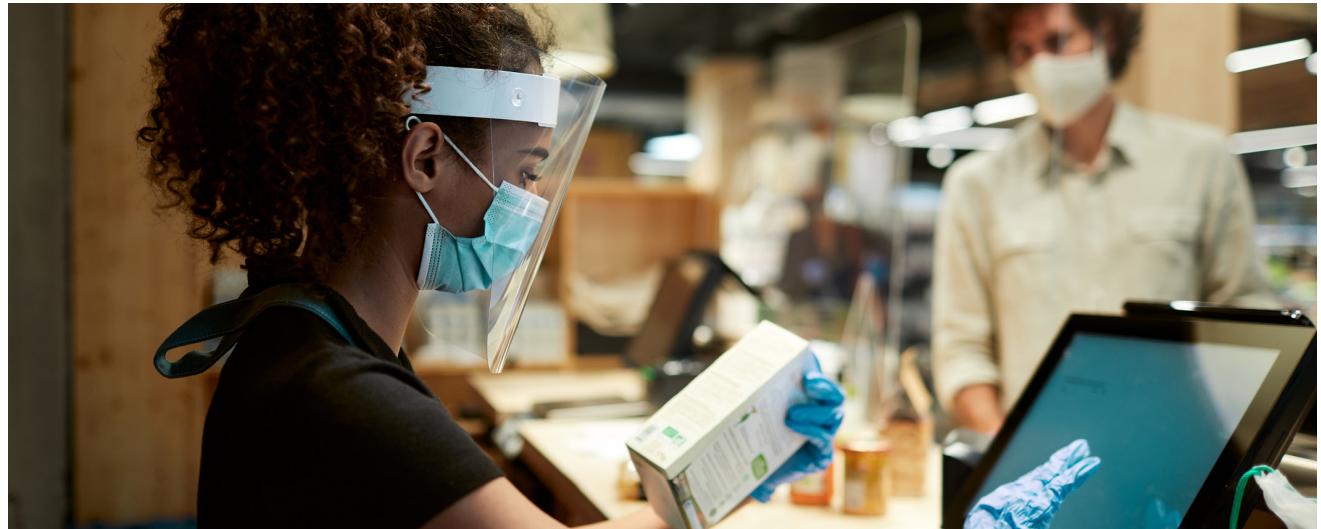


Job Creation and Local Economic Development 2020

Rebuilding Better



Policy Highlights



The big picture



COVID-19 has hit our economies and societies like a tsunami, at a time when many regions still had not recovered from the last crisis. The effects on jobs and workers dwarf those of the 2008 global financial crisis, and are differentiated across places. Large cities host many high-skilled workers that can telework, but also low-skilled workers in face-to-face service jobs that remain at risk. Tourism-intensive communities are facing unprecedented drops in visitors. COVID-19 is accelerating other ongoing labour market transitions, including digitalisation and the automation of jobs, as well as the green transition. Other trends could slow down as global supply chains adjust and teleworking facilitates geographic mobility.

In the short term, local employment services and training providers will need to quickly upgrade capacities and adapt. The increased demand for job placement and skills upgrading

is daunting, particularly to prevent scarring for the most vulnerable populations (e.g. young people, the low skilled and women). The hardest hit local businesses (SMEs and the self-employed) and sectors (such as tourism, culture, hospitality) may also require specialised action. A combination of sector- and place-based policies will be needed.

Looking further ahead, "rebuilding better" in local communities will require re-thinking local development strategies. They can take advantage of a changing geography of jobs due to remote working, and better leverage local assets, such as the social economy. Short-term pressures to create jobs should not overshadow the need for quality jobs with a future, particularly for the populations hardest hit. Finally, upgrading skills and infrastructure will be important to help businesses, notably SMEs, people and places manage an accelerated digital transition.

The economic tsunami is hitting some local labour markets particularly hard...



COVID-19 has been a shock to our economies, and no community is spared. GDP has plummeted, the number of hours worked has drastically shrunk, and unemployment is spiking. Communities everywhere will have to manage rising unemployment as local small businesses as well as large multinationals shut their doors, downsize, or freeze hiring. Low-skilled workers, young people and women are already bearing the brunt of the crisis, which could dampen their earnings and opportunities for years to come. Local SMEs and the self-employed are also particularly vulnerable.

