovative infrastructure. These would stimulate the economy, create new jobs and improve quality of life and well-being. Many cities and countries are already pursuing such policies, some within the context of national multi-level coordination amongst tiers of government is thus essential in the context of evolving disruptive situations. For example, in Quito’s Agrifood Pact, a map of the city’s food distribution networks was used to distribute food to areas which lacked supply and was an essential tool for community engagement in poverty alleviation and food distribution. This case study demonstrates how, when done right, community engagement can be the urban regeneration process itself and result in transformation that improves quality of life and avoids displacement.

References


Collectively, the case studies in crisis-response urban regeneration projects present models for the world. From the international perspective of the global case studies which focus on diverse urban regeneration processes across cultural boundaries, the formats urban regeneration can take to improve a multitude of aspects of urban life, demonstrate the effectiveness of urban regeneration in creating more inclusive and vibrant communities.

Within Quito, residents, NGOs and UN-Habitat established a community fund to support collaborative community activities, managed by the residents to reinstate microfinance schemes that are not dependent on a wide array of sources.


Conclusions

Innovative Finance

Leverage Private-Public Partnerships and Think Long-Term

While participatory planning and community organisation are key, financing is a crucial component of long-term urban regeneration. For example, in the Agrifood Pact, the rehabilitation projects’ community participation was a project-specific creative financing. For example, the urban regeneration process in the historic precedents reveals the important role public institutions play in effectively managing disruptions explored in the historic precedents reveals the important role public institutions play in effectively managing disruptions and to provide research for public engagement during Covid-19. Source: UN-Habitat.

Innovative Technology

Improve Quality of Life and Well-being

Historically, investments in technological advancement in post-disruption recovery packages led to the expansion of the electric network in the United States through the 1920s and the motorway and road networks in the United Kingdom in the 1950s. The ensuing increased quality of life and mobility stimulated industry and job-creation which reduced unemployment over a short period of time. Some argue that the equivalent recovery of the Covid-19 pandemic includes the deployment of 5G broadband and large-scale innovative infrastructure. These would stimulate the economy, create new jobs and improve quality of life and well-being. Many cities and countries are already pursuing such policies, some within the context of national multi-level coordination amongst tiers of government is thus essential in the context of evolving disruptive situations. For example, in Quito’s Agrifood Pact, a map of the city’s food distribution networks was used to distribute food to areas which lacked supply and was an essential tool for community engagement in poverty alleviation and food distribution. This case study demonstrates how, when done right, community engagement can be the urban regeneration process itself and result in transformation that improves quality of life and avoids displacement.

References


Collectively, the case studies in crisis-response urban regeneration projects present models for the world. From the international perspective of the global case studies which focus on diverse urban regeneration processes across cultural boundaries, the formats urban regeneration can take to improve a multitude of aspects of urban life, demonstrate the effectiveness of urban regeneration in creating more inclusive and vibrant communities.

Within Quito, residents, NGOs and UN-Habitat established a community fund to support collaborative community activities, managed by the residents to reinstate microfinance schemes that are not dependent on a wide array of sources.

Dane-Hang Nguyen, Director, Rockefeller Group, and Project Manager, Quito NYC, Second Outdoor Dining: A New Approach to Public-Space/Co. Available at: https://neocon.com/blog/beyond-outdoor-dining.
Dane-Hang Nguyen, Director, Rockefeller Group, and Project Manager, Quito NYC, Second Outdoor Dining: A New Approach to Public-Space/Co. Available at: https://neocon.com/blog/beyond-outdoor-dining.
Dane-Hang Nguyen, Director, Rockefeller Group, and Project Manager, Quito NYC, Second Outdoor Dining: A New Approach to Public-Space/Co. Available at: https://neocon.com/blog/beyond-outdoor-dining.
Dane-Hang Nguyen, Director, Rockefeller Group, and Project Manager, Quito NYC, Second Outdoor Dining: A New Approach to Public-Space/Co. Available at: https://neocon.com/blog/beyond-outdoor-dining.
Dane-Hang Nguyen, Director, Rockefeller Group, and Project Manager, Quito NYC, Second Outdoor Dining: A New Approach to Public-Space/Co. Available at: https://neocon.com/blog/beyond-outdoor-dining.