

Insights and Reflections: February Ideation Hour

The Resilient Nation Partnership Network (RNPN) and the Department of Homeland Security Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships hosted the February 2022 Ideation Hour. The gathering explored how to strengthen climate equity for the Whole Community.

The virtual event included four breakouts:

- Promoting climate resilience through youth engagement.
- Fostering resilience at the neighborhood level.
- Building equity into mitigation actions.
- Building climate literacy: Where do we start?

Key talking points, considerations and resources follow.

1. PROMOTING CLIMATE RESILIENCE THROUGH YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Key Points and Considerations

- **Meaningful youth engagement involves inclusive, intentional and respectful partnership.** Change the power dynamic between youth and adults. Elevate diverse perspectives. Integrate these voices and insights into the programs and policies that affect their lives.
- **Kids can do more than you think.** Empower them to drive change.
- **Youth demand action.** We've been talking about climate change our whole lives. Now we need different ways to share what's needed for our future. Establish guidance systems in line with genuine progress on equity, justice, biodiversity and a sustainable relationship with our planet.
- **Education is essential.** Start youth engagement and environmental science lessons early. Children learn like sponges. As we grow to understand the climate change and literacy topics that are most important to youth, we can design programs that lead to action.
- **Engagement needs to be driven by the lived experience of young people.** We need to make it relevant and place-based.

Resources and Projects

- [Action for Climate Emergency \(ACE\)](#) educates, inspires and supports young people to lead the fight for their future. They see a world where a global movement, rich in youth leadership, has turned the tide on climate change. They believe an equitable, biodiverse, carbon-neutral future is still possible.



FEMA



Resilient Nation
Partnership Network

- [CLEAN Network](#) is a community of over 800 diverse members. They work to improve climate and energy literacy at all levels to enable responsible decisions and actions.
- The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s Gulf Research Program (GRP) aims to grow the scientific and environmental knowledge of Gulf Coast children and youth. GRP [funding](#) can help the next generation understand the socio-environmental challenges facing their communities.
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA’s) [Environmental Literacy Program \(ELP\)](#) grant builds community literacy and resilience to extreme weather, climate change and other environmental hazards. The ELP [Community Resilience Education Theory of Change](#) shows how education can increase community resilience.
- [PEAK Grantmaking](#) is a member-led community that advances equitable, effective grantmaking practices.
- [Project Resilience](#) is a high school course about the environmental challenges facing Gulf Coast communities. It was developed by the University Corporation For Atmospheric Research Center for Science Education and the South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center.
- [The Climate Initiative Learning Lab](#) moves climate change education into youth action.
- [The Climate Initiative Policy Toolkits](#) and resources educate, empower and add voices to the climate policy legislative process.
- [The RISE Challenge](#) is creating citizens with the knowledge, skills and will to make their communities more resilient.
- The Wild Center’s [Youth Climate Program](#) convenes, engages and empowers young people around the world to act on climate change.
- [YouthPower Learning Community of Practice on Youth Engagement](#) has developed a comprehensive definition of meaningful youth engagement and additional resources.

2. FOSTERING RESILIENCE AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL

Key Points and Considerations

- **Embed resilience into the community.** Identify the change-makers. Connect groups that might be working in parallel.
- **Understand how the community consumes information.** Build strategies and communications to meet communities where they are.
- **Communities are diverse.** A community has many voices. Learn about their unique challenges and co-create solutions for your approach.
- **Advance cultural skills.** Value a community’s diverse cultures. Build relationships with community-based organizations, houses of worship, local governments and other diverse groups.
- **Make financing accessible.** Ensure awareness and equal access of funding programs.

Resources and Projects

- [Military Resilience](#), American Security Project.
- The city of Nashua, New Hampshire worked with community stakeholders on [Resilient Nashua](#), a comprehensive resilience initiative. In 2020, the city kicked off “Imagine Nashua,” the latest master planning process.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s [Building Resilience Against Climate Effects framework](#). This five-step process helps officials prepare communities for the health effects of climate change.
- [The Emergency Volunteer Corps of Nehalem Bay \(EVCNB\)](#) is a non-profit dedicated to building personal, community and regional resilience. The EVCNB develops programs to build a culture of preparedness.
- The [U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates program](#) estimates annual income and poverty statistics for all school districts, counties and states.
- DelValle Institute Learning Center’s [Get Ready, Be Safe, Stay Healthy \(RSH\)](#). RSH is a community preparedness program the Boston Public Health Commission’s Office of Public Health Preparedness developed in 2013. RSH builds public health and resilience in communities.