Some places are being hit harder than others, with some new patterns for this crisis (see page 5). The local importance of specific sectors and occupations, the skills of local workforces, and local outbreaks of the virus (and the associated containment measures and changes in consumer behaviour) all influence these local divides. For example, the share of jobs in the sectors most at risk from strict containment measures ranges from less than 15% to more than 35% of local jobs across OECD regions. Where these jobs are particularly concentrated, there will be further knock-on effects for local economies more generally.



- **Polarised urban labour markets could see deepening divides.** Cities have both large shares of relatively low-skilled jobs at risk (such as those in restaurants, hotels, and retail stores), as well as large shares of high-skilled jobs that are more compatible with teleworking and are typically more resilient in downturns. In Europe, the share of jobs amenable to teleworking is 13 percentage points higher in cities than in rural areas.

- **Places specialised in tradeable sectors face short-term risks, but also long-term opportunities.** COVID-19 caused global trade to plummet and interrupted supply chains. The share of employment in tradeable sectors varies from less than 20% to over 40% across regions. However, more globalised regions also tended to recover more quickly in the previous crisis, a trend which could repeat itself this time around.

- **Tourism destinations are in for rough seas.** International tourism is anticipated to decrease by around 80% in 2020, and is unlikely to rebound quickly. This will affect a range of tourism destinations, from large cities, such as Venice, Prague and Barcelona, to rural areas. In several island tourism hotspots in southern Europe, over one-third of jobs are in sectors directly impacted by COVID-19 containment measures. The extent to which containment measures are active in tourism high seasons is a key determinant of the extent to which this risk becomes reality.



Already, regional divides are showing up in unemployment statistics for countries with available data. For example, in the United States, unemployment reached over 20% in Hawaii and Nevada – two major tourist destinations – in the spring, and also spiked considerably in California and New York, home to country's

largest metropolitan areas. For countries that have extensive short-time work schemes, the extent of potential unemployment has not yet become visible. Local recovery trends will need to be closely monitored to address these divides.

The economic impacts will vary across communities based on the local importance of specific sectors and occupations, the skills of workforces, and local outbreaks of the virus

Rolling waves of stricter measures in targeted regions and cities will likely be a reality until a vaccine is widely deployed. This has already been the case in many countries, where national containment measures were lifted at different paces across regions, or where stricter containment measures were re-introduced in response to specific local flare-ups. Due to a second wave

of the virus at the time of this publication, many countries reintroduced nationwide containment measures. Lessons on the effectiveness of different containment measures will inform future decision-making about how to balance the health response with the resulting economic impacts across different regions.



COVID-19 compared to previous crises: More of the same or a change in the game?

COVID-19 is not a standard downturn. The rapid collapse of economic activity, the magnitude of reductions in hours worked, and the uncertainty associated with the spread of the virus and associated containment measures are unlike any crisis in recent memory.

