

# URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES

## Newsletter | March 2021 3

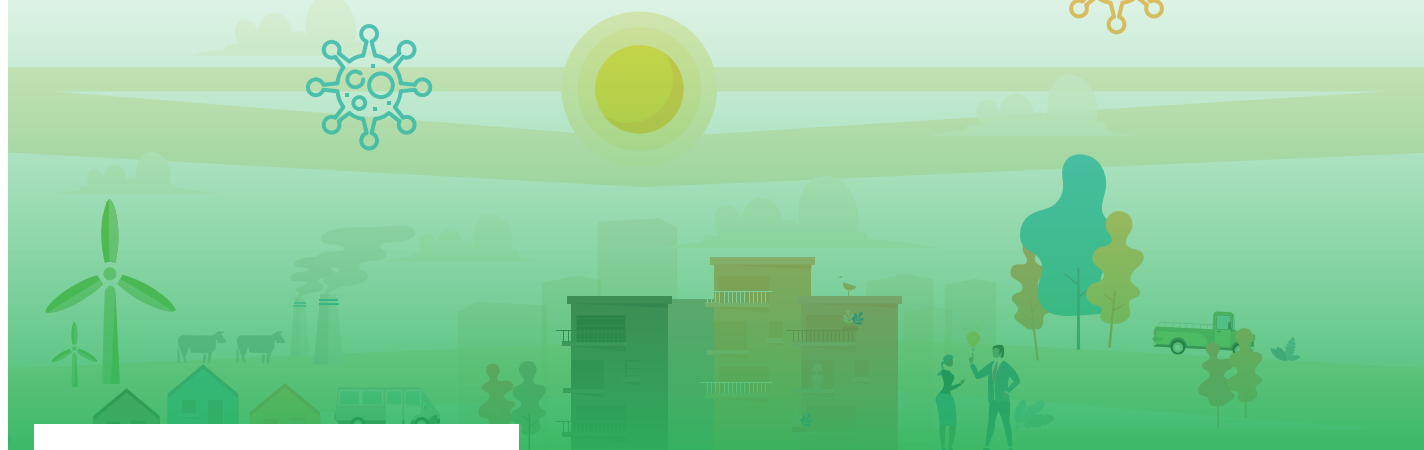


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### (EDITORIAL AND PRESENTATION)

## 1. THE COVID-19 CRISIS AND THE SUBJECTS OF AN URBAN-RURAL POLITICS

Since the last issue of this Newsletter in early 2020, life has radically changed for us all. The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed old cracks in new mirrors.

The inequalities between urban and rural areas, like other social and spatial inequalities at different scales, have been exacerbated and many territories' vulnerabilities are clearly exposed and demand a response.

This crisis has also shown the importance of integrated territorial approaches to address inequalities and confirmed the heightened role of territorial systems and urban-rural linkages in the planet's sustainability and resilience.

Many people have relied on urban-rural linkages, given the critical situation in cities. These linkages were the last resort for the most vulnerable in the face of the closure of public spaces and the shutdown of entire economic sectors for months.

Urban-rural linkages provided mutual aid and solidarity in the face of the loss of incomes, social protection systems and exacerbated food insecurity in many urban areas.

This situation clearly showed the need to present and represent the voices, perspectives and discourses of those who, by their practices, create urban-rural linkages and to whom these linkages matter the most in the public policymaking process.

These actors were small producers and entrepreneurs in rural areas that expanded sales of their products directly in urban areas, informal urban workers who had to return to their homes in the countryside, and many more, including civil society organizations and

local and municipal authorities which relied on their territories to meet the challenges created by the pandemic.

The recognition of this agency, and hence the practices, constitutes one of the first steps in a truly people-oriented approach and policy. The role of territorial systems, their actors and linkages in a global crisis also reinforces the need for political and ethical mandates for government policymakers, international organizations, civil society organizations, and the private sector, among others, to strengthen these linkages as a means of social protection, food security and, in general terms, increased resilience for all.



