



Training Toolkit on Government Innovation for Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups

Module 9

Ensuring Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups During Public Health Emergencies







Contents

- 1. Special Vulnerabilities of Vulnerable Groups during Public Health Emergencies
- 2. Impact of Public Health Emergencies to Vulnerable Groups
- 3. Strategies and Approaches of Government Innovation for Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups during Public Health Emergencies with Innovative Cases
- 4. Challenges and Policy Considerations

Learning Objectives

- To understand the special vulnerabilities confronted by vulnerable groups during public health emergencies and impacts on their well-being and socio-economic status.
- To introduce strategies, approaches and innovative ideas from different public health emergencies to ensuring protection of vulnerable groups and their inclusion in service delivery and policy-making processes in public health emergency situations.



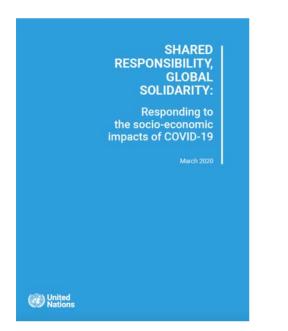




- Vulnerable groups confront special vulnerabilities especially during the times of public health emergencies
- Socio-economic impact of public health emergencies are more severe to vulnerable groups
- Vulnerable groups that are particularly vulnerable during the times of public health emergencies include among others:
 - persons with disabilities
 - older persons
 - ➤ the poorest
 - ➢ women and children
 - refugees, migrants, IDPs
 - > people in rural/remote areas
 - indigenous peoples







"The most vulnerable in the face of this crisis are those who are already at risk: those caught up in or fleeing war and persecution, those already living in highly concentrated and under-served areas, those whose lives have already been upended for other reasons and who lack access to basic social and political protections or to any support systems."

- UN Secretary-General's Report "Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19" -



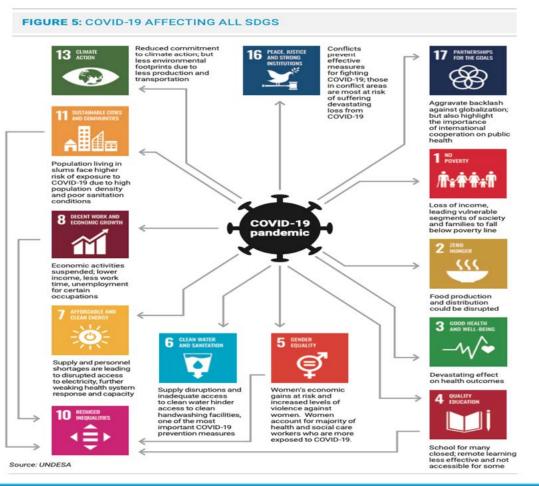


- Special vulnerabilities confronted by vulnerable groups during public health emergencies include:
 - Loss of job and income
 - Lack of access to health service & infrastructure
 - Lack of access to essential services and infrastructure, e.g. water, food, transportation, etc.
 - Unsanitary and crowded living conditions
 - Lack of access to information
 - Lack of financial capacity to mitigate the impacts especially with growing unemployment
 - Lack of social protection and insurance coverage





Significant impact of public health crisis on achieving the 2030 Agenda



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Source: UN Secretary-General's Report "Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19"









IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON INFORMAL ECONOMY WORKERS (AS OF 29 APRIL 2020)

