Hyacinth Burrowes
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Mitigation and Community Resilience

I believe the greatest role of mitigation in community resilience is maintaining residents' hope. In the wake of a disaster, it is important that there is the perception of mitigation and improvement otherwise the negative outcomes compound and perpetuate. If residents and non-residents alike believe that things are hopeless, they aren't motivated to act. A part of me thinks there is a much larger conversation to be had about the resilience of the millennial community and the impact of social media's conditioned passivism, but I digress. "Hope Cannot Die," as they sang in the "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" video.

Community resilience can be a somewhat ambiguous and elusive goal. It's hard to know the exact steps to instill preemptive resilience because each community is different in the disasters it faces and its challenges to disaster response. However, part of the reason why community-based disaster management is so successful is because of the empowering effect mitigation has on the community as a whole. When I think of instances where communities weren't resilient, I think of New Orleans post-Hurricane Katrina and regions of Puerto Rico affected by Hurricane Maria. If you visit these neighborhoods today, there are parts that still haven't been rebuilt. There are a multitude of reasons for this, but I believe that the inefficiencies and delay in mitigation contributed to the communities' lack of resilience. Additionally, the lack of mitigation in Sudan after a cycle of floods have resulted in a community that lacks resilience; people have given up hope, homes aren't being rebuilt, and thousands of people are migrating elsewhere. Unfortunately, this is a large problem amongst low and middle income countries that are facing the effects of climate change. They don't have the resources to prioritize mitigation in a way that is reflective of the severity of the issue. This is also being seen in small island developing states and as a result, we are seeing a mass migration due to climate change.

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