

## T-AP Recovery, Renewal and Resilience in a Post-Pandemic World (RRR)

### Final Report

#### Project Information

<b>Project Title</b>	Adaptations of young people in monetary-poor households for surviving and recovering from COVID-19 and associated lockdowns (PANEX-YOUTH)
<b>Start Date</b>	1 Jun 2022
<b>End Date</b>	31 Dec 2024
<b>Lead PI and Institution</b>	UCL, Bartlett School of Planning
<b>Consortium Members and Institutions</b>	Lauren Andres (University College London), Paul Moawad (University College London) Peter Kraftl (University of Birmingham), Cristiana Zara (University of Birmingham), Stuart Denoon Stevens (Nottingham Trent University), Lochner Marais (University of the Free State), Abraham Matamanda (University of the Free State), Luciana Bizzotto (University of São Paulo), Leandro Giatti (University of São Paulo).
<b>Project URL</b>	<a href="https://panexyouth.com">https://panexyouth.com</a>

### 1. Project Summary (max 700 words)

A summary drawing out the key points and messages (what has been achieved and what did not go according to plan and why).

Young people, and particularly vulnerable young people, suffered dramatically during the pandemic; for many of these young people, the effects of COVID-19 continue. They were not seen as a priority during COVID-19 and continue to be neglected in some areas of policy and service provision, despite the significant proportion of their lives affected by this unprecedented health crisis. While a significant amount of public funding was allocated to emergency funding during the pandemic, it was nevertheless often insufficient and poorly targeted. Some (vulnerable) children and young people will struggle to catch up (e.g. with education); this will have long-term consequences on their adult lives which cannot be ignored. Our findings support recommendations about how to help those young people as well as what could be done differently in the event of a future crisis like COVID-19.

The daily survival of children and young people and their families was ensured due to the involvement and commitment of individuals, communities, faith groups, charities, schools and teachers who all stepped in in unprecedented ways as part of the pandemic solidarity effort. Hence, as well as making recommendations for policy-makers, our findings highlight such organisations' possible future role (and the support they need) in responding to future crises like COVID-19 (Andres et al., 2023a&b1).

This project used a participatory action research methodology to co-create knowledge about such adaptations and generate wider recommendations, with young people, and the communities in which they live, as well as non-government bodies and non-profit organisations that focus on this age group. By co-creating knowledge, we aligned our data collection efforts with these organisations' immediate knowledge needs to support the adaptations employed by young people to help them cope and recover from COVID-19 and associated policy responses. Our approach also allowed us to create a bridge between those affected by policy (young people) and those drafting and implementing policy (organisations). Our project focused on case studies in three locations: Mangaung and Moqhaka in Central South Africa, West Midlands in the UK, and São Paulo state in Brazil.

All our objectives have been met. Through our project, we have been working with key partners at national and international levels. Some of these organisations were part of our community of practice and have been involved in workshops all through the project. This has been reflected in our engagement activities including through our ESRC IAA research on food emergency and health with the other TAP RR funded project 'Building Back Better from Below' which looked at grassroots innovations in accessing food and

health in Brighton & Hove, Sao Paulo and Toronto, particularly for Black and Racialised communities and was led by the Institute of Development Studies - University of Sussex (Alex Shankland). The work we are currently completing with UNICEF and UNESCO demonstrates the international relevance of the Panex Youth research and some of the findings will inform wider policies and strategies at both national and international levels.

## 2. Key findings

Young people, and particularly vulnerable young people suffered dramatically during the pandemic and continue to do so. They were not seen as a priority during COVID-19 and continue to be neglected in some areas of policy and service provision, despite the significant proportion of their lives affected by this unprecedented health crisis. While a considerable amount of public funding was allocated to emergency funding during the pandemic, it was nevertheless insufficient and poorly targeted in some cases. Some (vulnerable) children and young people will struggle to catch up; this will have long-term consequences on their adult lives which cannot be ignored. Our findings support recommendations about how to help those young people as well as what could be done differently in the event of a future crisis like COVID-19.