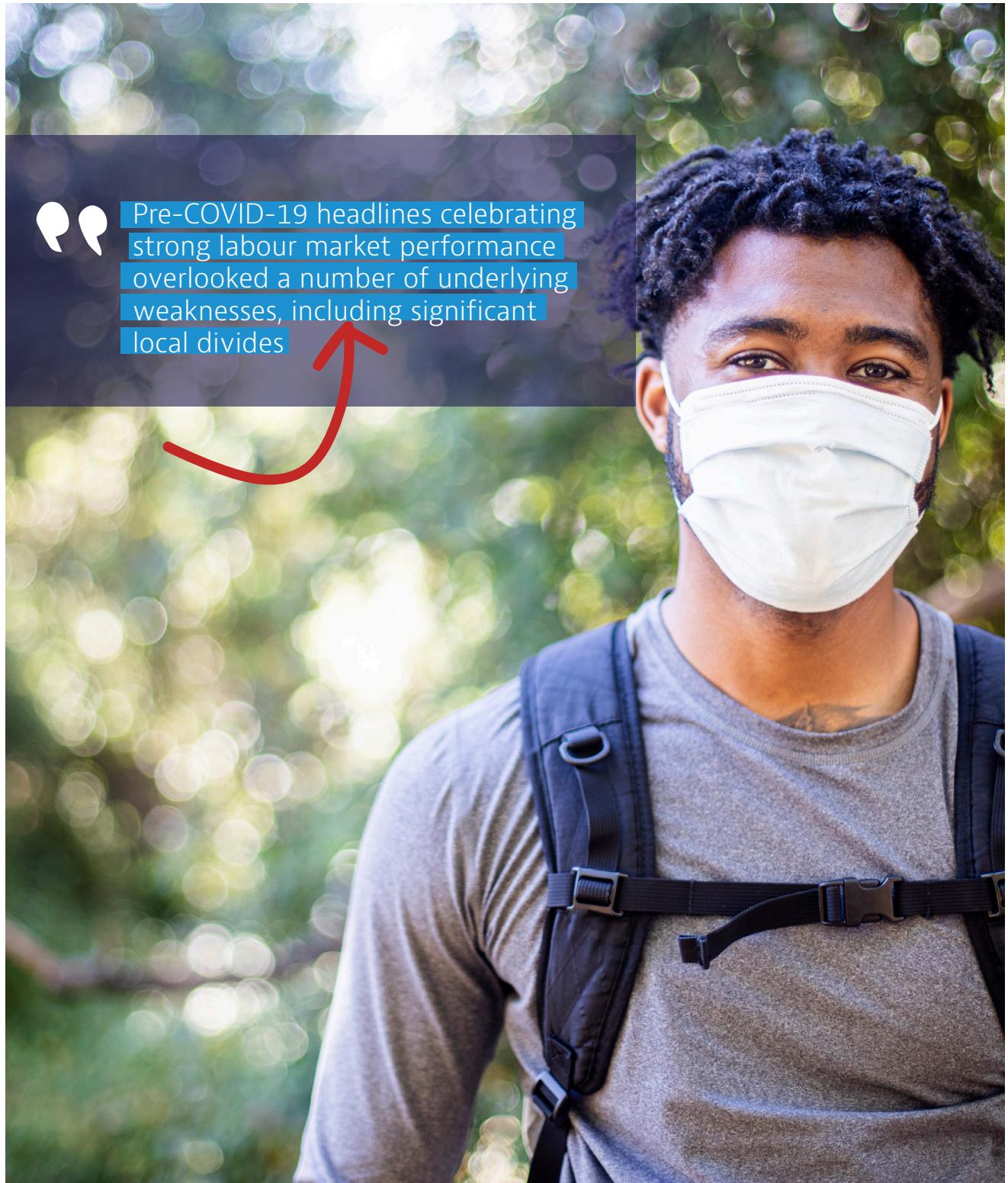
Like previous crisis, some places will undoubtedly be hit harder than others. Following the 2008 crisis, roughly 80% of regions saw employment (number of jobs) decrease at some point, but with large differences in the scale and timing of losses. At its lowest point, employment declined by over 20% in some of the hardest hit regions in Spain and Greece, and by over 10% in some places in the United States, Denmark, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Turkey, and Romania. This time around, there are also significant differences in economic impacts across regions, although the full scale of these remains to be seen.

But the types of places that rebounded more quickly last time around may not be able to repeat this performance. In many countries, more urbanised areas and capital regions took large initial hits in the 2008 crisis, but also started to bounce back earlier. Emerging evidence suggests that cities have likewise taken particularly hard hits from COVID-19, in large part due to their concentration of face-to-face service activities, but may be rebounding more slowly and face greater struggles. Additionally, many places relied on tourism to help them climb out of the last recession, a sector that is one of the hardest hit this time around.

Within local labour markets, low-skilled workers and young people may be the most vulnerable to COVID-19-related job losses, similar to the 2008 crisis. Low-skilled and young people are heavily represented in the sectors most at risk from COVID-19, are less likely to hold jobs that allow them to telecommute, and more likely to be on temporary contracts. The last crisis similarly hit these groups particularly hard. Lessons from previous crises suggest that the impacts on these populations, particularly young people, may not be a one-off blip, but rather could have longer-term scarring effects. Local efforts to find opportunities to keep them engaged will become even more critical to avoid other social challenges.

