

People-Solution Framework

A pandemic and post pandemic approach focused on people's participation

Introduction

With the risk of second wave infections and the absence of a vaccine, countries around the world are now battling with the dilemma between people's life safety and the social and economic impact of the emergency measures. Ending a lockdown prematurely could compromise every effort made up to this point on limiting the spread. However, the current lockdown measures are socially and economically hard to sustain. They may jeopardise local and global economies, potentially create conditions for social unrest (especially among economically vulnerable areas), impact people's mental health, and increase episodes of domestic abuse.

We believe that the solution lies in bringing people and organisations into the equation, to tackle the pandemic together with the government. People can take on more active roles in ending the crises.

With this proposal, we present a framework that could mitigate the negative social and economic effects created by the lockdown and help revitalise the economy, while protecting vulnerable people and essential social services. Our approach applies behavioural science to maintain economic and social sustainability amidst the crisis, not as an alternative to the Government's ongoing response to control the pandemic, but as a flexible and dynamic enhancement to it.

The People-Solution Framework is intended to allow eligible people, businesses and organisations to go back to their business in a controlled and organised way, while the emergency measures set by the Government are still in place.

The two key concepts of the framework are:

1. To continue protecting the most vulnerable people through lockdown and any other necessary measures established by the Government;
2. To allow eligible people, businesses and organisations to willingly join a discretionary and optional framework in order to progressively go back to their normal business and activities during the pandemic.

The People-Solution Framework exempts eligible households, businesses and organisations from some restrictions imposed by the emergency measures. This framework is designed to run alongside the Government's current measures for pandemic containment, while aiming at providing people with the possibility to take on roles to contribute economically and socially during the crisis.

Implications for the people

The People-Solution Framework is meant to be discretionary and optional for everyone. Eligible participants include healthy households in which all members are aged below 60, and entities that are currently restricted from operating. Upon joining, participants will explicitly acknowledge the higher risks that they are exposed to in contracting the virus, and at the same time, accept to refrain from putting pressure on health services. This means that those who participate are the ones suitable and willing to renounce the maximum personal security they are entitled, and instead contribute to revitalise the economy and society through carrying out activities with higher risks.

For individuals, participating in the framework does not imply changing the way one currently lives or works. Participants may continue to fully follow guidelines of the lockdown if they wish. If one can work from home and can comfortably remain indoors, he or she is encouraged to keep doing so for safety concerns.

However, upon joining, People-Solution Framework participants may have higher freedom compared to those remaining in lockdown, under the conditions suggested in Appendix 2. People within the participating households will have more flexibility to carry out individual or collective economical and social activities, which allows them to adapt to different situations when needed. Employees and workers will be able to carry out jobs as of prior to the lockdown to a certain degree. In case of unemployment, they will be able to join in new or temporary vacancies in businesses and other entities that are up-and-running. In case of furloughed, they may renounce and enter other available temporary contracts. They may return back to their permanent contract with their original employers after the lockdown.

For key workers, participating in the Framework also does not imply changing the way they currently work. Key workers may by all means decide not to participate in the Framework. However, upon joining, one will obtain priority to be allocated to critical, higher-risk front line positions when needed.

Implications for businesses and other organisations

For businesses and other organisations, participating in the Framework does not imply changing the way they currently operate. If an entity can be fully operated remotely, they are encouraged to keep doing so to maximise safety. However, upon joining, they will have more freedom adapting to different situations when needed, under the conditions suggested in Appendix 2. It is worth noting that, when an entity joins, it does not imply that their teams of staff have to join as well. Entities of any kind cannot force their employees and staff to participate in the Framework. Businesses will have to evaluate their cost effectiveness based on the number of their employees that will join, their ability to adapt to new modes of operation, their flexibility regarding employment and staff allocation, and expected demands. In case of staff shortages, businesses and entities can recruit available labour, including the People-Solution Framework participants.

Examples of how individuals and entities can contribute upon joining the People-Solution Framework include serving as key workers during rush hours in transportation, running catering businesses for other People-Solution Framework participants, serving as front-line employees in up-and-running entities, setting up new business models adapting to situations during and after the crisis, etc. The Framework may be used by the Government as a transition mechanism to move from the current situation back into normal life.

The People-Solution Framework registration process could be completed through a government website. A unique certificate number would be issued per household or per entity upon joining, while daily registration caps could be set based on the number of people and number of entities joined by sector.

Benefits for society

The People-Solution Framework has the potential of generating various positive implications to our future economy and social life. With certain levels of discretion granted, people regain agency, freedom and the environment to create new and suitable ways to adapt to the crisis. This may include gradual reformation of business and employment models, develop new services and products, trigger and optimise staff allocation across businesses and sectors, and provide opportunities to utilise idle labour.

On the other hand, essential services, such as hospitals and care centers, public transportation,

supermarkets and nurseries, will have better control to organise their teams of staff based on their participation status. This may in turn reboot other vital health services that are currently paralysed due to Covid-19, such as oncology and dentistry. Utilising idle labour also provides workforces to further essential services with low vocational training thresholds that are currently short of labour due to the lockdown, such as food farming and harvesting.

