sharing
collaboration
cooperation

Collaborating in times of crisis: Lessons learnt during the Covid-19 pandemic

PROJECT

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Preface

Previous intellectual outputs of SCC project analyzed the types of collaborative spaces in respect to their degree of collaboration, their integration with education and training institutions and their internal structure. We explored the internal needs of those communities and we offered tools to address them. Now it is time to look at collaborative spaces from a different perspective: how do they fit in our society after 2020/2021?

The present document is the result of a collective reflection on the essence of how collaborative spaces and innovation communities can contribute to a better social life and a more sustainable societal development after the Covid-19 pandemic. We collected examples, lessons learnt, and challenges to offer a vision for the future, near and distant. The conclusions and recommendations are based on our own reflections and the feedback received in the local events and the final European event online in August 2021.

Introduction

Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on workers and coworking/collaborative spaces in Europe and globally

The advancement of affordable and convenient technologies supporting the day-to-day activities of knowledge workers led to the rise of digital nomadism in the early 2000s and that went hand in hand with the growth of the coworking market. Coworking and digitally-enabled remote work are tightly intertwined since the beginning of the coworking movement. This growth progressed steadily for more than a decade and the two concepts gained a central role in the reflections on the future of work. The idea was that, while still a minority, digital nomads and other location-independent workers represented an evolution of traditional office work and coworking spaces seemed like the natural habitat to accommodate new working patterns and flexible work models.
The real estate industry largely followed this trend and investments have grown steadily in the large market that emerged both in North America and Europe, and in other areas like India and South-East Asia.

The pandemic outbreak of Covid-19, a new illness caused by SARS-COV-2 virus that can be carried and transmitted also by patients not showing symptoms, determined a global health crisis that rapidly spread from Wuhan, China (December 2019) to the rest of the world. By March 2020 the pandemic hit Europe. Italy was the first country to register a high number of infections and the rest of EU countries followed (France and Spain, initially). Governments tried to slow down the spread of the virus imposing lockdowns and various restrictions in an increasing number of countries throughout late winter and spring. Stay-at-home orders and compulsory confinement drastically changed the patterns of urban life and energy consumption.

Suddenly remote work became the norm for most office workers while a vast majority of workers with non-teleworkable assignments were furloughed or suspended in various ways, or had to adapt to new tasks and ways of working. The education sector was particularly affected with the enforcement of distance and online learning for most levels of education (secondary and higher education in particular).
This abrupt digital transition was determined by the emergency and didn't fit into the trend towards coworking mentioned previously; on the contrary it was distinctively accompanied by isolation. The economic and organizational consequences for collaborative and coworking spaces were severe: according to the Coworking Survey Europe 2020 by coworkingeurope.net[1] 77% of coworking spaces reported a loss in revenues since the beginning of the pandemic and 66% offer less community oriented activities. The renewal of restriction measures and lockdowns after the summer of 2020 worsened the situation and forced most coworkings to modify once again their activities and adapt.

The combination of work and school from home completely and suddenly changed also the family life of millions of workers with an unprecedented effect on work-life

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[1] https://coworkingstatistics.com/all-results-of-the-2020-coworking-survey-europe

balance. The situation is multifaceted and had both positive and negative consequences.

Before the pandemic some parents (especially mothers) used to miss meetings or joined late because they had to get their children out of the house and accompany them to school before commuting into the office and if they managed to be present on time they were often already more tired than their colleagues and found difficult to make their voices heard. For this kind of workers online meetings and flexible hours made a real difference presenting an opportunity to do their job more efficiently and feel better.

At the same time many workers are suffering from so-called Zoom fatigue[2] that occurs when a person is confronted with their own image and a grid of faces staring on the screen daily for hours.

There are other aspects of remote work that can create issues for workers in various situations:

Digital divide creates an unfair environment where some workers have to overcome more obstacles to complete the same tasks than others doing the same job; Most of the time enterprises shifted to work-from-home abruptly and the costs of operations have not been duly evaluated creating hidden costs that have to be absorbed by workers on their own, the toll taken by isolation on well-being and mental health has still to be understood and analysed completely but it is already clear that many people suffer in different ways [3]from lack of social interaction in the workplace and, once again, women are more represented among those that felt the weight of isolation as a result of working from home during the pandemic.

Reviewing studies and articles published between March 2020 and July 2021 it became clear for us that, at the time this document is published, there are no easy unequivocal interpretations of the consequences of the sudden shift to remote work that the global workforce experienced and is still experiencing in many countries. What is however clear is that the world of work and consequently the labour market are not the same as they were in 2019.

The mindset of many workers has rapidly changed and a majority of employers are struggling to keep up with this evolution. The year 2021 has seen a surge in persons reevaluating their priorities and pursuing career changes or straight-up ending their employment. This is unprecedented. The situation is so new that economists and journalists started to use the terms "Great Resignation" first coined by the organizational psychologist Anthony Klotz in 2019 to describe a possible future scenario of massive drop in occupation due to workers voluntarily quitting their jobs. That future is now.

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[2] https://news.stanford.edu/2021/02/23/four-causes-zoom-fatigue-solutions/
[3] https://www.rsph.org.uk/about-us/news/survey-reveals-the-mental-and-physical-health-impacts-of-home-working-during-covid-19.html

Sentiment Analysis: Collaborative Economy - coworking, coliving, cohousing

Many of the changes mentioned are driven by a new wave of self-awareness in the workforce. Forced in isolation, taken out of their usual routine, many workers had to confront their own motivations and goals, and some found that their perception of their job and their work environment wasn't what they thought. This disharmony was felt by many and started to trickle into public debate.