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Running through our findings – and our recommendations – is the vital consideration that young people’s voices were often unheard during COVID-19. Hence, an overall recommendation underpinning all of our findings is that diverse young people – and particularly those who are most marginalised or vulnerable – were not heard enough and should have a voice in future policies, actions and decision-making processes.

More specifically, our findings reveal the following:

1. School absence and refusal have increased since COVID-19. Where appropriate, schools should introduce and/or signpost to students measures that enable school engagement during and after a period of lockdown (or similar), whilst also addressing the root causes for disengagement. Cognisant of the multiple pressures on schools, schools may focus on some or all of the following:

(a) making school environments less pressurised (thrown into sharp relief during time at home, when many students felt less pressurised); (b) measures to support young people with loss of confidence whilst away from school; (c) addressing sometimes patchy support in schools for student wellbeing and mental health; (d) finding (creative) ways to mitigate loss of contact with school during a crisis, which in turn can mean loss of the wider benefits of school.

2. There is a need for further work around the ‘soft skills’ that some young people lost or did not develop during COVID-19, particularly as there is a shared feeling that we

'moved on' from the pandemic in a way that did not enable young people to come to terms with what had happened. Many professionals who work with young people have reported that there are cohorts who, for instance, lack the skills and ability to relate to others in appropriate ways. Schools and other learning institutions could, for example, work on relational pedagogic practices, using trauma- and compassion-informed approaches.

3. Whilst recognising they are vital, we must not over-emphasise the role that schools can play during or after a pandemic. They cannot provide and do not have the resources to provide a one- stop shop for all the issues young people face. They are not and should not be the only place that CYP gain support – families, friends, communities, and other organisations should also be key. There could be greater consideration of how in turn to support those organisations, and how there could be greater coordination, partnership and/or multi- agency working to ensure some young people, and some needs, do not slip between the cracks.

4. Linked to recommendation 3, there could be planning for greater resources and sharing of good practice for organisations outside of schools who provided support for home education during lockdowns. This would also need to acknowledge (as per recommendation 1) that after COVID-19, some young people did not return to school and remained home educated. Any work with such organisations should also ask young people how they would like to be supported outside of school.

5. There could be a concerted focus on support for young people's key transitions – for instance to secondary school, to College/University, and to work. Those transitions and support for them were compromised during COVID-19, with some young people getting 'lost in transition'. Guidance and support for young people could be two- fold: targeted at young people, now, who missed out during key transitional periods during the COVID-19 pandemic; better preparedness, plans and resources to provide guidance and support for young people going through transitions during future pandemics.

6. Address inequalities in children and young people's access to greenspace, and outdoor spaces, which in turn affect their opportunities for play, learning and socialisation. Children and young people are often excluded from outdoor, public and green spaces in their communities; this situation was exacerbated during lockdown restrictions, when playgrounds and other leisure spaces were closed and young people's time outside was limited. There should be greater efforts towards and investment in building on guidance to make public spaces more accessible to diverse children and young people, and placing greater emphasis on children and young people's access to such spaces during a lockdown scenario.

7. Support and advice around technology use (especially social media and gaming) could be more nuanced. Use of these technologies is a complex issue, especially when children and young people cannot access outside spaces. It should not be assumed

that social media use or gaming are always negative behaviours, when they can facilitate learning new skills, socialization and allow downtime; but it should be recognized that use of digital technologies can also be dangerous, problematic and toxic. Supporting young people to find a balance – where that balance may be different during a pandemic – is key.

8. Linked to recommendation 7, recognise and support the ways in which digital media can enable young people's participation in high-level decision making and co-research (as with the PANEX- Youth project) alongside or even more than more traditional approaches to meeting/consultation cannot. There could be greater consideration of how to ensure scaling up of these approaches, inclusion in terms of the young people involved (equal access to these opportunities) and training for young people participating in such activities.