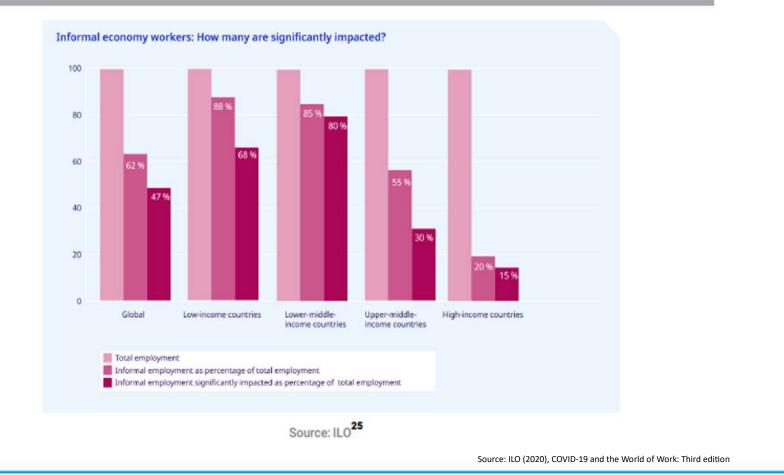






FIGURE 1: COVID-19 IMPACT ON OLDER PERSONS

COVID-19 AND OLDER PERSONS

Economic well-being

The pandemic may significantly lower older persons' incomes and living standards. Already, less than 20% of older persons of retirement age receiving a pension

Mental health

Physical distancing can take a heavy toll on our mental health. Living alone and being more digitally included than others, the risks are higher for older persons

Responders

Older persons are not just victims. They are also responding. They are health workers, carers and among many essential service providers

Life and Death

Fatality rates are five times higher than global average. An estimated 66% of people aged 70 and over have at least one underlying health condition

Vulnerability

Essential care that older persons often rely on is under pressure. Almost half of COVID-19 deaths in Europe occurred in long term care settings. Older women often provide care for older relatives increasing their risk to infection

Abuse and neglect

In 2017, 1 in 6 older persons were subjected to abuse. With lockdowns and reduced care, violence against older persons is on the rise









GLOBAL POPULATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



Figure 1 Global population of persons with disabilities (IASC Guidelines, 2019, Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action)

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THREE CRISES IMPACTING PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

- Unsanitary and crowded living conditions (e.g. some refugee camps have a population density that is 1,000 times that of surrounding host communities.)
- Compromised access to health services
- Food insecurity (e.g. more than half of the world's refugees and IDPs live in countries and communities that feature high levels of food-insecurity.)



- Curtailed access to asylum an (e.g. 99 countries are making no exceptions for admission of asylum seekers at closed borders)
- Detention, forced returns and deportations
- Stranded migrants, family separation and human smuggling

- Rising unemployment and loss of livelihoods (e.g. over half of the refugees surveyed by UNHCR in Lebanon reported having lost their already meagre livelihoods)
- Decline in remittances (e.g. remittances will drop by a total of USD\$109 Billion in 2020 due to COVID-19)



COVID-19 EFFECTS ON WOMEN



2. Impact of Public Health Emergencies to Vulnerable Groups



FINANCIAL AND UNPAID CARE

- With businesses and schools shut, financial and caretaking responsibilities have mounted, with women disproportionately bearing the burden (3 times more than men)
- Women are also more likely to be informal rather than formal workers, relative to men, and less likely to

HEALTH AT RISK

• 70% women are on the frontlines of health care work.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- 243 million women between the ages of 15-49 experienced gender-based violence in the last 12 months (UN women), further intensified due to covid-19.
- \$ 1.5 trillion estimated loss in global GDP due to violence against women and girls

COVID-19 EFFECTS ON MIGRANT LABORERS

LOSS OF JOBS & INCOME

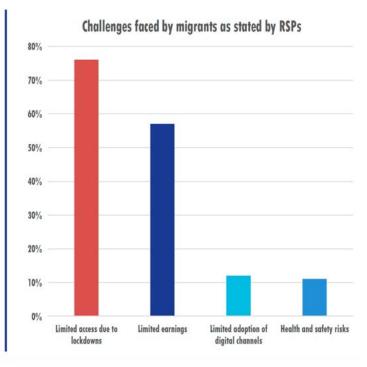
Migrants laborers are losing jobs and incomes, unable to remit money back home.