Before and during the pandemic Condiviso conducted a **research** on the topics of coworking, coliving and cohousing.
The research employed a digital tool based on a semantic engine capable of interpreting the content of information, perfect for analysing the web, digitized newspapers and social media: The tool is called Monitoring Emotion [4]. It analyzes in real time thousands of digital contents in more than 60 languages.
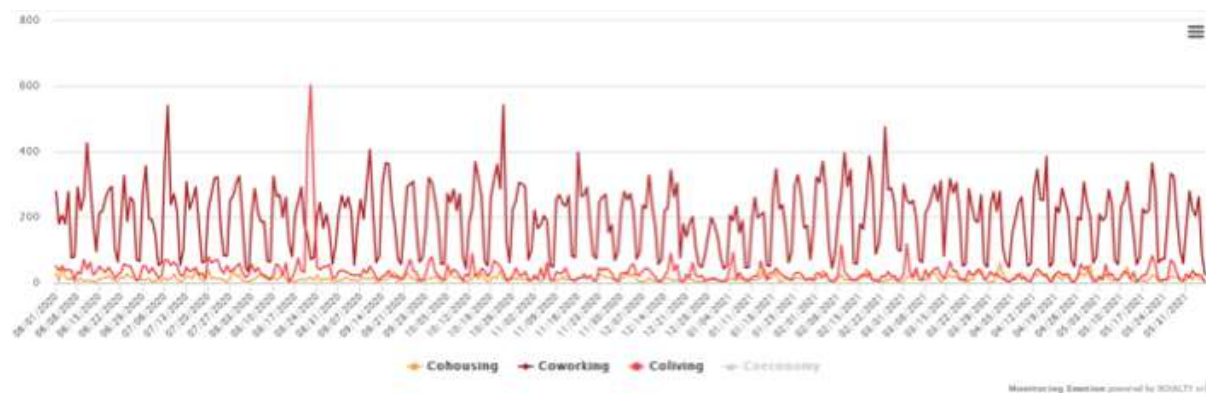
In the year between June 2020 and June 2021 the system collected over 116000 contents on coworking, coliving and cohousing in Italian and English including articles, news, blogs, posts and tweets. 75% of the contents are about coworking and 84% are in English.

Share of Voice
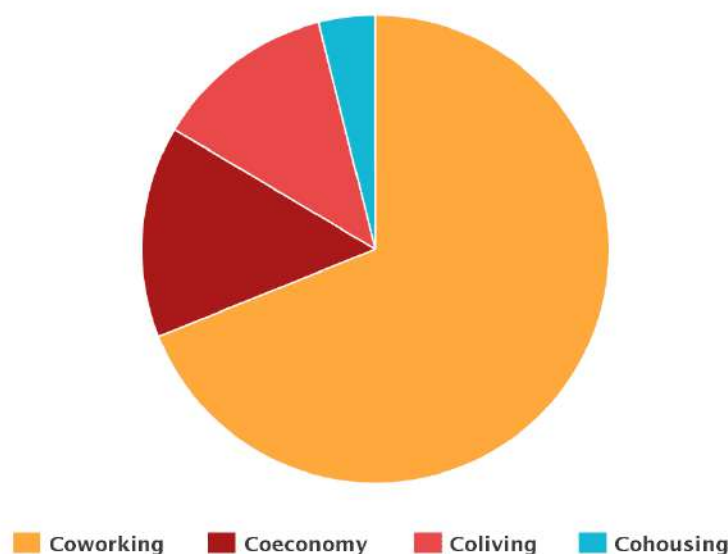
Monitoring Emotion powered by ROIALTY srl

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[4] http://www.monitoringemotion.it/wp/eng/

A difference emerges between Italy and the Anglo-Saxon world (not only in terms of quantity of messages issued) but also in terms of the topics addressed: In English it is "Real Estate" the term that is most prominent in connection (and therefore the impact that the increasingly widespread experiences of coworking, coliving and cohousing have on the real estate market and urban development), while in Italian social issues prevail (both from the point of view of the social enterprises involved in experiments pertaining to collaborative economy, and in discussions on the social impact that coworking, coliving and cohousing have on society).

Lockdowns obviously had an impact on communication too. Coworking spaces were closed and Covid-19 monopolized the public conversation. When it was possible to reopen, after a first moment of apparent immobility, a strong dynamism was noticeable, with increased communication efforts by big and well-structured companies, which were looking for flexible solutions to make their employees work remotely (in Italian mostly addressed with the English words "smart working"), as well as from home, especially in managed environments guaranteeing respect of adequate security protocols and that they were, at the same time, a place of relationship: the coworking. Amongst the main messages related to the coeconomy dimension, the most significant is "community", the sense of belonging and the advantages of being in a group. This shift of focus towards community increased for the whole duration of the research.
In July 2020 the news stream from United States was dominated by the same research cited by seventy online newspapers showing that, until the end of 2021, 6% of all American workers will provide their services entirely remotely and that between 25% and 30% will work from home for several days a week. That sparked a debate for a while and a need for suburban coworkings and community spaces clearly emerged.

In the examined year two absolute peaks of communication were identified in particular, one for each language.

The noticeable peak in Italian language content happened in September 2020 when the debate was sparked by a tweet from Giorgio Gori, mayor of Bergamo (one of the cities most affected by the pandemic in Europe), who tweeted:
"I believe that coworking places in the cities need to be set up. This reduces commuting to large cities - hours lost in cars or on trains - but people are not forced to work at home, and dialogue, and perhaps even collaboration between workers is a benefit."

The message went viral with 260 retweets and generated numerous comments. The discussion on proximity and coworkings is still going one year later and many initiatives are emerging to experiment on this topic.

Giorgio Gori ✔
@giorgio_gori

Io credo si debbano attrezzare dei luoghi di coworking nelle città. Così si riduce il pendolarismo verso le grandi metropoli - ore perse in auto o sui treni - ma non si obbliga la gente a lavorare in casa, e si consente il dialogo, e magari anche la collaborazione, tra lavoratori

> **Francesco Luccisano** @FLuccisano · 6 set 2020
> Mi piacciono molte cose dello #smartworking:fiducia al posto di controllo, squadra al posto di gerarchia, risultati al posto di timbrature.Solo una cosa non riesco a mandare giù:lavorare da casa. Il lavoro che ti entra in camera, che ti bussa in bagno,che concorre con la famiglia

4:20 PM · 6 set 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

English-speaking content spiked in October 2020 when Sen. Kamala Harris (then running in the presidential campaign for United States elections) participated in a fundraising event meeting students in a coworking space in Atlanta: The Gathering Spot. It is interesting to notice that The Gathering Spot is not just any coworking space, it is a membership club funded to support networking and community building for entrepreneurs in an area known for its huge inequalities, especially among the African-American population. The club has since grown significantly despite the health crisis and the lockdowns, and they opened two new locations in 2021in Washington D.C. and Los Angeles.

