TOOL 19

RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

RECOVERY

This tool will help you to:

- Determine which actions will get life and commerce back to normal as soon as possible
- Improve pre-disaster conditions and build resilience to future risks

Who will implement this tool:

- The mayor
- The *municipal leadership team*
- Relevant staff from the following municipal sectors:
  - Family Welfare/ Food Security
  - Communication
  - Health
  - Education
  - Agriculture and Natural Resources

In collaboration with the following groups:

  - Community-based organizations
  - Religious and spiritual support organizations
  - Food wholesalers and retail markets
  - Humanitarian and development non-governmental organizations
  - National emergency management agencies

OVERVIEW

A moderate pandemic may impact life and commerce only for the duration of the pandemic waves and may actually strengthen social networks as people come to each other's assistance. A more severe pandemic may have caused many deaths, drastic inflation, unemployment, food crisis, and a collapse of social networks. Recovery from a series of severe pandemic waves will require hard work and persistence on the part of local leaders and community members.

After several severe pandemic waves, the tendency may be to analyze the situation simply in terms of needs and deficiencies, because both will certainly be immense. Yet a municipality must rely on an inventory of remaining assets and capacities if it is to find the power to regenerate itself. Initially, communities should determine what they can do immediately, without external assistance, using all existing skills, resources, and technical experience. Some recovery efforts may require more resources than a municipality has available. The team must then be prepared to communicate the priorities of the municipality to national and regional government, international agencies, and other sources of external support, once assistance becomes available.

> **STEPS TO RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE**
>
> Pandemic recovery programs should:
> - Reduce fear and reestablish a sense of security
> - Reassess vulnerability and strengthen and sustain relief activities
> - Get life and commerce back to normal
> - Improve on pre-disaster living conditions and overall well-being by linking relief activities to longer-term work that addresses the underlying causes of food shortages and poverty

STAGES OF RECOVERY EFFORTS

Pandemic recovery efforts occur in stages. They cover the critical middle ground between disaster response and improving long-term well-being for at-risk populations. Some activities can be undertaken immediately following a pandemic, once health experts have declared that social distancing is no longer needed. These activities will reduce fear and reestablish a sense of calm. Examples are reopening schools and businesses and making sure that short-term income and basic necessities are available.

There are other recovery activities that can take place once a sense of normalcy and security begins to return to the municipality. The goal of these efforts is to strengthen the resiliency of households and communities so that they are better able

to manage future shocks. These efforts include rebuilding household and community assets, and restoring local institutions that have been overwhelmed by the pandemic, particularly health facilities.

STAGE 1. REESTABLISH A SENSE OF SECURITY

Reduce public fear and support the community's grieving process

The first stage of recovery involves reducing public fear and supporting the grieving process. The psychological impact of the pandemic on survivors may be huge; psychosocial support will be extremely important to restore a sense of calm. Concerns that people have about future outbreaks, about their ability to get life back to normal, or about other worries must be identified, recognized, and dealt with as soon as possible. Immediately after the pandemic has run its course, the team should begin activities to reduce fear and reestablish a sense of security.

Gender, age, and previous medical conditions may influence the impact the pandemic has on families and individuals and should be taken into account by those providing psychosocial support. Homes will likely be the place where most people have suffered. Women—often the primary caregivers for household illness—may need additional grief and recovery counseling. Schools will also play an important role in this process by helping children recover from a very frightening experience and move forward.

With municipal staff from the education and communication sector, and any available resources or direction from national level government, develop a public education and communications plan. Television, radio, and newspapers can help the community recover by sharing accurate information and dispelling rumors. The public should be made aware of normal responses to fear, uncertainty, survivor guilt, trauma, and disasters.

Organize community meetings to discuss the end of the pandemic and to assure people that life can get back to normal. To aid in the grieving process, memorials and candlelight vigils can be held for those that have passed away. During upcoming cultural events and festivals, the dead can be remembered and celebrated, if this is an acceptable tradition. These outlets and venues should also be used to provide sources of further information and help. (For more information, see Tool 12, *Fundamentals of Communication During Crises and Emergencies*, Tool 14, *News Media Communication*, and Tool 13, *Communications Plan Implementation for a Severe Pandemic*.)

Reopen public places

Once health experts and national authorities have declared that social distancing and isolation measures are no longer needed, the team should encourage schools, community centers, businesses, and markets to reopen—even if they are short-staffed or have limited supplies. This will help people feel that things are getting back to normal. Depending on the severity of the disruption in trade, many smaller businesses may not be able to reopen immediately and may need assistance to recuperate. Options for reviving economic activities and markets are discussed in the next section.

Reintroduce joy

Bringing joy and laughter back to the community can be an important contributor to coping with losses and restoring a sense of normalcy. Consider organizing recreational activities, cultural events, or music festivals in order to bring people together. Give them the opportunity to talk about their experiences and promote supportive relationships.

STAGE 2. LINKING RELIEF AND RECOVERY

Once initial fear is reduced and a sense of security begins to return, the team can concentrate on municipal programs that will link relief efforts to recovery. Well-planned influenza pandemic recovery programs address not only the immediate recovery situation but also the underlying causes of hunger and suffering among affected populations. The goal of these efforts is to strengthen the resiliency of households and communities so that they are more able to manage future shocks.

