The Impact of COVID-19 on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: Implications from China

In March 2020, Dr. Jennifer Bouey, who holds the Tang Chair in China Policy Studies at RAND, presented testimony before the House Small Business Committee on the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on the economy in China and on the global supply chain.

MORE AT www.rand.org/t/CT524
TOMORROW DEMANDS TODAY

RAND has launched a $400 million fundraising campaign, the largest in the organization’s history.

The effort aims to expand the capacity of RAND and the Pardee RAND Graduate School to develop objective, fact-based policy recommendations and initiatives that communities and societies worldwide can use in solving their most urgent problems.
This is a challenging and unsettling time and I hope you and your families are staying safe and well. At RAND, we have been focused on adapting to the fast-moving COVID-19 emergency, working to balance the health and safety of our staff members and their families, our service to our clients, and our commitment to the communities in which we live and work.

With COVID-19, the world confronts an era-defining challenge—one that requires all sectors of society to come together to overcome it, even as our routines of physical distancing have forced so many of us apart. In the face of so many unknowns, I am certain of this: RAND’s research and analysis are vital to society. We are working now on responses to the pandemic, as well as addressing other threats the world faces.

Despite the growing crisis, we moved forward with our plans to launch a $400 million fundraising campaign, Tomorrow Demands Today. RAND, a trusted nonprofit organization, exists to have an impact and to make a difference in the world. It is at moments like this that we recognize how essential fact-based information and data-driven research are to effective decisionmaking.
We remain committed to using facts and analysis to help solve the most complex problems, which is why there’s an even greater need than ever before to support our researchers and Pardee RAND Graduate School students. Philanthropic support strengthens our efforts and will allow RAND to do even more.

The campaign will help RAND and the graduate school develop objective, fact-based policy recommendations and initiatives that communities and societies worldwide can put to use in solving their most urgent problems.

Our campaign is focused on five priorities.

- **Countering truth decay.** “Truth decay” is the term we use to describe the diminishing role of facts and analysis in public life. As a nonpartisan institution that seeks to advance the public good through research and analysis, RAND is the only research institution that has already invested in an initiative to counter this grave, existential threat.

- **Rethinking and retooling institutions.** The 20th century saw the establishment of some of the world’s most strategic and beneficent organizations. RAND will help to design a revitalized set of institutions to promote security, stability, and prosperity for the century to come—instutions essential to the disciplined, long-term, consensus-driven, and coalition-building efforts on which clear, well-supported policy depends.

- **Strengthening and safeguarding communities.** In confronting global problems such as social and economic inequity, unsustainable cities, migration and displacement, and the health of an aging population, RAND understands the need to solve these problems where people are already experiencing them firsthand—in local communities. By working at the front lines of need, RAND can pilot and refine practical tools and approaches that others can deploy right away.

- **Catalyzing a new era of problem-solving.** The Pardee RAND Graduate School has a crucial role to play in fulfilling our campaign goals: It is an engine of new ideas and talent, and a vital platform for new tools and strategies. We will share what we develop with others, greatly expanding our capacity to bring about positive change.

- **Ensuring agility.** While the scope of the problems we are prepared to address is broad, the scope of emerging problems is even broader. Philanthropic dollars will allow us to meet unanticipated analytic needs rapidly and respond with agility to new research opportunities and evolving research priorities.

As we embark on this campaign, we look back with pride on what we’ve accomplished and look forward to what more we can do through the power of philanthropy.

By taking care of each other and working together I’m confident we can weather this crisis and emerge even stronger.

As always, we thank the clients, grantors, and donors who support our vision, make our work possible, and help us meet tomorrow’s demands today.

Michael D. Rich

MICHAEL D. RICH | PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Resilience to Sectarianism in the Middle East

Sectarian conflict is often seen as a defining feature of the modern Middle East. Yet the reality is much more complicated. At the local level, especially, communities are not nearly as riven or driven by sectarian prejudice as the conventional wisdom says they are.