9. Ensuring better preparedness and equitable opportunities for digital access (to devices and/ or data) for different groups of children and young people, their families and those who work with them (both for education and other purposes). There is an opportunity here to engage with the work of UNESCO's Digital Readiness Index team, which assesses and provides recommendations for countries in the event of a pandemic or similar crisis.

10. Work with young people to battle misinformation around crises. Young people have the skills to act as a bridge (and/or to co-produce) accurate information, especially in short form on digital media, to counter misinformation in, for instance, the circulation of public health information during a pandemic. Remembering and learning from COVID-19 – and listening to children and young people

11. Learn from what worked in COVID-19. Some apparently haphazard or reactive approaches happened to work – whether in terms of flexibility in pedagogic approaches or ways of working through digital media, or how local organisations responded to meet local needs. At the national, regional and local scale there could be efforts to collate and share examples of what worked (our longer reports, referenced at the end of this document, are examples of such efforts). Similarly, more learning is still needed on what could still work in a post-COVID context, and what could work in terms of better and equitable preparedness for a future crisis.

12. Don't just move on: COVID-19 happened but young people have not had the opportunities to deal with its shorter- and longer-term impacts. COVID-19 was a major part of their lives (proportionately, compared with adults, and because of the impact of restrictions on them). It is crucial to keep talking about COVID-19 and address trauma.

13. Develop a systemic approach to policy for children and young people, particularly for times during and in the years after a crisis. In particular, working across health, education and employment can help deal with challenges in respect of young people's

transitions. Such policies – as per wider policy-making for (and with) young people – need to be aligned, coherent and joined up, stopping young people from falling down the cracks. They also need to be properly resourced and involve children and young people in appropriate ways in their design.

14. Those working with and advocating for young people could call out and put pressure on organisations who should be engaging young people in debate about and responses to crises, but don't. Examples of good practice in engaging children and young people – whether specifically during crises or more widely – could be collated and shared, with resource to support good forms of engagement.

15. Finally, recognize the importance of food in times of crisis and post-crisis. This includes access to food (specifically healthy, nutritious and culturally diverse food) in a context of increased food poverty for young people. It also involves acknowledging its role as a way to get together and cope but also as a mean to access vulnerable young people and their families and hence provide adequate support.

## **2.1. How did you go about in achieving your research findings and outputs/outcomes?**

Our research findings relate to four main research stages:

### **Stage 1 – Global Mapping Exercise**

We mapped and developed typologies of the pandemic's impact on the food /education/play-leisure nexus with a focus on young people's vulnerabilities globally.

The methodology used in conducting this assessment involved the search and analysis of publicly available documents. The documents were retrieved from several sourced: UK Government websites (e.g. Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). Department of Education (DfE), Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). UK Parliament websites, HM Treasury website, Bank of England monetary publications, Republic of South Africa ; reports produced by Brazilian government websites (Department of Basic Education, Department of Health, Department of Higher Education and Training, The Presidency), Statistics South Africa website, National research institutes, such as IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), IPEA (Institute for Communicable Diseases, Global Burden of Disease website and reports, The Applied Economic Research), FJP (Joao Pinheiro Foundation), INEP (Anísio Teixeira National Institute for Educational Studies and Research), FIOCRUZ (Oswaldo Cruz Foundation), and the National Youth Council, Communicable Diseases of South

Africa, RSA Government Gazette ; In addition, academic papers, press releases, multinational reports from INGOS (e.g. UN, UNESCO, UN Habitat, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP), IGOs (IMF, OECD, The World Bank, OECD), international advisory groups (e.g. KPMG), Think Tanks (e.g. The Brookings Institution) and reports from charitable and non-profit foundations (e.g. Catholic Relief Services, Carnegie UK Trust, Child Poverty Action Group, The Edge Foundation, Sutton Trust, Plan International), NGOs (e.g. Youth Employment UK) and collaborative networks - Brazilian Network Information Center (NIC.br) and the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee (CGI.br), PENSSAN Network (Brazilian Research Network on Food Sovereignty and Security and Nutrition), National Campaign for the Right to Education, and Civil Society Working Group on the 2030 Agenda - were also used. These sources were consulted at several times during the study.

