

Leveraging Tools that Build Equity into Climate Resilience Initiatives

Equity & Climate Resilience Workshop Themes



On October 24, 2022, 34 practitioners working at the intersection of equity and climate resilience came together for a [workshop](#) in Baltimore in the lead-up to the [National Adaptation Forum](#). Workshop participants examined the barriers to implementing more equitable practices through climate resilience, and discussed how new or existing tools and tactics could overcome those barriers.

The conversations built upon several foundational presentations on tools and tactics that include Trauma-Informed Engagement presented by [Chauncia Willis](#) from [I-DIEM](#), the EPA’s new Equitable Resilience Builder Tool presented by [Emily Eisenhauer](#) and [Jeanine Finley](#) from the [US EPA](#), and Organizational Listening and Engagement presented by [Tacy Lambiase](#) from [KLA](#).



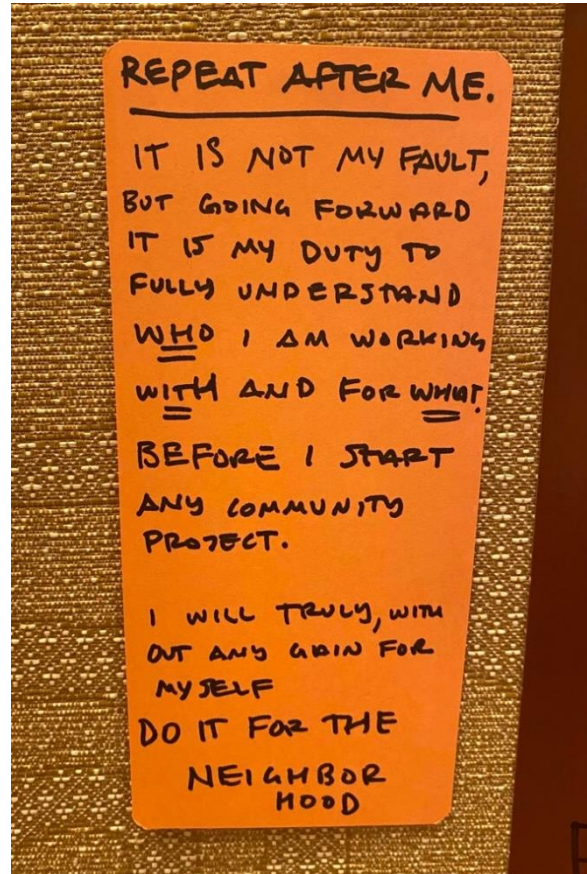
Through these discussions, participants recognized that community partnership is critical to all phases of a project – from research and initiation to planning and design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and onward to further action – to effectively carry out equitable climate resilience. Below are five ideas for how this might be enacted, highlighting where resilience projects often fall short, and what strategies might help us all support more equitable processes and outcomes.

Further details and specific notations from participant-recorded flipcharts of “red-flag” equity challenges as well as “green-flag” equity solutions can be found on [this spreadsheet](#).

1. Community partnerships should start long before the project begins. It takes time, trusted contacts, persistence, and flexibility to build relationships and trust between community members (including possibly overstretched community organizations) and other resilience practitioners.

- a. Create a space for community storytelling and listening to community experiences.*
 - b. Build a core group of diverse community members to help bring and initiate new project ideas and share community context.*
 - c. Conduct pre-engagement assessments that allow planners to better understand community history or needs.*
2. Planning and design phases of resilience projects must be made accessible to community members who are considered equal partners in the planning process.
 - a. Build upon existing community assets, including hiring and promoting local BIPOC leaders to include diverse perspectives.*
 - b. Co-develop a shared vocabulary of hazards, risks, and possible solutions with community members.*
 - c. Pay community members for their expertise as “context experts” (as compared to consultant “content experts”), and conduct engagement over multiple time scales as well as at locations convenient for community members.*
3. Project implementation should be mindful of power and funding imbalances.
 - a. Co-develop research protocols and funding plans with community members and be sure to follow these protocol and plans throughout the project.*
 - b. Embed equity, cultural competency, and further community engagement into organizational job descriptions as well as proposal requirements.*
 - c. Allow for locally determined implementation methods, including use of local materials, locally convenient funding cycles, or different forms of output that are locally deemed more useful and usable by the community.*
4. Project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) should be intentional and accessible for the community.
 - a. Consider M&E from the start of the project and utilize language as well as measured outcomes that matter to the community.*
 - b. Involve community members in selecting M&E metrics and data collection and review processes.*
 - c. Shift measurements to include social outcomes as well as longer timeframes that may include more accurate readings of long-term equity impacts or benefits.*
5. At the “end” of a project, further actions should be considered to sustain impacts and community benefits for the long-term.
 - a. Create multi-year plans as part of project deliverables - planning for operations and maintenance funding, further community partnerships, or resource acquisitions - for long-term impact.*
 - b. Build community leadership, capacity, and ownership throughout the project, and take responsibility for following up with the community after the project has “finished.”*
 - c. Center locally available materials and resources throughout the project for greater replicability or maintenance after the “end” of the project.*

Conceived of, hosted and facilitated by [Climate Resilience Consulting](#), [Kim Lundgren Associates Inc.](#), [Adaptation International](#), and [One Architecture & Urbanism](#).



Photos by Joyce Coffee