But what makes communities resilient to the worst impulses of sectarianism—in particular, the deeply rooted grievances between Shi‘a and Sunni Muslims? Researchers convened a group of Middle East scholars to examine communities in Lebanon, Bahrain, Syria, and Iraq as case studies. The Henry Luce Foundation funded the project.

The researchers found that weak borders, as in Syria, can allow sectarian agitators to penetrate a community. Political elites often fan sectarian tensions for their own gain. And steep socioeconomic disparities between one group and another can make those tensions much worse.

But sectarian violence is still the exception, not the norm. Even at the height of the civil war in Iraq, communities where Sunni and Shi‘a Muslims lived together were often able to resist falling into sectarian conflict. In Lebanon, sectarian politics have started to give way to political movements focused more on economic development, education, and other issues of concern to all sides.

The international community can help by limiting support for sectarian leaders or parties and by de-escalating conflict between the two power poles of the Middle East, Saudi Arabia and Iran. It can also work to strengthen borders, and to open up space at the local level for nonsectarian political movements.

Middle Eastern communities do not need the West to save them from sectarian strife, the researchers concluded. There are local capabilities to draw on. What they need are policies that strengthen—or at least don’t undermine—their resilience.

MORE AT
www.rand.org/t/RR2799
Rescue Operations in Africa

The U.S. military has several thousand service members stationed in Africa. When someone is injured, the logistical challenges of getting them help can be enormous.

The continent is three times the size of the United States. The distances are so vast, and U.S. forces so dispersed, that rescue times can easily exceed survival times. With Africa a focus in the fight against terrorism, researchers looked at what it would take to improve those odds.

They modeled flight times and injury rates, rescue assets and airfield locations. They found that just basing more surgical teams or rescue aircraft in Africa would not do enough to increase survival rates. Even if Africa had all the rescue resources that deployed to Afghanistan during the height of the war there, it would still take too long to get injured people to surgical sites.

But making those surgical teams mobile, and shortening their alert times, would keep more people alive until they could reach a medical facility, the researchers found. They recommended that the military replace several fixed “damage control surgery” teams with mobile teams, and have them ready to go within an hour of getting an alert.

In response, the military scrapped a plan to station more rescue assets at fixed locations, which the research showed would have no significant impact on survival rates. Instead, it has started to deploy mobile surgical teams to Africa and pushed many of its aircraft there to shorter alert times. It also has started to move aircraft and surgical teams forward during high-risk missions, to further reduce response times.

Nuclear Weapons, Deterrence, and the Baltic States

A series of RAND wargames a few years ago highlighted a danger that has haunted U.S. and NATO military planners ever since. With enough preparation, Russia could seize the capitals of its Baltic neighbors in less than 72 hours.

But there was more: Interpretations of writings and pronouncements from Russia raised concerns that it might use limited nuclear weapons to paralyze NATO. That could allow it to end a war on terms favorable to it before NATO even had time to build up its ultimately superior conventional forces.

Recognizing that its capabilities for war in Europe had degraded since the Cold War, NATO began improving both its conventional and nuclear capabilities to deal with any potential crisis in the Baltics. That raised an old question: Could improved nuclear weapons change the military equation, and prevent hostilities in the first place?

The answer, according to a new round of analysis and wargaming at RAND, is no.

Modernized nuclear capabilities might provide some assurance that NATO would be able to respond to a Russian first strike. But NATO’s battlefield targets would be in the very countries it was trying to defend. Deeper targets would be in Russia itself—targets that Russia likely considers strategic. Russia might retaliate against similar targets in the United States.

In fact, RAND found, Russia would have better options than NATO at every level of limited nuclear war. In the language of the Cold War, it would enjoy “escalation dominance.”

