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COMMUNITY-LED RESILIENCE: IMPROVING DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY FOR BLACK PEOPLE AND PLACES

Thursday, October 1, 2026

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WELCOMING REMARKS

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ATYIA MARTIN
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Executive Director, Next Leadership Development

MODERATOR

NNENIA CAMPBELL
Executive Director, The William Averette Anderson Fund for Hazard and Disaster Mitigation Education and Research

PANEL ONE

TRACY HADLEY
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Love Without Walls

JASMINE E. MOORE
Rent Support Assistant and Grant Writer, Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church

PRINCESS SHAW
Founder, Light Up Lawndale

KIMBERLY TURNER
Founder, The Coalition

PANEL TWO

SANCHITA BALACHANDRAN
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DONOGHOE: Good afternoon, everybody. Hello. Hello. Good afternoon. Thank you very much. If everybody could come in, take your seats Welcome everybody to the Brookings Institution. My name is Manann Donoghoe. I'm a fellow here at the Brookings Center for Community Uplift. I lead our work on climate resilience, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.

Look, first of all, I know everybody's busy. We live busy lives. It's a busy time, so I wanna thank you all for taking time out of your day, out of your afternoon to be here with us. Look, I'm lucky enough to be sharing with this stage later today with my friend and colleague Dr. Atyia Martin, who's sitting down in the front row there. Dr. Martin is the executive director of Next Leadership Development, who's our partner for this event.

Last year, Dr. Martin and I, we released some research on federal emergency management program called the CDRZ. Has anybody in this room heard that term, CDRZ? Yep. See some hands up. For those who don't know, that's the Community Disaster Resilience Zones. Now, this is a program that designated about five hundred communities to start with as priority zones for building disaster resilience. Now, becoming a CDRZ, theoretically what that meant was, yeah, you had all these incentives for private investment to come to your community, you had special and easier access to federal funds.

You know, that's a boon for communities, especially those desperately seeking to reduce the risks they face to make their communities safer. However, we found something surprising that I know to a lot of the folks in the room won't be surprising. And that's that while federal data that was used to create the CDRZ program identified about seventy-seven percent of all Black majority communities as highly vulnerable to disaster impacts, only about 10.5 percent of the CDRZ were in Black majority communities, right? In other words, what our research found was that this federal policy, it missed many of the most vulnerable communities. Importantly, it missed many Black majority communities who could have benefited from a designation like CDRZ.

You know, I'm sharing that story not just 'cause I'm proud of the work. I, I am proud of the work. But I'm sharing that story because it's really what this event is about. I'm thankful that this event has been produced in partnership, in partnership between the Brookings Institution and between the Next Leadership Development. In fact, we couldn't do an event like this without a partnership like this.

On stage today, you'll hear not only from your usual Brookings experts, people who are familiar with the Brookings stage. You'll also hear from grassroots organizers who are working in Black communities in areas that are actively involved in the disaster recovery process. That's something unique. These types of partnerships, they're crucial to creating better policy. I truly believe that. Good policy is informed by local experiences. It's responsive to local needs, and it can address the gaps that exists for the most vulnerable communities. So that's really what today is about.

With that, I'd like to hand over to Dr. Martin to make a few remarks and introduce our moderator for the panel. Thank you very much for being here.

MARTIN: Okay, I made it up to the podium, y'all. Okay, I'm here. Let me bring this down just a little for little people. Happy Thursday Another beautiful day out here in the world. My name is Dr. Atyia Martin. I'm the executive director for a nonprofit called Next Leadership Development, and we convene what's called the Black Resilience Network, and many of those members are here today in order to share their experiences.

I just want to briefly share some remarks to keep me on track because I know myself. So first of all, I want to make sure that I thank Dr. Andre Perry, the senior fellow of the Center for

Community Uplift here at the Brookings Institution. Has been an amazing partner, thought leader, and just intellectual rock star that we love and adore and appreciate all the work that you have done in your research and in your partnership.

I also want to thank Manann Donoghoe. Where are you? Oh, there you go. So Manann, who just left the stage, has been an amazing partner as well and has sat with me on meetings every two weeks, y'all. He puts up with me every two weeks for an hour, and we talk through potential projects, the projects we're working on, and share what's possible.

And that is one of the spaces where we came up with this idea of bringing folks together in order to really understand the challenges and experiences that Black communities are having in trying to get resources for their communities to navigate the labyrinth that is the emergency management system and all aspects of it. The government side, the kind of VOAD side, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters, the local county state politics, all of the things in between on top of anti-Black racism.

So the people you're gonna hear from today are coming with incredible expertise that they have earned. Most of, actually everyone who you will hear from from community, these are not people who come from the disaster space. These are folks who are really from community who stepped up because the community needed them to, and they took on the assignment with love, with commitment, and with a level of sacrifice that most people will never fully understand what they give up to support their communities, all without being paid for it.

So I am just grateful that the, that Next Leadership Development has been able to partner with the Brookings Institution in being able to host this so that you can hear from them yourselves, and also to celebrate this moment that we're in right now. So I know there's-- It doesn't feel like there's a lot to celebrate. Some people may feel that way, but there are some things to celebrate In addition to the amazing community members who are in this room who we should be celebrating, and you will especially celebrate them when you hear about their work, it's also 500 years of African Americans being in the United States.

