The Price of Panic

“Those who do not weep, do not see.”
— Victor Hugo, Les Misérables

In 2019, the coronavirus family, which has been causing respiratory disease in millions of humans worldwide every year for millennia, welcomed a new member. The disease it causes, COVID-19, proved to be milder than seasonal flu in fairly healthy people under 70, but it was nearly 1,000 times deadlier in older people or those made vulnerable by serious pre-existing conditions.

Rather than focusing protective measures on the people at heightened risk of illness, governments around the world imposed and continue to impose severe restrictions on their entire population. With routine medical care disrupted, businesses shuttered, curfews imposed, travel restricted, socialization criminalized, we are causing a devastating amount of harm.

The negative effects of lockdown are too often dismissed as small sacrifices, necessary to keep a highly deadly disease from spreading. These sacrifices are, in fact, neither necessary nor small, and the disease is only a threat to a minority of the population that can be protected without lockdowns. Sometimes, when major harms become hard to ignore, they are lamented as further damage caused by Covid, even though it is our panic-driven measures that are to blame. This is an effort to bring focus to the magnitude of suffering taking place around us because of lockdowns.

Hunger & Poverty

AP NEWS

Virus-linked hunger tied to 10,000 child deaths each month

BRITISH HERALD

Second Lockdown Forces Myanmar’s Slum Dwellers To Hunt For Rats And Reptiles To Stave Off Hunger

UN DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

UN report finds COVID-19 is reversing decades of progress on poverty, healthcare and education

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

WFP Chief warns of grave dangers of economic impact of Coronavirus as millions are pushed further into hunger

UN NEWS

One in six children living in extreme poverty, with figure set to rise during pandemic

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Colombia: Indigenous Kids at Risk of Malnutrition, Death
ABC NEWS
UN expert: Pandemic’s worst impacts on poverty yet to come

NEW YORK TIMES
“The Biggest Monster” Is Spreading. And It’s Not the Coronavirus.
Tuberculosis kills 1.5 million people each year. Lockdowns and supply-chain
disruptions threaten progress against the disease as well as H.I.V. and malaria.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
At least 80 million children under one at risk of diseases such as diphtheria,
measles and polio as COVID-19 disrupts routine vaccination efforts, warn Gavi,
WHO and UNICEF

THE DAILY WIRE
New CDC Numbers Show Lockdown’s Deadly Toll On Young People

NATURE
Stillbirth rate rises dramatically during pandemic

UN AIDS
The cost of inaction: COVID-19-related service disruptions could cause hundreds
of thousands of extra deaths from HIV

THE DAILY MAIL
Lockdown “caused up to 21,000 extra deaths — many due to reduced access to
healthcare”

DEVEX
1.8M people could die from tuberculosis in 2020: WHO

THE NEWS TRIBUNE
US overdose deaths appear to rise amid coronavirus pandemic
Puerto Rico shuts its only two 911 call centres amid coronavirus outbreak

Harm to Children

MSN
Four newborn babies die in one month at an Australian hospital

BBC
Huge rise in reports of online child abuse images

CNN
The pandemic has created a second crisis in India — the rise of child trafficking

THE TEXAS TRIBUNE
Alarming failure rates among Texas students fuel calls to get them back into classrooms

UN OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS
“Children at risk of lasting psychological distress from coronavirus lockdown”:

Save the Children

THE ECONOMIST
Lockdowns could have long-term effects on children’s health

CDC
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e2.htm
Anxiety, Depression & Suicides

CNBC
More than 7 in 10 Gen-Zers report symptoms of depression during pandemic, survey finds

FORBES
The Pandemic Has Caused An Increase In Anxiety, Stress, Depression And Suicides

ABC NEWS
Suicides on the rise amid stay-at-home order, Bay Area medical professionals say

THE BALTIMORE SUN
“The lockdown killed my father”: Farmer suicides add to India’s virus misery

GLOBAL NEWS
Canadians reporting higher levels of anxiety, depression amid the pandemic

USA TODAY
Isolation kills, especially seniors. Community spaces can be a vaccine for COVID loneliness.

OTTAWA SUN
Woman, 100, succumbs not to COVID but to isolation

WALL STREET JOURNAL
What Happens to the Musicians When the Orchestra Music Stops?
Oppression

UNHCR
IOM, UNHCR announce temporary suspension of resettlement travel for refugees

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
GCC: Flawed laws exploited in pandemic to further crush freedom of expression

THE ECONOMIST
The pandemic has eroded democracy and respect for human rights

FORBES
The Covid-19 Crisis Has Wiped Out Nearly Half Of Black Small Businesses

We do not have to accept the fallacy that this price, in lives and livelihoods, is necessary in order to limit the toll of Covid. To learn more about focused protection measures, please refer to the Great Barrington Declaration, a statement by infectious disease and epidemiology experts.