Furthermore, while viruses are not like enemies during war time, the Covid-19 has so far turned countries that stood upon liberty and democracy into apparatus enforcing increasingly rigorous medical martial laws. The sudden disruption of daily lives may heavily reduce society's overall wellbeing¹, and imposed fear of losing meaning as human beings.

Introducing the People-Solution Framework is to bring back, for all those who are bearing the crisis together, a purpose and the discretion to contribute .

Limitations

Like any public policy, the People-Solution Framework has its limitations. The feasibility of the Framework in cases of pandemics, will depend on specific clinical manifestations, the genomic structure of the virus, projected pandemic timeline, the robustness of the country's social support system, and the willingness of collaboration between countries. This is why we have proposed a set of supporting measures (Appendix 3) to minimise inevitable shortcomings of the Framework upon implementation.

Conclusion

In times of extreme crisis, people are called to take action. Participating in the People-Solution Framework is an act of courage, determination and generosity to support the recovery of the country. It can serve as a way toward economic revitalization, allowing a smoother transition after the crisis. Introducing the People-Solution Framework is a way to bring people and organisations into the equation, to let people take on more active roles in ending the crises.

This policy proposal is aimed at providing a multidisciplinary and flexible framework for dealing with large-scale pandemics and situations of extreme crisis where each component of society is involved and can contribute. We urge the Government, the public and social science experts, to join forces in putting into place and rolling out the foundation of our framework.

¹ <http://clubtrollo.com.au/2020/04/08/how-many-wellbys-is-the-corona-panic-costing/>

Suggestions on details for this Framework such as eligibility, conditions, supporting measures, and further research needed are contained in the appendices that follow.

We are a team of professionals, students and researchers and would be delighted to discuss this proposal further, continue its development into a broader framework and eventually present it for consideration to the competent authorities.

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APPENDIX 1 ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION

Who can participate in the People-Solution Framework:

- 1.1. households in which all members are aged below 60², and without underlying health conditions³. Decisions of participation should be made collectively by all members with full legal responsibilities. Minors under should follow the decision of their legal guardians.
- 1.2. entities that are currently restricted from operating, upon decision of the board of directors or equivalent to participate in the Framework.

² Statistical data suggests that the death rate for people below 60 who contracted Covid-19 without having underlying health conditions is below 0.2%. People above 60 have a significantly higher rate of death upon contracting Covid-19.

³<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

APPENDIX 2 CONDITIONS FOR THE PEOPLE-SOLUTION FRAMEWORK

- 2.1. The People-Solution Framework is meant to be discretionary and optional for everyone. Authorities will neither favour nor discourage the participation.
- 2.2. People-Solution Framework participants will explicitly confirm that joining the framework is entirely discretionary and upon free will.
- 2.3. People-Solution Framework participants will explicitly acknowledge that, upon joining, they will have higher risks in contracting the virus.
- 2.4. People-Solution Framework participants will explicitly accept that they will refrain from putting pressure on health services, reducing the number of calls and utilisation of the health services to the minimum possible.
- 2.5. People-Solution Framework participants will explicitly accept that the authorities may limit them from accessing social and economic support allocated specifically for the pandemic.
- 2.6. People-Solution Framework participants will explicitly accept that they will respect and support the quarantine measures for those who are not part of the Framework.
- 2.7. Those who are not part of the People-Solution Framework will continue to follow the authorities's guideline regarding the pandemic.
- 2.8. Individuals/households and entities who provide false information during the registration process and/or regarding their participation status, and/or force others to participate, will face criminal charges.

APPENDIX 3 SUPPORTING MEASURES

The People-Solution Framework will require a set of important supporting measures provided by the authorities. These include:

- 3.1 Establish elaborated instructions and guidance for People-Solution Framework participants, this may include restrictions of physical contacts with those who are not part of the Framework, maintaining social distancing in public spaces, personal hygiene and immune system care, etc.
- 3.2 Strengthen the support and protection for key workers in essential roles.
- 3.3 Strengthen protective isolation measures and establish specific and separated time periods regarding essential outdoor activities for those who are not part of the People-Solution Framework.
- 3.4 Provide social and economic security, such as self-isolation facilities and housing for those who are not part of the People-Solution Framework.
- 3.5 Establish corresponding units for the management of the Framework and a reporting communication channel to prevent cases of forced participation within households and entities.

APPENDIX 4 FURTHER SUPPORTING RESEARCH

- 4.1. Detailed design of operation measures regarding the framework registration process and framework management.
- 4.2. Quantitative estimation and qualitative analysis of monetary, welfare and other intangible benefits, such as improvements upon wellbeing, of the Framework.
- 4.3. Framework limitations and mitigation measures: key risks that might arise upon implementation, e.g. increase in virus transmission from asymptomatic carriers.
- 4.4. Prerequisites for the Framework to be viable (e.g. stability of the virus, the genomic structure of the virus, projected pandemic timeline, the robustness of the country's social support system)
- 4.5. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the positives and negatives of current options different to the People-Solution Framework, e.g. immunity passports, gradual lockdown lift, etc.