This is our 500-year anniversary, 1526. I won't go into the weeds of the story because Manann will yell at me. I'm trying not to make eye contact with him right now, y'all. But ultimately, in 1526, 100 Black people were brought here to the United States as part of a Spanish colony, and they fought for their freedom, and they escaped, all 100 of them, and lived here in America since then. Now, there's a reason why you don't know these stories. Much of history that we don't know is not taught in school, and so we just don't know these aspects unless we seek them out. And I bring that up because today is so special with that as the backdrop. It is the 500th anniversary. As we celebrate 250th, we're celebrating 500th. And today we get to wrap our arms around community members and experts who are going to help us better contextualize what's happening in communities today, all of the strength and power that communities have marshaled in order to navigate all that the systems have failed to do, and to, and hopefully encourage us to get involved in some meaningful way.

So with that said, I get to bring up one of my favorite human beings, who is Dr. Nnenia Campbell from the Bill Anderson Fund. Thank you so much and enjoy the rest of the session

CAMPBELL: Dr. Nnenia Campbell with the Bill Anderson Fund, and I'm so excited to talk to you all today. Thank you for being here. We will have two panels. This first panel, we're gonna get some experience directly from on the ground from, from some wonderful women who are serving their communities, as Dr. Martin stated. I'm gonna call each of them up to the stage.

First, we have attorney Kimberly Turner with, the founder of The Coalition. Next up we have Tracy Hadley, the founder and chief executive officer of Love Without Walls. Jasmine Moore, the disaster case manager with Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church. And Princess Shaw, founder of Light Up Lawndale

So I think it's important to start off this discussion with some examples of what disasters actually look like. When we talk about systems failing, when we talk about the response that's necessary to address those, those failures and those shortcomings I think it's really important for us to, to actually understand what that looks like in your experience.

So the first question I'd like each of you to respond to, starting with you Princess, is when a disaster affects your community, what does emergency management look like from the ground level before, during, and after the official response begins?

SHAW: Well, I will say good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for being here, first and foremost, to listen to us and hear what we have to say.

And I think for me, it's confusing. Confusion. So for emergency management for us, because for Chicago, when we have a disaster, it's not the normal disaster you will see when it comes to tornadoes, hurricanes, things of that nature. And our emergency management, as well put together as it is there's a deficit. And that deficit is the fact that many moons ago, someone made a comment or made a actual finding that climate change was real.

And so here we are, all these many moons later, where climate change is happening with urban flooding for the city of Chicago, and there's no real response. The response is a scattered, hopefully we can get this done. Once I get over this one hump, then I'm okay with that. But that's not an answer. But anything else in the city of Chicago, when we have festivals and things of that nature, they are spot on. The OEMC has everything together. They know how to coordinate with the police department and other departments. It's just in the aspect for when it comes to disasters that they are not very much together.

CAMPBELL: Thank you. Jasmine?

MOORE: Hello, everyone. Thank you for being here. I live in Asheville, North Carolina, where we experienced Hurricane Helene two years ago, just a couple days ago. And for us disaster was not supposed to happen in the mountains, and especially not a flood. And so Asheville was not prepared at all for what was going to happen.

And emergency management for us, it really boiled down to community and relationships because we needed to know where the people are. Where are the people beforehand? Do we know where the Deaf and blind community lives? Do we know who doesn't have access and transportation? And so for Grace Covenant, we were able to start with community, the people who we were in relationship with, and that's really, really important.

CAMPBELL: Thank you.

HADLEY: Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for this opportunity to be in this space. I'm Tracy Hadley, founder and director of Love Without Walls.

Emergency management before, during, and after the disaster-- in a perfect world, emergency management is supposed to be connected to the community in a relationship, basically knowing the needs that are there. Preparation should be in place. During the disaster, emergency management is supposed to provide what is actually going on with the community as far as disaster and report it to those who are over them After the disaster, in

long-term recovery, they are supposed to still be in the picture making sure that everyone recovers in an equitable way, and making sure they report their findings.

We found that in our communities in Mississippi, in the underserved communities, because of the lack of resources in the area and communication, they're not connected to the community in a way. So that's where our organization, being a grassroots organization in the area already working with the community, basically had a head start in that way.

But the communication that's not in place was a barrier to those to receive assistance in the area they're in, the underserved communities.

CAMPBELL: Thank you.

TURNER: Yes, good afternoon. Thank you for having us. My name is Kimberly Turner, and I'm from St. Louis, Missouri, where we experienced a EF3 tornado just last year, May 16th. Since that tornado impacted our community, we have seen that our emergency response system could be improved greatly. The infrastructure needs to be improved within the government. However, when it comes to the community coming together, we have seen that the strength of unity of various organizations like ourselves, the coalition, who are grassroot and came together specifically in response, directly in response to this tornado, and other nonprofits who have shifted their efforts to helping our community to not only have relief, whereas there was no one but us for the first three weeks.

This tornado took five lives, 5,000 homes damaged or destroyed, 10,000 properties, 10,000 properties damaged or destroyed, $1.6 billion worth of damage in our community, predominantly Black generational homes. There was no alarm that sounded the day of the tornado. And because of that, we are still in the middle of it all today, and I look forward to sharing more.

CAMPBELL: Thank you all. And I wanna dive into what that looks like in specific domains next with this next question. So starting again with you, Kimberly. We know that disasters often expose existing challenges related to housing, health wealth, and transportation cultural preservation, so many areas. Which of those challenges becomes the most urgent in your community during disaster recovery, and why?

TURNER: Certainly. So I'd start with housing. So the coalition is an organization of attorneys, realtors, law students, and insurance claim professionals as individuals and member organizations that our main objective is to ensure that our community knows our rights as we rebuild.

And the reason why we became an organization is because there was the call. There was the call from homeowners and renters who were impacted as to, "Where are the attorneys? We're being told that we no longer own our homes if it is condemned, if you receive the red sticker. We're being told to sign this quit claim deed so that we no longer own our house and to give over our ownership interests."