This next stage of recovery involves three steps. (1) First, identify the people in the municipality that have suffered the most and will have trouble getting back on their feet. Then simultaneously (2) make sure that short-term income and basic necessities are available for these people, and (3) link short-term relief efforts to longer-term strategies for building resources and skills that will reduce the impact of future disasters. Depending on how severely the pandemic affected the municipality, recovery operations may continue for up to two years.

STEP 1. REASSESS VULNERABILITY

The first step in designing recovery programs is to identify those who have been most affected by the pandemic and those that will have the most trouble getting back on their feet. Target immediate assistance to these groups. If the team used Tool 9, *Identification of People Most at Risk of Food Insecurity* before the pandemic arrived, update that information now with a follow-up assessment to help determine who has suffered most, and who has been more resilient to the pandemic's impact. If the team was not able to undertake this assessment before the pandemic, now is the time to gather that information.

Determine the coping strategies that people have used in response to the pandemic. Coping strategies refer to the ways that individuals, households, and communities combine their skills, knowledge, and resources to respond to a shock or disaster. These strategies can be positive or negative and investigating both types is important to understanding whether a situation is worsening, remaining the same, or improving. Awareness of coping strategies can help the team identify which households are in most need of recovery assistance, and it can increase understanding of how those who have managed fairly well through the pandemic have been able to do so. This last important point is often overlooked. By understanding successful coping strategies that have helped people survive, leaders are able to share this information with others that have not fared so well, helping them to be better prepared for future disasters. (For more information, see Tool 9, *Identification of People Most at Risk of Food Insecurity*.)

The chart on the following page gives examples of coping strategies that people might use in response to a severe influenza pandemic

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Planting a small garden with short-cycle crops during the first week of the pandemic, which provides vegetables for the household during the peak of the wave	Migrating away from home to distance themselves from an infected area, thereby losing jobs or leaving farms or businesses unattended. In urban areas where influenza rates are likely to be the highest due to large populations, there could be high rates of urban-rural migration as families migrate to live with rural relatives to escape the pandemic, thus exposing rural areas to the disease
Organizing exchanges among neighbors to increase the variety of foods the household eats	
Gathering and preserving fruit found on common municipal property	Reducing the quantity and quality of food consumed because food has not been available in the municipality or because it has been unaffordable

STEP 2. STRENGTHEN AND SUSTAIN RELIEF ACTIVITIES

Make sure short-term income and basic necessities are available. The next recovery step will be to help the groups of people that have been most affected to obtain short-term income and basic items such as water, food, shelter, medicines, and clothing. In addition to the information gathered in the assessments, encourage the community to participate in identifying people that should receive assistance. This establishes an open and participatory process.

Carefully consider what the municipality can do with its own resources and capacities to help those in need in the short term. Some of these recovery activities will be maintained for a short time (6 months or less), such as the response efforts used during the pandemic, and outlined in Tool 11, *Distribution of Emergency Food During a Pandemic*. Additional activities for consideration are listed below. The specific mix of activities should be tailored to the local context and based on the full participation of the municipality.

- Set up supplemental feeding centers (community kitchens, soup kitchens) for at-risk populations such as the elderly and children.
- Provide vouchers, stamps, or other alternative currency that can be used to purchase food in local markets. This will also help to stimulate local business.
- Continue to encourage home gardens as a means of improving diet diversity and to provide immediate access to low-cost foods. Supply seeds and technical assistance, if possible.
- Provide health, hygiene, and nutrition education.
- Organize food security recovery programs like food- or cash-for-work. This will free up money for food purchases. See Handout 1 for food-for-work/cash-for-work considerations.
- Provide cash-for-training (so people learn vocational and other life skills to enhance food and livelihood security).

STEP 3. GET LIFE AND COMMERCE BACK TO NORMAL

While some of the municipal staff works to identify and assist those that have suffered the most from the impact of the pandemic, other municipal staff—with community input—should identify what can be done with local resources and manpower to get life and commerce back to normal. An overarching objective will be to improve on pre-disaster living conditions and overall well-being. The municipal leadership team will want to link relief activities to longer-term work that addresses the underlying causes of food shortages and poverty. All activities should focus on strengthening the resiliency of households and communities so that they are more able to manage future shocks.

To enhance the speed and appropriateness of recovery activities, make full use of the assets and capacities that already exist in the community. By building on the abilities of local households, the capacities of local associations, the strength of social networks, and the supportive functions of local institutions, the municipality can secure and restore income-generating opportunities and access to services that will ultimately build stronger, more sustainable communities. These communities will then be less vulnerable to future shocks, particularly those such as a pandemic that impact global market supplies.

A key objective of these efforts will be to revive economic activities and markets. Following a severe pandemic, trade can be reestablished through the rehabilitation of small and medium businesses. Due to expected high mortality rates, skills and business training, as well as other services that support the development of small businesses, will be critically needed. Vocational training programs can also serve to address the impact that mortality rates may have on staffing levels.

