

International Society of City and Regional Planners

Planning for better cities and regions



Frank D'hondt, Secretary General

- How has the COVID-19 crisis affected housing?
- How should urban and regional planners respond?
- How is ISOCARP co-leading the needed Change?

How has the COVID-19 crisis affected urban housing?

- Worldwide lockdowns have demonstrated criticality of decent housing: not overcrowded, well aired, access to private garden, balcony or rooftop, shops and urban services within 15' walking distance, clean water, electricity and quality broadband for telework and -schooling - existing inequalities have been exacerbated by the pandemic crisis
- Temporary closures of urban parks was/is a harsh measure for urban dwellers and in particular those in overcrowded and/or small high-rise dwellings.
- Extreme exposure of the homeless and poor urban migrants (even in Singapore!)
- Extreme vulnerability of overcrowded slums and informal settlements (affecting nearly 1 billion people!)

How has the COVID-19 crisis affected urban housing?

- Overall, cities might pay a disproportional ‘urban penalty’ for the pandemic crisis and result in urban flight of the median and higher income groups (a new sprawl surge?)
- Highly depending on a proper understanding of ‘density vs overcrowding’ as culprit
- Highly depending on collective place-based intelligence (incl. governance)

How should urban and regional planners respond?

- We need to sow seeds of incremental change in the cracks of the broken system: a return to pre-covid19 'normalcy' is a pathway to self-destruction
- The pandemic debate is largely spatially blind: time to step up territorial/place-based housing strategies and pandemic response-mechanisms
- We need to overcome the binary urban-rural thinking by planning and managing housing within urban-rural-nature continuum
- We need a Green Recovery of the pandemic crises: people-centred, health and nature-based practical urbanism and housing within city-regional carbon-neutral planning and governance (New Green Health Deal)
- We need to reinvent civic engagement in urban and regional development
- We need to increase the pool of community-based self-help planners: Global Planning Aid!

How is ISOCARP co-leading the needed Change?

- Capitalizing on the Jakarta Declaration on ‘Planning for Metropolitan Areas’ (ISOCARP World Planning Congress 2019);
- Contributing to WUF10 Abu Dhabi Declaration by Global Planners Network;
- Preparing the Doha Declaration on ‘Post Oil Cities’ (ISOCARP World Planning Congress 2020);
- Advocating a new generation of Green Urban (Recovery) Deals for (mega)cities;
- Creating new tools and online planning services for civic and grassroots engagement in urban and regional development (ISOCARP Cyber Agora, Global Planning Aid, Community of Practices and Research).

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