The total documents found were 435 across the board with 365 selected for their relevance.

### ***Stage 2: – National and Regional Mappings***

We situated and deconstructed, in each of the three countries and regions (West Midlands/Birmingham, UK; Central RSA/Mangaung and Moqhaka, South Africa; and São Paulo State/Paraisópolis and Heliópolis, Brazil), what have been the key impacts of pandemic-related policy towards the food, education, play/leisure nexus of issues facing young people during and after Covid, what policy/programmes/initiatives were developed, and how local places matter.

We conducted a total of 90 in-depth interviews with key adult stakeholders in England, South Africa and Brazil including policy-makers, NGO practitioners and social activists.

### ***Stage 3: Zooming in on local adaptations of young people in monetary-poor households***

We conducted an in-depth case study analysis in six case study areas, in each case study region indicated above, focusing on incremental and innovative strategies and the impact of those adaptations on everyday survival and recovery.

We engaged 180 children and young people across our case study regions in a programme of in-depth, multi-method, qualitative research (44 in Brazil, 49 in South Africa, and 87 in the UK).

### ***Stage 4: Co-design of multi-scalar solutions to foster young people's recovery and resilience***

We co-designed with our community of young people and our community of practice solutions aimed at helping vulnerable young people to recover and be prepared in the

eventuality of future major health and socio-economic crisis in line with the food, education, play/leisure nexus.

To do so, we ran three local cafes (one in each country) and one international café to co-design recommendations to young people and relevant organisations.

Local cafés lasted an average of 3 hours and applied participatory tools (discussions and visual web exercises) to explore themes like food, education, and leisure. These activities sought to deepen dialogic reflections on youth agency, adaptive capacities, and emotional responses to crises, highlighting the value of local knowledge and co-created solutions for addressing future crises. Our ‘international café’ in November 2024 used simultaneous translation (Portuguese/English) to allow a productive and successful conversation between academics, practitioners and young people from all three countries.

To achieve our research findings and outputs/outcomes, we worked together as a team with clear deadlines and task distributions. WPs were led by specific team members. We were having team meetings monthly and Research Fellows were having additional meetings during fieldwork / data analysis to ensure coherence across the three countries.

We ensured we engaged from the start with key national and international organisations (such as Unicef and Unesco) as to be ready for fieldwork and maximise impact. This included for example in England (School Food Matters, BITEBACK2030, Food Ethics Council, Assemble Play, Learning Foundation, Youth Employment UK, Edge Foundation, Prince's Trust, Meriden Adventure Playground, WMCA, BITEBACK2030, Meriden Adventure Playground, Starlight Children Foundation, ImpactEd, The Birmingham Diocesan, Faith Action, Sutton Trust), in Brazil (Arq.Futuro Cities Laboratory of INSPER, Pró-Saber Institute São Paulo, G10 Favelas, and UNAS/Heliópolis), in South Africa (LoveLife South Africa).

- 2.2. Assess the Trans-Atlantic Partnership** (what worked and didn't work well? What has been achieved through this joint funding that would not have been possible within a national funding framework? Do partners have plans to continue the cooperation?)

**What worked and didn't work well?**

**What worked:** Ability to work across three countries and lead international comparative research with a team of stellar researchers who collaborated closely, positively and successfully.

**What didn't work well:** We had to adjust to the requirements specific to each funder (specifically budget constraints) which was tricky and time demanding.

**What has been achieved through this joint funding that would not have been possible within a national funding framework?**

This funding enabled the kind of international shared participatory methodology and comparative research that is usually not possible through one funder. It enabled a unique combination of skills, disciplines and experience, as well as deep insights into the similarities, connections and differences between the effects of COVID-19 in different geographical contexts.

**Do partners have plans to continue the cooperation?**

Of course. We continue to meet regularly to work on ongoing publications and impact pathways and we aim to keep an eye on further calls to hopefully be able to collaborate again in the near future.