Improved nuclear options may bolster perceptions of NATO’s strength and determination; they may strengthen deterrence by raising the risks that Russian planners would anticipate in planning any invasion or reassessing one that had begun. But they would not improve NATO’s situation as assessed in purely military calculations.
A good game really surfaces questions about what just happened and leads you to insights that you hadn’t thought of.”

YUNA WONG

Games People Play

Policy researcher Yuna Wong is serious about games. She’s designed and run wargames to study national defense policy, Marine Corps operations, and the dangers of putting too much trust in artificial intelligence. She wrote her Ph.D. dissertation at the Pardee RAND Graduate School on how to better model the behaviors of noncombatants when simulating urban military operations.

She didn’t expect to make gaming a focus of her career. She studied political science, then worked as an operations research analyst for the Marines. She was at a conference when she saw what she describes as BOGGSATs—a Bunch of Guys and Gals Sitting Around Tables—playing a wargame. “They were a particular type of geek that I felt very comfortable with,” she says.
Q What was it that made you decide to focus on gaming?
A It was the whole idea of living out a story and really surfacing different perceptions people can have. It was so different from a study or experts expounding on some topic in a static and impersonal way. With games, you can get experts shouting at each other. It was just fascinating to me, the human drama.

You recently looked at deterrence and artificial intelligence. Walk me through that game.
We had a future scenario where China was the dominant power in the region; the United States, Japan, and South Korea were all trying to balance against it; and everyone had autonomous systems and artificial intelligence. We asked the question: If you make decisions at machine speeds, can things escalate at machine speeds?

Did any moments stand out as the game unfolded?
We had speculated that maybe you could get a world where only robots destroy each other and nobody even cares or notices. But our game escalated to the point that there were human casualties. The first time humans were killed, that really raised the temperature. It was a different game after that.

Did you come away with any insights that you wouldn’t have otherwise?
In our scenario, the machines escalated in ways that humans didn’t expect and couldn’t manage. We really need to think about that as we develop these systems and concepts. The United States and China both seem very committed to investing in artificial intelligence and autonomous systems, but we need to ask whether some of those systems are inherently more escalatory. We need to avoid a future where the first time we’re asking those questions is after we’ve fielded these systems and we’re in a crisis.

You also have a board game named Hedgemony coming out soon.
It’s a version of the game that we developed for the Pentagon that supported the 2018 National Defense Strategy. We thought a commercial, boxed version could help inform people who are trying to think strategically—graduate students, War College staff and students, people in the services. You play the Department of Defense and you make different choices about posture and modernization, force structure. Other players can be China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. How do you balance your resources when you have living adversaries who are also trying to think about the strategies they want to pursue?

It sounds like the market would be professionals, not necessarily families playing on a Sunday afternoon?
Right—although we don’t want to underestimate some families.

So what makes a good game?
It’s got to be easy for participants to be active, to really get immersed in the game. A good game really surfaces questions about what just happened and leads you to insights that you hadn’t thought of. Thomas Schelling, the famous RAND wargamer and Nobel laureate, once said no matter how intelligent people are, they can’t make a list of the things that had not occurred to them. That’s what games can be good for.

Do you have a favorite board game?
Quartermaster General, a World War II game. I really appreciate how elegant that game is in recreating some of the dynamics of World War II—not just the forces, but the geopolitical logic and some of the choices those countries had to make. Having done something like Hedgemony, creating a game of strategy for the entire world, I really appreciate how well that one is done.
Turn of the Tide

By Doug Irving, Staff Writer

The corner of Virginia known as Hampton Roads is home to more than 1.7 million people, a major port, and more military installations than anywhere else in America. So it’s no small concern that the region is succumbing, inch by inch and year by year, to the Atlantic Ocean.

A new RAND report looks at how the community pulled together to prepare for rising sea levels, and the challenges it faced in working across

As sea levels rise, military and civilian communities work together to mitigate damage and foster resiliency
civilian and military lines. It’s a case study, with a note of caution, for other communities confronting the effects of climate change.