Urban development, pollution, proximity, and collaborative spaces

After the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic on 11 March 2020, the world saw the quickest decrease of citizens mobility in documented history. A globalized world with the aviation sector brought to almost a standstill and urban traffic enormously reduced. Confinement measures and the pandemic also showed their effect on industry emissions. The Global Carbon Project [5] estimates that Fossil CO_2 emissions have fallen in all the world's biggest emitters (by 12% in the US, 11% in the EU, 9% in India and 1.7% in China). While a lasting effect of this sudden reduction in emissions is unlikely, it represents an opportunity for policy changes that can determine a more sustainable economic recovery compared to previous economic crises, limiting the rebound effect seen in the 2010s in the aftermath of the 2008-2009 financial crisis.

A combination of behavioral changes, city planning, organization of work, and a shift towards renewable energy could represent the best hope for a sustained reduction of air pollution.
Since the most significant reduction in CO_2 emissions in 2020 is from oil, it is more and more clear that the lockdowns around the world affected greatly surface transports (private and public use of roads and railways). The reduction of commute traffic had not only a positive effect on CO_2 levels but on air quality too; especially in big cities.

The impact on aviation has been even greater (75% reduction at the peak in 2020) but the combined emissions of the aviation industry account for less than 3% of global emissions. In any case a shift in business travel could affect also this source of pollution in the near future if companies will favorite web conferencing over international meetings in person.
On the other hand a large number of citizens forced to spend most or all of their day at home will increase the energy consumption of their households. Although a study from Poland[6] on energy consumption during lockdowns shows an increase in daily electricity demand with practically unchanged peak loads, thus the risk of overload for electric networks is not high. As long as a transfer of energy consumption from offices and schools to residential buildings continues the existing infrastructures can safely supply the energy requested.

The 15-minute city initiative [7]popularized in 2019 by the mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo is known around the world with many names: 'ciudad a escala humana' ('human-scale city', Buenos Aires), 'complete neighbourhoods' (Portland, Oregon), 'Barrios Vitales' ('vital neighbourhoods', Bogotá), '20-minute neighbourhoods' (Melbourne), 'superblock' (Barcelona), for example. It represents a new style of urban planning that aims at the transformation of the urban texture in big cities to adapt it to a more sustainable and equitable urban living. A stronger sense of community and lower pollution are both objectives that collaborative spaces have in common with these

[5] https://www.globalcarbonproject.org/news/TemporaryReductionInCO2EmissionsDuringCOVID-19.html
[6] Bielecki,S.;Skoczkowski, T.; Sobczak, L.; Buchoski, J.; Macia ̦g, Ł.; Dukat, P. Impact of the Lockdown during the COVID-19 Pandemic on Electricity Use by Residential Users. *Energies* **2021**, *14*, 980.
[7] https://www.15minutecity.com/

initiatives and the integration of them into urban planning is an opportunity for the future of big and smaller cities alike.

The city of Milan (Italy) announced their new policy of "near working[8]" in the spring of 2021: as of March 2020, public employees have been largely working from home and most services have been offered through online platforms or over the phone with very limited contacts between citizens and administrative workers. After the end of the emergency the vast majority of employees were expected to go back to their office. The "near working" initiative aims at keeping the positive aspects of remote work (less transport pollution and traffic, better work-life balance, more efficient use of time) by allowing public employees to be members of coworking spaces near their home, thus avoiding isolation and hidden costs that are sustained by the worker directly. The proposal goes also beyond just "placing" workers in coworking: the idea is to offer services for citizens directly at the coworkings, creating a network of decentralized public offices that people can easily reach on foot near their home. The same approach can be shared by Universities and training centers, especially to complement online learning and avoid isolation of students.

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[8] https://www.greenplanner.it/2021/03/16/near-working-rilancia-coworking/

Lessons Learnt

The original collaborative vocation of the coworking concept inevitably refers to its users and the necessity to build together the services that will answer to their needs. It is evident that thinking about the future of coworking and collaborative spaces to make them sustainable in the post-pandemic world and more resilient in the future cannot be done without involving as early as possible in the process the persons who will populate those spaces.

The contacts with coworking and collaborative spaces that lead to the publication of the "Best practices report on collaborative spaces and cooperative governance"[9] as well as the experiences of the project partners (in particular the support activities for new communities lead by Febecoop in Coopcity, Brussels) allowed us to identify a few keys to developing new sustainable spaces in close collaboration with their communities.

Keys to making collaborative spaces more resilient through intelligent activation of their communities

More than a vademecum or a modus operandi, these shared experiences should be considered as keys to catalyse new thinking, to envisage a new and open landscape of future possibilities while keeping its roots in the collaborative fundamentals and, also, taking inspiration from the cooperative model.

Key 1: have a complete and detailed vision of its users and stakeholders

The robustness of the cooperative model is based on a strong and bi-directional interaction between users and the shared enterprise, between the whole and its components. To build or rebuild a resilient collaborative space, it is important first of all to identify the users most concerned by the project and therefore those most likely to invest in making the place better. This approach, which consists of assessing the strength of the bond, the potential win-win relationship, will enable the process to begin by focusing on the "ideal" users.

To approach this criterion of interdependence, it may be useful to map all the categories of users in a very broad way by placing them on a graph with two axes:
- Axis 1: degree of interdependence of the user towards the collaborative space (how necessary or even "vital" is the space that we want to develop for the user?)
- Axis 2: degree of interdependence of the space with the user (to what extent can the user make a decisive contribution to the project?)