### 3. Impact of the Project

- 3.1. **Academic impact of your project** (please provide a summary of the academic impact achieved. For example, conceptual impact (changes in the way researchers understand a particular field); new methods, techniques or classification systems; or training or capacity building within academia). If possible, please list the sources (publications, reports, reviews, web links, users/beneficiaries etc.) to corroborate the impact.

We are significantly advancing debates in youth studies and children's geographies regarding the longer-term impact of the pandemic on this specific age group. We are publishing about aspects of young people's identity formation and everyday cultural practices (for instance around food or digital media use) has been dominated by research in psychology, public health and cognate disciplines (Adams et al., 2020). Despite the importance of this work, as we outline later, this means that debates about young people's identities and everyday cultural practices have become dominated by sometimes normative, medicalised and pathologized approaches to issues such as addictive behaviours and the transgression of lockdown rules. Our work has also enabled us to develop new conceptual and empirical agendas for research about children's and young people's geographies – for instance with a focus on popular and digital cultures, which had hitherto been marginalised in the subdiscipline. See Andres L, Moawad P, Kraftl P, Stevens S, Marais L, Matamanda A, ... Giatti L. (2024). Children and young people's access to food, education, play and leisure in times of crisis: An international, integrative review of policy responses, impacts and adaptations during the COVID -19 pandemic. *Children & Society*, doi: [10.1111/chso.12924](https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12924) and Kraftl P, Andres L, Marais L, Matamanda A, ... Giatti L. Cultures of COVID-19: Marginalised Young People's Experiences of a Global Pandemic in Brazil, South Africa and the UK, *Annals of the AAG* (under review). We have also been advancing methods in the ways to participate and actively engage with young people, through diverse qualitative methods (visual mapping, local and international cafes) with the view of supporting young people's healing, training and empowerment.

#### **Publications:**

Andres L, Moawad P, Kraftl P, Stevens S, Marais L, Matamanda A, ... Giatti L. (2024). Children and young people's access to food, education, play and leisure in times of crisis: An international, integrative review of policy responses, impacts and adaptations during the COVID -19 pandemic. *Children & Society*, doi: [10.1111/chso.12924](https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12924)

Andres L., Kraftl P, Moawad P. (2023). *The impact of COVID-19 on Education, Food*

*and Play/Leisure and Related Adaptations of Children and Young People in England.*  
Panex Youth Website.

Andres, L., Lauren Andres (University College London), Paul Moawad (University College London) Peter Kraftl (University of Birmingham), Stuart Denoon Stevens (Nottingham Trent University), Lochner Marais (University of the Free State), Abraham Matamanda (University of the Free State), ... Leandro Giatti Universidade de São Paulo). (2023). *The Impact of COVID-19 on Education, Food & Play-Leisure and Related Adaptations for Children and Young People: International and National Overviews – PANEX-Youth WP2 Full Report.* Panex Youth Website.

Marais L, Matamanda A, Gbadegesin F, Ntema J, Mgwele A, Dunn M, ... Denoon-Stevens S. (2024). The COVID-19 restrictions, child services and the well-being of children in South Africa. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, (1), doi: [10.1186/s40723-024-00138-7](https://doi.org/10.1186/s40723-024-00138-7)

Bizzotto, L. M.; Paredes, Y. ; Musumeci, L.; Giatti, L. Reseña del Proyecto “PANEX-Youth: Adaptações de jovens em comunidades vulneráveis para sobreviver e recuperar da Covid-19”. *Revista GICOS*, v. 8, p. 1, 2023.

Börner, S.; Kraftl, P.; Giatti, L. L. More than participatory? From ‘compensatory’ towards ‘expressive’ remote practices using digital technologies. *Qualitative Research*, p. 14687941231165882, 2023b.

Börner, S.; Kraftl, P.; Giatti, L. L. Youth participation with a purpose?: Promoting the transformative power of remote critical action-reflection research with Brazilian youth in conditions of resource insecurity. In: *Handbook of Children and Young People’s Participation: Conversations for Transformational Change.* [s.l.] Routledge, 2023a.