“Collaboration is difficult,” said Maria McCollester, an associate political scientist at RAND who led the study. “You think, ‘This will be helpful; it should be a no-brainer.’ But as we dug into it more, we realized how much effort it takes to collaborate, and how much you need to be able to put into it.”

Hampton Roads embraces one of the largest natural harbors in the world and has been a center of military activity since the 1600s. It gave its name to the famous first duel of ironclad warships during the Civil War, the Battle of Hampton Roads. Today, it hosts the largest naval station in the world, most of America’s F-22 fighters, and more than 80,000 active-duty U.S. service members.

And it is steadily losing ground. Sea levels around Hampton Roads are now one to two feet higher than they were a century ago. Floods have become a part of life in some coastal neighborhoods; as one local complained to a reporter, residents have had to get their brakes changed because of all the salt water in them. Climate models suggest the sea level could rise by another 1.6 to 7.5 feet by the end of the century.

In 2014, the federal government launched the Hampton Roads Sea Level Rise Preparedness and Resilience Intergovernmental Pilot Project—better known as the IPP. Its
“The way that we’ve done things in the past might not be enough in the future as we face more complex challenges.”

MARIA MCCOLLESTER, ASSOCIATE POLITICAL SCIENTIST

Purpose was to bring together civilian and military officials to plan for a future of rising water and worsening floods. The ocean won’t stop at a base perimeter or city line, the thinking went—so neither should the planning effort.

For the next two years, city leaders and state planners, Air Force colonels and Navy commanders did something that doesn’t come easy in government: They worked across their own jurisdictional boundaries. They looked at how rising sea levels could endanger roads, bridges, schools, businesses, and public health. And they did it on their own time.

It wasn’t easy. Security concerns prevented the military from sharing such basic information as what roads it needed to stay open. Officers sometimes transferred out of the area mid-project. Local governments used different scenarios of sea-level rise in their individual plans, making it difficult to agree on a single scenario, or set of scenarios, to plan for collectively. And a working group set up to consider future land use planning, the usual domain of local governments, disbanded halfway through the project.

Those challenges—even more than the successes—provide a good guide for other communities, RAND researchers found. That’s especially true when it comes to working across civilian-military lines. “While collaborative planning is unobjectionable to promote,” they wrote, “it is surprisingly difficult to do and even more difficult to do well.”

To be effective, communities need to agree up front on the magnitude of the problem they’re trying to solve, and what they’re willing to do to solve it. They need institutional buy-in, so that the commitment doesn’t end when an officer transfers or a local politician leaves office. They need to think through why they need a collaborative approach, and how they plan to make it work. A steady source of funding would help.

Big, collaborative approaches to a problem like climate change also need a center of gravity, the researchers concluded—a regional entity that can pull everyone together and oversee the different parts of the project. One of the best features of the Hampton Roads IPP, they found, was its use of Old Dominion University as an “impartial convener.” It provided a neutral location for meetings and prevented any one participant from having a greater voice in the project than others.

In their interviews with civilian and military participants in the IPP, the researchers found not a single person who thought the monthly meetings and daylong workshops were not worth the effort. It helped change the conversation in Hampton Roads and, despite the challenges, brought neighbors together for their own mutual defense. Last year, the Navy and the cities of Norfolk and Virginia Beach released a joint report that looked at steps needed to protect schools, roads, a hospital, and Naval Station Norfolk from the encroaching water.

“The way that we’ve done things in the past might not be enough in the future as we face more complex challenges,” McCollester said. “If I’m a city manager or I’m working in a military installation, I’m going to have to interact with people outside of my organization to plan for those challenges. It’s difficult. But just something as simple as having meetings with other people can open you up to other ways of thinking about things.”