However, this time around, women are bearing more of the brunt of the COVID-19 economic crisis than men. Women are particularly exposed to COVID-19-related job losses, as they are over represented in the sectors and occupations most at risk. This is in contrast to the global financial crisis of 2008, which predominantly hit male-dominated sectors and occupations. Women are also more affected when local services, such as education and childcare, are disrupted.

Like previous downturns, COVID-19 could accelerate automation and digitalisation, with containment measures reinforcing this trend. Evidence suggests downturns accelerate automation, as employers replace workers in routine jobs with new technologies and complementary higher-skilled workers. On top of the general downturn, labour shortages and the imperative of social distancing in the workplace provide further incentives for automation this time around. Smoothing these transitions will be especially important in places with relatively high shares of jobs at risk of automation.

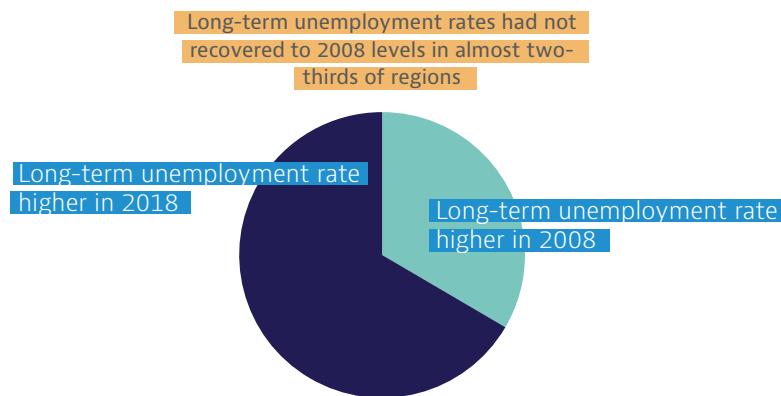
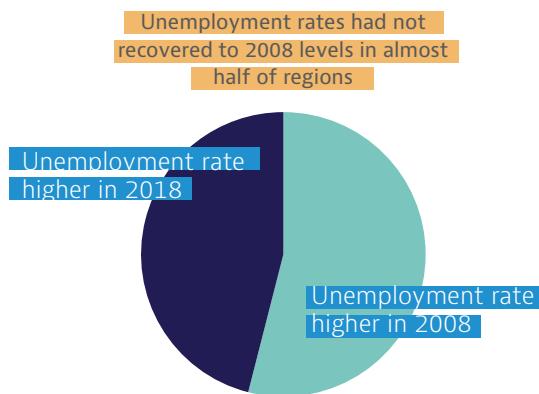


Even pre-pandemic, many places were still struggling to keep their head above water...

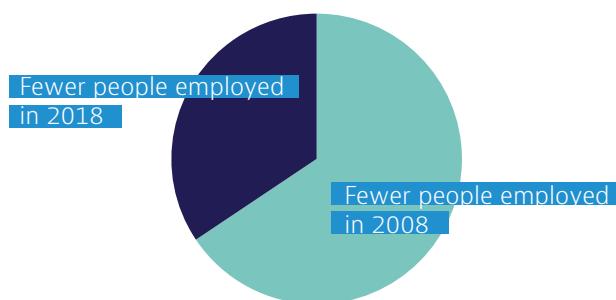
Pre-COVID-19 headlines celebrating strong labour market performance overlooked a number of underlying weaknesses, including significant local divides. While the overall OECD unemployment rate stood at 5.4% in 2019, these rosy figures masked other

issues such as stagnant wage growth and a shrinking middle class. National averages also hid the fact that some places continued to struggle with the legacy of the 2008 crisis. Almost half of regions had not recovered to pre-crisis unemployment rates by 2018.

