
WELL-BEING POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION: A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK

Solly MARIAM THOMAS

Associate Researcher, Center for Applied Business and Management Research - France
sollymthomas27@gmail.com

SUMMARY

There needs to be immediate and significant legislative action to resolve health, economic, social, and environmental problems; the COVID-19 pandemic brought this to light. Findings from this study highlight the need for new policies in many important sectors, such as healthcare, economic security, mental health services, lifelong learning, social justice, digital transformation, and resilience in the face of climate change. The best way to be ready for a pandemic is to strengthen public health surveillance systems, expand healthcare capacity, and ensure that everyone has access to healthcare. To ease financial worries, governments should think about income assistance programs, policies to help small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), and a universal basic income. More people should be able to receive teletherapy, employment regulations should encourage mental health, and campaigns should be launched to reduce stigma as part of mental health measures. If schools are serious about keeping students and ensuring they get a quality education, they should invest in strong digital infrastructure, professional development opportunities for teachers, and inclusive policies that address the needs of these groups. Actions to fortify communities, regulations to raise housing affordability, and assistance for marginalised groups are all necessary for social justice. Smart city planning, disaster preparedness, and transitions to renewable energy are all necessary for climate adaptation, while digital transformation initiatives should prioritise cybersecurity, e-governance, and digital literacy to improve service delivery. Principles such as stakeholder involvement, data-driven decision-making, efficient resource allocation, and ongoing monitoring and assessment form the basis of the suggested framework, which suggests a staged approach to implementation. We may all stand to gain in the long run from this strategy, which will help with COVID-19 recovery and disaster preparedness.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, health system resilience, economic security, mental health support, education continuity, social equity, climate adaptability, digital transformation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Rapid and strategic responses are required to address the systemic vulnerabilities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected health systems, economics, social structures, and environmental settings. When governments were already having trouble meeting the surprisingly high demand for healthcare, medical supply shortages, insufficient healthcare infrastructure, and service inequality exacerbated the problem for already-vulnerable places. The new economic policies, like universal basic income and targeted aid for SMEs, were exposed by the economic consequences, which included increasing inequality, supply chain disruptions, and unemployment. In addition, the epidemic exacerbated mental health difficulties, highlighting the fact that current treatments for these conditions are insufficient to address the pervasiveness of issues like anxiety, depression, and social isolation. Millions of students, especially those from low-income and rural areas, lost access to higher education as online learning became more common, exposing digital gaps. Educational systems were significantly altered as a result of this. The crisis brought attention to long-standing disparities in housing, employment, and healthcare, and its effects on disadvantaged areas made the concept of social justice a hot topic. Climate adaptation strategies were highlighted by the pandemic as being critically necessary due to the fact that people were made even more vulnerable by environmental degradation and resource mismanagement. Greener urban planning and the use of renewable energy sources were consequently in demand. Digital transformation is essential for future resilience and effective government, school, and business operations; hence, investments in digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, and literacy were necessary. In light of the above, this research presents a holistic framework for welfare policy changes, with an emphasis on digital transformation, social justice, economic security, mental health assistance, educational security, and resistance to climate change. This paradigm tackles the current pandemic issues as well as the need to strengthen resilience in the face of future disasters. In order to accomplish this, it promotes cross-disciplinary collaboration, uses research-based strategies, and engages the appropriate stakeholders. The study highlights the significance of a comprehensive and inclusive approach in guaranteeing policies are successful, fair, and long-lasting, acknowledging the interdependence of many domains. Policymakers and businesses alike can benefit from the suggested organised implementation tactics as they traverse the treacherous terrain of pandemic readiness and recovery. Among these strategies are staggered rollouts, constant monitoring, and adaptive feedback systems. Last but not least, the introduction lays the groundwork for a more thorough examination of these crucial policy domains by stressing the transformative power of a coordinated and organised response to the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