See also Caracol Toolkit:
1 | A - Identify actors and leaders related to your topic
2 | A - Identify and map potential stakeholders and users

Key 2: Involve the target users as early as possible in the project

In order to be sustainable, a collaborative project must be able to count on a loyal and committed community that lives in and personifies the space. We are aware of the financial challenges faced by coworking spaces, which must now reinvent themselves or start from scratch. In this context, any cut of costs is welcome. However, the expenses associated with

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[9] https://www.scc.coop/research/

running a coworking space can be substantial. The users themselves have the capacity to become ambassadors, guides for newcomers and catalysts for initiatives within the space. To maximize this chance of being able to count on the optimal and long-term involvement of users, it is important to involve them as early as possible in the co-design or re-design of the project and to build a strategy entirely dedicated to their needs.

It is certainly not a question of meeting users with a ready-made project, a finalized business plan and an agreement just waiting to be signed. Rather, it is about engaging in an ongoing relationship of questioning, listening carefully to their needs and building together solutions. This approach requires great empathy on the part of the project leaders.

See also Caracol Toolkit from part 1 | A - Identify actors and leaders related to your topic

Key 3: Identify the real needs of users

We often find difficult to clearly identify our own needs.
One of the reasons for this is the tendency of human beings to mix needs with solutions.
In the context of a coworking project, if a self-employed person expresses, for example, the need to be surrounded by a community of peers, they are in fact already identifying a possible solution. Behind the proposed solution we can detect the actual need: for an individual it might be to get out of isolation to preserve their own well-being and mental health or for a small economic actor it could be an economic necessity to get together with others to access economies of scale or reach new markets. To help the future user to express real needs, our experience leads us to guide the reflection by asking to refer to real-life problems (the term "problem" is more popular when talking about ourselves and it adheres more to the notion of real need).

See also Caracol Toolkit : 2 | B - Meet and listen to stakeholders to validate the context and needs analysis

Key 4: define an ambitious and realistic sharing policy

The concept of coworking clearly stems from a mutualistic approach to the workplace and the organization of labor. Thus, the intelligent sharing of resources (material, human or knowledge) is supposed to have a beneficial leverage effect for the entrepreneurs and other isolated workers who make up the coworking community. In the process of strategic modelling of the project, it is important to have a broad understanding of the possibilities of applying this principle of mutualisation. The mere pooling together of the "office resource" is undoubtedly limiting and risks leading to coworking projects that are reduced to the simple "parallel" coexistence of different professional actors without there being any collaboration or cooperation between them. That would a coworking only in real estate terms.

However, while we must be ambitious and make users aware of the virtues of sharing, it is important to set the cursor at a level that is appropriate for each individual. For example, someone could imagine a shared workspace based on cooperative principles and aimed at securing the salaries of self-employed and freelancers by pooling their income. But it is easy to understand that this touches on a delicate aspect of every worker's life: revenues and personal resources. When the community is not yet mature enough to adopt more advanced collaborative strategies, it is recommended to move forward step by step to find the right balance for the community.

See also Caracol Toolkit : 2 | C - Reinforce your vision by sharing and discussing it with stakeholders to reach alignment

Key 5: value the contributions of the users involved

Recognising and valuing the inputs provided by the contributors to the project, by analogy, is like keeping a full tank of fuel when you want to drive a long way. It is indeed a necessity when trying to keep these crucial resources for the project active over time. Whether it is in the co-construction of the space and its animation, or as ambassadors of the place, the expected involvement of users is high. Unfortunately, this involvement is not always properly valued (especially in the initial phases of self-financed project for obvious financial reasons).

We sometimes witness this problem experienced by beautiful and ambitious projects, proposed by a competent and enthusiastic team that gradually loses traction because the main contributors are forced to abandon it. After a very promising start, these projects see their lifeblood running out because they have not been able to adequately compensate those who invested their time, energy and even their own money.

Where possible, it is often desirable to value contributions in the form of financial remuneration. However, when the means available are not sufficient, alternatives are possible, particularly in the form of compensation in kind (discounts, bonuses, recognitions, etc.).

See also Caracol Toolkit : 3 | A - Co-define the role, functions and relations in your team and with stakeholders

Key 6: Prototype, test, evolve without losing sight of the financial balance

Each coworking space is unique because it derives its DNA from a community of users that is as unique and multiple as the number of different individuals that make it up. This influence of the users on the unique future of the project is even more important when they are involved from the design phase onwards, as is advocated. This uniqueness challenges each project to create its own business model. It is therefore not a question of applying a "ready-made" format and slightly adapting it. It is necessary to truly embarking on a journey of co-design to build a "tailor-made" model with the community of future users. In this context, we know that constraints and solutions will continually emerge not only in the initial phases of the project's existence but also during its evolution and growth. These challenges will lead the project to readjust, pivot and reinvent itself as it evolves. It is therefore inappropriate to start with a definitive, XXL version of the project. Ture collaboration is a process of experimentation and it is therefore recommended to start with a prototype which can be continually adapted according to the steps forward made by the community.

If we defend an approach based on experimentation and the right to imperfection in the intermediate models tested, it seems important to us to anchor the process in a search for economic equilibrium as early as possible. As we have seen, it is particularly important that the project should quickly be able to adequately value the contributions of its participants. From this point of view, it is advised to think of the prototype(s) to be tested in terms of a "minimum viable product".