Many regions have still not recovered
10 years after the 2008 crisis



Jobs (i.e. number of people employed) were still below 2008 levels in one-third of regions



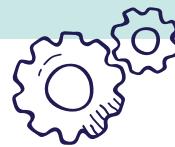


...and manage the undercurrent of broader economic, demographic and environmental changes

Pre-COVID-19, economic, demographic, and environmental shifts were already reshaping the geography of jobs, the skills in demand, as well as the composition of local workforces. These changes have many positive effects such as longer and healthier lives, safer workplaces, and more productive economies. Yet they were also generating considerable anxiety about the future. Indeed job stability has been decreasing and skill gaps have been growing in recent decades. If not properly managed, these shifts could also reinforce geographic divides. Already,

jobs (as measured by the number of people employed) have become more geographically concentrated in most OECD countries with available data, and typically even more so for high-skilled jobs.

COVID-19 could transform many of these ongoing shifts into abrupt changes, making the transition even more difficult for some people and places. However, it could also reorient trends such as urbanisation and globalisation, opening up new opportunities for places that previously risked being left behind.



COVID-19 is accelerating some labour market trends and altering others

Longer-term trends

A changing geography of jobs skills

Automation and the digital transition

- Automation and digitalisation will destroy and create jobs, but not necessarily in the same places
- Increased demand for digital and complementary skills across local labour markets
- Ongoing job polarisation in almost all local labour markets

Globalisation

- Recent deceleration and shifting patterns of globalisation will have different impacts depending on local specialisations in tradeable sectors

The green transition and climate change

- Loss of "brown" jobs could have geographically concentrated disruptions, which may not be compensated by the local creation of "green jobs"
- Climate change resulting in job losses in most affected local economies

How could COVID-19 accelerate/decelerate trends?

- ↑ Automation-related job losses come sooner than expected
- ↑ Use of teleworking, e-commerce, and other digital tools significantly expanded

- ↓ Managing supply chain risks could result in relocation, particularly in strategic sectors such as medical equipment, shifting regional advantages

- ↑ Shift in consumer preferences for greener consumption
- ↑ Expanded public investment in green infrastructure
- ? New tensions could emerge between preserving jobs at all costs and transitioning carbon-intensive sectors

A changing labour supply

Population ageing

- Shrinking and ageing labour force in many countries, particularly in rural areas
- Growing pressures for older workers to update skills and work longer

- Broad demographic trends unlikely to change

- ? More rural areas may be able to attract new and younger residents

Urbanisation

- Concentration of jobs and workers in cities, particularly at the highest skill levels
- "Brain drain" leading to outflows of the highly skilled from rural areas

- ? Large urban areas could see fewer residents
- ? Rural areas and smaller cities may see new opportunities to attract workers and jobs

Migration

- Ongoing international migration, with immigrants concentrating in cities

- ↓ International movement of workers and students will slow, at least in the short term

COVID-19 will accelerate automation, putting additional pressure on regions with a high share of jobs at risk

Automation will both create and destroy jobs, but the new jobs created will not necessarily be in the same places as the jobs that were lost. The share of jobs at high risk of automation reaches nearly 40% in some regions (for example, West Slovakia) but can be as low as around 4% in others (around Oslo). On average, regions with a lower-educated workforce and that are less urbanised have a higher share of jobs at risk. In past waves of technological change, cities that already had a highly skilled workforce have benefited the most from the new, complementary jobs created. They attracted more high-skill jobs and workers, and reaped the spillover benefits in terms of other local job creation (e.g. as a result of increased demand for local services such as restaurants, hairdressers, etc.). Earlier waves of technological change have also contributed to a general trend of job polarisation in OECD countries, with important regional differences.

COVID-19 will likely accelerate automation, deepening the need for a rapid policy response. In the short term, firms are turning to labour replacing technologies to maintain social distancing requirements and ensure continuity of business in light of containment measures. This likely foreshadows longer-term shifts in business and risk management strategies, as well as the more general trend of increased automation seen in previous recessions. Already in a February/March survey by Ernst and Young, 36% of top executives said they were accelerating investment in automation as a result of COVID-19, and a further 41% said they were currently re-evaluating their strategies in this area.



The geography of job polarisation

Almost all OECD regions have seen a decrease in the share of middle-skill jobs. In over a quarter of regions, the share of middle-skill jobs decreased by 10 percentage points or more since the early 2000s. Mirroring national trends, polarisation is accompanied by a general upskilling of jobs in most regions. While polarisation is generally accompanied by upskilling, in about one out of six regions, it was accompanied by downskilling (i.e. growth in the share of low-skill jobs outpaced growth in high-skill jobs).