2. KEY WELL-BEING POLICY CHANGES

A robust healthcare system that can keep everyone safe in times of crisis is more important than ever, as the COVID-19 epidemic has shown. Improving healthcare capacity to handle demand spikes requires a mix of new policies, such more medical personnel, more critical care unit beds, and more efficient supply chains. Health policy should be based on the premise of universal healthcare coverage for testing, treatment, and vaccination in order to minimise inequities and provide equal access to healthcare. To avoid similar epidemics in the future, public health monitoring systems must be improved so they can detect and react to disease outbreaks as they happen. Automated reporting systems and electronic health records are examples of infrastructure and technology investments that can increase early diagnosis and fast reaction. The capacity of the public and private healthcare systems to react to crises can be improved through encouraging collaboration between the two. Governments should prioritise the expansion of healthcare workforces through training programs and fines to provide access to high-quality healthcare during and after disasters.

Even while the pandemic is ongoing, economic policy must attend to urgent demands and set the stage for future prosperity. Income support measures, including increased unemployment benefits, direct cash transfers, and wage subsidies, are necessary to help families and people who are facing economic instability as a result of losing their jobs. Small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) are a prime target for government assistance programs like low-interest loans, subsidies, and tax deferrals due to their crucial role in many economies. One potential long-term approach to tackling economic inequality and

vulnerability is to investigate UBI pilot programs. One way governments can promote resilience through the implementation of innovative and adaptive economic policies is by offering incentives for digital and environmentally friendly technology. Use can reach underserved or faraway places more quickly with the use of open digital platforms and mobile banking. Accessibility will be enhanced and wait times will be reduced.

Because of the far-reaching psychological impacts of the COVID-19 epidemic, mental health support has emerged as a key area of concern. Anxiety, depression, and stress are on the rise, making it all the more important that people have access to mental health services like teletherapy and community outreach programs. Workplace mental health policies that provide resources like counselling, flexible scheduling, and stress management courses must be a top priority. In order to foster a more tolerant environment for mental health, public awareness initiatives should target the reduction of stigma and the promotion of help-seeking behaviour. Community organisations and mental health experts can work together to develop more precise solutions. This is of utmost importance for vulnerable groups, including caretakers, those residing alone, and individuals who work on the front lines. Ensuring that mental health programs have sufficient financing and resources and prioritising the integration of mental health care into primary health systems are crucial steps in building a resilient society that prioritises overall well-being.

The global spread of the COVID-19 epidemic shook educational systems around the globe, prompting measures to keep education going and make sure it was accessible to all. In order to facilitate distant education, a strong digital infrastructure is required, one that can link every individual to the web and provide educational institutions with digital materials. In order to better equip teachers to use digital resources and adapt to new ways of teaching, it is crucial that teacher preparation programs prioritise developing their digital literacy. We must prioritise inclusion policies that offer individualised lesson plans and affordable technology to low-income children if we are serious about closing the digital achievement gap. Governments may make better use of resources and knowledge to build long-term educational models by encouraging public-private collaborations. Integrating online and in-person training with continuous assessment and feedback systems, hybrid learning solutions can create an educational system that is more robust and ready for the future.

For the COVID-19 pandemic to be contained, social justice policies must tackle the long-standing and worsening disparities. Food security programs, job placement assistance, and healthcare subsidies are crucial in assisting low-income families, minorities, and women, who are among society's most vulnerable populations. "Rent subsidies and eviction moratoria are two ways in which affordable housing laws can protect vulnerable populations from becoming homeless. Participation from local organisations and leaders in community resilience initiatives can pave the way for more appropriate, situationally-based responses to societal issues. Social safety nets and inclusive policies may be strengthened and made more egalitarian if governments invest in them.