DECREASE IN REMITTANCES

Nearly a 20% drop in remittances to low-andmiddle income countries expected by the end of 2020 (World Bank)

50%

Of providers, primarily currency exchanges and remittance network providers mentioned they would not be able to sustain the prices if the COVID-19 related lockdowns extends for more than 3 months



Source: Presentation by Mr. Jaspreet Singh, Global Manager, Innovations and Financial Health, UNCDF Malaysia during UN DESA Online Training Workshop on "Government Innovation for Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups" (Nov 2020)







- Government needs to ensure that inclusion of vulnerable groups during the public health emergencies by:
 - Identifying and understanding their special vulnerabilities and demands during the emergency
 - Ensuring that government services and assistance are delivered to all citizens, including vulnerable groups
 - Providing them access to timely information and data on the emergency situations
 - Supporting socio-economic recovery of vulnerable groups through special policies/measures
 - Monitoring and reviewing the special situations of vulnerable groups during the outbreak





To ensure inclusion of vulnerable groups during public health emergencies, government needs to take innovative measures/policies in the following dimensions:

1) Strengthening leadership and changing mindsets

- Political will/commitment from top leadership to take into account unique challenges to the vulnerable groups during public health emergencies
- Empower technocrats and experts to identify and address the varying risks to different vulnerable groups
- Centralized response for inter-agency coordination and synergy in actions to address the specific vulnerabilities of vulnerable groups including mobilizing resources
- Inclusive mindsets in policy making including engaging vulnerable groups in consultation process





2) Leveraging technologies and digital government

- Using technologies such as blockchain for inclusive emergency assistance and financial services to vulnerable groups
- > Open data for transparency and accountability including information sharing
- Avoiding corruption and misuse of public funds in emergency funding and procurement
- Multi-channel information dissemination services especially with resort to social media platform
- Frontier technologies for diagnostics, contact tracing and tracking, rationing PPEs, especially the telehealth and telemedicine services for vulnerable groups





- 3) Enhancing national-local collaboration and coordination
 - Strengthening local ownership of strategies and actions
 - Local responses to identify immediate needs of vulnerable groups and deliver inclusive customized services to address their special vulnerabilities
 - Bridging the capacity and resource gaps
 - Centralized data platform for timely information sharing
- 4) Forging multi-stakeholder engagement with the private sector, IT experts, civil society organizations, development agencies, etc.
- 5) Mobilizing resources through innovative financing
- 6) Enacting/amending relevant laws, regulations and policies
- 7) Effective communication strategy to counter misinformation and strengthen public trust and confidence





Digital Government Policy Response to COVID-19

Leveraging Technologies and Digital Government

\sim	• •		\wedge	Time horizon	Policy action	Digital government response
				Short-term	React	 Use digital platforms (i.e., online portals, social media) for accurate and timely information-sharing Lead two-way communication with people and foster e-participation (i.e. hackathons, brainstorming events) Ensure protection of people's human rights including data privacy and take into consideration unintended consequences of technology
CONTACT- TRACING APPS Bluetooth-based nobile phone apps for tracking the spread of the virus,	AI CHATBOTS AI chatbots as "Virtual Doctors" on government portals for self-diagnosis,	ONLINE PERMITS Online movement permits during curfews, ensuring people follow	E-LEARNING PORTALS Digital platforms supporting teachers and students with online resources	Mid-term	Recover & Resolve	 Form effective multi-stakeholder partnerships (i.e. private sector, academia, NGOs and international organizations) on regional, national and local levels Provide technology education for digital literacy, specifically targeted at public officials, children, women/girls and MSMEs Offer financial and technical support to local governments in the implementation of digital tools and technologies Leverage lessons learned and policy ideas from the ongoing crisis
metimes with text notifications or eatmap extensions	reducing pressure on healthcare systems	shelter-in-place orders	and providing high quality teaching and learning from home	Long-term	Reinvent	 Invest in new technologies (i.e., AI, blockchain, robots, drones) and ICT infrastructure to increase the resilience of the health economy and public services delivery Develop digital infrastructure and engagement tools for the most vulnerable groups in society, particularly for migrants, refugees and ethnic minorities Revisit data protection and privacy legislation along with lessons learned





Digital Government Policy Response to COVID-19

Leveraging Technologies and Digital Government



- 1) Information sharing
- 2) E-participation
- 3) E-health
- 4) E-business
- 5) Contact tracing
- 6) Social distancing and virus tracking
- 7) Working and learning from home
- 8) Digital policy
- 9) Partnerships

Source: UN DESA (2020) Compendium of Digital Government in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic





ICT Applications and Tools Usefulness and Impact on Zika and Ebola Epidemics Worldwide

