

Leading Through Crisis

Reducing the Impact of COVID-19 in Latin America and Africa

Session 3 | July 30th, 2020

Public Health Briefing – Amanda McClelland

“Situation Briefing & Special Topic: The 3 W’s”

Leadership Essentials – Mayors Panel

“Public Policy and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Ideas for experimentation from Africa and Latin America”

PUBLIC HEALTH

Situation Briefing, Amanda McClelland – Important Information

Data as of July 28 th , 2020	Latin America	Africa
Total number of cases	4,405,542	726,105
Cases in last 24 hours	56,975	13,185
Total number of deaths	184,430	12,257
Deaths in last 24 hours	1,603	357

“3 W’s,” Amanda McClelland – Important Information

Practicing the 3 W’s controls the spread of COVID-19. Each practice has its own value, but they are most effective in combination.

The 3 W’s are:

- Wear a mask
- Wash your hands
- Watch your distance

By modeling best practices, enforcing mask use and conducting media campaigns, Mayors play a key role in promoting these critical infection management strategies. Specific actions include:

- Distributing masks
- Promoting local PPE and sanitizer production
- Increasing access to sanitation services (e.g., installing handwashing kiosks)
- Regulating public spaces (e.g., requiring mask use; limiting hours or occupancy)
- Monitoring compliance with guidelines
- Shielding high-risk populations
- Always wearing a mask yourself in places where they are required
- Engaging influencers (e.g., social media influencers who can reach youth)

The only thing spreading faster than the virus is misinformation about it, especially false treatments and cures.

- Combat dangerous misinformation (e.g., taking bleach internally)
- Do not give more exposure to harmless rumors (e.g., sunlight as a cure) by refuting them
- Social pressure and norming of good behaviors is effective

CRISIS LEADERSHIP

"Ideas for experimentation from Africa and Latin America," Mayors Panel - Important Information

Public health aspects of this pandemic such as transmission and treatment have become clearer in recent months. However, it is less clear how to coordinate, implement, fund, and communicate about effective measures. Local circumstances and resources may differ greatly. At the same time, the economic and psychological costs of the pandemic are becoming increasingly evident.

In the absence of a clear blueprint for managing this crisis, local leaders must experiment to find what's effective. Experimentation will yield both successes and failures, but it is necessary for an innovative, adaptive, successful response.

Here are some lessons gleaned from experimental initiatives taking place across Africa and Latin America.

Protecting vulnerable populations is paramount. The virus attacks the elderly and those with certain medical conditions more fiercely, while disruptions to the economy and services disproportionately affect poor and homeless people. Lockdowns and stress may also worsen domestic violence, addiction, and mental health issues.

- To secure food access for children and the elderly, food can be distributed at many sites, especially in poorer areas and informal settlements.
- Community gardens can be grown for food security and to strengthen community.
- Volunteers can check in with the elderly by phone, bringing them medication and other things they need.
- Though informal settlements' lack of resources makes it harder to implement the "three W's," free masks can be distributed in such areas and handwashing kiosks set up.
- Public spaces such as sports arenas can be converted into needed facilities.
- Care centers can be created for COVID-19 patients who cannot safely quarantine at home. To make them more attractive, amenities can be provided such as TVs and good food.
- Shelters can be built to allow homeless people to stay indoors safely.
- Teams of volunteer psychologists can be built to help those stressed by the pandemic.

Collaboration and communication are key in a complex and frightening crisis where misinformation is rampant.

- Communication should be clear, consistent, hopeful, and accurate. A short daily program can be started on radio, TV, and/or social media (e.g., Facebook Live) to talk about COVID-19 and the response.
- In public communication, individual responsibility can be emphasized, since everyone is involved and needed, from the government to the formal and informal economies to young people.
- Partnering with food pantries, the private sector, NGOs, or religious organizations can help in distribution of food, PPE, and other resources.
- In places where distancing proves impossible, such as large public markets, handwashing and masking can be emphasized.

Funding and infrastructure present new challenges that must be met with new approaches.

- As local revenues are impacted by the pandemic, unnecessary expenditures can be found and cut.
- Putting together a strong plan early on can attract international aid, and diaspora populations can also be a source of support.
- To facilitate economic recovery, apps or websites can be created to provide opportunities to entrepreneurs.
- A contact tracing team can be created, along with a clear process and software to handle the data.
- Since public transport is unsafe, the city can invest in more cycling infrastructure.

Mayors across Africa and Latin America also mentioned some persistent challenges posed by this pandemic.

- There is intense pressure to end lockdown and reopen the economy, making it difficult to hold to the plan of waiting until testing shows that reopening is safe.
- Getting the whole population of a city on board with compliance is not easy, and no government can manage this crisis by itself, regardless of its resources.
- Children in particular are suffering, as their education, routines, and socializing are interrupted.
- Collaboration and coordination with the central government is often challenging, whether it involves consistent messaging, adequate testing, or managing PPE and other vital supplies.
- It is hard to find a sense of normality, a new equilibrium that will allow people some certainty about what tomorrow will look like, even if it doesn't look like last year.

Next Session

Thursday, August 13th, @9:00 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. US ET