With the help of the community, brainstorm a list of all recovery options that might be relevant and effective in the municipality. The list of sample activities below offers some initial ideas. Some activities, such as reestablishing market linkages, may require external assistance. Separate the list into two groups: recovery options that can be done with local resources and manpower, and recovery options that require external assistance. This will help to identify what can be done right now, as well as help to prepare leaders to communicate the municipality's priorities to sources of external support, should assistance become available.

Sample Recovery Activities

- Strengthen or reestablish local markets and supply chains.
- Support efforts to reinstate or strengthen cross-border markets and food supply chains.
- Strengthen or reestablish transport of goods, medicines, and services.
- Offer skills training for immediate (self) employment; match job seekers to employment opportunities.
- Facilitate small loans for business activities in all sectors.
- Provide business training for new businesses.
- Support the formation of cooperatives.
- Facilitate start-up grants for vulnerable groups who face difficulties greater than the loss of productive assets (e.g., women who lost their husbands or main income earner).
- Provide access to alternative opportunities for earning income.
- Provide education and support for mothers, families, and communities on child health and hygiene, as well as feeding and care practices for infants and young children with influenza.
- Strengthen health service delivery systems; ensure equitable access to vaccines and other medications.

- Revitalize small-scale agriculture and animal husbandry.
- Introduce vocational training and improved agricultural technologies, including low-labor input technologies.
- Strengthen natural resource management (e.g., reforestation, water harvesting).
- Strengthen agricultural extension services.
- Advocate for national government solutions that help poor people manage risks.
- Support citizen awareness campaigns and communication and media efforts.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONDITIONAL TRANSFER ACTIVITIES (FOOD-FOR-WORK/CASH-FOR-WORK)

Conditional transfer activities generate income for those who are able and willing to work. The regional or national government may be able to provide more information on how these programs have been used in the country before.

Two of the most common types of conditional transfer programs are cash-for-work and food-for-work. Employment in public or community works programs provides income-earning opportunities and, at the same time, improves the living environment for pandemic-affected communities through building, rehabilitating, and maintaining needed community infrastructure. Both types of community works programs have the following benefits:

- Food-for-work/cash-for-work can help people retake control of their lives. They provide immediate work opportunities as well as a basis for longer-term employment by helping people learn new skills.
- The cash or food transfers help buffer food shortages that have resulted from market collapse, transportation problems, and reduced employment due to layoffs and illness.

Important factors to consider if the municipal leadership team decides to include food-for-work or cash-for-work as part of an influenza pandemic recovery program:

- Workers must be healthy enough to perform the activities.
- Transport costs to and from the work site must be provided.
- Communities should participate in the decisionmaking process and view the activity as something that creates a valuable community asset, such as tree planting on common property.

Although cash-for-work and food-for-work can be successful short-term measures, they do bring with them the inherent risk of creating dependency. In a post-pandemic situation, recovery efforts should shift out of these temporary transfer programs as quickly as possible and into activities designed to rebuild the economy and sustainable livelihoods.

Cash-for-work and food-for-work are compared and contrasted in the table below.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR FOOD-FOR-WORK AND CASH-FOR-WORK PROGRAMS

FOOD-FOR-WORK	CASH-FOR-WORK
Immediately following a pandemic, markets may be closed. Households will have limited access to markets, and food prices will increase, reducing food availability. Food-for-work can help municipalities meet food needs until markets stabilize.	In many cases, food is not the most appropriate resource for recovery efforts. Cash-for-work can increase purchasing power and build local capacity by enhancing skill sets.
Considerations • In a post-influenza pandemic situation, the nutritional value of the food provided is critical as many workers will be recovering from illness. • Ration size and nutrient content must exceed the human energy expenditure required for the work activity pursued. • The food given out (food basket) should include traditional or popular foods if possible. (Consider local food culture.) • The self-targeting feature of food-for-work allows the most needy to contribute their labor to obtain food while helping to develop or maintain the community's infrastructure. • Food transfers are less susceptible to security problems for recipients than cash transfers; however, food is more susceptible to staff theft than cash. • Food-for-work may be a better choice than cash-for-work in communities where there is the risk of cash being spent on nonfood/nonessential items. • Obtaining enough food to give people may be difficult. • Storage facilities must be available. • Staff to manage food stocks must be available.	*Considerations* • The items people need to purchase must be available in the markets and priced competitively. • Cash-for-work programs are quicker to launch, easier to manage, and less expensive than cash-for-food programs. • Cash-for-work has lower logistical costs than food-for-work (which has high transport costs and can easily disrupt the food market where it exists). • Cash-for-work can inject cash into the community, starting a chain reaction that helps many sectors of the market. The overall purchasing power of the community will be increased. Using local resources (e.g., producing bricks locally rather than bringing them from the capital or from abroad) can add benefits for the target locality. • The amount of the cash transfer should be equivalent to or just below the local minimum wage. • Cash-for-work must be monitored so that it does not lead to labor shortages for local enterprises. • Self-targeting of the neediest may not be as effective as with food-for-work, due to the desirability of cash. • Security and diversion risks for cash may be greater than food transfer risks.

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