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ICLEI South Asia E-News

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Dear Friends,

The world, as we knew it, has changed tremendously almost overnight. The pandemic has upended our lives and we are adjusting to profound social and economic changes, and are preparing for an unanticipated world.

Yet, even in such turbulent times, there is clarity that we need proper strategies to win this war, and that only collective action can ensure a collective transformation. National and local governments in the region have taken up the cudgels to curb the spread of the pandemic, and ICLEI South Asia has joined these efforts by helping to prepare response and monitoring strategies, among others.

I am happy to present this special edition of our newsletter that highlights our ongoing support to cities in this context, and also the extraordinary initiatives being taken by local governments in the region.

Take care and stay safe.

Covid-19: Fighting the Pandemic in South Asia

The scale of the Covid-19 pandemic has thrown up innumerable daunting challenges to national and local governments in the South Asia region. The end of the crisis is not in sight yet, and the extent of the damage it has caused so far is immeasurable. However, cities and towns in the region are fighting back, and ICLEI South Asia is supporting them in this endeavour in various ways.

ICLEI Support



The 'frontline soldiers' in this war - the medical staff - are facing serious shortages of protective gear in the country. At the request of Mr Asok N. Bhattacharya, Hon'ble Mayor of Siliguri city, West Bengal, India, ICLEI South Asia has **donated 50 units of Personal Protective Equipment** to the city municipal corporation. In addition, ICLEI SA is helping the city to communicate with and deploy workers involved in solid waste collection, transfer and disposal, **in operating the compost unit for processing wet waste**, and in supporting the preparation of IEC material for dissemination.

ICLEI South Asia has also offered assistance to several other corporations in the country in developing communication material in local languages. For instance, in Udaipur city, Rajasthan, India, ICLEI staff **prepared IEC material** in Hindi for the benefit of waste collection workers, and assisted the city corporation in preparing a strategy for streamlining and **monitoring the distribution of food packets** among needy people, besides helping to coordinate the initiative. The team in Hyderabad city, Telangana, India, shared IEC material for sanitary workers on maintaining hygiene and sanitation.

In Nagpur city, Maharashtra, India, ICLEI South Asia supported the city corporation in **digitising survey forms** that sought details from citizens such as their travel and medical history, and possible contact with Covid-19 cases.

The Amdavad Municipal Corporation in Gujarat state, India, needed help to shortlist volunteers/ companies for data analysis and pandemic modelling, which the ICLEI South Asia city staff provided. ICLEI South Asia also helped to develop a **Covid-19 density risk map** based on location information shared by the corporation. In Surat, Gujarat, the city corporation's GIS expert was assisted in the **development of a hotspot map**. The Kochi Metro Rail Limited, Kerala, India, has received ICLEI support in preparing a datasheet to monitor freight vehicles entering the state during the lockdown period.

ICLEI South Asia staff have also volunteered to help in the community kitchen of the Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation and in developing a hotspot map, for which official approval is awaited. The city staff are **helping in the smooth operation of the biomethanation plant**.

Smart Strategies



The cities themselves are also using Smart City infrastructure as an important tool in the fight against COVID-19. They are developing predictive analytics using heat maps and taking action to monitor people's movements, using geo-fencing, as well as the periodic health status of suspected cases.

Several cities in India, for instance, have developed mobile apps for the benefit of symptomatic people. Citizens in Nagpur just have to fill the information about their symptoms on the coronavirus application, which easily detects whether they have the Covid-19 symptoms. If the symptoms are confirmed, the mobile application informs a team of doctors of the Nagpur Municipal Corporation for further monitoring and action. The Surat Municipal Corporation has developed a COVID-19 Tracker System, which includes a web portal and mobile application to track people who have a history of recent foreign or interstate travel and persons who have come in direct contact with confirmed coronavirus cases.

In smaller Indian towns such as Mangaluru and Jabalpur, a dedicated hotline and WhatsApp video consultations, respectively, have been set up for providing telemedicine services and counselling.

Meanwhile, in Singra municipality, Rajshahi district, Bangladesh, the city authorities have taken the initiative of using Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative (TUMI) vehicles to deliver essential items and groceries to people under lockdown in the area. The people can register their requirements by calling designated helpline numbers and there is no charge for delivery. ICLEI is a partner in the TUMI e-mobility initiative in Singra.

The Smart Cities of Pune and Kochi in India are using technologies such as live GPS tracking, geo-fencing and analytics to keep track of patients, quarantine cases, contact tracing and community surveillance, and of resources such as quarantine facilities, isolation beds and associated manpower.

A number of Indian cities such as Tumakuru, Nagpur, Aizawl, Chennai and Coimbatore are using drones for survey, as public address systems, for mapping unusual activity and crowd control, and in disinfection processes. Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Varanasi and Pune are using variable messaging devices in public areas to disseminate health-related information.

These are just a handful of the battle strategies that cities are adopting in the region to curb the spread of the pandemic. ICLEI South Asia is extending support in kind and cash to these efforts to build collective action and hope.

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About ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability is a network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments, supported by a team of global experts, driving sustainable urban development worldwide. Active in 100+ countries, we impact over 25 percent of the global urban population.

ICLEI firmly believes that sustainable cities are the foundation of a just and sustainable world. We create systemic change in urban areas through practical, integrated solutions and spark city-to-city and city-to-region connections. ICLEI brings a strong urban component to national and global sustainability policy and translates global policy into action. Through our collective efforts, ICLEI is building a sustainable urban world to shift the trajectory of global development.

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