

Insights and Reflections: June Ideation Hour

On June 23, 2021, the Resilient Nation Partnership Network (RNPN) hosted its first-ever Ideation Hour, a freestyle discussion encouraging open dialogue, idea sharing and continued collaboration. The virtual event focused on four timely breakout topics: social resilience, hurricane seasons, resilient infrastructure and wildfires.

Key discussion points, considerations and resources the participants shared are outlined below.

1. SOCIAL RESILIENCE

Key Points and Considerations

- Social Resilience focuses on the ability of social units, groups or populations to prepare for, withstand, respond and recover from climate, natural hazards and other disruptions.
- Harnessing the power of local social networks to mobilize and respond to disasters is a key component of bolstering a community's overall resilience.
- The definition of "resilience" can vary depending on the community in which you are working (rural, urban, suburban, older, younger, varying accessibility) and its cultural implications and historical context. Therefore, do we want a shared definition of resilience, or do we let communities define it using their own terms?
- Front-line community members most affected by severe weather and climate change are often not selected and supported by practitioners to lead resilience work. The focus needs to shift to the community, so solutions are built from the ground up.
- Terms like "affordable housing" can be emotionally charged and lead to "not in my backyard" reactions.
- Funding is a widespread challenge for many. Engage nonprofits and address capacity-building in grant writing.

Resources and Projects

- [NOAA's Community Resilience Education Theory of Change](#) places equity at the forefront for achieving resilience. Grantees for community resilience projects are required to address equity in their applications.
- Jackson State University works with colleagues to prepare vulnerable communities for severe weather and conducted specific research on people of color, particularly in the South. They have new projects funded by the National Science Foundation and Department of Homeland Security for certificate programs for diversity and inclusion. In the past, the university received complaints that researchers came in, did the work, left and



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never returned to support the community. They are partnering with other universities on these issues and are available to share expertise as needed, as well as project, sub-contract and grant awards.

- Front-line community members most affected by severe weather and climate change are often not selected and supported by practitioners to lead the work (Louisiana Watershed Initiative). The narrative needs to shift from practitioners to resources and communities. One of the largest challenges in Region 6 is that many officials and staffers are not representative of the communities they serve and there is hesitation to transition commissions or boards from the people who hold the power. Louisiana Watershed Initiative and Georgetown Climate Center are working on a visioning and strategy paper that addresses affordable housing from the perspectives of climate, flood risk, and rural and urban communities. They are also examining the temporary-versus-permanent housing spectrum.
- [Build Change](#) builds disaster-resilient housing in Latin America, Asia and the Caribbean. Its mission includes homeowner-driven, human-centered design. They believe the community should drive the solution from the ground up.
- The City of New York's Office of Emergency Management is interested in learning about the Region 8 art installation and skate park project. The point-of-contact works for a FEMA-funded project called "Strengthening Communities Through Recovery."

2. HURRICANE SEASON

Key Points and Considerations

- The hardest part of the hurricane preparedness process is penetrating the communities. People are more loyal to local community leaders than to state-level workers. Focus on providing local leaders with risk mitigation information and identifying community sponsors to carry the message.
- We need residents to understand that the risk is real and present. Education is critical.
- One participant pointed out that more civilian deaths take place following a storm (from indirect forces) than during the storm itself.
- To increase mitigation efforts, Pennsylvania places a big emphasis on pushing the importance of flood insurance and understanding risk.

Resources and Projects

- Operation Hope focuses on local outreach prior to a hurricane to encourage people to have disaster kits ready and robust financial planning in place. The organization needs to collaborate with other organizations to bolster residents' preparedness capacities. Find more information on [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).
- Baton Rouge, LA uses a database system to track local community members and their risk procedures.



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- [Emergency Financial First Aid Kit](#) (FEMA)
- [Resilience Analysis Planning Tool](#) (FEMA)
- [National Risk Index \(NRI\) for Natural Hazards](#) (FEMA)
- [Emergency Preparedness Now](#) (Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center)
- [Building Community Resilience with Nature-Based Solutions: A Guide for Local Officials](#) (FEMA)
- [A Guide to Supporting Engagement and Resiliency in Rural Communities](#) (FEMA)

3. RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Key Points and Considerations

- Resilient infrastructure is a complex topic, and its meaning can depend on one's perspective. Participants shared their interpretations:
 - Anything that a civil engineer touches.
 - Essential systems designed and constructed to prevent or minimize damage during an incident.
 - Infrastructure that was designed, built and maintained to minimize societal total cost of ownership, including all tangible, intangible, monetary and non-monetary costs.
 - Drinking water, roads, transportation, healthcare systems, watersheds, coral reefs and other "natural" systems that provide ecosystem and food services.
- Housing isn't always defined as infrastructure because it is private. However, it is a long-term asset that strengthens local economies and improves health and education. (Build Change)
- Social infrastructure is measurable and includes interpersonal connections, community organizations and social equity. It provides a lens to see the real and local impacts effecting a community.
- Constructing resilient infrastructure may contribute to gentrification. Ensure community members are at the table to make their voices heard.
- Determining appropriate recovery time can be a challenge. How fast should recovery be? Bulletproof infrastructure can come with unaffordable costs. We lack the basic principles to decide what is optimal.
- Consider the following: "What level of recovery speed minimizes loss?" Communities are stumbling over how fast is "fast enough."



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- There is a need to integrate and better educate resilience professionals on nature-based solutions.

Partner Resources

- [Advanced Warning and Response Network \(AWARN\)](#) is working to improve its alarm system. Resilience comes down to social integration, and AWARN is trying to build relationships to achieve greater resilience.
- NOAA doesn't do "dirt-moving projects," so it partners with other agencies to ensure its science leads to effective application, via Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) programs.
- [Nature-Based Mitigation Goals and Actions in State and Tribal Hazard Mitigation Plans](#) (Environmental Law Institute)
- The Alliance for Climate Resilient Earth's ([ACRE](#)) largest partnership is with the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). They are working to gain global adoption of their standards by banks, insurance companies, colleges/universities, etc.
- [Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure](#) (Taylor & Francis Online)
- [Critical Infrastructure Sectors](#) (Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency)
- [Exploring a Community's Quest for Resilience: Struggling with Past Plans](#) (American Society of Civil Engineers))
- [Community Resilience Planning Guide](#) (National Institute for Standards and Technology)
- [The Effects of Sea Level Rise Program](#) (National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science, NOAA)
- In June, the Texas 87th Legislature passed [TX SB3](#), which requires improved notification and communication of potential power outages. It also requires improved coordination between power and natural gas systems to ensure they do not cut each other off – this is a major step toward resilience.

4. WILDFIRES

Key Points and Considerations

- Every state has a certain level of wildfire risk.
- Insurance does not know how to assess wildfire risk in its totality – this needs to be improved. How can we address the risk if we don't know what to fix?
- Self-preparedness is key to improving a community's resilience and recovery time following a wildfire incident.



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- Employees who are self-prepared are more likely to recover and return to work more quickly.
- Providing information on varying mitigation techniques with an emphasis on affordability is essential.

Partner Projects and Resources

- Habitat for Humanity, in partnership with Simpson Strong Tie, is working on its first mitigation guide for local habitat affiliates. Providing a technical guide for different mitigation techniques for homes in wildfire-prone areas, with a heavy emphasis on affordability, is key. These include landscaping techniques, insulated concrete, etc. The guidance is coming from affiliates in southern and northern California.
- NOAA is working on providing long-term forecasts that anticipate drought and wildfires. They are currently working with emergency management professionals to improve drought monitoring projects and tools. When wildfires happen, how can we quickly identify those hotspots and get that information to state and local first responders? Wildfires move and change quickly, and we're using satellite technology through NOAA and partners to find those hotspots.
- American Institute of Architects has a number of resources dedicated to wildfire mitigation. It's re-training landscape architects and has a program on using healthy and non-toxic materials. Air pollution has long-lasting effects on entire neighborhoods. [Hazard Mitigation Design Resources](#).
- Nike is thinking about several different factors, including smoke annihilation, immediate evacuation of employees, alternate work-from-home spaces, etc. It is a very complex scenario that Nike continues to coordinate on. The majority of their office staff is working at manufacturing sites and there is a need to ensure healthy ventilation (while also ensuring work-from-home employees have measures in place).
- [Firebreak: Wildfire Strategies for Real Estate](#) (Urban Land Institute)

PARTNERS WHO EXPRESSED INTEREST IN COLLABORATION

Affordable and Disaster-Resilient Housing

- Louisiana Watershed Initiative and Georgetown Climate Center
- Build Change
- Succor Solutions

Emergency Management

- University of Rochester
- NYC Office of Emergency Management

Climate Change and Resilience

- Boise State Hazard and Climate Resilience Institute
- Georgetown Climate Center

Targeting Vulnerable Populations / Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

- Jackson State University

Hurricane Season

- Operation Hope focuses on local outreach to encourage disaster preparedness (logistical and financial). The organization needs to collaborate with other organizations to bolster individual preparedness.

Wildfire Risk

- ARISE is hosting its first symposium addressing wildfire risk. Contact ARISE for updates.

