

Addressing the Challenges and Opportunities of Global Disaster Management in the Post-COVID-19 Era

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Letter to the Editor

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Letter to the Editor

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has had a significant and far-reaching impact on various aspects of human life, including global disaster management. The pandemic has demonstrated that existing disaster management systems are not sufficiently resilient, effective, and responsive to deal with complex and dynamic global-scale crises. Therefore, urgent reforms are needed to improve the quality and capacity of future disaster management systems.

In the research report entitled “Redefining Global Disaster Management Strategies: Lessons From COVID-19 and the Call for United Action”, Krzysztof Goniewicz and Frederick M. Burkle¹ propose some innovative solutions to address the challenges and opportunities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of global disaster management. However, this research report also has some weaknesses, such as the lack of depth of analysis on the factors affecting the success or failure of existing disaster management strategies, the lack of critical discussion on the challenges, obstacles, or risks that may be faced in implementing the proposed solutions. Therefore, this article aims to fill these gaps with a critical analysis of the implementation of innovative solutions for global disaster management in the post-COVID-19 era.

The COVID-19 pandemic is 1 example of a global-scale disaster that poses major challenges for global disaster management.² The pandemic has infected more than 200 million people and killed more than 4 million worldwide as of August 2021.³ The pandemic has also caused severe social and economic impacts, such as increased poverty, unemployment, inequality, conflict, migration, and humanitarian crises.⁴ In addition, the pandemic has also exacerbated the impact of other concurrent or sequential disasters, such as floods, forest fires, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and armed conflicts.⁴ The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that the existing global disaster management system is not sufficiently resilient, effective, and responsive to deal with complex and dynamic global-scale crises. Some of the factors that influenced the success or failure of global disaster management strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic include:

- Capacity and readiness of the public health system to detect, prevent, and treat COVID-19 cases.⁵
- Availability and accessibility of vaccines, medicines, personal protective equipment, and other medical equipment to protect and cure people infected with COVID-19.³
- Speed and accuracy of decision-making by governments and health authorities in implementing COVID-19 prevention and control measures, such as lockdowns, travel restrictions, health protocols, contact tracing, and mass testing.⁶
- The level of community compliance and participation in following COVID-19 prevention and control measures, as well as their level of awareness and knowledge of the risks and modes of transmission of COVID-19.⁷
- The level of cooperation and coordination between countries and international organizations in sharing information and resources to address COVID-19, and providing humanitarian and technical assistance to countries in need.⁸
- Impacts and interactions of COVID-19 with other concurrent or sequential disasters, and capacity and preparedness to deal with multiple or compound disasters.⁹

Based on these factors, there is great variation in global disaster management performance during the COVID-19 pandemic between different countries and regions. Some countries and regions have successfully controlled the spread of COVID-19 and minimized its impacts, while others have had great difficulty in dealing with COVID-19 and its impacts.¹⁰ This suggests that there are opportunities to learn from global disaster management experiences and best practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as challenges to improve global cooperation and coordination in the face of future global-scale disasters.

Africa is one of the continents that has successfully controlled the spread of COVID-19 and minimized its impact. As of August 2021, Africa had only 7.3 million confirmed cases and

184 thousand deaths from COVID-19, with a death rate per million population of 138, which is lower than the world average of 513.¹¹ Africa has also managed to maintain its economic and social activities by implementing proportionate and evidence-based COVID-19 prevention and control measures.¹² One of the key factors for Africa's success in global disaster management during the COVID-19 pandemic is the implementation of global cooperation and collaboration based on solidarity, mutual trust, respect, and mutual benefit in the face of COVID-19.

Africa can enhance global cooperation and collaboration based on solidarity, mutual trust, respect, and mutual benefit in the face of COVID-19. Africa can share information and resources with other countries that need assistance in overcoming COVID-19, as well as provide humanitarian and technical assistance to developing countries. Africa can also participate in international forums on global disaster management during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as WHO, GAVI, CEPI, the European Union, the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa, and the World Organization for Animal Health.¹³

The implementation of global cooperation and collaboration in Africa had a positive impact on global disaster management during the COVID-19 pandemic. Africa also has the potential to maintain and improve its global disaster management performance in the post-COVID era, by continuing to develop and strengthen its global cooperation and collaboration. However, Africa also faces several challenges and barriers to the implementation of global cooperation and collaboration, such as resource and capacity constraints, inequality in the distribution of vaccines and medicines, and the risk of conflict and political instability.¹³ Therefore, Africa needs to take mitigation or adaptation measures that may be necessary, such as increasing domestic and international resource mobilization, demanding equal access to vaccines and medicines, and enhancing regional peace and security.

Challenges and opportunities emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of global disaster management. This article proposes some innovative solutions to improve the effectiveness and resilience of disaster management systems in the post-COVID era, such as adopting a systemic and cross-sectoral approach, enhancing community resilience and inclusive participation, investing in early warning systems and risk communication, using technology and data-driven approaches, and increasing global cooperation and collaboration. Implement innovative solutions for global disaster management across

different contexts and scales, and discuss challenges, barriers, or risks that may be faced in implementing solutions. Incorporating the suggested solutions can benefit the development of global disaster management, and all elements can actively participate in the process of reforming future disaster management systems.

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