Technology and tools applications	Implications and impact
Social media, Digital Network Diagrams & Maps, crowding Mobile mapping, CDRs, Satellite images, Drones	Preparedness, instructions and guidelines, individuals and communities mobilization, engagement ad participation Contact tracing, data-driven decision making frontline action, early warning, population movement
Social Media, SMS & IVSS	Enables individuals and communities to understand epidemic risk and initiation action for recovery
Mobile Apps, Social Media, SMS	Sharing information regarding the outbreak between healthcare workers
SMS, Mobile Apps, social media	Mobilization, alert, instructions and advice Communities engagement on disease and actions, allows individuals in remote communities to shared anecdotal and positive journalism
Social media, Tele-consulting	Patients can communicate with family and friends, healthcare workers can communicate with patient
SMS, Mobile apps	Reimbursement, microcredit or insurance inquiries, Paying healthcare workers, accepting donations from contributors
SMS, mobile apps, webinars, and online tutorials	Efficiently train new healthcare staff, keep existing staff informed about updates
Closed Circuit social media, internet, thermal cameras	Circuit social media, internet, TV, migration cameras Surveillance of patients monitoring
	Social media, Digital Network Diagrams & Maps, crowding Mobile mapping, CDRs, Satellite images, Drones Social Media, SMS & IVSS Mobile Apps, Social Media, SMS SMS, Mobile Apps, social media Social media, Tele-consulting SMS, Mobile apps SMS, mobile apps, webinars, and online tutorials

Leveraging Technologies and Digital Government

Table 1: ICT applications and tools usefulness and impact on Zika and Ebola epidemics worldwide.

Source: Tambo E, Kazienga A, Talla M, Chengho CF, Fotsing C (2017) Digital Technology and Mobile Applications Impact on Zika and Ebola Epidemics Data Sharing and Emergency Response. J Health Med Informat 8: 254

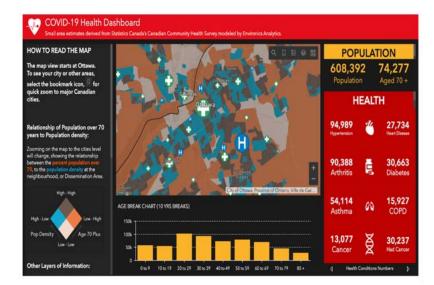




Canada - COVID-19 Health Dashboard for Identifying High-Risk Communities

Enhancing national-local collaboration and coordination

Leveraging Technologies and Digital Government



https://datasmart.ash.harvard.edu/news/article/covid-19-responsegis-best-practices-local-government

- COVID-19 Health Dashboard for local governments to identify which communities in Canada were at highest risk of adverse impacts from the outbreak
- The map uses small area estimates from Canada's Community Health Survey to classify risk by comparing the population of people aged 70plus to the overall population density.
- It also highlights the number of people locally who have pre-existing conditions such as COPD, cancer, or hypertension that put them at even greater risk.
- The interactive map allows users to zoom in to any province across the country and view their own communities. It also highlights nearby medical facilities and the services they provide.



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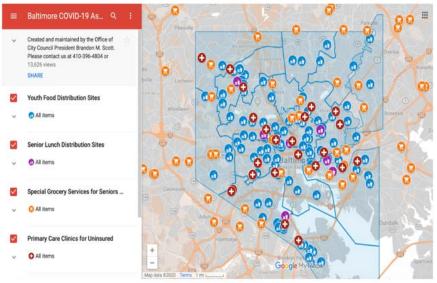


3. Government Innovation for Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups during Public Health Emergencies

Baltimore, US - Mapping Community Assets

Strengthening leadership and changing mindsets & Enhancing national-local collaboration and coordination & Leveraging technologies and digital government

- A user friendly, <u>interactive map of city resources</u> was quickly created by the Baltimore's City Council President to help provide information to the city's most vulnerable residents.
- The map highlights food distribution sites for children and seniors, special grocery services for seniors, and clinics where uninsured residents can receive medical care.
- Residents can search for services near them and click on each icon to learn more information about their location or service of interest.
- As of March 28, the map has been viewed just over 13,000 times and the Council chair has called on the public to provide further feedback to help improve the map's functionality.