Bizzotto, L. M.; Giatti, L.L.; Musumeci, L.; Marquez, Y.P.; Andres, L. ‘Youth and Children’s Adaptations to COVID-19 in Brazil: Repercussions on Education, Food, and Play/Leisure, E-book, USP open access repository (in press)

#### **Under Review:**

Kraftl P, Andres L, Marais L, Matamanda A, ... Giatti L. Cultures of COVID-19: Marginalised Young People’s Experiences of a Global Pandemic in Brazil, South Africa and the UK, *Annals of the AAG* (under review)

Bizzotto, L. M.; Börner, S.; Musumeci, L.; Rocha, T. F. da; Giatti, L.L. Giatti. The future lies in collective strength: youth participation in addressing the pandemic damages in

vulnerable urban communities in São Paulo, Brazil. *Children's Geographies* (under review)

Börner S., Giatti, L., Bizzotto, L., Rocha El-Kadri, M., Sousa Reis, A., Schweickardt, J., Kraftl, P., Andres, L. Coping with the invisible impacts of COVID-19 in a context of polycrises: wellbeing strategies of marginalised urban and indigenous Brazilian youth, *Frontiers in Psychology* (under review)

### **Under Development**

Bizzotto, L.; Kraftl, P.; Giatti, L.L.; Musumeci, L.; Andres, L. 'Exploring polycrises through youth: lessons from Brazilian vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 pandemic'.

Matamanda AR, Mukumba C, Marais L, Mathebula M, Venter A, Mgwele A, Matooane LS, Ntema J. Photovoice methodology with vulnerable communities: Comparative analysis from three research projects. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*.

Matamanda AR, Marais L, Nel V, Mgwele A, Matooane LS, Ntema J, Mukumba C, Bhanye JI. "We only ate meat on Sundays": covid-19 food experiences among young from South African low-income households.

Andres, L ; Kraftl, P, Marais L, Matamanda A, ... Giatti L. Power on, power back and alternative pathways to coping in unprecedented times

Andres, L ; Kraftl, P, Marais L, Matamanda A, ... Giatti L. Time, routine and waiting mobility in youth adaptation and lives' trajectories

Zara C., Giatti, L, Bizzoto, L., Kraftl, P., Andres, L., Not forgetting as a mode of healing: the role of participatory methods in support young people through crisis

Marais, L., Andres, L ; Kraftl, P, Marais L, Matamanda A, ... Giatti L. What is home, where is home and what should be home?

### **3.2 Impacts outside academia (please outline the main changes your project has brought about for people outside academia).**

PANEX YOUTH has been delivering impact outside of academia as following:

1 - By informing national and international strategies.

This includes the report "A Plan for Play: The affordable way to wellbeing for every child" by The Children's Alliance. Lauren Andres contributed to it and used some of the Panex-Youth results.

The forthcoming Learning and Community Hubs for the Evolving Right to Education in Times of Crisis UNESCO Working Paper on Education Policy (work done with the UNESCO · Chief of Education Unit – Paris)

The forthcoming Call for Action "Strengthening Urban Resilience and Sustainable Neighbourhoods for Children in Times of Crisis" with UNICEF (Global Lead – Urban – NYC)

Input into UNESCO's "Digital Readiness Index" by Peter Kraftl

2- By empowering young people through their participation as co-researchers in our research. We have collected several statements which testify as to the societal impact of our work.

Association of Colleges:

"Eddie Playfair, Senior Policy Manager at the Association for Colleges (AoC) said:

"We welcome the findings of this research, which remind us of the deep and lasting impacts of the Covid pandemic on several cohorts of young people and the need to learn lessons for the future.

We know that crises tend to widen pre-existing social inequalities and that living through even a short period of crisis can have damaging long term consequences.

Colleges will also welcome the emphasis on supporting young people around critical transitions, whether to further education or to employment as we know that these are points where people can fall through the cracks.

We also strongly support the recommendation that young people, particularly from marginalised groups, should be more involved in decision-making about their education."