**Figure 1.** Migrant laborers outside the railway station waiting to leave the city due to covid-19 pandemic in Jaipur, India, May 2020. © Mukesh Kumar Jwala

9



WEBINARS  
ORGANIZED  
BETWEEN MAY  
& DECEMBER  
2020

As the Covid-19 outbreak became a global pandemic, little was known about the capacity of health, food and governance systems at territorial levels in many cities and regions. Mainstream media, discourse at national levels in many countries and on the international scene rarely covered the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis on territorial systems. One way to obtain information about urban-rural linkages and territorial systems was to create virtual spaces for information sharing on what was unfolding on the ground. In May of 2020, UN-Habitat started a webinar series to put the focus on **Covid-19 and Urban-Rural**

**Linkages.** The first article in this newsletter provides an overview of this process by sharing some **insights from 9 global webinars** organized between May and December 2020. Many other international organizations and partners generated important (virtual) spaces during this crisis to continue discussions on territorial approaches to response to the pandemic, generating important insights to inform the recovery efforts in different geographies, scales and contexts. We provide an overview of these events in 2020, organized by our partners, in our section **Urban-Rural Linkages Spotlight.**

This issue also contains two **short articles on urban-rural linkages**. The first article focuses on Thuringia in Germany, where an **experimental framework for new approaches in urban-rural planning and governance** is currently being implemented as part of the **IBA Thuringia** (2013-2023). The second short piece reports on the **key role of intermediary cities** as part of the development of a national strategy for these settlements in Morocco.

This report also spotlights the role of small and intermediary cities in recovering from the present crisis and generating resilience to future distresses.

A set of recommendations is outlined. This third issue closes with a look ahead at the role that UN-Habitat work on urban-rural linkages will play in the implementation of global agendas in 2021.

A special thanks to all the contributors to this edition: Firdaous Oussidhoum, Antonia Sabartes and Rodrigo Messias (UCLG), Richard McCarthy (Slow Food International), Hannes Langguth (TU Berlin - Urban-Rural Assembly) and Martina Doehtler-Behzadi (IBA Thüringen).

## I. COVID-19 AND URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES: INSIGHTS FROM NINE GLOBAL WEBINARS

**URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES IN THE TIME OF COVID-19**  
**URL WEBINAR SERIES**

**URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES IN THE TIME OF COVID-19**  
 MONDAY, MAY 4, 2020 | 15:00 EAT

**METROPOLITAN PERSPECTIVES**  
 THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020 | 16:00 EAT (UTC+03:00)

**INTERMEDIATE CITIES AND SMALL TOWNS**  
 THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2020 | 16:00 EAT (UTC+03:00)

**IMPACT ON THE URBAN POOR AND SLUM RESIDENTS IN ASIA AND AFRICA**  
 THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2020 | 16:00 EAT (UTC+03:00)

**NEIGHBOURHOOD GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY RESPONSES**  
 THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 2020 | 16:00 EAT (UTC+03:00)

Webinar jointly organized with **SHLC** Centre for Sustainable, Healthy and Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods

UN-HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

INFO: <http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/un-habitat-ply-covid-19-response-activities/>

**POLICY, LEGISLATION AND GOVERNANCE WEBINAR SERIES**

**TOWARDS THE NEW NORMAL:**  
**learning from the crisis to improve territorial governance**

**MONDAY, JUNE 29, 2020**  
 17:30 EAT (16:30 CEST)

**SPEAKERS**

**EMILIA SAIZ**, Secretary General of UCLG

**DAVID NABARRO**, Imperial College (ICL) 1894D COVID-19 Special Envoy / IESD Leadership Mentoring Series CH

**EMANI KUMAR**, Deputy Secretary General, ICLG / Executive Director, ICLG South Asia

**Mohamed Sefani**, Mayor of Chichaouen (Morocco) and President of the Forum of Intermediary Cities of UCLG

Register here: [Register here](#)

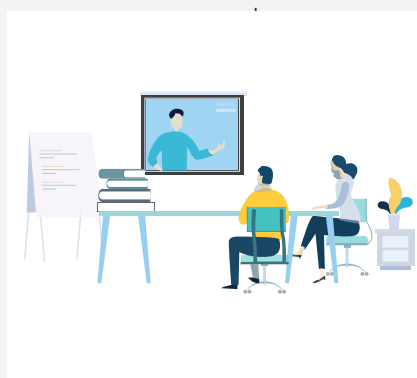
UN-HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