As well as there were people who were coming into our community from out of state and in state stealing the bricks from our homes. And if you Google or know anything about St. Louis bricks, they are very valuable. And so the call came out, and we answered. And so because of the tornado and the exposure that, that has happened since, we have now found that 70% of our community are uninsured. 70% of those who have been impacted.

And it was not a secret prior to the tornado. Our Department of Insurance and Commerce had a study done years ago and knew that that area, which was North City and West City in

St. Louis, was not insured properly. But nothing was done to advocate and to tell the community who some thought perhaps they did not need insurance because these were generational homes that were passed down, that if they did not have a mortgage, they did not need to be insured. However, of course you need insurance, but the education was not there.

Additionally, the likelihood of redlining exists. So we found from talking with our community and having at our hub an insurance claim hub where we go through the policies, we make the calls to those insurance companies, as well as helping with having FEMA on site and SBA on site for our under-insured or non-insured, that many of our community members tried to get insurance, but they were either denied for reasons such as you have a large tree in your yard, or you have a flat roof, or you have a detached garage, or you own your home, denied insurance and provided some a gap insurance through the state that only covered s-fire damage and similar causes as opposed to storm or wind and tornadoes. And so we have realized that because of the redlining that likely took place, that that is an issue that has been exposed and that we need to advocate for our community in that way and insurance reform.

Additionally, we've also found out that many of our community members, because these were generational homes that were passed down from grandparents to parents and to children, did not have the proper title to their home, which also impacts your ability to receive funding from FEMA and SBA and other entities after a natural disaster. So heirship property is when you have a home that the title shows an owner that perhaps has passed or no longer lives in that home. So we're working to help clear those titles as well as the coalition in answering and helping with other legal needs that our community has faced and that has since been exposed because of the tornado.

CAMPBELL: Thank you. And Tracey, if you could respond to the same question.

HADLEY: Well, I echo the same as you shared. In certain communities in Mississippi, heirship, the property, is a problem, and we have workshops to basically address that and work with the residents to have the titles cleared.

When the disaster struck our area in the March 2023, same as it is now, there's not very much as far as housing in the area. So home ownership is a problem in our area. And there were, there weren't many places for people to move to. And not having the proper titles for their homes, they aren't able to receive the assistance that's in place for them as a resource.

CAMPBELL: Thank you. And Jasmine?

MOORE: Sure. I would say I'm echoing Attorney Kimberly and Tracy that housing, housing is a crisis, and when a natural disaster hits, it exposes those things and then heightens the need for safe and stable housing. So, I come from a place where I understand and believe that housing is, it's like a housing first model. For instance, if someone's not safely housed, they cannot adequately take care of their mental health, their children to and from school, get to and from work. You know, housing as a model, knowing that it's very essential for a person and, and dignifying people by living in safe and stable housing. You know, when it comes down to it, Asheville, North Carolina, well, Buncombe, I should say, Buncombe County, there were over two hundred plus homes that were destroyed in the storm, and there were landslides that washed away storms down the river. There were homes that were mobile homes that were lost, and so whole trailer park.

And what I found also is that there were these large corporations from places that did not live or work in North Carolina that were trying to purchase the land, and they did that. There were folks who eventually were removed from their home because they could not live there,

and then they were in FEMA trailers. And ultimately, FEMA, after fourteen months, were like, "Oh, you have one more month to live here." That left people unhoused, and the unhoused population in Asheville has grown significantly since the storm. And so housing, I believe, is one of those major essentials that we need to focus on and then make it affordable.

You know, what I've seen and I personally experience is, we were renters at the time the storm hit, and within a couple days, our landlord said the rent's going up by six hundred dollars starting January 2025. And how can anybody afford an rent increase of six hundred dollars? And I didn't know that it just wasn't us. When I started doing disaster case management, I keep hearing stories of people saying that the rent went up by six hundred dollars. What I did not know was that landlords and property management, they have-- there's an invested interest after natural disasters. There's a property management that is well known and leads the nation's evictions after natural disasters. And so they get the folks evicted.

There was no eviction moratorium either in Asheville, North Carolina, after the storm. There were evictions that were successful. People left, but then the landlord or the property manager, they actually get money from FEMA for an empty apartment, and then they raise the rent for the next tenant to move in. And so there is this predatory behavior as it pertains to housing after natural disasters.

CAMPBELL: Thank you all for those insights. And Princess, I wanna ask you something a little bit different. Thinking about the systems we have to support communities that have been affected by a disaster, what do emergency management agencies, funders, and outside partners need to change in the way that they work with community-rooted organizations?

SHAW: Well, I'm glad you asked that question because at the end of the day, the entire FEMA system needs to be overhauled. Not gotten rid of, but overhauled. And as we've seen with these different locations, they all have challenges that they have to overcome.

Those overcoming challenges are a couple of them, just the inconsistency when you call a 800 number. You can call in one minute, talk to one agent, literally call back five minutes later, and when you call back, they have no clue what you discussed with the previous actual call taker. That's a problem.

Then they also have it where I've actually had this conversation several times. So when FEMA came out for Chicago, on the west side of Chicago back in July of 2023, we had a concern where people's furnaces and hot water tanks were not being addressed. On top of those things not being addressed, then they're sending people from outside of our area to explain to us how our home should run. And so how do you tell someone how to run their home if you're not even from the area and you don't have the same demographics, your neighborhood doesn't look like mine?

And shame on FEMA for having the same system in, in place for so long. It needs to be urbanized. It needs to take a turn for the better. And my favorite slogan is that you have FEMA working from a concept of Fred Flintstone days. So they're still, and even in 2026, trying to make a wheel out of a rock when we're literally living in the George Jetson days where at the end of the day, in about a week or two, we might be having flying cars.