3. BUILDING EQUITY INTO MITIGATION ACTIONS

Key Points and Considerations

- **Public engagement about natural hazard resilience shouldn't be done because it is mandatory.** It should be done because it makes communities safer.
- **Begin mitigation before an emergency.** Motivate the community and its officials to take equitable mitigation actions today. They could save lives and property tomorrow.
- **Establish relationships with vulnerable communities.** Meet people where they are. When possible, provide resources or support that enable participation (e.g., on-site child care, paid outreach workers with strong community ties, etc.). How do we encourage more diverse people to join these efforts? Use multiple communication channels to maximize access while accommodating access barriers. If appropriate for the target audience, use technology to reach less-connected populations.
- **Move at the speed of trust.** Build plans that factor in cultural differences to build trust and improve communication. Understand the barriers to participation: language, finances, documentation, time, etc.
- **Identify metrics that support equity-focused goals.** Use measurements and benchmarks that extend beyond those that have traditionally been used.

Resources and Projects

- The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine’s [Addressing Disaster Vulnerability Among Homeless Populations During COVID-19](#) looks at disaster vulnerability, homelessness, the pandemic, and intersecting hazards and disasters.
- NOAA-funded Coastal Management Programs and [Sea Grants](#).
- National Recreation and Park Association Community Engagement [Best Practice Resources](#).
- Natural Hazards Center’s [Risk Communication and Social Vulnerability: Guidance for Practitioners](#).
- The White House Council on Environmental Quality drafted the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#). It is a key component of President Biden’s [Justice40](#) Initiative.
- [BetterEvaluation](#) presents the best methods to evaluate metrics and methods.
- The “[Disasters and Religions](#)” app provides practical information for religious individuals and groups to use across the disaster life cycle.
- [CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index](#) data helps local officials identify communities that may need support before, during or after disasters.

4. BUILDING CLIMATE LITERACY: WHERE DO WE START?

Key Points and Considerations

- **Keep it simple!** When discussing climate change and natural hazard resilience, use terminology that everyone can understand.
- **Acknowledge the interconnected needs for access and justice.** Access to broadband, healthcare, education and other resources is tied to climate-related risks.
- **Talk more about trends and less about the causes of climate change.** COVID-19 shined a light on health and many other disparities. We must ensure the same populations aren't repeatedly exposed to risk.
- **Bring stakeholders together.** Help communities access resources. Use social media and partner with community leaders. Put power back in community members' hands.

Resources and Projects

- Alliance for a Climate Resilient Earth (ACRE) [Declaration for Climate Resilient and Sustainable Infrastructure.](#)
- The [Build Change Guide to Resilient Housing – An Essential Handbook for Governments and Practitioners.](#)
- [Climate Justice Resilience Fund](#), supporting community-led solutions for climate resilience.
- [Community Resources for Science](#), engaging and empowering students about the environment and climate change.
- FEMA's [Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities](#) program supports states, local communities, tribes and territories as they undertake hazard mitigation projects. These projects reduce their risks from disasters and natural hazards.
- [Justice40](#) ensures that at least 40% of federal climate investments go directly to frontline communities most affected by poverty and pollution. It is centered on racial justice and equity.
- The National Academies of Sciences, Medicine and Engineering [Gulf Research Program.](#)
- NOAA's [Climate Literacy: The Essential Principles of Climate Science](#) helps individuals and communities understand Earth's climate, impacts of climate change, and approaches to adaptation or mitigation.
- Find resources from a range of public media producers and curators in the [PBS Learning Media](#), which will help you learn and teach climate science literacy.
- [Climate Ready Boston](#) works with the community and other partners to achieve a Climate Ready Boston.

Contributors: Bezos Earth Fund; Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado Boulder; Nurture Nature Center