GLOBAL NIGHTTIME RECOVERY PLAN

CHAPTER 4 – SUSTAINING OUR NIGHTLIFE SCENES
SUPPORT MODELS FOR NIGHTLIFE INDUSTRY WORKERS, INDIVIDUALS, AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Introducing the **Global Nighttime Recovery Plan (GNRP)**, a practical guide for cities that are trying to determine the best way to design and safely execute a strategy to reopen and reactivate their creative and night-time economies. The guide was created in response to the severe vulnerability of nighttime industries caused by Covid-19, and in acknowledgement of this unique opportunity for improved, night-centric city planning offered by the crisis.

The GNRP is an international collaboration of some of the foremost minds in nightlife governance, planning and culture, spearheaded by nightlife advocacy agency, **VibeLab.** First conceived in June 2020, it has quickly grown to include the work of 130 practitioners, academics, public health experts, advocates and industry representatives from more than 70 cities spanning 6 continents – that network growing and strengthening with each new chapter.

Download and read the complete chapters via *nighttime.org*

The GNRP is published by VibeLab

With thanks to our partners

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Unterstützt von / Supported by
Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung / Foundation

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CHAPTER 4 – SUSTAINING OUR NIGHTLIFE SCENES

ISSUE STATEMENT

As fluctuating Covid infection rates persist across the world, restrictions and business closures continue to severely affect nightlife industries in 2021.

This chapter focuses on the people who make up this industry, whose income, resources and opportunities have evaporated, with available relief largely insufficient.

The chapter outlines nightlife workers' current needs and the challenges in meeting them. It highlights solutions for short-term relief, and recommended reforms to create a more sustainable nighttime economy that provides more security, prosperity and dignity to workers.

METHOD

A team of industry experts has conducted a global survey, collected interviews and case studies from **Germany, New Zealand, South East Asia, USA, South Africa** and **The Netherlands,** to assess existing trials and strategise to produce best-practice recommendations.

IDENTIFYING NIGHTLIFE WORKERS' CURRENT NEEDS

Our definition of nightlife workers focuses on the creative sector within the nighttime economy: employees of concert halls, nightclubs, bars, theatres and associated industries, plus occupations that support this sector. Most nightlife workers are classed as "gig" workers.

A global survey was conducted to learn about the pandemic's impact on these workers. Respondents were predominently US based, but also cover the UK, Europe, Korea, Pakistan and Brazil.

- 78% are self-employed
- 98% lost income due to COVID
- 49% received aid - mostly unemployment aid
- Only 14.8% of those who received aid said it is sufficient
- 16.7% say the aid is only partially or temporarily sufficient
- 10% claim they may not return to the business; 3% have decided not to return; 2% say they will return in a reduced capacity

Respondents "most pressing" needs:
- Direct cash and rent assistance 38%
- Mental health support 12%
- Employment in a different field 11%
- Free/low-cost healthcare and medication 11%
- Less than 10% - food assistance, training/education for employment, access to remote working equipment, shelter/housing

UNIQUE CHALLENGES

Nightlife needs acknowledgement as both a culture and a business:

- Despite the revenue nightlife generates, it is difficult for governments to acknowledge its cultural significance.
- The stigma of nightlife as a scene for rampant drugs and sex lingers, so many localities focus on legislation that restricts nightlife, rather than expanding its economic opportunities. This also limits governments' appetites to give targeted aid.
- Those who participate in nightlife are often members of marginalised groups which are usually neglected politically and targeted unfairly in the enforcement of laws.

Respondents "most pressing" needs:

- Without a clear grassroots movement among nightlife workers and patrons to lobby governments, it is difficult for allies within government to advocate for nightlife workers.
- Past regulation of this industry has created mistrust which may discourage people from working with the government.
- Gig workers are rarely tied securely enough to businesses to receive any economic relief through them.
- There is often a lack of data or adequate classification of data.