The need for that break-down-the-barriers approach is already apparent in military communities nationwide. Most military installations depend on their civilian neighbors to ensure the power stays on, the water is safe, and their employees can get to work. In a recent survey of more than 3,500 U.S. installations, half said they were already experiencing droughts, floods, extreme heat, and other effects of climate change.
Coming Home
Understanding the unmet needs of civilians who return from war zones and other hot spots throughout the world

By Doug Irving, Staff Writer

Erica Kaster has spent a good part of her adult life deployed to some of the most dangerous places in the world. She knows what it’s like to be stopped by men with guns, to find bullet holes punched through the walls of her living quarters. She’s not a soldier, though, or a military contractor trained for war. She’s an international advisor, a civilian.

The United States has thousands of civilians like her serving overseas—diplomats and drug-enforcement agents, treasury officers and disaster-relief specialists. They often work alongside the military in places like Iraq or Afghanistan. But when they come home, RAND researchers have found, their experience is much different. Many get no more support than a close-out briefing and a few extra days of time off.

“I wouldn’t do this if I didn’t love it and think it was worth it to go to these places to support security and stability,” said Kaster, who has deployed more than a dozen times to high-risk areas like Iraq, Libya, and Sudan. “The military has a number of programs to take care of its people when they come home,” she added. “It shouldn’t be a crazy requirement to do the same thing for civilians.”
At any given moment, well more than 10,000 civilians are on assignment around the world for federal agencies like the State Department or the Drug Enforcement Administration. Some serve in wealthy world capitals or well-protected embassies. But two decades of war have put an unprecedented number of them into combat zones or other high-stress, high-risk areas.

Yet surprisingly little research has looked at whether those deployed civilians get the support they need when they come home. Federal analysts tried to answer that question in 2010, but they hit an immediate roadblock. Few agencies kept track of civilian employees who had served overseas and returned.

Molly Dunigan decided to take another look. She’s a senior political scientist at RAND whose previous research included a landmark study of private military contractors. It found that at least a quarter of those who had deployed to combat zones exhibited signs of post-traumatic stress disorder, most of it untreated. Unarmed civilians working in some of the same places, she thought, probably had some of the same needs.

“With the types of wars that we’re engaged in, it’s not like those civilians can necessarily stay back behind the front lines,” she said. “It made sense to think about how to make sure reintegration services are available to this other part of the total force, which are the civilians.”

Dunigan and a team of researchers interviewed more than 30 agency managers and previously deployed civilians. Their study spanned the federal government and the Department of Defense, but it did not include intelligence agencies like the CIA. It found that civilians who deploy on behalf of most federal agencies come home to support that is often incomplete and insufficient, and sometimes entirely nonexistent.

Few of the interviewees had received support services that are standard issue in the military, for example—such as family programs, decompression activities, and mandatory health assessments. Some had deployed under temporary contracts, not as permanent employees, and received no post-deployment support whatsoever. Even when additional services were available, it was often up to the returning civilians to ask for them, and few even knew they existed. Many worried that seeking help would hurt their careers.

Even the way civilians deploy could present challenges when they come home, the researchers found. Military service members almost always deploy and redeploy in units. Civilians usually deploy alone, and come home alone.

“With the military, you have a whole unit come back and go through a redeployment center, almost like a reorientation to being back in the United States,” Dunigan said. “But when you have an individual working at a desk at the State Department, who deploys to Afghanistan for six months and then comes back, they’re really on their own.”

The researchers found no good data on the number of deployed civilians who return with post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, or other mental-health injuries. But they found some evidence that it could be substantial.

A 2015 assessment of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), for example, described “severe and unsustainable levels of stress” among employees in high-risk environments. A 2010 study of State Department employees in high-stress posts reported that more than half struggled with insomnia, jumpiness, and other adjustment issues when they came home.