UCLG Urban and Local Government

Registration: [Click here to register](#)

In the years preceding the global outbreak of Covid-19, UN-Habitat convened a series of events and processes to understand more concretely how to strengthen urban-rural linkages (URLs). Expert meetings leading up to and following Habitat III and the launch of the New Urban Agenda galvanized a multi-actor global attention to urban-rural linkages.

The launch of the Urban Rural Linkages Guiding Principles (URL-GP) and Framework for Action at the UN-Habitat Assembly in was accompanied by efforts at subnational levels to bring greater URLs and the experiences at local levels.



The pandemic that spread from cities to rural areas and from region to region brought the importance of urban-rural linkages to a new level of attention. As confinement to homes and curtailing of conferences, workshops and travel became a global reality, many communities and organizations turned to on-line platforms to share experiences and lessons from the pandemic. UN-Habitat's Policy, Legislation and Governance Section Urban Rural Linkages began a series in May of 2020 to examine urban-rural the context of Covid-19.

May and December, nine global the impacts and lessons of Covid-19 were co-organized with partners and UN-Habitat.



The first series - URL in the time of Covid-19 - included five sessions:

- 1 • Urban-rural linkages in the time of Covid-19, with regional perspectives from cities in Asia, Latin America and North America.
- 2 • Metropolitan perspectives from Mexico, France and the network metropolis;
- 3 • Intermediate cities and small towns, with perspectives from the Netherlands, the International Labour Organization (ILO), United Cities and Local Government (UCLG), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- 4 • Impacts on the urban poor and slum dwellers in Asia and Africa with perspectives from India, South Africa, Slum Dwellers International and UN-Habitat's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (co-organized with the Centre for Sustainable, Healthy and Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods - SHLC);
- 5 • Neighbourhood governance and community responses from the Philippines, Tanzania, Bolivia and Canada (co-organized with SHLC).



Drawing on lessons shared in these webinars, a first policy brief was published in July that identified key principles from URL-GP that are reinforced by the experiences of Covid-19 in cities and subnational territories. These principles include locally grounded interventions, integrated governance, do no harm and provide social protection, and are data driven and evidence based that were key to effective responses from local and national governments. The full brief can be retrieved from <http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/un-habitat-plg-covid-19-response-activities/>

Starting in July, a new set of webinars were organized under the title Strengthening Communities for the Future We Want: Urban-Rural Linkages Policy, Legislation and Governance Webinar Series:

- 6 • "Towards the new normal: learning from the crisis to improve territorial governance". Speakers included the United Nations Secretariat's Special Envoy for Covid-19, representatives of UCLG, UN-Habitat, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) and a mayor from Morocco. (co-organized with UCLG)
- 7 • "Human mobility across the urban-rural continuum in the time of Covid-19" with speakers from Colombia, India, Djibouti, the World Health Organization and United Nations Nutrition.
- 8 • "Market cities: how public markets can pump life into regional food economies and forge social cohesion?" With speakers from Vietnam, Tanzania, Philippines, UN-Habitat, Project for Public Spaces, Healthbridge International. Co-organized with Market Cities Initiative and co-hosted by Slow Food International.
- 9 • "Why urban-rural linkages? Managing the impacts of cities on ecosystems, land and climate across the urban-rural continuum" was co-organized with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) and included speakers from the Economic Commission of Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC) and the City of Madrid, among others.

The nine webinars were attended by thousands of participants from a wide range of organizations and levels of governance. They provided a rich source of information in real time as the Covid-19 pandemic continued to surge around the world. The many lessons will be drawn together in a report to be issued in early 2021 with an accompanying policy brief to build on the most important lessons. Among these are that:

- Social protection systems linking cities and territories for essential services of food, water, health, education and housing must be strengthened as vital safety nets.
- Informal economic and solidarity safety nets are a vital part of the mutual interdependency of urban and rural areas and must be recognized and supported.