So I'm gonna need for FEMA to get up to speed with where everyone else is, and not only just FEMA, but then even our emergency management. And as opposed to taking a look deep within and just apologizing. A lot of these neighborhoods, what I've been hearing throughout this three-year journey for me is that a lot of these counties, these cities, if they would just simply step back and say, "Hey, we apologize, we're not up to par," then I think

we would be able to move forward with even our emergency management to make sure as far as anything, we can come together for a holistic approach that works for each one of these extra areas up here.

CAMPBELL: Thank you all for those insights. And a question I have Kimberly, for you is about our approach to, to changing these, these conditions we're hearing about and the systems that are not, that are not functioning. So if you could secure one concrete commitment from the public agencies or philanthropic partners after today's conversation, what would that be?

TURNER: It would be to help to advocate for insurance reform. That's top tier. It's not just a St. Louis issue. This is something that nationwide, so as both an attorney and a realtor, where I serve on state capacity as a director for Missouri Realtors, I've seen the issues on a large scale statewide, but I've also heard about it within the National Association of Realtors across our country.

When insurance companies have the ability and the authority to drop you because you used your insurance policy, that is a problem. When they have the authority and the ability to undercut the value that they provide to you when your home no longer has a front of your house or your roof is detached, and they deny you or provide you with little to no money, that is a problem When insurance companies are able to outright just choose an area, likely because of systemic racism, and not provide adequate policies to begin with, that is a problem.

So it is not working as it should. It's working as institutionalized as it's intended to work. Whereas it is, it is collecting funds from our community but not providing the coverage and protection that it should. So if there's anything that could help all of us nationwide, it would be insurance reform.

CAMPBELL: Thank you. Thank you. And same question for you Princess. Would you like to respond?

SHAW: Can you repeat the question for me please?

CAMPBELL: Sure. If you could secure one concrete commitment from public agencies or philanthropic partners after today's conversation, what would that be?

SHAW: To actually come up with a system that's streamlined and that works. Making sure that when they streamline the process, that it's not based on a model for one particular area, but then it is adaptable to different areas. As we see up here, we have four different areas that we're speaking on. But making sure to make those changes and those adaptabilities to reflect those areas that need the help. If you're sending me someone that has no clue what a basement looks like, and when I'm trying to explain to them to come and help me and they refuse, do I really be mad at that person? Can I be mad at that person? 'Cause they don't understand my real blight. And so I would say for me it would be to make sure they understand how and when to streamline, not just get rid of something because it's broken. You don't throw, always throw the baby out with the bathwater.

You go head on, you fix it, you streamline it, you make it adaptable to those certain areas, and put funding to it. I've seen them put funding to so many different things that is not beneficial for our neighborhoods. And then the millions of dollars that have been poured into the insurance companies, there needs to be some type of accountability on that angle as well.

CAMPBELL: Thank you. And I invite any of our other panelists if you have comments you'd like to make on that, that one request that you would make of the emergency management or philanthropic partners for a commitment.

MOORE: Send the money to the people who are doing the work. Send the money to the community-based organizations that are out here doing the actual work. I've been doing this since 2024, and I've seen now I'm so invested and interested in who got $5 million and for what? Where did they go? Who did they help? Mind you, I'm walking into homes with people who their basement is still mold. And I am, as a grant writer for Grace Covenant as well, begging for funding to support a family not living in their car anymore with two children who are on the spectrum.

Send the money to the organizations who are doing the work. And it's not about organizations that are, you know... Well, I would say this, and I don't wanna call out any particular organization. I might get in trouble if anybody in Asheville is watching. However, however, there's organizations who always get the money. But we don't see the fruit of their labor or what labor. Yes. So that's an issue for me, and that's an issue when it comes to this. Because Grace Covenant, I'm proud to say, while, yes, I work for Grace Covenant, we've done over $7 million in rent support to our community for those who have been heavily impacted, the Black and brown, the Latinx, the service worker economies, those people who are in desperate need of recovery. And as a long-term recovery group, send the money.

CAMPBELL: Thank you. And before we go into the Q&A, Tracy, if you'd like to respond to that question.

HADLEY: Oh, basically just echoing the same. Nonprofits who are boots on the ground actually connected to the community, we know the community well before the disaster strikes. And what happens are the larger organizations do, they receive the funding. So I think maybe changing how those funds come from the federal to the state to the actual community. If we could streamline and change some of the rules and regulations there, it'll be helpful to us who are doing the actual work, the boots on the ground.

MOORE: And might I add just just a little barrier that I know from my experience in sharing with Tracy is that some grassroots organizations don't have the largest budget, and so some funders don't wanna fund it, or they don't have a 990 yet, or they don't have an audit yet. And these issues create barriers for people to receive support and help.

CAMPBELL: Great. Thank you so much for all of those insights. And those are really important, especially those, those considerations around the systems that are in place and the expectations and how that does not align with what's happening on the ground. So thank you. I'm going to now turn to a couple of the questions that we've received from our audience.

The first one is about how you would recommend getting people of color involved in local voluntary organizations active in disasters. And any of you can, can start if you have have thoughts about ensuring that our communities are represented within these networks that are responding in their communities.

SHAW: Well, I'll start. Letting us in. Letting us in. Letting us in. Letting us in because I can tell you from mine in particular for, for Chicago, we're part of the Northeast Illinois COAD. If I tell you how many times I've emailed, called, and said, "Hey what are we doing here?" It was non-active. So now, 2027 January, we're gonna have our first official meeting to now get those actual people that are supposed to be there at those tables to start meeting and sound an alarm.