UK Young People:

"My experience working as a co researcher on the Panex Youth Research team has been nothing short of enjoyable and thought provoking – a sentiment I'm sure my fellow co youth researchers would share. From the beginning of the project Cristiana has been an absolute pleasure to work alongside with. She has a way in which she can appeal to young people especially in regards to some pretty complex information being covered. We have always been able to cover a plethora of topics all while having a laugh and

genuinely enjoying ourselves. During my exams I felt completely overwhelmed with the sheer amount of work that had to be completed – I am not sure my professor would be too pleased to hear this, but our sessions with Cristiana played as an escape from those never-ending assignment deadlines.”

“Each meeting or session with Cristiana has left me feeling extremely positive and rearing to go. Cristiana had provided us with the necessary training and support to conduct our field interviews – this wonderful opportunity has allowed us to feel more confident in information gathering, and able to note this down for future career applications.

Don’t think I’ve forgotten you Peter and Lauren. If all my professors could be like Peter, my life would be complete. Peter is a man of many talents – from being extremely intelligent to very cool and edgy and in with the “young people” (not saying Peter is not young hahaha). Peter is also incredibly passionate about his work – and that shows when he is able to condense very complicated content into manageable content that we could understand as young people.

Lauren is an incredibly warm and welcoming person – she just has the welcoming persona that allows people to open up and become more comfortable – Lauren is also very intelligent and really adores her area of expertise – she is able to make me laugh, but also support me in any way possible. She also creates an atmosphere that allows people to share their valuable experiences and insights. I reckon she could be our next Prime Minister. “

“My highlight working on this research project would definitely be the conducting of the interviews. Every time I had interviewed my friends, family members or peers I learnt something new about people’s different experiences of the covid 19 pandemic. While there was plenty of negative thoughts surrounding covid – a lot of the interviewees had stated they picked up positive habits such as learning new languages, skills and hobbies.

I’m also going to cheat a little and say a second thing I enjoyed from this project other than working with some amazing people would be getting to meet our Brazilian and South African colleagues both in person in Birmingham and at an online session. This project is the gift that keeps on giving – this, even as an aspiring Barrister will aid me in my future career and ongoing educational pathway.”

#### South Africa Young People

“This project allowed me to reflect on the experience I had during the pandemic. Actually, it helped me to heal from the trauma that I experienced as it allowed me to take stuff off my heart that I had not shared with anyone.”

“Through this project, I have realised how many of us were going through the most and suffered in silence. But through this project, I have also come to realise that there were many people who were doing some great work by assisting others and this has been heartwarming to hear the experiences of my colleagues and sharing stories and experiences.”

A student from UFS mentioned that “This is a story I need to tell and this project allowed me the opportunity to share my COVID-19 story which is characterised by hope, resilience and overcoming multiple challenge. Hearing the stories from my colleagues reassured me that we were all going through the most.”

Brazil Young People:

"Sometimes we felt choked up and didn't have the opportunity to speak. Through this research project, we started to reflect, to remember, and we had the chance to let it all out." (Young resident of Paraisópolis)

"The pandemic was just seen as a disease, a phase. No one ever asked what it was like to stay indoors for a year... It was always about how the pandemic affected the population's routine. But they never asked for our perspective—how we experienced it and how we coped with it." (Young resident of Heliópolis)

During the closing session of the course with young people in Brazil, we discussed their evaluation of the research.

A young girl from Heliópolis expressed that participating in the research had been important for revisiting those past moments, as she had felt that everything had been left behind. Through the conversation circles encouraged by the methodology, she realised how important it was for her to express what she had felt. The course thus became a space for reflection, where she could relate to others' pain and no longer feel alone. (“We're siblings/partners in our ‘hurt’,” she said.) Participation in the research became, therefore, the construction of a space of empathy.

A boy from Heliópolis observed that looking at the posters made it clear how the territory shapes each person's experience. He recalled the activity of selecting a photo from his territory and how that evoked a range of emotions among participants.

Another boy from Heliópolis highlighted the importance of the research being constructed collectively and horizontally, allowing young people to feel part of the investigative process. He spoke about how the task of searching his phone for old photos from that time helped him recall what had been lived and what had also been “hidden” in the past.