https://datasmart.ash.harvard.edu/news/article/covid-19-responsegis-best-practices-local-government





Forging multi-stakeholder engagement with the private sector, IT experts, civil society organizations, etc. Mobilizing resources through innovative financing Leveraging technologies and digital government

Effective communication strategy to counter misinformation and strengthen public trust and confidence

- Norway: Prime Minister held an online press conference with a Q&A session specifically for kids to help ease their fears, as youth and children are very vulnerable to fake news and might suffer from the burden the COVID-19 crisis put on parents' social, economic, and mental well-being.
- France: The Government's startup incubator Beta.gouv.fr and the Ministry of National Education developed a civic reserve platform to help match and connect public and civil society organizations with volunteers. Organizations and citizens can register on the platform for a variety of tasks, such as assisting with the distribution of necessities, or providing childcare for healthcare workers.
- Canada: Some provinces, in cooperation with the Canadian Mental Health Association, have developed virtual mental health support platforms and virtual counselling services to support the elderly and other people who are experiencing psychological stress as a result of the crisis
- Qatar: installed computers in labor compounds to provide virtual consultations for migrant workers.
- Singapore: founded an e-campaign to raise money for its migrant workers community which has been seriously affected by COVID-19.





Rwanda - Drones for Delivering Medicine and Food to Quarantined Areas & Vulnerable Groups

Leveraging technologies and digital government Forging multi-stakeholder engagement with the private sector



Photo credit: UNICEF/UN070227/Chim Chisiza

https://www.ktpress.rw/2020/02/rwandas-drones-complete-25000-flights-in-blood-medicine-delivery/

- Zipline Rwanda a robotics firm operating unmanned aircraftdrones that deliver blood to hospitals in remote areas has completed 25,000 flights that saved thousands patients in emergency cases.
- Rwanda and Zipline entered a deal in February 2016, to build the first drone port in Shyogwe Sector, Muhanga District – Southern Province in a bid to improve accessibility to blood and emergency medical supplies to remote parts of the country. The agreement aims at extending quick health services to remote-based hospitals.





UNICEF – U-Report

Leveraging technologies and digital government

Forging multi-stakeholder engagement with the private sector, IT experts, civil society organizations, etc. Effective communication strategy to counter misinformation and strengthen public trust and confidence



U-Report is a free, anonymous SMS and social mediabased messaging tool for community participation, designed to address issues that people care about. It is active in 60 countries, benefiting 8 million users. U-Report is an open-source mobile messaging programme managed at the country level by UNICEF alongside youth and NGO partners.

U-Report COVID-19 Chatbot Through communication channels like SMS, Viber, Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp users can ask U-Report questions about the Corona Virus and received preprogrammed answers from experts on the matter.

https://www.unicef.org/innovation/ureportCOVID19

https://www.unicef.org/innovation/stories/UReportCoronavirusIndonesia





Enacting and amending laws, regulations and policies Forging multi-stakeholder engagement with other stakeholders such as the private sector, IT experts, etc.

- Ukraine passed a law to ensure that IDPs receive social benefits throughout the COVID-19 lock-down period.
- Bahrain has established specific responsibilities for employers (and workers) in the private sector to ensure appropriate accommodations and facilities for migrant workers during the pandemic.
- South Africa enacted "Minister's Directions of 26 March 2020 to the Electronic Communications, Postal and Broadcasting Sectors" to remove obstacles associated with the rapid deployment of electronic communication services and had licensees directed to zero-rate access to local educational content websites and support health sector programming on COVID-19.

Source: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2020_04_unhcr_legislative_update_on_covid-19.pdf Source: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_743268.pdf





Republic of Korea - COVID-19 Relief Payments for Vulnerable Groups & SME Enterprises

Enacting and amending laws, regulations and policies including emergency support measures



- The dependent self-employed & Freelancers: Reduction of application requirements for employment subsidy
- **Construction workers**: Newly established an Emergency livelihood fund loan program
- Small business owners: Recovery assistance for damages caused by Covid-19, business closure support and support for small business owners to get back on their feet
- Youth: Reduced requirements for Youth employment subsidy
- Older persons: Advanced payment of employment promotion subsidy for the aged

Source: https://www.moel.go.kr/english/poli/poliNewsnews_view.jsp?idx=1559









Singapore: Online Crowdfunding Initiatives to Support Migrants

Mobilizing resources through innovative financing Forging multi-stakeholder engagement with other stakeholders such as the private sector, IT experts, etc.

