

Lessons Learned from International Responses to Covid-19

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues to persist in the United States, it is important to remember that this ongoing battle with the virus extends far beyond our shores.

No country has been spared the ramifications of this unprecedented global event. As of December 2nd, there have been 64,741,600 confirmed case of Covid-19 worldwide, with 1,566,602 attributed deaths. While every country has been impacted some have borne the brunt more than others such as India, Brazil, and the United States, each of which has seen more than 100,000 deaths due to the virus. However, some countries have stood out amidst this ongoing crisis, developing interesting and, in some cases, successful Covid-19 strategies which are worth studying in order to evaluate key patterns as well as address such questions as:

- Which nation's responses have been most effective and what lessons can the United States learn from them?
- Why have some regions of the world been more effected than others?
- What role have international and multilateral organizations played in addressing the issues related to the pandemic?
- And what are the steps being taken to ensure equitable access to an effective vaccine worldwide?

Countries under review include the following:

S. Korea:

The Republic of Korea has emerged as one the preeminent success stories of the Covid-19 era. Building upon its prior experience with MERS, [South Korea](#) acted quickly to subdue the virus within its borders. By utilizing proactive measures as well as a robust public health and resource mobilization system, South Korea was able to largely control the viruses' spread within the country with minimal "lockdown" measures. The country's sophisticated, [digital track](#) and trace system has been greatly accredited with helping to control the spread. However, this has not been without controversy, with issues of government surveillance and data collection becoming a greater concern within the [nation](#). Regardless, South Korea stands as one of the most successful countries in managing the effects of this ongoing health crisis.

Taiwan:

In many ways, Taiwan's Covid-19 response stands as the most [effective](#) in the world. By making use of its extensive, pre-existent public health and pandemic response infrastructures, [Taiwan](#) has largely been able to stop the virus' spread in in tracks. Taiwan's

pandemic response can primarily be defined by early action and utilizing strict border control and track and trace measures. Through the utilization of these measures and others, Taiwan has been able to avoid a domestic lockdown while at the same time keep Covid-19 cases at record lows. [To date](#), the island nation has recorded only 720 confirmed cases and only 7 deaths, helping to distinguish the nation as the seminal Covid-19 success story.

Germany:

By late spring, Germany was emerging as one of Europe's significant Covid-19 success stories. The [German](#) response was defined by precision and early action, utilizing pre-emptive measures to ensure access to tests and other medical assets as well as instating early lockdown measures. These acts coupled with brilliant levels of communication between the various levels of government and the private sector, allowed this federal state to have relative control of the situation by June. While infection numbers in many cases were high, [Germany's](#) medical infrastructure was resilient and relatively well prepared, allowing them to keep their death toll remarkably low. By June, the country was able to start lifting many of its social distancing measures. However, the European power's fortunes were not to last. By the fall cases numbers began to skyrocket again across the country and recently new lockdown [measures](#) have been implemented across the country. How quickly Germany will emerge from its current situation remains to be seen.

Australia:

Much like its neighbor New Zealand, Australia has received much recognition for its response to the ongoing pandemic. [Australia's](#) Covid-19 response has been to prioritize public health over all else. Australia initiated one of the strictest lockdowns in the world, completely closing its international borders by March 20th and establishing strict lockdown and social distancing measures across the country, many of which still remain in place. These social measures were supplemented by various economic and medical [efforts](#) on both a national and state level in order to mitigate the pandemic's overarching effects. While the condition of the measures varies state by state (with Victoria having the strictest [measures](#)), the Australian response has been largely defined by brilliant coordination across governmental levels and the private sector. While its health results have been notable, with the country hoping to eliminate the virus by Christmas, [Australia's](#) response has been criticized as overly excessive and failing to properly address the "larger" side effects of the pandemic.

Sweden:

Perhaps the most [controversial](#) response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been Sweden's, with it being [praised](#) by some and vehemently [condemned](#) by others. Despite what many believe,

Sweden has enacted [measures](#) to contain the virus and mitigate its wider effects, including travel bans, stimulus programs and limiting the size of gatherings. However, these measures were much less strict and concentrated when compared to most other nations, relying on trust-based recommendations rather than formal measures. While the [Swedish](#) government has begun to enact new and more comprehensive measures in the wake of a new wave, the Swedish response continues to be a matter of debate.