See also Caracol Toolkit : 3 | C - Strategy, Planning, Management

Challenges for collaborative spaces:
the case of ESSPace

ESSpace is a place of life and initiatives located in the 13th arrondissement in Paris. The space hosts multiple activities: bar-restaurant, coworking space, meeting rooms, conviviality space, food distribution. ESSpace is mostly dedicated to the development of the Social and Solidarity Economy (ESS) in the 13th arrondissement and in the whole city of Paris.
ESSpace was founded in 2015 and has been open since 2017. Since that date, the place has been seeking economic stability while developing its own community, and its activities have grown strongly according to users' demands.
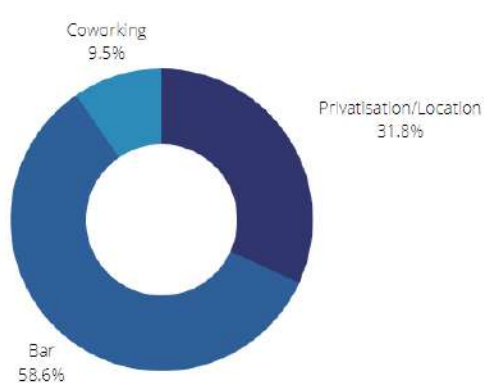

ESSPace and the Covid-19 Crisis
The Covid-19 crisis had and important impact on ESSpace and its activities. During the first lockdown in France, between march and June 2020, the place was completely closed. A reopening has been organized between June and September 2020, but the limits imposed on gatherings prevented the relaunch of normal activities.

During the second and third lockdown between October 2020 and June 2021, the place struggled to stay open even if the bar-restaurant was closed as well as the meeting rooms. During this period, only the coworking space remained open with a strict limitation on the number of coworkers present in the space at the same time.
Since June 2021, the place is gradually reopening, and its various activities resume as restrictions are lifted.

Between 2019 and 2020, the association recorded a loss of 71.5% of its turnover compared to 2019. This loss was however limited by aid from the State and Communities (solidarity fund, partial unemployment, cash advance, Exceptional Grant).

In 2020, for certain periods during the year, the entire team was placed on short-time work.

In September 2021, even if activities restarted again, the situation is still fragile for ESSpace and the next months will be decisive for the future of the organization.

Breakdown of ESSpace revenues by activity
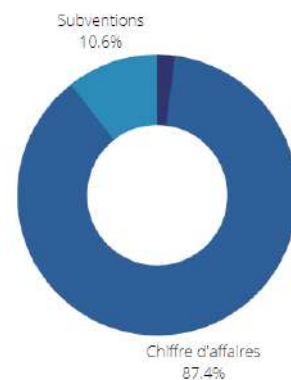
Breakdown of ESSpace incomes between subsidies and revenues

Solidarity never stopped

Despite the covid-19 and the lockdowns, ESSpace continued to develop solidarity actions

In September 2020, in partnership with the City of Paris and Linkee[10], ESSpace decided to host a food distribution for students.

We have seen during the year to what extent the coronavirus crisis has exacerbated the precariousness of students, which comes in several ways: economic, social but also psychological.

At the beginning, the distribution was planned as a one-off action on Monday and Thursday evenings. However, the greater demand pushed our community to completely open our doors to Linkee.

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[10] https://linkee.co/

In December 2020, the restaurant room was 100% used by Linkee for different uses:

- A place of distribution; nearly 500 students came by every Monday and Thursday to retrieve a 6 to 7 kg food parcel (or about 3 tons of food given at each distribution);

- A storage location, allowing Linkee to supply its distributions to ESSpace and other places in Ile-de-France region;

- ESSPACE kitchen was used as a place to cook and prepare food for students and other associations. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings, a team of volunteers cooked and prepared over 1000 dishes each week.

At the same time, on distribution times, the rest of ESSpace has been opened for other volunteering associations to offer the most complete possible support to students. Some of the partner associations present were:
- Les Psys du Coeur, which offers free individual psychological support for all students,
- L'ACLEF which helps students find accommodation in Paris,
- LMDE which offers health awareness actions.

Thanks to this collaboration, in 2020 several thousand students passed through the doors of ESSpace to find the warmest welcome possible, food packages and support services to help them get through this extremely complicated period.

Through the pandemic and beyond
During the most critical phases of the health crisis the members of ESSpace never stopped to collaborate and strengthen links between the actors of the Social and Solidarity Economy on their territory.

Based on the experience in 2020, ESSpace managed the launch of a network bringing together these actors in the 13th arrondissement in 2021.

The network has three main objectives:

- Promote mutual knowledge between actors
- Support the skills development of employees and volunteers of member structures
- Promote the creation of solidarity projects in the 13th arrondissement

Above all, this network aims to encourage solidarity initiatives like the one that took place at ESSpace with Linkee. Create a neighborhood of solidarity in which a close dialogue is established between the inhabitants, associations, local businesses, and public authorities providing services to those in need in the immediate proximity of where they live, study, or work.

Challenges for education:
the case of Mondragon University

Overview: Impacted areas

The exceptional circumstances of Covid-19 Pandemic implied the teaching transformation from a face-to-face format to a non-face-to-face format for most of the 2019-2020 academic year.
The areas that required specific adaptation included:

- Academic calendar
- Competences and learning outcomes
- Teaching activities and methodologies
- Evaluation systems
- Internships
- Student mobility
- Training students and Teaching & Research Staff to acquire competences on non-face-to-face or online learning
- Management of inscriptions, admissions and enrollment

In this exceptional situation, it is important to enable channels to manage the situation together with stakeholders and get suggestions for improvement from their side (students, teachers, collaborating companies or organizations). In the case of students, it involved the monitoring of the situation and the contrast of the necessary adaptations were being carried out both through the Mondragon University Student Council and the different Committees of the Centers in which the students participate.

New modes of education / learning & collaboration

Due to Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns and limitations, the Universities have generated new modes of learning and collaboration . The learning modalities included in Mondragon University´s regulations were/are the following:
- **Face-to-face mode:** it requires the regular and continuous attendance of the student during training activities at the university. The face-to-face modality combines physical attendance to the university center with other autonomous learning activities.
- **Online learning[11]:** it requires that most of the training activities provided (tutoring/mentoring, learning and student assessment) are carried out on a digital platform and, therefore, do not require the student to physically go to the educational center

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[11] The online modalities are considered included within the distance modality defined in the ANECA Support Guide V.04-16 / 01/2012 -
http://deva.aac.es/include/files/universidades/verificacion/Guia_de_apoyo_VERIFICACION_AAC_V03_020616_en.pdf

- **Blended teaching:** it requires that the planning of the training studies combines the physical attendance of the student at the educational center and the online delivery of some activities on a digital platform following the online modality.

