



Making Waves in Equitable Coastal Resilience: A National Workshop on Social Equity and Coastal Resilience

(Preliminary) Summary of Discussions and Key Points

November 9, 2022

Background: The ODU workshop planning team conducted preliminary analysis of discussion from the breakout sessions on Days 1 and 2 of the workshop. The analysis was intended to inform the development of research agenda and recommendations for actions and next steps to facilitate applied/engaged research and on-the-ground projects/programs to address equity in coastal resilience.

1. Definitional concerns

What does equity mean in the context of coastal resilience? Who decides the definition?

- Equity and resilience are broad concepts that require further definition.
- Terms mean different things to different people and in different places.
- Practitioners and researchers need to come together to define what equity is.
- What is equity in policy terms? Who gets to define it?

What does success in advancing social equity in coastal resilience look like? What does a successful engaged research or on-the-ground project look like?

- Lack of metrics on what defines a successful project makes it difficult to identify models/examples, what works, etc.
- Can a project have a successful collaboration but not successful results in the community? Are they mutually exclusive?
- Need to work with communities, agencies, etc. to determine success.

2. Measuring equity and coastal resilience

- How do we track equity across time and space, recognizing the need for comparison while acknowledging the local context?
- How do we know that we are making a difference in advancing equity while building coastal resilience?

The following research questions capture the essence of these questions, while being sufficiently general to be applied to the different areas of discussion from Day 1 (emergency management, infrastructure, coastal squeeze and related issues) and other aspect of coastal resilience.

- How can we assess that equity related metrics are making a difference?
- How can we develop metrics for universality and comparative value while also ensuring their local salience?
- How do we address the implications of labeling a community?
- What is the role of participatory research and co-production in defining and applying these metrics?
- How can we detect when dynamics and/or outcomes are shifting and determine the effects?
- What meta-level analysis is needed?

3. Recommendations for facilitating on-the-ground projects/programs

Funding for engaged or applied research

Increase funding for engaged or applied research and allow more flexibility for research to co-produce with communities or community partners

- Build long-term focus and requisite resources into funding and programs/grants requirements, such as accounting for the time to build relationships, compensating individuals or groups in the community participating in the research, long-term monitoring or checking back on communities.
- Fund action-based research or funding to implement research findings.
- Provide funding for infrastructure to support engaged and applied research.
- Explicitly call out the need for co-production and two-way engagement with communities in RFPs.
- Prioritize equity focus in research funding opportunities by providing clear definitions, measurement guidance, and incentives.

Funding for communities to support on-the-ground projects and programs

Ensure equity in prioritizing, evaluation, streamlining, award, and types of on-the-ground projects and programs that benefit underserved communities

- Re-evaluate funding programs to ensure their goals, RFPs and grant requirements, and grant selection processes are equitable.
- Conduct equity assessments before the funding programs or funding opportunities are created.
- Assess the equity focus of current funding programs and opportunities, and the extent to which distribution of funding considers equity dimensions.
- Direct funding to non-structural projects to support resilience of coastal communities.
- Create flexible funding application processes with reduced application and administrative burdens, such as by allowing groups of communities or localities to apply for grants, creating simpler grant applications, or reducing cost share requirements.

Incentives, infrastructure, and institutional support for academic research

Provide institutional and administrative support, and incentives in encouraging and fostering community-based, engaged, and applied research

- Educate university leaders and administrators on the importance of community-based engaged and applied research and on the need to provide institutional support for and resources to researchers, faculty, students, etc.
- Create incentive structures and guidelines (e.g., tenure expectations) that recognize and reward community engagement efforts, value engaged and applied research, and prioritize relationship building as an important outcome.
- Establish staff positions to support community engagement activities (e.g., fostering community collaborations, conducting regular community check-ins, etc.) that underpin successful engaged and applied research, such as extension or engagement specialists, community liaisons, or community coordinators
- Provide administrative and project management support for engaged and applied research.

Research and project infrastructure

Create and disseminate tools and metrics for project assessment that emphasize equity and mechanisms for collaboration-building processes

- Establish definitions and metrics of successful engaged and applied research and community-university collaborative projects.
- Identify existing and develop new tools for measuring different aspects of equity and coastal resilience.
- Create a repository for data collection and information sharing (e.g., repository of mitigation projects to share information about mitigation best practices, data on where mitigation funding is allocated and mitigation projects are implemented).
- Develop partnerships with professional organizations that can help disseminate research findings, project results, etc. to complement the academic articles that are emphasized in academia.
- Establish mechanisms for creating connections between universities, communities, government and nonprofit agencies, funding programs, and industry where information is transferred, translated, understood, and accessible?
- Identify examples of successful equity-focused programs that can be applied in coastal communities to build resilience, determine how they can be replicated or scaled-up, and disseminate information from these programs.
- Provide resources to help researchers understand the process for community-based applied and engaged research and offer guidelines/training for building relationships with and engaging communities.

Support for communities and community partners

Create paths and resources for community empowerment and advocacy

- Emphasize research/project activities that enable communities to develop tools, resources, knowledge, and capacity to advocate for themselves beyond the project.
- Provide resources or support (e.g., grant writing services, contract management, procurement assistance, etc.) for communities to apply for and manage grants.
- Create a framework for what communities/community organizations should expect from researchers and the types of partnerships/collaborations that can be pursued.