

Leading Through Crisis

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

Session 5 | August 27th, 2020

Public Health Briefing – Dr. Tom Frieden

“Key Actions for City Leaders”

Leadership Essentials – Prof. Farayi Chipungu

“Leadership and the Politics of Change”

PUBLIC HEALTH

Key Actions for City Leaders, Dr. Tom Frieden – Important Information

Isolation of cases and quarantine of contacts

- Prevents confirmed or suspected cases from infecting others
- Isolation and quarantine have economic and social costs that cities can help alleviate
 - Provide care packages with food, masks, and other necessities
 - Provide daily check-in phone calls, access to telehealth, garbage removal, and other support
 - Provide a stipend to those without sick leave or who have children or elderly dependents

Bans of indoor public gatherings

- Reduces possibility of bigger outbreaks of disease
- Large indoor gatherings are especially dangerous
- Positive steps can also be taken to encourage outdoor activities:
 - Streets can be closed to traffic to allow walking, cycling, and outdoor dining

School and work closures and adaptations

- Closures may be useful based on disease transmission patterns, but social harms must also be limited
- Adaptation is sometimes possible
 - Teaching can take place outside
 - In-person instruction may be prioritized for students with special needs
 - Guidelines for closing and reopening schools can be found here:

https://preventepidemics.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Reopening-Americas-Schools_07-08-2020-Final.pdf

Shelter-in-place orders

- When required, all people remain at home except for essential workers (health care, public safety, food supply) or essential tasks (food shopping, medical care, care for vulnerable populations)

Data collection: Testing, contact tracing, and effectiveness of public health measures

- If something can be measured, it can be managed
- Testing of active infection is important, but testing resources are limited
 - Prioritize testing those with symptoms who work in hospitals, schools, prisons, etc.; and workers even without symptoms in facilities for elderly people
 - Serological (antibody) testing is less practical for now
 - Guidelines for prioritizing testing can be found here:
- Start contact tracing to stop infections from spreading more widely
 - Ideally, hire tracers from the affected community, e.g., social service workers, new college grads

- Publicly track the percentage of cases arising from quarantined contacts, which is the most important indicator of whether contact tracing is working
- If possible, monitor the effectiveness of public health measures
 - Observers can track mask usage in different communities and public places
 - More information can be found in the Mask Guidance Playbook here: <https://preventepidemics.org/covid19/resources/mask-playbook/>
- Excess mortality (above averages) will capture not only confirmed COVID-19 cases but also undiagnosed cases and increased fatalities from other causes—a number closer to the pandemic’s true toll
- Information on key indicators for tracking COVID-19 can be found here: <https://preventepidemics.org/covid19/resources/indicators/>

CRISIS LEADERSHIP

“Leadership and the Politics of Change,” Prof. Farayi Chipungu - Important Information

During crises, difficulties arise when leaders try to apply **technical** solutions to **adaptive** challenges.

- Leaders are used to dealing with technical problems:
 - The issue is already understood
 - Solutions are already known
 - Authorities only need to consult experts
 - The obstacles are familiar: time and money
- But in addition to the technical aspects, COVID-19 presents adaptive challenges:
 - The problems themselves are unclear
 - The solutions are unknown and require learning
 - Authorities must consult stakeholders in many communities
 - The obstacles are harder to surmount: hearts, minds, loyalties, and deeply held values

In this time of crisis, leaders must ask themselves **critical diagnostic questions**:

- What adaptive challenges am I currently defining in technical terms?
- Where am I locating responsibility?
- How am I defining obstacles?
- What competencies must be developed to make progress on the challenge, and in whom?
- What resistance am I encountering, and what losses is it trying to protect against?

Normally, the nature of the “leadership contract” is clear. Leaders are entrusted with power in order to:

- define problems and solutions
- shield people from external threats
- clarify roles and responsibilities

But leaders dealing with an adaptive challenge have different, harder tasks:

- Identify and frame the challenge
 - Step back to look at the whole system
 - Frame the challenge as a collective one, in which everyone is involved
- Identify and use conflict productively
 - Uncover conflicting views
 - Create an environment that allows conflict and conversation
- Infuse the work with meaning
 - Maintain a collective sense of purpose

- Render apparent and manage conflicting purposes
- Situate themselves and others within the system
 - Understand where their own authority comes from
 - Partner with outside people above, below, and at the same level of authority as themselves
 - Redefine others' roles as needed

Finally, remember five things:

- **Diagnosis is key:** Distinguish between technical problems and adaptive challenges so you can change your approach accordingly.
- **Be prepared to disappoint:** There are many competing interests, and people will not always be satisfied with your handling of an unprecedented and sweeping crisis.
- **Work both the people and the problem:** You must build new capacity in people, infuse the work with meaning, and disappoint people at an acceptable rate.
- **Pace yourself and your teams:** The time frame for an adaptive process is less predictable than for technical problems. Remember this is a marathon, not a sprint!
- **Take care of yourself:** Find spaces, times, and practices that allow you to recenter yourself.

Next Session

Thursday, September 10, @9:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. US ET