And my favorite thing, what I just got done telling them not too long ago was like, "Hey, do we have a bat line?" I remember growing up, Batman was my favorite cartoon to watch, and I always remember Commissioner Gordon or whoever was in that room, that red phone. When it rang, you knew Batman was coming. We need that. I told them. They looked at me like I was crazy. Like, "Listen, I'm, I'm serious. We need a bat phone so when we have that disaster, these people can get deployed quickly and actually have a plan in place."

HADLEY: I feel that in in our underserved areas, starting with the, the churches, I think everyone attends a church or have some family member who's in a church. And I think it's very important, preparedness is important. So basically preparing, getting ready, being ready so we won't have to get ready when disasters hit. So I think more communication within the community on what's needed for your particular community. After all, you know your community better than anyone.

MOORE: I'd like to add that it's important to name relationships and trust, and our Black community does not trust those who are in power and positions because of how historically they've been treated. And so access is denied because there's no trust, there's no relationship, and we need that.

TURNER: Your question is how to help the Black community to volunteer with various organizations, not just government entities.

CAMPBELL: Right. Voluntary organizations, in general.

TURNER: So, as a coalition, what we've found has been helpful is to be able to reach out directly to various organizations. So I am a, a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, if I have any sorors in the room. I don't, 'cause I don't hear any oops. So nonetheless, yes. Oops from me. Yeah. So reaching out to trusted, right, organizations, so churches, right? Reaching out to D9, reaching out to other grassroot organizations who are already doing some type of work within our community to ask them to send their membership, right?

We had a day called All Boots on the Ground because we found out we can't do it by ourselves. We knew that when we formed, that's why we're the coalition, right? Not one organization, not one person is going to be able to rebuild our community. However, even the coalition by itself needs others. This is a collective, and now it's not just locally collective, right? This is a national call to action. Because when we all come together, then others who are in our community, so not only did we have, you know, attorneys, realtors, law students, and insurance claim professionals volunteering with us from various organizations and the community organizations, but we had community who were impacted who would come to our hub, which we were out for nine months on the corner of MLK and Cora every Saturday with our hub and canvassing our community and door knocking and talking to our community and saying, "Hey, you're welcome here, too. We need your help. Come and join us." And they did.

So the invitation, the invitation from people who may already have the network, the connection, the relationship, and just from doing the work and others see you doing the work and they want to help, too.

CAMPBELL: Thank you. And our last question probably looking at the time, is what can advocates do now to combat disaster capitalism from placing displacement pressures on survivors?

TURNER: Restate that question for me.

CAMPBELL: Yeah. What can advocates do now to combat disaster capitalism, to keep it from displacing survivors in your, in communities?

TURNER: What can we do as preparation so that we're not displaced? Yes, well, we're trying to figure that out now in St. Louis, right? So the objective is that we know our rights so that our community, which, we were being provided disinformation, so intentional misinformation, as well as misinformation in order to displace us. Because St. Louis, in my perspective, was already on track to being gentrified, right? You see the signs. And so this just, you know, accelerated the possibilities and the need for advocacy to prevent it, right?

And so, what we are needing to do to advocate so that we're not displaced is, one, making sure that our community is educated, right? So that we're educated that we need insurance no matter what. That if Big Mama's House was passed down to us by word of mouth, we have to get, go through probate, or better yet, make sure that our grandmothers and grandfathers and parents have their estate plan, which is what I do as an attorney, right? So that homes can be passed down and protected and assets are protected. And so when you have insurance and you have your asset protected and you also have the title to a home, now you're able, when a disaster comes, to be able to receive funds to rebuild your home properly. So that's one thing, or a couple things that we're able to do.

MOORE: I would say it's very important for, naming that city council in any area, there are elected officials, right? So voting, because I think ultimately what I've seen is that corporations don't have to come in and buy all the land up if-- they have to go before a vote or they have to go before city council, there are certain things that can be stopped.

And so, you know, for me, there's been a lot of exposure of people coming in that are, that don't belong there, and this is just their model. After natural disasters, this is what they do. And so stopping that in some way, some form, some fashion to really allow people to rebuild because again, housing is, for me, it's a housing first model.

SHAW: And I'm gonna chime in right behind her, but I will have to agree. Our elected officials from what I've seen in Chicago, I have had several conversations with them over numerous occasions to the point where they have become tone deaf. And what that means is, is because they're not able to grasp the severity and the depth of what's going on, that they just immediately shut down and then don't wanna really help, even though they do. Seeing that they have been in office, many of our Chicago have been in office for a very long time. If you don't keep knocking at their door, you eventually just get ignored, and that's why they hate seeing me come down to city council. But that's why even more I love going down, right?

Because you have to, like she just said, you have to do your due diligence. And as taxpayers, they're constantly going up on the taxes. In Lawndale alone, I think our property taxes jumped like 133%. And for that to jump that high because of the simple fact that you have to make up for that somewhere else, that's a problem. And then they try to do the, the blame game. And so I'ma, I'ma blame Tracy, and then I'ma, I'ma blame her down there, and I'ma blame you just to keep running me in a circle as opposed to saying, "Hey, we're sorry. We know this is a broken system."

That's why the forefathers, when they created this whole United States of America-- and that's what I'ma be nice and say today-- when the United States of America was formed, that's why they put amendments in place, because they knew back then whatever they put in place then would need to change with the times as we continually go on. And I think the biggest concern is, is that we have electeds that have become so complacent and comfortable with just the status quo and going ahead on and making sure that they just repeat the cycle that was done before them without doing the real deep dive and research that's needed for these changes for housing to look like what it needs to look like in the

areas for the insurance companies, 'cause the insurance company's been around forever. What are we doing here, right?

CAMPBELL: Well, that's all the time we have. I'd like to give another thank you to our panel for sharing their experiences with us.

TURNER: Thank you for having us.