Kaster has been there, looking over her shoulder, paranoid that someone was still listening in on her phone conversations. The constant strain of her work in Sudan left her with a temporary eye twitch and a mild stutter that disappeared months after she came home. She found herself crying at home, at work, on the bus, after the 2012 attack on the U.S. mission in Libya, where she had lived and worked alongside Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens in 2011. Then she spent weeks deployed to Southern Turkey to work on the U.S. response to the Syrian civil war.

“I came home for a temporary rest break, and I was just exhausted, stressed, not sleeping well,” she said. “I had a very emotional argument with somebody close to me, and something inside me just shattered. For weeks, it was like shots of...
adrenaline just coursing through my body, every time an anxious thought crossed my mind. All my stress, from all those years in crisis environments, just came crashing down upon my head. I didn’t make the return trip to Turkey.”

She was fortunate, though. Her work at the time brought her under the umbrella of USAID. Among all of the agencies in RAND’s study, it provided some of the most comprehensive support to its deployed employees, along with the State Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration. That includes decompression activities, special courses on post-deployment resilience—and the counseling services that helped pull Kaster out of what she describes as her tailspin.

But much more could be done. Federal agencies should develop a standard approach to helping their deployed employees manage the transition home, the researchers concluded. That could include a checklist to make sure those employees know about the programs available to them. It also should include mandatory health assessments, exit interviews, better tracking of returned civilians, and more support services for them and their families.

The military can provide some guidance here. For example, agencies should consider grouping returning civilians into units and sending them through formal reintegration programs together. Agency leaders also need to head off any stigma around asking for help, something the military has been working on for years.

What’s needed above all, the researchers concluded, is better awareness of—and attention to—the needs of deployed civilians.

“The fact is, we all go out to these places knowing the worst can happen,” Kaster said. “But it’s because, in areas where there’s a lot of unpredictability, there’s also a lot of opportunity. There’s a potential to really move the needle.”

She apologized: The phone connection was cutting in and out. She was working on another project, she explained, gathering lessons from a program to help communities scarred by the terrorist group Boko Haram recover and resist violent extremism. She was on the ground, pushing the needle, in the far north region of Cameroon.
The world is at a pivotal moment, when facts, analysis, and science are playing a diminishing role in public discourse and policymaking.
“Research and analysis—high-quality, objective, rigorous—are RAND’s stock-in-trade,” says Joel Z. Hyatt. “That’s why the world needs RAND now, today, more than ever, and why I am serving as chair of RAND’s fundraising campaign. I believe that no other research organization in the world is better equipped to devise solutions to today’s security, social, and economic challenges.”

Hyatt is a RAND trustee, and has been involved with the organization for more than 20 years, including as a donor. He was drawn to RAND, he says, because of its track record. “In its early years, RAND pioneered the field of Soviet studies, when the Cold War and the proliferation of nuclear weapons represented the existential threat to society as we knew it. Fifty years ago, RAND established one of the first public policy graduate schools. RAND would go on to pioneer the science of defining and measuring health care quality and create enduring methods that are still in use today. Its subsequent accomplishments—in fields as diverse as civil justice, terrorism and national security, education and labor, and science and technology—have made a lasting impact on the entire world.”

Philanthropy is especially essential at this moment. The COVID-19 pandemic has put a spotlight on how important it is for people to have faith in institutions and to know how to identify information that is based in science and facts. Philanthropic support gives RAND not only the resources but also the flexibility and independence to take on such problems, to develop new research methods, to work with local community members to implement solutions, and to focus on impact.

“The ultimate goal for RAND,” according to president and CEO Michael Rich, “is to restore facts and analysis to their rightful place as the foundation of policymaking. If RAND has an ideology at all, it’s to follow the facts wherever they might lead. No commercial spin. No political bias.”

Below are three examples of how RAND used unrestricted gifts in 2019 to serve the public good.