Expired



- Government-linked nonprofit organization National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre launched two key e-campaigns -"Migrants we care" and "#HOMEFORALL migrant - to aid Singapore's migrant workers community, which has been seriously affected by COVID-19.
- The initiatives have raised S\$ \$1,105,951 (USD776k) and S\$738,468 (USD518k) respectively as of 21 April 2020
- A central giving page has been set up on Giving.SG to enable people and organizations to easily find and contribute to charities' efforts to address the needs of communities affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Source: UN DESA (2020) Compendium of Digital Government in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Screencapture from: https://www.giving.sg/mwaf/migrantswecare





Saudi Arabia – "Move to Donate" Initiative

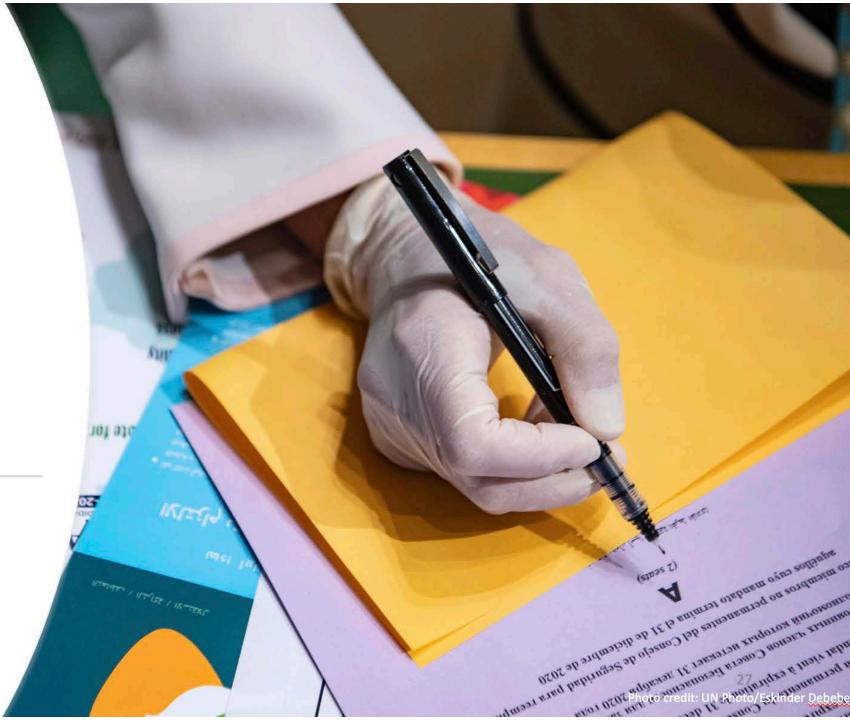
Mobilizing resources through innovative financing Forging multi-stakeholder engagement with other stakeholders such as the private sector, IT experts, etc.

- The Saudi Sports for All Federation (SFA) launched "Move to Donate" Initiative in collaboration with Saudi Food Bank (SFB) at the start of Ramadan, which rewards people's activities by delivering food baskets to people most in need.
- Those wishing to participate in the initiative can benefit from the services provided by the SFA portal.



Source: UN DESA (2020) Compendium of Digital Government in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

4. Challengesfor PolicyConsideration







4. Challenges for Policy Consideration

- 1) Lack of strategy for prioritizing policy actions during different phases of the evolution of public health emergencies
- 2) Meaningful and effective engagement of vulnerable groups on a sustainable basis
- 3) Empowerment of vulnerable groups to reap their potential especially the youth for addressing public health emergencies
- 4) Sustained investment in essential services including health service and infrastructure in healthcare system
- 5) Digital divide & lack of ICT infrastructure
- 6) Building digital capacities and skills of vulnerable groups in better accessing health service





4. Challenges for Policy Consideration

- 7) Issue of data security and protection of personal information
- 8) Spread of misinformation and false news
 - Lack of public trust and confidence in government
 - Public panic can further aggravate already existing overstretching of medical supplies
 - Social unrest
- 9) E-resilience due to surge in website visits and occasional crash downs
- 10) Cyberattack may increase substantially during public health emergencies
- 11) Cyber bullying on different ethnic groups

Group Work







30'

Group Work (1)

Group Discussion

Please discuss the following questions in your group to share experiences and challenges in ensuring inclusion of vulnerable groups during public health emergencies and in COVID-19 response in your country.