Particularly large regional variations in job polarisation can be found in countries in Southern and Eastern Europe as well as the United States. For example, in Italy, the decrease in the share of middle-skill jobs ranged from 13 percentage points in Marche to 0.2 percentage points in Calabria. Regions with high shares of employment in manufacturing as well as higher initial shares of middle-skill jobs also tended to experience more polarisation over this time. In general, urban areas tend to have more polarised labour markets.



Automation will both create and destroy jobs, but the new jobs created will not necessarily be in the same places as the jobs that were lost. COVID-19 deepens the need for a rapid policy response.



For many places, notably rural areas, demographic shifts will be as important as technological change

Demographic changes are dramatically reshaping labour forces: by 2050 it is estimated that over half of OECD countries will have a smaller working age population than in 2010. Yet for almost 30% of OECD regions – notably more rural areas – a shrinking labour force is already a reality. These changes are the result of both population ageing, and migration patterns, particularly movement from rural to urban areas. However, population shrinkage does not strictly follow urban/rural lines. Almost one in four cities (23%) with more than 50 000 inhabitants in the OECD has shrunk in population since 2000. A shrinking local labour force can open up a vicious cycle, with employers relocating because they cannot find the local workers they need. Loss of local employers and jobs, in turn, could lead to a decrease in local revenues to invest in infrastructure and services, in turn leading to more out-migration. However, automation could help alleviate some of these challenges.

COVID-19 will not radically alter these general demographic patterns, but could reorient them. The short-term rise in teleworking could spark broader long-term acceptance of this form of work and could free workers to locate where cost of living is lower or quality of life is higher. Already, some communities have rolled out incentives to attract teleworkers as part of local economic development strategies (e.g. Vermont and Tulsa, Oklahoma in the United States). However, whether COVID-19 will have a more permanent impact on preferences for urban, suburban and rural living remains to be seen.

COVID-19 could either generate new momentum for the green transition or make the trade-offs more acute, with disparate impacts across places

The bulk of the green transition is still on the horizon, as concrete actions to invest in renewable energy and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels still lag behind public commitments. Current estimates predict that the overall net impact on jobs will be minimal, but there will be important transition costs for the places and people most affected. Material-intensive or extractive sectors tend to cluster around specific places with natural resources or enabling infrastructure. "Green" jobs, including those in the circular economy, are less reliant on place-specific natural resources, and firms are more mobile to locate where they can find the right type of workers. Thus, while there is a good chance that places specialising in material-intensive or extractive sectors will lose jobs in this transition, their ability to reap the benefits of the complementary job creation is less assured.

Whether COVID-19 will accelerate or decelerate this transition remains an open question. COVID-19 could generate new political will to tackle this type of collective, global crisis. The large-scale stimulus packages governments are now rolling out provide more capital to make this happen. Behavioural changes and shifts in consumer preferences could also be longer lasting, such as a reduction in business travel, international tourism, or daily commuting. However, COVID-19 could also create new tensions between preserving jobs at all costs, and transitioning carbon-intensive sectors to greener production methods. For example, governments may face strong pressures to assist struggling carbon intensive industries, such as airlines or carmakers.



The policy response: from recovery to rebuilding better - the need for bold and rapid local actions

When national support packages are rolled back, unemployment will likely increase, putting local employment and training systems under considerable stress. Disadvantage could become more entrenched for young people, the low skilled and women in particular. Some sectors and firms will continue to face prolonged drop in demand as well as the persistent scars from the initial outbreak period. As many of these sectors are highly regionally concentrated, such as tourism or culture and creative industries, a combination of sector-specific and place-based actions will be needed. Bold and rapid action can help to prevent longer-term scarring for the hardest hit places, firms and people.