### Gun Policy in America

Fueled by philanthropic dollars and our commitment to the public interest, RAND’s Gun Policy in America project is making an impact with key stakeholders and resulting in improvements in policy and decisionmaking. The project sought to provide insight into the question, What does scientific evidence say about the effects of various firearm policies on important outcomes, such as firearm deaths, violent crime, the gun industry, and participation in hunting and shooting sports? The researchers found a shortage of high-quality studies on the effects of gun policies, leading to their recommendation that the federal government increase funding for gun research.

Specifically, the authors recommended investing in research portfolios at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the National Institute of Justice. The report’s lead author elaborated on this point in March 2019 testimony before the House Committee on Appropriations subcommittee responsible for developing funding levels for the CDC and NIH, noting that, without an explicit appropriation from Congress, federal agencies may be reluctant to fund gun policy research.

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“‘My decision to initiate a research project to study gun policy in the United States came after many years of watching what seemed like an increasingly polarized and acrimonious ‘debate’ that rested on a sparse foundation of analytical findings. I knew that, at RAND, we could bring a unique perspective on the issues as a fiercely nonpartisan organization devoted to objectivity and analytic rigor. So, I established the RAND Gun Policy in America initiative, investing in a comprehensive effort that draws from the best of RAND’s interdisciplinary research talent.”

MICHAEL D. RICH
President and CEO, RAND Corporation
**Opioids Uncharted**

Despite federal, state, and local efforts to address opioid-involved deaths and addiction, the crisis continues to ravage parts of the United States. RAND research examining the nation’s complex opioid problem has received broad attention from the media and policymakers alike, laying the groundwork for high-level impact in the years ahead.

Recent RAND research offers strategies to address the sharp increase in fentanyl and other synthetic opioid deaths, including why these illicit substances are becoming entrenched in certain regions. Possible suggestions include innovative techniques to address the source of synthetic opioids; creative ways to disrupt online transactions; and supervised consumption sites, where trained staff monitor for overdose or risky injection practices of already purchased drugs. A RAND report drawing on international experiences with these sites could provide valuable insights for communities and decisionmakers.

Additional RAND research is forthcoming in 2020 on how opioid-use disorder influences family well-being, the history and potential impacts of opioid litigation, and barriers and opportunities for reversing the tide of the crisis.

Funding for the Opioids Uncharted project is provided by gifts from RAND supporters and income from operations. Additional research on opioid-related policy is conducted by the RAND-USC Schaeffer Opioid Policy Tools and Information Center—a collaborative effort with the USC Leonard D. Schaeffer Center for Health Policy & Economics—and funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

**Truth Decay**

In 2019, we continued our donor-supported research on how to counter “truth decay”—the diminishing role of facts and analysis in American public life. Reports explored media literacy education as a tool for mitigating truth decay and how news presentation is changing in the digital age.

RAND researchers also created a database of online tools developed by nonprofits and civil society organizations that aim to fight the spread of disinformation. These include fact-checking resources, bot detectors, and media literacy apps.

The most recent report in the series sheds light on where Americans get their news and what sources they view as reliable. The study is based on survey data from the nationally representative RAND American Life Panel. Notably, the authors found that one-third of Americans use news platforms that they acknowledge are less reliable, mainly social media and peers.
The Pardee RAND Graduate School is a Campaign Priority for RAND

An educational institution like no other, Pardee RAND has a crucial role to play in fulfilling our campaign mission: It will be an engine of new ideas and talent as well as a vital platform for new tools and strategies. It will also be a lab for exploring, experimenting with, and piloting new solutions for communities and for a fundamentally transformed world. We will share what we develop with our higher education peers as well as with the RAND project teams working to counter truth decay, redesign institutions, and revitalize communities.