- Inequalities within and between urban and rural areas are a major vulnerability for health, safety and resilience and must be part of all Covid-19 recovery agendas.
- Ecosystems services from rural to urban areas (food, fibre, water and animal products) are at the heart of circular urban-rural economies and require improved and integrated urban-rural governance.
- In different ways, depending on the scale and context of cities and territories impacted by Covid-19, the flows of essential goods and services (food, water, shelter, funds, etc.) proved more resilient at the territorial scale than at longer distance national and global scales.
- Integrated territorial development that links sectoral priorities of health, environment, food systems, biodiversity, economy and social cohesion across urban and rural communities is a core precept for future crisis mitigation.



Speaker's  
presentations and  
webinar recordings

Speaker's presentations and webinar recordings can be found here: <https://urbanpolicyplatform.org/policy-legislation-and-governance-webinar-series/>



## II. SHORT ARTICLES ON URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES

- **StadtLand: IBA Thuringia as an experimental framework for new approaches in urban-rural planning and governance**

*Dr. Martina Doehler-Behzadi, Managing Director, International Building Exhibition (IBA) Thüringen*

Rural areas in Germany are under great pressure to adapt in a sustainable manner, against the background of demographic change processes related to the increasing field of tension between population decline

and immigration, climate change and the transformation of energy systems, technical innovations and socio-cultural change processes. Thus, conventional knowledge sets and planning concepts, including related



governance and funding instruments, are inadequate to the challenge. To address this, the International Building Exhibition IBA Thuringia (2013-2023) aims to develop new practice-oriented planning and governance tools that promote integrated urban-rural development in the Free State of Thuringia, central Germany.

International building exhibitions have been an important instrument across German-speaking countries in Western Europe for over a 100 years. Partly financed by the federal government and the federal states or cities themselves, IBAs act in the field of architecture, urban planning, landscape design and regional development. Following of from this tradition, the IBA Thuringia is pursuing the approach of a long-term, real-life laboratory in order to actively shape model projects, including new development approaches and forms of organization, that enhance socio-ecologically sustainable transformation processes across urban-rural territories.

**Figure 2.** StadtLand Thuringia is a differentiated and historically rich cultural landscape with numerous smaller villages and settlements. The historical landscape is characterized by agricultural production, whereas, at present, the production of renewable energies is part of the landscape.

With its primary theme of **"StadtLand"**, the IBA refers to the spatial structures that impact everyday life across Thuringia. Contrary to the ordinary understanding of rural areas, Thuringia's rural patterns, which are 90 per cent of its total area, are mainly characterized in a tight network of polycentric, small-scale settlement structures with 2.15 million inhabitants living in 664 independent municipalities. By 2035, the population of Thuringia is expected to fall to 1.88 million and it is already obvious that such a decline will not be evenly distributed. Instead, larger cities especially are expected to benefit from migration, whereas more remote areas,

including small towns and villages, will disproportionately lose populations. As a result, on the one hand there is increasing pressure for growth, for example in the housing markets in urban centres, and on the other hand the negative consequences of emigration and depopulation are becoming more and more apparent socially, economically and spatially. These are the concerns that IBA Thuringia has addressed in recent years in order to open up a long-term experimental framework for actively engaging with new practice-oriented approaches to integrated urban-rural development.



*Figure 3. Schlafstall - The new timber building in Bedheim, a small village in southern Thuringia, by Studio Gründer Kiefel, shows contemporary methods and approaches for participatory and site-specific timber constructions based on ecological standards.*



More  
information

[www.iba-thueringen.de](http://www.iba-thueringen.de)

The IBA understands its working methods as a necessary reaction to current socio-spatial polarization and ecological challenges across Thuringia. Generally committing to the common good, through a 10-year process, the IBA experimentally developed a wide set of tools and projects that explore and further develop the manifold relationships between urban and rural areas. In this way, the IBA seeks to address local actors from administration, business and civil society as well as political stakeholders in equal measure in order to motivate, accompany and network with various stakeholders, support cooperative processes and promote excellent design approaches that address the public awareness.