At last, a girl from Heliópolis emphasised how the research process helped her reflect on the role of youth in adapting to the challenges of the pandemic, a very sad period in everyone’s lives. She praised the research as a meaningful experience of reflection and reinterpretation of what had been lived — a kind of therapy, which they often do not have access to.

### **1.1. Any expected future impact of your project**

We are expecting our project to have further impact once our Call for Action with UNICEF and Working Paper with UNESCO are out. Our findings also have a high degree of transferability. Hence, future impacts will include but extend beyond the impacts of COVID-19 and planning for future pandemics, to future preparedness for compound crises, impacts on education policy, and impacts on creating more child-friendly cities, particularly in parts of cities more deeply affected by climate change.

The UK team has also secured additional funding through the ESRC Impact Acceleration Account Research grant to work on “Emergency Food Planning, Food and Health Justice and Resilient Communities and Places”. This is led by Lauren Andres (UCL Bartlett School of Planning), and Alex Shankland (IDS), who was leading the B4 project, which charted grassroots innovations in enabling marginalised and BRM communities’ access to health and food justice in Brighton & Hove, Sao Paulo and Toronto (also funded through the TAP RRR Call).

For this project, we are running a series of workshops with our project partners and other stakeholders to co-design recommendations for emergency food planning which promote food and health justice, fostering resilient communities and places in England. These bring together a mix of voluntary sector organizations with policymakers, academics, and ethnic minority group representatives, allowing us to:

1. Share insights about the diverse adaptations that have emerged regarding access to food (production and distribution), eating habits and diets and their wider impact on health, in times of sustained crisis.
2. Share knowledge about what support, networks, knowledge, resources, and skills are needed to tackle food and health (in)justice at local levels.
3. Share stories of local-level transformative changes that have the potential to be scaled up.
4. Share insights about how local places can be shaped to promote healthier and fairer built environments.

We are currently working on a policy brief with the target of informing UK national policy.

## 2. Project Team

### 2.1. Did the grant support the professional development of team members? If so, how?

All researchers at all career levels, have been included in papers' development and are currently working on academic outputs as leads authors. All the projects, ECRs received support and mentorship from PIs and Co-Is.

In Brazil, Luciana Bizzotto (RF) received additional support from the University of Birmingham through the Brazil Visiting Fellows Scheme to visit UoB between May and July 2024.

Support was also provided to doctoral students in Brazil who assisted Giatti and Bizzotto with the fieldwork; they were involved in the planning and implementation of the different aspects of the project including organising workshops, photovoice sessions and visual webs.

### 2.2. As a result of the research, have any team members obtained any prizes, awards or commendations? (Please only include information that is available in the public domain).

No (not yet!)

### 2.3. Did the project lead to any additional and or unexpected collaborations outside of the research team? If so, please provide details.

As mentioned above, Panex-Youth has been closely working with the B4 project also funded by the TAP RRR Call). We are running an ESRC IAA project together with the view of developing further research collaborations.

3. **Conclusions** (please provide a brief summary with the main positive and negative issues concerning your project).

**Positive**

- We allowed young people to make their voices heard and offered unprecedented opportunities for reflection that helped them to deal with impacts of COVID-19 that were often effaced in efforts to 'move on' after the pandemic;
- We allowed trans-national comparative dialogue and knowledge transfer amongst academics, youth and a range of stakeholder representatives;
- Our work reached international arena while generating local impacts;
- Further collaboration opportunities emerged as a result of our research, within and beyond the existing team.

**Negative:**

- Budget was limited and it would have been good to have at least £500K on the ESRC side to run the project for a longer period and enable greater research support (especially for data analysis);
- Alignments and requirements with other funders (incl. how to spend the budget, for what etc.).

#### **4. Recommendations for the Trans-Atlantic Platform**

- Ensure that all funders are fully aware of each other's funding requirements.
- Allow higher budget threshold (typically when FeC are required).