UNIQUE CHALLENGES

Emergency relief for general workers
Direct monetary subsidy allows workers to stabilise their living situation, take care of basic needs and improve mental well-being. Eligibility criteria for relief should be simplified to avoid missing self-employed/gig-workers.

Emergency grants for artists
To subsidise lost income for creators and invest in future projects of the arts community.

Mutual aid
Community sharing of resources and services to spread information and raise money has been critical during the pandemic, e.g. United We Stream; NYC Nightlife United

Empowering communities to access government relief

> **Case Study: CARES for Music**
> In March 2020, US Congress passed the CARES Act - a $2 trillion general economic relief package, but offered little information on how it could be spent. By August 2020 there was only a 19% spend rate of CARES funds. Sound Diplomacy and gener8tor created the CARES for Music Toolkit – a free, practical guide to help the music, entertainment and cultural industries access relief.

Direct-to-artist patronage
The direct relationship between artists and their fans has been a lifeline, with streaming, mutual aid, subscriptions, and sales becoming primary forms of income generation, in place of live performance. E.G. Bandcamp Fridays, where the music sales platform donates 100% of its profits to artists for one Friday every month.

Targeted government relief for creative workers

> **Case Study: The South African Experience**
> South Africa's efforts shows the complex steps a government must take to get targeted and timely relief to creative and nighttime workers. Existing bodies like Music in Africa were utilised to conduct multiple surveys immediately, and provide reports on economic impact and immediate needs. The government announced a relief package in the same week, and appointed an independent panel from within the industry to ensure transparency in distribution.

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

FOR GOVERNMENTS:

Improve civic inclusion and measurement of nightlife and nighttime workers
Data gathering for labour statistics and analysis must include night time workers and the types of industries that fall within the work, to help inform policy. Nightlife workers are often invisible, and need to be considered equally but independently from daytime workers when making policy decisions and constructing legislation.

Improve the social safety net
Through universal basic income, expanding unemployment assistance and labour reform that restricts exploitative use of the gig work structure. A robust safety net protects workers from the risks inherent in gig work.

FOR COMMUNITIES:

Create infrastructure to facilitate private patronage for the creative industries

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Case Study: Cosimo Foundation
The COSIMO foundation, created in The Netherlands in 2019, generates stronger collaborations between creative sectors and businesses. The pandemic has highlighted a huge need for funding for cultural sectors and an opportunity for businesses to create social impact. The foundation implements a "matchmaker" model that allows businesses to easily find and support creative projects with tax-deductible donations, and allows creative sector actors to access funding without needing to create complicated non-profit organisations.

Expand direct artist-patron relationships
Through models like the a subscription, member-based internet platform Patreon, video streaming platform Mixcloud Live, which hosts DJ-led mixshows and live audio streams, and Bandcamp, a platform with a well developed model for continued artist-patron relationships and an artist-friendly financial model.

Build sustainable networks and worker power
Coalitions mayspring from Night Mayor/government nightlife offices, local trade organisations, and government officials sympathetic to the challenges nightlife workers experience. Outside these structures, nightlife workers must also seek ways to safely organise and advocate with grassroots campaigns.

CONCLUSION

Without greater, more targeted, long-lasting support structures, many nightlife workers will not be able to continue in the industry.

The preservation of nightlife will only be possible if governments commit to recognising the nighttime as a legitimate organising lens for governance, and work towards protecting and supporting its workers so that they will be able to sustain themselves at all times, especially during crises.

Nightlife workers must recognise their power as significant contributors to the vitality of cities in order to move the industry to a more equitable model through organising and advocacy.

In rebuilding the nighttime economy from this pandemic, there is an opportunity to create a more sustainable, resilient, and equitable environment for its workers. Understanding the unique challenges for nightlife workers can lead to positive changes to improve conditions for workers throughout the nighttime economy.