We are deeply grateful to those whose leadership gifts were part of the early phase of the campaign. These generous gifts included:

- **$10 MILLION** from the family of Frank and Marcia Carlucci to endow scholarships, support the dean’s priorities, and title the deanship—now known as the Frank and Marcia Carlucci Dean
- **$6 MILLION** from Jim and Anahita Lovelace to further the Pardee RAND Graduate School’s efforts to redesign public policy education to better meet the needs of the 21st century
- **$6 MILLION** from Susan F. and Donald B. Rice to support the school and provide unrestricted support for RAND
- **$3 MILLION** from Frederick S. Pardee to expand the Pardee Initiative for Global Human Progress and strengthen the school’s global impact
- **$2.5 MILLION** from Ann McLaughlin Korologos to establish the Ann Korologos Impact Award and provide unrestricted support for the school
- **$1 MILLION** from the estate of Dr. Charles Wolf, Jr., and Theresa Wolf.

Members of the Pardee RAND community are contributing to the COVID-19 response by sharing their expertise on topics that include emergency response, health care, public health, online education, economic and security implications, and more. We are also searching for solutions to coronavirus-related challenges on local, state, national, and global levels.
Ensuring Agility Is a Campaign Priority for RAND

Throughout RAND’s history, we have developed groundbreaking solutions to some of the world’s most challenging problems, often shaping the course of events in profound ways. Beginning with experts on a broader range of policy issues than any other research organization, we have the talent, tools, and ambition to confront complexity with sustained research and analysis. Today, however, the situations the global community is facing are without precedent. To ensure we can address them forcefully when they arise, we will direct a portion of our funding to discretionary uses and initiatives we can scale flexibly.

COVID-19 research projects at RAND

Earlier this year, RAND directed significant resources toward research on COVID-19. Below is a selection of new projects that would not have been possible without the generous support of RAND donors.

- Tracking household effects of COVID-19 via the American Life Panel
- Understanding the technological and legal implications of tracking individual movement to aid the national pandemic strategy
- Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on an economically vulnerable population in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Mitigating the international economic fallout from public health responses to the pandemic
- Positioning small businesses to reopen once closures are lifted
- Resourcing health care during a pandemic
- Tracking urban pandemic response and compliance with open data from cities
- Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on Latinx sexual and gender minorities
- Evaluating the response of social service providers in Los Angeles
- Trading COVID-19 medical supplies across states
- Comparing COVID-19 responses in Wuhan and New York to find lessons for other cities
- Conducting elections safely under pandemic conditions
A mysterious disease was spreading across the world. The rate of transmission was alarming, and the number of deaths was rising exponentially. There was no test for the new disease, and the public was panicking.

The circumstances might sound familiar in the time of COVID-19. But the decade was the 1980s, and the disease was HIV/AIDS, which killed 90 percent of those infected.

RAND researchers were at the forefront of the research response to what became a deadly pandemic. Using RAND’s own resources, researchers ran models to predict the disease’s dynamics and transmission rates. Later, RAND led the first major U.S. effort to estimate the cost of HIV care, obstacles to medical access, and the effects of HIV on people’s quality of life.

Since then, researchers have explored how stigma and medical distrust prevent people with HIV from getting life-saving treatments, and how lotteries and social networks can get patients to consistently take their medicine. They’ve studied connecting homeless individuals with HIV to treatment, and using urban gardening and nutritional counseling to reduce people’s food insecurity. To this day, RAND continues to pursue ways to ease HIV’s impact in the United States and parts of Africa where the disease is most prominent.

Today, what was once a killer pandemic is closer to a chronic disease—a lifelong illness but not necessarily a fatal one. The evolution of HIV might be a useful example to keep in mind as we hunker down against a new pandemic.

Funding for this research initiative is provided by gifts from RAND supporters and income from operations.
The RAND Corporation is a research organization that develops solutions to public policy challenges to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier and more prosperous. RAND is nonprofit, nonpartisan, and committed to the public interest.

PHILANTHROPIC CONTRIBUTIONS SUPPORT OUR ABILITY TO TAKE THE LONG VIEW, TACKLE TOUGH AND OFTEN-CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS, AND SHARE OUR FINDINGS IN INNOVATIVE AND COMPELLING WAYS.

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