The task is not restoring the pre-COVID-19 economy, but seizing the opportunity to

rebuild better, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. Stimulus and policy packages can also help make communities more resilient, inclusive and sustainable than before, if designed strategically. Yet there is also a risk that a narrow focus on job creation at all costs could derail such efforts. The good news is that COVID-19 has opened a window to re-orient local economies away from unsustainable development pathways, and innovate in local development approaches. The accelerated digital transition means that large parts of the workforce will need to be reskilled and redeployed to ensure they have jobs in the next ten years, not just the next ten months. Specific actions will also be needed to ensure SMEs and rural areas are not left behind in the digital economy.

Recovery: Act Quickly and Boldly to Prevent Scarring for the Hardest Hit Places and People



1/ Strengthen local employment and training systems to manage the additional pressures

Upgrade local public employment service capacities and virtual services, to help places hardest hit in the short term and support broader economic transitions in places facing longer-term challenges

Target active labour market policies to both individual and community characteristics, and ensure accountability mechanisms take local conditions into account

Adapt local training provision in light of increased demands, system constraints and local needs

Promising practice: In Sweden, cabin staff from Scandinavian Airlines who were furloughed as a result of COVID-19 were offered fast-track healthcare training to support the public health response, building on the transferrable skills they already had.

2/ Prevent entrenched disadvantage for young people, the low skilled and women

Expand outreach to hard-to-reach populations, including through partnerships with local community organisations

Intervene early to prevent longer-term labour market disengagement

Address other barriers to employment (e.g. childcare, mental health challenges, transportation) through local coordination of wrap around services

Promising practice: In Denmark, municipal Youth Guidance Centres follow young people until they reach the age of 25, and support education and labour market transitions.

3/ Work with sectors facing prolonged drops in demand, and address the negative spillovers for local economies more generally

Consider complementary measures for the hardest hit places as broad national schemes are rolled back

Support firms in implementing social distancing, including through adaptations to the local built environment

Fill gaps for local sectors and populations not well-covered by national schemes

Promising practice: The city of Seoul, Korea has created three different funds for Emergency Support for the Arts, targeting artists, arts companies, planners, art educators and freelancers.

Rebuilding Better: Seize the Opportunity to Develop Ambitious Plans for the Future



1/ Rethink local development approaches

Bring diverse stakeholders together to develop a shared vision for the future of local economies

Use new sources of local employment and economic development data to set visions and adapt along the way

Valorise the role of the social economy, and expand social innovation

Re-evaluate local strengths and weaknesses in light of changing residential and consumer preferences

Promising practice: The Mondragon Corporation, a federation of co-operatives, has been a long-term partner in revitalising the Basque Country in Spain, and employs over 80 000 people.

2/ Look beyond short-term returns in terms of job creation

Evaluate local job creation measures against economic, social and environmental criteria, including making sure they are well-targeted to the populations hardest hit

Support firms in upgrading local job quality and productivity, particularly SMEs

Promising practice: The City of Chicago in the United States, launched a USD 56 million dollar initiative to hire hundreds of contact tracers through community-based organisations, with a focus on hiring individuals from communities facing economic hardships and that have been particularly hard hit by COVID-19.

3/ Support firms, people and places through an accelerated digital transition

Identify and build skills that can help local economies make transitions to the future of work

Integrate the use of teleworking by firms into local development strategies

Upgrade digital infrastructure, particularly in rural areas

Promising practice: Communitech, in the Kitchener Waterloo Region of Canada, has been working with employers to develop career pathways to help mid-career professionals transition from industries more vulnerable to disruption to high-tech firms and industries.



"Going local" will be even more essential as the tsunami starts to recede

The initial emergency response by countries has been predominantly uniform national policies to support workers and firms, but they won't last forever. Local actors also played an important role in the initial response phase, implementing and complementing national schemes as needed, and helping local workers and firms navigate the often complex patchwork of those schemes. Unfortunately, at the time of this publication, a second wave of the virus was hitting many countries, particularly in Europe, resulting in governments re-introducing stricter containment measures and broader economic supports. However, as these emergency supports eventually wind down and the much longer recovery and rebuilding phase revs up, "going local" will become even more important. Why?

1) The challenges local economies are facing have become more differentiated

The challenges are not the same, from large metropolitan areas to tourism-intensive regions to manufacturing communities. Uniform, national policies are not enough to respond to differentiated local contexts, particularly given the need to simultaneously adapt to longer-term transitions such as accelerated automation, demographic shifts, climate change and changes to patterns in globalisation.