The learning models can be categorized into different typology types based on
a) presence
b) type of synchronism
c) the sequencing

The resulting combinations are:
Presence:
- **Physical presence**: face to fase physical activities on campus and in companies and organizations.
- **Virtual presence:** synchronous activities carried out by videoconference outside the Campus or companies and institutions.

Synchronism:
- **Synchronous** : when the interaction (in the digital or physical environment) between the people participating in the learning activity occurs simultaneously in time.
- **Asynchronous:** when the interaction should not occur simultaneously (autonomous work, recorded activities, etc.).

Sequencing:
- **Simultaneous presence:** when learning activities are delivered physically and virtually simultaneously. In this model are the mirror rooms applied
- **Shift activities:** when physical and virtual face-to-face activities alternate. In this model, while one group of students is in physical activity, another group works in asynchronous virtual activities.

Context	Presence	Learning conducted in person by the Teacher-Tutor (**Guided Learning**)	Learning developed by the student by himself or in the company of his peers (**autonomous learning**)
Physical (on campus)	**Face-to-face**	**Synchronous** (classroom activities, tutorials, labs, etc.)	**Asynchronous** (students in the library, physically working in groups, etc.)
Virtual (on campus or off campus)	**Face-to-face**	**Synchronous** (videoconferences, streaming sessions, mirror classrooms)	X
	No presential	**Asynchronous** (recorded sessions, webinars)	**Asynchronous** (students from home or MUdle campus)

Depending on the scenario, the learning model can be adapted taking into account the combination of presence, synchronism and sequencing. Depending on the following

axes (predominance of the physical or digital context) we can have the following models:

- **Adapted face-to-face:** when the digital context represents or complements some face-to-face activities and methodologies. In general:

  - Although physical presence is the basis, several activities take place virtually.
  - Synchronous activities are preferred over asynchronous ones.
  - The activities are designed with the digital and face-to-face context in mind.
  - The percentages of face-to-face work (physical or virtual, directed by a teacher or tutor) and autonomous work (own or in collaboration with their colleagues) are maintained.
  - Simultaneous presence (physical and virtual) arises in physical contexts and alternating activities in which physical presence is mandatory (for example, laboratory practices).
  - In some cases, while one group of students performs physical activity in person, another group will develop asynchronous virtual activities.

- **Flexible hybrid model:** when the face-to-face and the digital context are combined, complementing different activities and methodologies. In general:

  - Asynchronous activities are preferred over synchronous ones.
  - The activities are designed with the digital and face-to-face context in mind, but this design requires a rethinking of what is usually done in the face-to-face physical context through a specific design.
  - The protagonism of the student will intensify in the learning process and the activities that are developed will be developed mostly in person (physical). The activities will be offered on a rotating basis on different days (while one group of students performs physical activity in person, another group will develop asynchronous virtual activities). Due to the Covid situation, some students will substitute physical activities for asynchronous virtual activities.

Example of new methodologies/activities at Mondragon Team Academy (MTA)

Online experience: the Covid situation resulted in enabling new forms, spaces, dynamics, initiatives and activities, communication channels with entrepreneurs at Mondragon Team Academy to continue being close, connected and thus, assuring the development of the training program. Everything in person was adapted to the virtual format (dialogue sessions, workshops). For that purpose Mondragon created a team (LEINN ONLINE[12]) leading the process of this offline-online transformation.

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[12] https://www.openleinn.org/

The changes introduced the use of tools such as Googlemeet, Webinars, Slack, Loomio, Mudle etc. which allowed MTA students to continue their learning process.

Connection with global challenges: during the Covid crisis an agenda of activities for the MTA community including talks, workshops, online events of its own production was developed, supplemented also with activities that other partners and agents of the ecosystem were offering.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of such initiatives:

• Creatingforhumanity.org: Mondragon Team Academy (LEINN) together with MONDRAGON and other companies, Foundations and NGOs united to mobilize young people to create solutions to the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic. Creating for Humanity is a massive call to action that calls on social innovators to present ideas, solutions or start-ups that respond to the needs created or worsened by the health crisis.

• #EUvsVIRUS: MTA students participated in the Hackathon launched by the European Commission on April 24, 25 and 26 2020 to develop short-term innovative solutions for the imminent challenges related to coronavirus in different technological areas. MTA collectively solving some of the 37 challenges they launched, as well as leading the coordination and organization of the Efficient Remote Working Challenge within the Education area.

• Mondragon University staff, including colleagues from the MTA, together with the Maker community, also supported the preparation of Personal Protective Equipment for healthcare workers and first responders, using 3D printers in the University.

• MTA-EYWA and AIPOWER Venture Builder. MTA and more specifically the LEINN degree (Degree in Entrepreneurial Leadership and Innovation), together with the partners Eywa and Aipower (Venture Builders), launched a startup creation process composed of 7 modules in Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality technologies.

Right to digital disconnection: know how to say "NO" to collaboration
Faced with continuous connectivity scenarios, at Mondragon University we have established a regulation for the "right to digital disconnection".
Several recent studies have found that teleworking increases the risk of continuous digital connection. Also when it comes to flexible work, workers have the right to a "digital break": not to respond to calls, messages or to stop carrying out other telematic activities outside of each one's working hours.
Within this framework, in this autonomy and flexibility that everyone has to organize their work and their schedule in the most appropriate way, self-demand must be present to guarantee that the university staff complies with the work with quality. We have to have a proactive responsibility in this sense, because it is up to each person to establish disconnection limits and seek a balance. In order to reach this, we recommend to follow two criteria:

- On the one hand, and outside of working hours, the university staff is not obliged to have an urgent and immediate availability at all times; each one must assess and measure when to be available and when to say no, depending on the needs of the situation and using their common sense. On the other hand, university staff must also respect that other people have the same right to disconnection, so it's a shared responsibility to respect each other's limits..
- Working outside regular work hours can be a personal choice, but all the staff must take into consideration the influence that this generates on the colleagues. For this, it is highly recommended, for example, to schedule sending emails, or that phone calls made outside working hours are only for very urgent matters.