CAMPBELL: All right. And we are going to start with our second panel. Okay. And I'm gonna call up ... go ahead. First we have Andre Perry, senior fellow and director, the Center for Community Uplift at Brookings Metro. Again, Dr. Atyia Martin a nonresident senior fellow at Brookings Metro and founder and executive director of Next Leadership Development. We also have Sanchita Balachandran, the director of Museum Conservation Institute at the Smithsonian Institution. And Dr. LesLeigh Ford-- oh, she she's not, she's not here? Ah, okay. Okay. So this is our panel for today.

So thank you all for joining in this conversation with us. And I want to think about what we just heard in these, in these, in this past conversation. We heard a lot about how communities what they experience when our systems are not connecting with what they need on the ground, when the systems are falling short when the networks that are filling the gaps don't have the resources that they need.

And for this conversation, I'd like to start thinking about, on a policy level, what it means to, what it would look like to better support those organizations, to not ask them to do the work that they do without the authority that's needed, without the resources that they need, without the support that they need from our systems, or systems that are trying to uplift the, the work that they're doing in filling those gaps. So, that's the, the context I'd like to bring to this conversation.

So for the first question I'd like all of you to respond to that's what would it mean to build disaster and climate policy from community experience rather than asking communities to adapt to policies that were designed elsewhere? And how might such an approach connect with some of the themes that we heard around health, around wealth, and bringing in the perspective of cultural preservation?

And I know that all of you won't be speaking from a policy lens. Some of you, especially Sanchita, I know you'll be speaking from more of a service orientation. But just thinking about those questions what, what ideas would you like to bring to the table?

PERRY: Yeah, I'll start. I'm Andre Perry, senior fellow director for the Center of Community Uplift. Now, I'm gonna take a little bit have a different take on that. A professor once told me that all policy has a face on it. So it's not a matter of the policies not reaching communities. What neighborhoods are the policies addressing? Many times, when it comes to disaster management, the policies are built around the upper crust neighborhoods in, within cities. The long-term recovery groups, for the most part, are the decision makers, in terms of the case management and so forth, decide what happens.

And from a policy perspective, we don't necessarily need legislation. We need changes at that level. The long-term recovery groups can make changes. But our policies are inherently connected to the people in those groups. So if we're not on those, in those recovery groups, and only in the voluntary organizations active in disaster, the VOAD-- I always have a hard time getting that out, the VOADs-- there's always gonna be an imbalance because it's the sort of grassroots organizers, the people we heard on the platform before us that are on the VOADs, right? And there's simply just a power disconnect between them and those on the long-term recovery groups.

So for me, it is making sure, one, for the most part, make sure you get on these boards and committees. I mean, the whole point of a VOAD is that you should prepare before a disaster comes, that you should be part of the recovery infrastructure before it comes. And as you heard often, now, now you hear this all the time a disaster wasn't supposed to occur here. It just wasn't supposed... But it's happening everywhere. And so we have to use these organizations as an organizational tool for the community writ large. This is an opportunity to hold these other, the county, the groups that are comprised of long-term recovery groups, accountable. Because if we're not on it, it's gonna be hard. It's gonna be very hard. So that's generally how I approach it.

It's not that communities are disconnected. It's low-income, low-wealth communities, Black communities that are disconnected

MARTIN: I'm trying to manage myself 'cause I struggled with this question 'cause there was, there's so much to it. But what I will say first and foremost is when we talk about resilience, Black communities have been resilient. That's why we're still here. The issue is that when we talk about resilience, it's on a spectrum, and we've been forced to be on the surviving side of that spectrum of resilience because we've been left to have to fill in the gaps of systems that have continuously cut us out from the things that we pay for as tax-paying citizens of this country.

So when we are talking about, well, how does policy, how can policy be better? How do we design it in a way that actually connects with what's happening on the ground and that is community-driven? Well, the first step is to listen to communities. Stop belittling them. Stop treating them like they don't know what they're talking about. Stop ostracizing people because they are not using the words that you want them to use, and acting as if you don't understand what they're saying, what they're communicating. And respect their, not just their community expertise, but their technical expertise.

All four of the people representing all of those communities who were up here, none of them were involved in any kind of emergency management, disaster management, anything before they got involved. You heard them talking. They know what they're talking about. They had to fight to earn that expertise so they could advocate on behalf of the community. So as we're talking about policy development and reform, that we're able to actually connect with the people who know what they're talking about, both from a context perspective, what's happening in communities, and a content or technical expertise because they've had to build that for themselves.

The last thing I'll say on this point is so many organizations come into communities after the fact, and they benefit from community resilience that folks already have, and they plant their flag in their resilience and claim it as their win. But though the people whose resilience they're flagging receive no funding, receive no recognition, and we have to stop doing that, and our policies need to be respectful and connect to that reality and funnel money to the folks who are closest to the people, closest to the work, and know what they're talking about.

CAMPBELL: And Sanchita.

BALACHANDRAN: Thank you so much for the invitation to be on this panel. And probably you're thinking cultural heritage, this seems quite a luxury item to be talking about when there are so many other needs. And I would say that, you know, one of the things that the Smithsonian takes as its most cherished value is the increase in diffusion of knowledge. And the organization that I'm very proud to lead, the Museum Conservation Institute, has for almost 65 years actually been charged with preserving the cultural heritage of the nation. That's often been focused, of course, at the National Mall, but as we know, cultural heritage lives everywhere, and it lives everywhere in communities, and it's very place-based.

And cultural heritage lives, right? It's not just something that is behind glass, but it's really something that is being used, being accessed, and is part of the storytelling of a community. And it tells people, you know, that they belong, who they belong with, and is an intergenerational thing that has a constant presence from the past into the future.

