MANAGING CRISES

REFLECTIONS ON ISSUES IN HANDLING COVID 19

Royal Irish Academy, 8 July 2020
FRANCES RUANE
Governance in Crises: General and Covid 19

Form, Scale, Speed and State of Preparedness

Who is in charge? What are their responsibilities and who is accountable?

Initial Conditions (pre-Crisis)

Initial Steps – Health, Population, Socio-economic

*Feature: strong information and reporting – new indicators*
IMMEDIATE POLICY RESPONSE TO COVID-19 – CLEAR MESSAGES

PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY: FLATTEN THE CURVE – HYGIENE, SOCIAL DISTANCING, HOSPITAL EQUIPMENT

RESOURCES FOR HEALTH
RESOURCES FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

ECONOMIC POLICY: RETAIN JOBS – TWSS; OTHER BUSINESS SUPPORTS

SOCIAL POLICY: INCOME SUPPORTS - PUP

INITIAL FOCUS CLEAR AND RESPONSES BROADLY POSITIVE
GFC Vs Covid-19: Some Differences

Global Financial Crisis – Sudden

• Response: internationally/EU-led

• Economic/finance experts inputting to decision makers and media

• Limited data/information

• Strategic direction dependent on others

• Biggest challenge: Building confidence that we can rebuild/solve problems

Covid-19 – More sudden

• Response: public-health led/global guidance

• Medical experts reporting directly to Cabinet and population at large

• Much more and timely data/information

• Strategic direction – mostly ‘own’ and ‘clear’

• Biggest challenge: Building confidence that we can open up without ‘new wave’
GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE IN MARCH 2020

CABINET COMMITTEE ON COVID 19

SENIOR OFFICIALS GROUP on COVID

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY TEAM

COMMS GROUP

SUBGROUPS

EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP

HSE NATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM

MEDICALLY DRIVEN ROADMAP

Implementation of Action plan informed by reports: medical (NPHET), economic (D/BEI) and social (D/Taoiseach)
GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE IN JULY 2020

CABINET COMMITTEE ON COVID 19

SENIOR OFFICIALS GROUP

SOCIAL POLICY

ECONOMIC POLICY

PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY NPHET

COMMS GROUP

CONTINUING ROLE OF MEDICAL ADVICE IN PACE OF REOPENING

NEW CABINET COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Central coordinating role of D/Taoiseach
SCALE OF ACTIONS/SUPPORTS ON ENTIRELY NEW SCALE

UNEMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS* - CSO DATA

*THERE ARE SOME OVERLAPS ON SCHEMES SO TOTALS HERE ARE HIGHER THAN ACTUAL TOTAL
RAPID POLICY RESPONSES: REVENUE COMMISSIONERS AND D/SOCIAL PROTECTION

Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme

Pandemic Unemployment Payment

Some signs of recovery with numbers on schemes falling but still high

PATH TO RECOVERY?
MANAGING THE RECOVERY ...

• From handling ‘pandemic crisis’ to ‘more familiar economic/social problems’ if we avoid a major new wave

• Future phases will look more like last crisis?
  • Managing tradeoffs to maintain societal support and reputation
  • Policies to support recovery, while minimizing LT burdens / costs
  • Addressing deferred problems – calling out new problems

• Different international order - medium-term influence
  • Greater EU downturn – slower recovery?

• Next – How to measure progress? Role of new Cabinet Committee..