Lessons Learnt

Mondragon University was already working on a strategic plan and the pandemic was declared during the last phase of defining said strategic plan. Interestingly, the priorities already pointed out before the pandemic had tremendous relevance in this new context. Three of the strategic priorities are:

1. **Strengthen the personalized learning experience of students**.
2. **Reinforce the character of a global university open to the world**.
3. **Promote the digital transformation of the University, advancing in a more digital training offer and improving the services and processes of MU**.

Due to health crisis we have learned the importance of an adequate communication strategy and of reinforcing collaborative governance (students, teaching and research staff, administration and services staff). The management of the pandemic has been characterized by complexity and flexibility in decision-making. The management of the crisis has been and is multidimensional, it affects all areas of life in the university, the academic (it impacts teaching and research), the economic, the labor, and of course, the health and safety of all people.

The state of the pandemic and the related rules change week by week and new situations arise, new challenges to which we must respond within very short time frames and with little certainties in planning. The way to respond to this complexity is through collaborative governance, providing different views on a problem that is multidisciplinary in nature. We have opted to create more or less structured "grupos de contraste" with students, teachers, and the whole of the Basque higher education system.

This complexity and agility in response have also put our governance model to the test. It is a very unique governance model, since we have a cooperative governance model, where each faculty is an independent and sovereign cooperative and therefore with a high degree of autonomy in decision-making. In this situation, we have understood the importance of providing specific solutions in each area, reinforcing the coordination amongst all the faculties.

We had to reinforce financial support for students with an extraordinary financing plan of €2 million with the aim that no one who wanted to study at the University of Mondragon had to stop doing so due to their economic situation, given the evidence

that a significant number of members of our students' families have been impacted by the economic crisis and were involved in temporary employment regulation files.

In relation to the strategic axis of **strengthening a more personalized learning experience for the student**, we have opted to return to face-to-face education, tutoring and mentoring with virtual support strategies that enrich classroom-based education. On the other hand, in some areas in which there was already established practices of online education, a hybrid model has been proposed as a starting point where the curricular designs are already based on combined strategies of face-to-face and virtual education. To achieve this objective, we reinforced the training of teachers in instructional design and assessment strategies.

The pandemic had a global impact with unprecedented simultaneous effects all over the world. This situation validates even more the strategic priority of **reinforcing the character of a global university open to the world**.
In January 2020, we began to monitor the situation of the pandemic in China weekly, with restrictions on the departure of students who were staying in Shanghai. We ended up suspending all international mobility and learning journeys at the beginning of April 2020, organizing the repatriation of all students who were outside Europe. Internationalization was the first area that put our crisis management skills to the test. In the 2021-2022 academic year, we have decided to keep international mobility because our educational project aims to deepen the student's experiential learning even if that requires additional logistics.

Last but not least, within the framework of the strategic priority of **promoting the digital transformation of the University**, the educational model of the future points to a progressive hybrid model. On the other hand, it is necessary to tackle a process of digital transformation of the University's processes and services to keep up with the pace of the teaching and learning activities.

Conclusions from the case
The Covid pandemic made evident the necessity for connectivity.
Connectivity brings people closer despite distance, providing instant and close contact. Mondragon University is committed to offer great opportunities in the field of work and education, bringing together very different people who share information and can work together in presence or remotely. Thanks to new technologies, communication is more efficient, since different resources are available to transmit what is wanted quickly and clearly. The opportunities that arise in universities in this scenario are manyfold e.g.
Multicultural teams: Carrying out projects with teams made up of people from different faculties or distant universities from other countries;
More work environments, fewer traditional classrooms: Environments that promote efficient and effective collaborative work avoiding traditional classrooms where the protagonist was the teacher;
Cooperation: online sharing of outcomes and results with other (distant) higher education institutions and stakeholders to obtain constructive criticism, opinions, etc. in addition to document recommendations and research exchanges.

Conclusions and recommendations

In the words of the OECD:

The COVID-19 pandemic is transforming how we think about our economies and our societies. The policy choices governments make today will determine their success in building a transition to a greener, more inclusive and more resilient tomorrow. It is an opportunity to chart a path that empowers everyone to face the future with confidence.[13]

Collaborative spaces and their communities have enormous potential to tackle all the topics mentioned and they represent a precious opportunity for decision-makers at local, national and European level to develop sustainable and tailor-made solutions for the needs of citizens in a society in transition.

A more structured and stable approach from policy-makers is needed to facilitate the spread and upscaling of community-led collaborative initiatives, including collaborative spaces. Regulations and policies will need to become adequate to support the adoption of collaborative solutions and foster the development of a just, responsible and inclusive collaborative economy lead by communities innovating in their own contexts.

The following recommendations are just examples of policies that need to be put in place to sustain the emergence of collaborative spaces and to strengthen innovation communities:

Support the development of collaborative ecosystems
- *Establish public-private partnerships empowering the local communities and supporting the emergence of new collaborative enterprises*
- *Leverage the role of public bodies as employers to mainstream collaborative spaces and proximity services (near work – distributed services and contact points)*

Tackle digital divide
- *support collaborative approaches that benefit the whole community instead of promoting recurring incentives for individuals to buy new technologic devices*
- *Support education institutions to train their teacher for the transition to hybrid education and to equip their students with all necessary skills and materials*

Encourage experimentation in Polycentric cities and proximity services (15-minute cities and similar).
- *Integrate collaborative spaces in urban planning involving local communities and supporting the emergence of new ones*
- *Engage the population and collect data to ensure the adoption of evidence-based solutions for local needs*

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[13] https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/en/

- *Promote networking and exchange of best practices between neighborhoods that are at different stages of urban transformation. It is particularly important to involve local communities and local businesses in underserved and lower-income areas to make the initiatives truly inclusive and collaborative*

Include collaboration in Energy policies
- *Promote incentives for carbon footprint reduction of collaborative spaces*
- *Experiment with prosumer schemes for collectively managed properties and remote workers' households*

More than anything else what is needed to stir the recovery towards a better future for everyone is a consistent long-term strategy for collaborative initiatives. We need a consistent approach in policy at all levels, especially at EU level, to guarantee the emergence of a distributed ecosystem, the establishment of adequate funding lines, the modernization of education and training.