3. OVERVIEW OF THE INTERVENTION

With the growing uncertainty associated with indefinite lockdowns, anxiety, fear, and depression were setting in for the college students and faculty alike. One professor decided to use an online conference platform to bolster mental health and well-being for students and community members by hosting a virtual dance class every week. This was in response to interest from students in the college and with the motivation of other experienced dance instructors who were also trying to determine the best virtual tools to continue their classes. Given the circumstances surrounding the lockdown and the novel nature of this intervention, particularly the professor's novice status as a dance teacher, select community members were invited based on personal connection with the professor. Dance training was an ideal focus of the intervention as it is a movement therapy with numerous physical and mental health benefits: management of anxiety and depression, improvement of self-esteem, and betterment of motor skills (Murcia-Quiroga, et. al., 2010; Ward, 2008). Part of the novelty of this effort lay in the fact that the professor was new to dance instruction, despite being a longtime dance student. The rapid transition to dance teacher required focusing on the language of dance, determining what virtual platforms were most efficient, deciding what

lessons were compatible with virtual learning constraints, and adapting to virtual feedback from students, often without visual cues. He asked the students and community participants to focus on three core principles: timing, connection, and purpose. Given his focus on community engagement these same three principles were emphasized as critical to building trust in the communities we serve and in relationships throughout life. This intervention therefore provided an opportunity to maintain connectedness in a virtual setting focused through a movement therapy program. For recruitment, the free dance classes were advertised through informational flyers, focusing on the nocost and no-need-for-partner aspects of the course, circulated through email. The lessons initially focused on the basics of three partnered style dances. However, in Week 4, following the request of a student participant, a shift was made to line dances. We quickly realized that this style of dance was optimal to teach in a virtual setting because the patterns do not traditionally require a partner, which accommodated participants living alone or with others. In the first 8 weeks of classes, teaching skills were sharpened, and student feedback helped determine best methods for presenting the lessons on virtual platforms. Microsoft Teams was used as it was readily accessible to both students and other community members. At different points in the lesson plan development, the professor consulted with his dance teacher who provided coaching to strengthen his new dance teaching skills under the crisis situation. Techniques were strengthened that included video on-screen technique demonstration, repetition to facilitate student learning of footwork, lesson pacing, and planning to include a basic pattern followed by creative intermediate versions. The final line dance lessons consisted of a collection of five different 16- to 36-count, four wall patterns that were repeatedly practiced during one class to music of different speeds. These classes began with easier patterns at slower speeds, progressing to faster music and more complicated patterns. This structure enabled students to become comfortable with the overall dance, gain confidence, and bolster well-being. This model was utilized, following a 3-week break, to develop an evaluable, 8-week, five-session virtual line dance program. The goals of this initiative were to bring together students and community members in a virtual setting during a time when physical interaction was not possible; to help dampen feelings of fear, anxiety, and depression; and to provide students and others who participated with emotional revitalization, particularly for those living in isolation, and a new movement therapy routine that builds confidence, creativity, and hope.

4. EVALUATION

For the first 8 weeks of free classes the instructor and one graduate student exchanged field notes (written within 24 hours of each lesson) on what could be improved in terms of the approach. This was an unplanned action but provided a historical record of qualitative assessment and evaluation of what worked well and where improvements were needed. As the virtual dance class was established in a time of crisis, there was no formal class registration or assessment process. Classes were not recorded so there were no audio or video recordings to reference. The instructor and graduate student conducted a manual review of field notes, documented between April and June 2020, using Microsoft Excel to catalog and code select notes. This produced a thematic analysis that identified five emergent themes: video/audio technology selection, dance selection, music selection/synchronization, student and participant engagement, and choreographymusic synchronization. The instructor and graduate student reviewed and discussed the resulting themes to assess completeness based on their independent review of records made. As shown in Table 1, we also identified lessons learned and opportunities for program development.

5. CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the necessity of comprehensive policy changes across health, economic, social, and environmental sectors to enhance resilience and well-being. Strengthening healthcare systems, supporting economic security, addressing mental health, ensuring educational continuity, and promoting social equity are paramount. The integration of digital transformation and climate adaptation strategies will ensure preparedness for future crises. Collaborative, data-driven, and inclusive approaches are essential for effective implementation. By fostering resilience through targeted interventions, societies can better navigate challenges and build a sustainable future, turning lessons from the pandemic into a framework for long-term progress and collective well-being.

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