After all, in the context of global urbanization processes, integrated and sustainable urban-rural development has become a complex task for society as a whole, in Germany and beyond. In this respect, the IBA Thuringia looks forward to expanding its international network through mutual exchange experiences and to sharing findings with other global regions. At the end of the IBA in 2023, an exhibition format will showcase and present projects and results to the public, as well as pass on recommendations to Thuringian state politics, experts and local project partners.

More information under: [www.iba-thueringen.de](http://www.iba-thueringen.de)





Figure 4. International summer school together with the Bauhaus Universität Weimar – the IBA Thuringia seeks regular international exchange based on practice-oriented formats or scientific debates.

## • The Key Role of Intermediate Cities in Morocco - A Multilateral Agreement for Multilevel Governance and Complementarity Between National and Local Levels.



*Firdaous Oussidhoum, Special adviser to the Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)*

In July 2018, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Moroccan Ministry of National Territory Development, Urban Planning, Habitat and City Policy, the Moroccan Ministry of Interior, UCLG, UCLG Africa and the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States. The MOU is for the development of a National Strategy of Intermediary Cities, to enhance through localization the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda.

This institutional architecture of the MOU ensures that that national and local levels sit together and base policy design on “on-the-ground” realities. After a first workshop, cross-consultations were structured with three key axes for this project’s development: climate, improving the livelihood systems, labour conditions, and solidarity.

### **Covid-19 And Change of Model of Development Through the Intermediary Cities for The Recovery:**

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic and related crises, priorities were adjusted around a consensus between the signatories that the importance of intermediary cities has increased in view of the post-Covid-19 recovery.

Intermediary cities and rural areas are the strategic territory in which to address urban-rural linkages, tourism, food systems, biodiversity protection, and others, and they are key to recovering from the present crisis and generating resilience to mitigate future crises. Within this concept, the second stage of the project was developed to support efforts by Morocco to develop a new model of development adjusted for the “build back better”.

### **Main Recommendations for a Systemic Transformation:**

One estimate is that in Africa, two out of three people are expected to move into intermediary cities over the next decades. This is a key figure that shows at what point investing in a system of intermediary cities as the future of urbanization is critical for a resilient future. Many recommendations were addressed to accompany these reflections in a report by the Royal Commission for a New Model of Development:

- Intermediary cities must be addressed as a channel for a territorial justice regarding climate and food systems based on the linkages between rural and urban areas, addressing inequalities and with an integrated vision of solidarity.

- The capture value of intermediary cities makes them attractive in terms of health, climate and wellbeing, allowing a dedensification and different management of the metropolis.
- These cities can be a laboratory for innovative policies of proximity and nature-urban integration and planning, where the 15 minutes city is already a norm.
- Thinking more adequately economic and local production and consumption criteria, based on the sustainable mobilization of local resources.
- The intermediary cities are the future critical markets, not only because of proximity, provision and valorization of local rural products, but also for the larger markets due to their critical mass.

Today, the critical question is how to address the current economic and social crisis without putting at risk the resilience for future generations. Decision makers are confronted with capitalizing the investments made up until now and responding to the daily emergency that continues.

An alternative solution is possible that will allow both to be responded to, if the solution addresses the awakening of intermediary cities as second engines for generating resilient prosperity based on local systems of livelihood and their sustainable growth with smart planning.



### III. URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES SPOTLIGHT

#### • Territorial and Landscape Days - Expert Workshop

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and BMZ (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development), with support from GIZ, organized the Territorial and Landscape Days (7-9 July, 2020) as an online expert dialogue on spatial approaches to sustainable development. Here, practitioners and policy makers from the European Union, international organizations (OECD, UN-Habitat, FAO, France's Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD)), international research

(GIZ, BMZ and French Development Agency) shared their experiences in implementing spatial approaches and discussed ways to further strengthen their contribution to rural development.

On this occasion, the results of a BMZ-funded and GIZ-commissioned stocktaking on territorial approaches by the Territorial Perspectives for Development (TP4D) partner group were presented and discussed. Workshop participants were also engaged

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

[https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5\\_17474](https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_17474)