ANNEX 1

Press Review – Collaborative spaces during the Covid-19 crisis

- 2021 – Rapport France Tiers Lieux : "Les tiers-lieux face à la crise Covid-19 » - Collaborative spaces facing the Covid 19 crisis

Abstract:

The Covid-19 crise had an important impact on the collaborative spaces. The organization "France Tiers Lieux" estimate that these spaces recorded a loss of 111 million over the period. In 2021, 80% of spaces suggest a potential closure in the short or medium term. At the same time, collaboratives spaces were the first to set up solidarity actions during the crisis. Some helped with the medical equipment by making masks and protective visors. Other initiated actions to deliver food and supply for people who needed it. Despite these actions, collaborative spaces are emerging from the crisis weakened.
Link: https://francetierslieux.fr/rapport-tiers-lieux-2021/

- 2020 – News Tank Culture : "Think Culture 2020 : « La crise du Covid-19 a rendu les tiers-lieux plus crédibles » (Stéphane Vatinel) » - The Covid-19 crisis has made those places more credible

Abstract:

"The Covid-19 crisis is an issue that has made collaborative spaces progress much faster than we had hoped for years. A number of commitments that we defend are now in the spotlight: ecology, biodiversity, short circuits, diversity of audiences, reduction of daily trips, etc.(…) At the lockdown's end, we had become credible partners for a number of elected officials or traditionally conservative establishments." - Stéphane Vatinel - Directeur général @ Sinny & Ooko

"The Covid-19 crisis has put public space and local amenities back at the heart of a city's cultural development. It calls for new practices, new ways of looking at the contribution of the public when a project is created. It is no longer the City that decides alone and collaborative places have their place in this renewed approach." - Laurence Dupouy-Veyrier - Vice-présidente @ Association des directrices et directeurs des affaires culturelles d'Ile-de-France
Link: https://docplayer.fr/198181969-Think-culture-2020-la-crise-du-covid-19-a-rendu-les-tiers-lieux-plus-credibles-stephane-vatinel.html

- 2021: "Coworking spaces: tools for spatial resilience in the post-Covid era?" - Divya LEDUCQ

Abstract:

"Over the past year, all new collaborative workspaces and third places, including coworking spaces (CWSs), have been affected by the pandemic. A systematic press review represents an original qualitative method to acquire contextualized secondary material through narratives and detailed cases in France. This research note reports the main results concerning the implemented strategies to cope with the effects of the crisis and regarding the increasing diversification of the remote workers using CWSs. In a future-oriented approach, we support the hypothesis that post-Covid19 coworking can be an effective tool for territorial resiliency based on several analytical perspectives: spatial scale, urban practices and public policies."
Link : https://journals.openedition.org/netcom/5569

- 2021: "Trop d'Open Spaces et pas assez d'espaces collaboratifs" (Too many Open Spaces and not enough collaborative spaces) – Forbes

Link: https://www.forbes.fr/management/trop-dopen-spaces-et-pas-assez-despaces-collaboratifs/

- 2021: "Coworking spaces after Covid: are they still the offices of tomorrow?" – Welcome to the Jungle

Abstract:
"The Covid crisis, which has affected many sectors, has been particularly hard on coworking spaces over the past year. Given the lockdowns, drastic health measures and even fear, have many places had to close permanently?
I don't think we know the number of closures around the world yet. For example, out of the 250 coworking spaces mentioned in the book, we have had to change four of the stories, because those places have closed. But those four spaces were relatively small and very much linked to freelancers, who were themselves quite affected by the crisis, which explains the logical chain of events. What is certain is that many spaces have adapted around the world. Many have launched virtual coworking, others have changed their business model by renting out their space to a single large company rather than to several, for example, while waiting for the crisis to end." - Pauline Roussel
Link: https://www.welcometothejungle.com/en/articles/coworking-spaces-after-covid

- 2020: "COVID-19, smart work, and collaborative space: A crisis-opportunity perspective" – Richard Hu

Abstract:
"In this essay, I employ a crisis-opportunity perspective to approach the practice of smart work and the making of collaborative space in responding and adapting to

COVID-19. These trends have been emerging at a faster pace in the recent decade, facilitated by a growing knowledge economy and information technological advancement. COVID-19 provides an extreme setting to test and trigger changes, and are likely to translate these emerging trends into a new normal in the way we work and the way we use space. This new normal, once established in the post-CVOID-19 world, will necessitate a new thinking about workplace management and space design to disrupt many norms rooted in an industrial age."

Link: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2226585620301898

- 2021 : "Rural coworking spaces in the Covid-19 era. A window of opportunity?" Elisabete Tomaz, Bruno Moriset, Jacques Teller

Abstract:
"The development of coworking spaces in rural areas has been the subject of great interest due to the expansion of digital technologies and the rise of new ways of working. They are increasingly seen as drivers of economic and social development. Rural coworking spaces typically host a diversity of professionals from various sectors who seek to reduce their daily commute and reconcile work and quality of life. Most of these spaces are located in converted buildings and provide shared office facilities, business support, and some social interaction that could counterbalance self-isolation experienced at home. The COVID-19 pandemic certainly challenged this model, but it also raised new opportunities given the widespread adoption of remote working. Based on the interviews conducted, it was possible to contribute to a better understanding of the resilience of rural coworking spaces, considering their specificities during the pandemic and their expected future development."
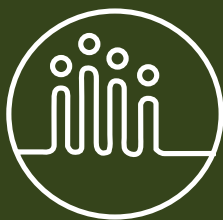Link: https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-03235464/

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