- 1) Which groups are most vulnerable to public health emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic, in your country? What do you think are the primary factors/causes of the vulnerability?
- 2) What are the challenges and innovative practices of your country/organization in promoting inclusion of vulnerable groups and ensuring leaving no one behind in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- 3) How do you think the innovative strategies, approaches and practices introduced during the Session 3 can be applied to your country's situation?





Group Work (2)

Role Playing

() 30'

Participants will be grouped in pairs. One participant plays the role of government official who is interviewing the challenges and difficulties of vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic to design and develop special policies to address the challenges and mitigate the COVID-19 impact. The other participant will play the role of one of the selected vulnerable groups as the interviewee. At the end of the 10-minute interview, each pair produces a specific COVID-19 policy(ies) for the particular vulnerable group interviewed. After 10 minutes, the participants switch roles.

- persons with disabilities
- older persons
- the poorest
- women and children
- refugees, migrants, IDPs
- people in rural/remote areas
- indigenous peoples





Background Materials

Key Readings	United Nations (2020), Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, <u>https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/SG-Report-Socio-Economic-Impact-of-Covid19.pdf</u>					
	 UN DESA (2020), UN E-Government Survey 2020, Chapter 8, <u>https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2020-Survey/2020%20UN%20E-Government%20Survey%20(Full%20Report).pdf</u> OECD (2020), Embracing Innovation in Government: Global Trends 2020, <u>https://trends.oecd-opsi.org/</u> UN DESA (2020), Policy Brief #61 on COVID-19: Embracing digital government during the pandemic and beyond https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/PB_61.pdf 					
	 UN DESA (2020), Policy Brief #79 on Role of Public Service and Public Servants during the COVID-19 Pandemic, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/PB 79.pdf 					
	UN DESA (2020), Policy Brief on Resilient institutions in times of crisis: transparency, accountability and participation at the national level key to effective response to COVID-19, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/PB_74.pdf					
	 United Nations (2020), The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020, <u>https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/</u> UN OCHA (2020), COVID-19: How to include marginalized and vulnerable people in risk communication and community engagement, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/COVID-19 CommunityEngagement 130320.pdf 					
	 European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) (2020), TECHNICAL REPORT - Guidance on the provision of support for medically and socially vulnerable populations in EU/EEA countries and the United Kingdom during the COVID-19 pandemic, https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Medically-and-socially-vulnerable-populations-COVID-19.pdf 					
 Further Readings 	 UN Sustainable Development Group (2020), Policy Brief on COVID-19 and People on the Move, https://unsdg.un.org/download/2232/32989 UN ESCWA (2020), The Impact of COVID-19 on Migrants and Refugees in the Arab Region, https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/uploads/impact-covid-19-migrants-refugees-arab-region-policy-brief-english.pdf 					
	 United Nations (2020), Policy Brief on A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19, <u>https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_policy_brief_on_persons_with_disabilities_final.pdf</u> UN Secretary-General's Policy Brief (2020): The Impact of COVID-19 on older persons, <u>http://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2020/05/COVID-Older-persons.pdf</u> 					
	 UN Sustainable Development Group (2020), Policy Brief: <i>The Impact of COVID-19 on children</i>, <u>https://unsdg.un.org/download/2081/30314</u> World Bank, The Social Inclusion Assessment Tool, <u>http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/478071540591164260/SiAT-Logo-web.pdf</u> Tambo E, Kazienga A, Talla M, Chengho CF, Fotsing C (2017), <i>Digital Technology and Mobile Applications Impact on Zika and Ebola</i> 					
	Epidemics Data Sharing and Emergency Response. J Health Med Informat 8: 254, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316879420					





End of Module 9