AUTHORS

Chapter lead:

Tara Duvivier is a Senior Planner at the Pratt Center for Community Development in New York City. She is a native New Yorker who seeks to improve the lives of marginalised groups - as they have contributed the most to the development of New York City as a global cultural hub. A certified urban planner, she has spent most of her career working in affordable housing development but has recently shifted solely to planning, working with communities to address issues around economic resilience and racial justice. She is a DJ and event producer, extending her day practice into nightlife by supporting various scenes throughout the city and seeking ways to improve working conditions for her peers.

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Merlijn Poolman started his career with organising metal shows and tours and electronic music events. Since 2018 he has been the Night Mayor of the Dutch city of Groningen. As leader of the Groningen Night Council, member of the Dutch Popcoalitie (advisory board to the government) and former European Music Council fellow-member. He has spent many years doing cultural exchange in China, and organised the Yin Yang music festival at the Great Wall of China. In 2018 he set up a service called Gateway to China, that offers Chinese social media accounts and content creation to Western artists. His newly formed Cosimo Foundation raises funding for cultural projects and creates partnerships with the business world.

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Kate Durio is the CEO of North America for Sound Diplomacy. Previously, she was the Chief Cultural Officer and advisor to the Mayor-President of Lafayette, Louisiana where she founded the city and parish's first cultural economy initiative and directed its $535,000 annual budget. Kate is also the Founder and President of the Culture Crowd Agency, a cultural economy consulting firm. Kate is based in her native Lafayette, Louisiana where she has earned numerous awards and recognitions for her role in several performing arts activations and public art contributions.

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Phuong Le is the founder of Homeaway Agency. Originally from Vietnam but Switzerland born & bred, Phuong Le has been active in the entertainment industry for more than 15+ years. Homeaway Agency is a booking & touring agency connecting the west & the east, handling Asia Tours for renowned international DJs but also focusing on supporting local Artists regionally and internationally. In 2019 she joined the Polygon Productions team as their Music Curator, to bring the first 360 3d immersive hyper real sound stage into the world. Together with Clubcommission Berlin, Clubbingtv, mixmag asia and the support of Goethe Instituts & French embassies in Asia, Phuong started United We Stream Asia to save club Culture and giving local talents an international platform to showcase their talents during Covid-19, with currently over 40 streams in 13 countries & 21 cities.

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Interviewees:

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Richard Foster is PR and Communications Manager at WORM, a Rotterdam-based multimedia alternative cultural centre and network organisation at the intersection of (popular) culture and (performing) arts. His writing appears regularly in *The Quietus, The Wire, Louder than War,* and other music and academic publications.

Berlin Clubcommissioner **Lutz Leichsenring** + former Amsterdam night mayor **Mirik Milan** are co-founders of *VibeLab*, which engages, connects, and counsels cross-sector stakeholders to keep cities vibrant and flourishing after dark. VibeLab has consulted on the formation of nightlife offices and

commissions in London, Madrid, New York, Tokyo, Vienna, Los Angeles, and more, and continues to facilitate idea exchange and implementation for communities, institutions, government agencies and brands worldwide.

Diana Raiselis is a German Chancellor Fellow with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, researching the role of nightlife in sustainable cities. She is a founding member of the Los Angeles Nightlife Alliance.

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Special thanks:

Berlin Clubcommission, Julie Donofrio and PennPraxis, Jess Dymond Barber, Fraunhofer-Institut Urban Economy Innovation, Jordan Rahlia, Guy Seidman, Jack Waghorn, Tak Umezawa, Takahiro Saito, and Kana Ito of Japan Nighttime Economy Association, Thé Dansant Belgium, Ampere, Paradise City Festival as well as the global communities of night mayors and nighttime scientists for their ongoing support.

THE NEXT CHAPTERS OF THE GNRP WILL ADDRESS:

- Building nocturnal governance capacity
- Financial support models for creative industry workers, individuals and vulnerable populations
- Support models for independent nightlife businesses
- Gathering data and measuring nightlife's impact

Find out more at *nighttime.org*