Reimagining Disaster Resilience for Communities

AN INCLUSIVE AND ANTI-OppRESSION BASED SYNTHESIS MAP SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES TO IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE.

New Orleans

Vulnerability Post Hurricane Katrina

A legacy of discrimination and displacement

Impact factors

Disasters affect people from low-income families the most, disproportionately impacting those living in poverty. Those who are already marginalized are the most vulnerable to disasters. Communities are also vulnerable due to a disjuncture between formal social policies and actual social practices. This is a complex challenge that requires identifying the social factors driving vulnerability to disaster risk and looking to communities to build resilience in different areas.

The resilience factors

Our research question: How might we design policy and urban planning interventions to help vulnerable communities build community resilience?

The current paradigm of a reactive and dispersed system

Disaster vulnerability

As our economies continue to grow, the development of new and more powerful systems have increased our vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, global warming, and external environmental disasters. This shift is especially felt in newly industrialized countries that have experienced rapid economic growth within finite resource systems. Vulnerable communities around the world are increasingly threatened by the status quo in which the economic and cultural norms of our current system have on our collective and other individual communities.

The possible impact of a preventative and integrated systems approach

OVERVIEW SEARCH

1. Economic System

2. Social System

3. Environmental System

The possibility of a preventative and integrated systems approach

A balanced ecosystem approach begins by addressing environmental disasters against the actual outcomes. The need for preventive action arises from the understanding that the natural disasters and environmental factors are interconnected. By investigating the history of city planning and development in New Orleans, we can better understand the paradigm shift that needs to take place in order to work with communities to assess the potential impact that a natural disaster may have on local communities, especially those most vulnerable to the current socio-economic system and cultural norms. Our synthesis map is concerned with the effects that the cyclical nature of environmental disasters has on disaster prevention and building resilient cities. The Impact Equation is used as a framework for outlining the areas of intervention for community resilience: social articulation, job security, food security, housing security, landlessness, social exclusion, and environmental degradation.

The impact equation

The equation conceptualizes the fact that the effects of climate change are felt across all systems and not just within the environment. The equation is as follows:

\[ \text{IMPACT} = \text{SEVERITY} \times \text{VULNERABILITY} \times \text{CAPACITY} \]

- Severity: the magnitude of a natural phenomenon, such as the earthquake magnitude or the intensity of a flood.
- Vulnerability: the degree to which an individual, community, or system is exposed to the effects of a disaster and its associated risks.
- Capacity: the ability of an individual, community, or system to cope with and recover from the effects of a disaster.

The equation helps us understand the paradigm shift needed to build resilience. It suggests that a balanced ecosystem approach is necessary to address environmental disasters and their impacts on vulnerable communities. The equation also highlights the importance of understanding the social, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to vulnerability and capacity.

A resilient future

This synthesis map provides a framework for understanding the resilience factors and their potential impact on vulnerable communities. By identifying the areas of intervention for community resilience, we can develop strategies to build more resilient communities. The map provides a comprehensive view of the interconnections between social, economic, and environmental factors, and how they contribute to vulnerability and capacity. The map also emphasizes the importance of understanding the social dynamics that underlie these factors, and how they influence the resilience of vulnerable communities.

The current paradigm of a reactive and dispersed system

The current paradigm of a reactive and dispersed system is characterized by a focus on individualistic, market capitalist paradigms, which prioritize economic balance. This approach may do so with loss of home, family, community, and death in a population. Our research question: How might we design policy and urban planning interventions to help vulnerable communities build community resilience? A balanced ecosystem approach begins by addressing environmental disasters against the actual outcomes. The need for preventive action arises from the understanding that the natural disasters and environmental factors are interconnected. By investigating the history of city planning and development in New Orleans, we can better understand the paradigm shift that needs to take place in order to work with communities to assess the potential impact that a natural disaster may have on local communities, especially those most vulnerable to the current socio-economic system and cultural norms. Our synthesis map is concerned with the effects that the cyclical nature of environmental disasters has on disaster prevention and building resilient cities. The Impact Equation is used as a framework for outlining the areas of intervention for community resilience: social articulation, job security, food security, housing security, landlessness, social exclusion, and environmental degradation.

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