

The Power of Collective Action

As Helen Keller wisely observed, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” As the events of the COVID - 19 pandemic have shown us, working collectively can help us to prevent further emergencies. By listening to health officials, improving global cooperation, and supplying personal protective equipment we can collectively help to stop the next pandemic.

Listening to public health officials and epidemiologists is the first way to prevent future global emergencies and any further spread of disease. If everyone does their part and complies with the outlines provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the pandemic could be contained a lot easier. For starters, we can observe the effectiveness of this when we look at Europe’s coronavirus cases and statistics. The [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#) or ECDC set strict guidelines for EU citizens to follow. “ECDC suggests the use of class 2 or 3 filtering face-piece (FFP) respirators when assessing a suspected case or managing a confirmed case.” After releasing these guidelines, Europe saw a decline in their cases. This was because the citizens listened to the given guidelines without protest and as a result decreased their numbers significantly. Another reason that collectively listening to health officials is effective can be seen within the United States. When each state announced their restrictions, the states that complied saw a decrease in cases. In the meantime, those states where masks were not being worn and social distancing was not put into effect saw a spike in cases. If everyone had listened to the CDC guidelines and applied simple rules to their daily life, we might not be in as bad of a situation. According to <https://covid.cdc.gov> a few states have seen a surge of cases. These states include Texas, California, and Florida. The people in these states did not follow the

recommended guidelines. If everyone listened to the CDC instead of pushing back and fighting, claiming the virus is a hoax, we would see a better future for our world and country.

Global cooperation is the second way to prevent future outbreaks and pandemics. As we observed in the initial COVID - 19 outbreak, a lot of the spreading occurred in international travel. If every person did their part when traveling internationally, observing small outbreaks, and communicating, global emergencies could be reduced. The first way that we can do our part in global cooperation is traveling safely. Even before the coronavirus outbreak, traveling with infectious diseases has always been unwise. Now more than ever it is important to travel safely. From wearing a mask, not traveling with illnesses, and withholding travel unless necessary, we can help to stop international outbreaks. This [executive order](#) applied to the US, Canada, and Mexico was an attempt to control travel. “In order to limit the further spread of coronavirus, the U.S. has reached agreements with both Canada and Mexico to limit all non-essential travel across borders.” Though later extended to the rest of the world, this was an early action of global cooperation that we can take part in. The next thing we can do is streamline communication between countries. After China stopped spreading information to the US and UN, untraced cases appeared around the world. If the Global Health Department can communicate effectively, cases and contact tracing could be a lot more effective. An [article](#) reflecting poor communication says, “U.S.-China collaboration to eradicate the coronavirus is a chance for both countries to demonstrate they can still cooperate in times of crisis. . . . But the climate in both capitals today indicates that this may not be the case anymore.’ . . . Developments since then, unfortunately, have proven this true.” If we simply communicated more, the virus may not have gotten this out of hand.

The third way to prevent further global emergencies while maintaining solidarity could be to supply resources and come together to help people. In the prime of the pandemic, the US faced supply shortages. Hospitals needed ventilators, supplies, and capacity but for some reason, no one could successfully aid them or provide the needed supplies. In previous national emergencies, communities united and everyone joined forces in order to fight whatever threat they were facing. In this case, it was the coronavirus. Yet people did not unite or help in any sort of way. During World War 1 the US united and supplied aircrafts for the troops. In a [report](#) published about the war it says, “Roosevelt didn’t have faith in the government to get America to a place where it could mobilize effectively. So he turned to the automotive industry with its efficiencies and understanding of mechanization.” This supports that in previous times we have been able to achieve outstanding goals when people unite. Another reason that supplying resources and organizing our government would be helpful is because an organized government calls for faster, effective action during the national emergencies. If the government could prioritize the safety of their citizens and focus on supplying enough masks and protection for everyone then we could live in a more cooperative environment. “People right now, as we speak, are dying because there have been inadequate supplies of PPE.” Says Rep. Lloyd Doggett in an [interview](#) with the Washington Post. In short, if the government had just taken action and provided masks a lot less people would have contracted the virus.

Looking forward, when national emergencies occur, listening to officials, improving global cooperation, and organizing the government can help improve these tense times. Throughout the pandemic, we have learned that solidarity is important because when united, we can accomplish a lot more. Coming together within communities is the first step to achieving

these goals. Overall, listening to health officials, global cooperation, and an organized government can help to prevent further emergencies.