COVID-19 has also created a once in a lifetime opportunity to address unsustainable or risky local growth patterns. In "good" times, making the case for diversifying away from dominant local sectors such as large-scale tourism or carbon-intensive industries can be challenging, as they delivered jobs and income in the short term. This crisis could create an opening to have these tough conversations

about the risks of over specialisation, and take the steps needed to diversify local economies. It has also sparked a new understanding of the interconnections between economic development and public health, among other factors creating resilient local labour markets, potentially opening the door to more integrated approaches to local development.

2) Local actors are responsible for many policies to help workers and firms transition to the new normal, and to shore up social safety nets

Regional and local governments have important responsibilities for the employment, skills, and economic development policies that can help workers and firms make these transitions. In roughly half of OECD countries, local and regional governments are wholly or partially responsible for implementing active labour market policies. In many cases, they also offer complementary programmes and supports in addition to national policies. They will take on larger roles as the employment policy responses shift from delivering benefits to helping unemployed workers transition to new opportunities. Local capacities will need to be rapidly upgraded to meet these increased demands.



Local actors are also best positioned to address both the supply and demand sides of the local labour market. For example, they can help identify and deliver the types of "top up" trainings needed to help displaced workers transition quickly from shrinking to growing local sectors. Partnerships across local economic development agencies and training institutions can help local SMEs both secure financial resources and expertise to integrate new technologies into production processes, and upgrade the skills of their workforces to put them to good use.



COVID-19 and the general downturn could exacerbate disadvantage, and local governments and the social economy will have to pick up many of the pieces. In a number of countries, local governments are directly responsible for benefits for the long-term unemployed or other social assistance recipients. Even in countries where subnational governments are not responsible for these benefits directly, it often falls on the shoulders of local actors to support those in the most precarious situations via emergency housing, material assistance such as food banks, health and mental health support, etc. Subnational governments are responsible for 76% of public spending in housing and community affairs, 25% of health spending, and 14% of social protection spending, on average.

3) Even as national economies turn around, some regions and cities could get stuck in a downward spiral

Even when national economies start to bounce back, there is no guarantee that the recovery will reach all places. In previous crises, research in the United States, for example, suggests that employment and wages have stayed depressed for over a decade in the hardest hit places. In one-third of OECD regions, employment (i.e. jobs, as measured by the number of people employed) remained below 2008 levels in 2018.

Some places could get stuck in a riptide, as local job losses, decreases in local public revenue, and deterioration in local public services mutually reinforce each other. COVID-19 could cause subnational revenues to shrink, particularly where subnational governments rely heavily on cyclical revenue sources, such as taxes and fees. In almost half of OECD countries, 50% or more of subnational public budgets rely on such

sources. At the same time, pressures could mount to increase spending on other areas, such as social protection. Should subnational governments be unable to meet these growing demands or balance budgets by cutting spending in other areas – such as infrastructure and public services – local quality of life could be impacted, making it harder in turn to attract new businesses and residents. Likewise, mass layoffs in particular sectors or important local employers could have trickle down effects for local economies more generally. Tailored, local actions will be needed to prevent or interrupt such cycles.



About the OECD

The OECD is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The OECD is also at the forefront of efforts to understand and to help governments respond to new developments and concerns, such as corporate governance, the information economy and the challenges of an ageing population. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

About the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities

The Centre helps local, regional and national governments unleash the potential of entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises, promote inclusive and sustainable regions and cities, boost local job creation and implement sound tourism policies.

About the Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Programme

The mission of the LEED Programme is to build vibrant communities with more and better quality jobs for all. Since 1982, the Programme has been supporting national and local governments through tailored reviews and capacity building activities, as well as research and good practice reports on innovative approaches to local development. Find out more about the OECD work on local development: <http://www.oecd.org/employment/leed/>

About this Policy Highlights

This booklet contains highlights from Job Creation and Local Economic Development 2020: Rebuilding Better, LEED's biannual flagship report. This edition examines the potential impacts of COVID-19 on local labour markets and the policies needed in response.

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Policy Highlights



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