And I would say just speaking of the technical expertise you were just mentioning, I think a lot of times the work of physically preserving cultural heritage, which is what our specialty is, is thought of as a very technical act. But I would say the, the more important work is actually to preserve the ability to continue that storytelling work, because we know that that is actually what provides an incredible amount of resilience for communities.

So, you know, on this topic of resilience, it is that ability to access the physical items, belongings, collections, places, archives that continue to do both that storytelling work, that evidentiary work, that intergenerational work and it's something that requires all sorts of actors, whether they're technical in nature or otherwise.

The other thing I would say that probably we don't think about is it's not a renewable resource. You can't build back the archive or that landmark or that building or that object that tells the story of your community in the way that perhaps you could build back a, a new home. And I think this is where really thinking about the, the need to invest in both the sort of preventive work to make sure that those incredibly important cultural aspects of communities continue to be in use now and are continued to be in use in the future is something that we think about a lot.

And I would say the other thing that we often don't think about with cultural heritage is it is a gauge of the community's wellbeing and health, and it's not often actually part of the metrics of a community's wellbeing. So how could we integrate that more so that there is actually even a small amount of funding that ensures that that cultural heritage piece is part of the care and recovery and general wellbeing of a community?

PERRY: I mean, you said so much because let me tell you it, it's hard to be a dispassionate sort of distant observer around these things. I lived in New Orleans for 14 years, went through Hurricane Katrina, and so much of how Black New Orleans was treated was predicated on the narrative that was heaved upon the residents And also, in the aftermath, that with a new narrative trying to be created about the potential of a whiter New Orleans, right? It's so important that the preservers and creators of culture are a part of the disaster management process for these reasons. Not only is it about protecting culture, it's about imbuing value in the assets in those communities.

And so I'm sure at some point I'm gonna talk about home values and all this, but, you know, you don't get lower home values without a lower narrative. Right? It's, and so for me, I love the fact you said that because it's a part of this, this process that can be very dollars and cents driven. And one, we can quantify a lot of the culture. We, we do have a cultural economy that we can put some numbers to. But there are some things the apparatus in determining value just ignores, largely because it's predominated by people of color in terms of the creation of it.

So for me, I, I think that what you just said, I got so hyped with when you said those things 'cause it's one of those aspects of disaster management and recovery that we just don't talk enough about.

BALACHANDRAN: Could I just say in response to that, I'm so sorry. That's okay. Is you know, we often, like our particular work is around tangible cultural heritage, and it's a little bit strange that our field is divided into things and the things that people do with things or places. But in fact, the reason why I think we are all so passionate about keeping physical

items and places and collections in use is because they mobilize all of the other things, the storytelling, the rituals, the gatherings, the memories, the knowledge sharing that is so critical to why communities matter.

And so I think when you were talking about these gauges that we exist for the kind of cultural economy, I wish there were ways to quantify how meaningful all of those rituals around why we live, you know, where we live and who we congregate with, if we could actually quantify that, I think that would really give a different understanding of what value is.

PERRY: I go back to my high school just to see my record on that on that plaque that's still there. You know, and we need those kind of, that preservation to bring, to convene people.

MARTIN: Now, I was just gonna add, just on the piece, this piece of historic and cultural preservation, two things. One is that in addition to all that was mentioned, there's also this element of we have been here before. None of this is new, and there's so much that we can learn from the stories of and the experiences of our ancestors and those who are no longer with us, and those who are transitioning, close to transitioning. They have so many stories and experiences that they can give us, some of which is documented, some of which is not. And in absence of that, we don't have the full context on what people went through for today to look like today. Across the country, at big picture, at the national level, and within specific communities.

And as a part of that, there's also a piece of who owns history. I see a lot of folks when we talk about cultural economy or cultural tourism and kind of all of the ways that culture gets transformed into a commodity, that the folks who are benefiting from that process are not the communities who actually, though, that history really belongs to.

So making sure that we're connecting those dots, and when it comes to disasters, there's a whole rich history of Black communities building their own infrastructure around emergency management, including the first fire department that was actually ran in Illinois, just out right in between St. Louis and Chicago. I'm forgetting the name of the town, y'all, because we did a whole Black towns project. But it's in between the two, and not only were they the first one, they still to this day service the county that they exist in.

So these, these are the realities of both pushing back on the narratives of victimhood and recognizing the strength and power that we have, and also recognizing that it requires an investment that is not being made, and it is not unlimited.

CAMPBELL: I wanna pick up that thread and think a little bit more about the support and decision-making and the equity issue there. So if, if you can respond, Atyia, to thinking about public agencies, philanthropic institutions, these things that you're talking about are often not part of the calculus when these decisions are being made. So how do you think those institutions can distinguish better between consulting with Black communities potentially, and actually genuinely sharing power? And that also translates into what we value, what counts as resilience. Can you speak more to that?

MARTIN: Yes. The most succinct way to say it, I think, is, it's about relationships, right? When you're in a relationship with someone, you listen. It's reciprocal. You benef- a healthy relationship. Let me reframe. Healthy, healthy relationships. It's reciprocal It has value in your everyday life, and you find ways to sustain it.

So when it comes to a relationship with philanthropy and what that could look like, it's about a mutually reinforcing relationship where communities are respected for their expertise, for the work they've been doing that other people have benefited from, and that there's flexibility built into the process that allows folks to do their best work with whatever circumstance

they're in, whether they're a 501(c)3 or whether they're not, whether it's-- in some communities we've worked in, in Mississippi even you know, there are folks, it's, it's like a person. We got connected to a person in a community, and that was the person. They were not an organization, and they are the ones who orchestrated everything for the support that happened in that community. They are not eligible for a grant, but they did all of the work to make sure that that community got the resources that were available from FEMA and from the VOADs and from all the other folks. In an absence of that person, that community would not have gotten resources. Black Hawk, Mississippi.

CAMPBELL: Please go ahead.

PERRY: You know, you hear this so often in policy talk, the saying that if you're not at the table, you're on the menu. This is very true. And when it comes to the long-term recovery groups, we typically think of the Red Cross, the county disaster management the various government agencies. Our organizations better be at that table. We have to be. So, power in this regard is not going to be shared. We have to demand a presence at these tables. The equities are... what I appreciate, the inequities are caused at that decision-making level. After the initial funding for, to get people out of harm's way and that initial wave, then the post-recovery work, and then we see at that level where those decisionmakers decide who gets what, when, and how.

So for me, it's about figuring out those local churches, those Black chambers of commerce, those, you know, the Latinx organizations. Whoever's underrepresented at the local level needs to be at the table. But here's the challenge. Many of the people at the long-term recovery group are the reasons why many of those communities are in trouble in the first place. Right? That they did not... it's the disaster before the actual disaster. Right? And so the reason why I think we always have to have a seat at the table, because we have to hold people accountable at this level before a disaster comes, because it's coming. So I don't wanna beat this drum too much, but I can't say enough what I've seen at the long-term recovery group level, just not enough representation.

MARTIN: And I'm gonna add a and, a super quick and. I promise it'll be a quick and. The quick and is, one, that, I don't wanna focus too much on or limit our focus to long-term recovery groups, right? Because the decision-making processes are happening at the local level, local government, county government, state government, federal government, and at each of those levels, there's, it's almost like a filter. And by the time it gets to the bottom, all of the resources and meaning and decisions and all that stuff has been extracted out, and you're just left with clear nothingness. I love water, but clear nothingness. And so as we're thinking about this from that perspective, that's one part.

And then the other part is just the ability to make sure that when we are building, that when we're at other people's tables, that the people at those tables represent their own tables. Because there's a level of accountability that's necessary for any leader who claims to represent any community, that there's people who they are accountable to so they don't get absorbed into the power structures that like to entice people to focus on their individual needs as opposed to collective needs. And it sounds like something that won't happen to you, but it can happen to anyone who is not connected to communities and held accountable, and that same accountability structure is what's necessary to hold the traditional systems accountable.

BALACHANDRAN: I wonder if we could just shift the conversation around investment. Because I think a lot of the conversation is about how you invest at the moment of a disaster, or how will people continue to invest after the disaster has happened. And I still can't unhear the notion of a slow disaster, which historian Scott Knowles has brought to my attention which is, you know, the decisions are being made decades or longer before you see some of those impacts.

And I guess I wanna give a good news story in terms of at least cultural heritage investment. One example is our institute was asked in the 1960s to actually study the Star Spangled Banner, which is on view at the American History Museum because there was some concern that this incredibly important national object which flew over Fort McHenry in Baltimore might actually potentially start deteriorating. So, starting in the 1960s, scientists at my organization were studying this incredible, venerable item and realized that it was composed of two different red dyes that are sensitive to light. And they predicted that if they continued to be shown in the light levels that the flag was then shown under, that the red stripes on the Star Spangled Banner would completely fade away within 250 to 350 years. So because of that, if you go visit the museum, the American History Museum today, and you look at the Star Spangled Banner, it's under very low light, precisely because we could predict this loss of something that was incredibly important to the history of this country. So that's a very long-term investment in terms of, you know, what do we want to protect, and what does it take to actually get to that point of investment?

The thing that I think continues to just shock me is the statistic that a dollar invested today saves $13 to $15 in investment after something horrible has happened. Why are we not able to actually leverage that statistic? I mean, it's real evidence to actually thinking about how we invest for long-term gains and start doing that right now rather than, you know, waiting for something to happen and then doing something that's not going to be enough and won't be able to sustain people for the time it takes for recovery.

CAMPBELL: Thank you. And we will be collecting questions from the audience and responding to those momentarily. So, if you do have a, a question you'd like to have answered please submit a card.

But I want to, in the meantime return to the, a point that you made earlier, Sanchita, about how we can't quantify some of these issues around culture and cultural heritage and, you know, what kinds of things we should be looking at when we're trying to measure the value of some of these investments. And so, thinking about what should be measured and what you think that decision makers need to know about how we measure what happens before the disaster, things like building relationships that are needed, how to, how we understand the community's values and incorporate that into the resilience building process. Can you all talk about from that perspective, we know that accountability is important but how should we measure things that we can use to demonstrate the value of some of these investments are being made? And any of you can start.

PERRY: You know, there's a, I'll say something that is on my heart. One, you invest in people, researchers who care. I can't say this enough. When I had an opportunity, we had some extra funds, we knew through our work on housing devaluation in the context of disaster recovery, we needed to, to find someone who could really look at ways to value communities in the climate space. And Manann Donoghoe has been this, a tremendous, tremendous researcher. Later on we had the opportunity, by we, meaning Brookings, we brought in Xav Briggs Xavier Briggs, and all you have to do literally is go on the Brookings website Google or look for Xav Briggs, Xavier Briggs, look up Manann Donoghoe, and look at the dozens of articles that are community centric.

You're not seeing some scientific number based on how many, on carbon reduction, which is the dominant viewpoint around these issues by and large, right? You're really looking at what communities need to thrive. And if you don't have people who have a framework of what will it take for communities to thrive, you'll never get the, the data and the analysis required to do exactly what you're doing.

We are just not invested, going back to the word invested, we are truly not invested in looking at community problems. Or I, I should say, in the communities that are needing to be served well, we're simply not invested in it. So, this, this is coming from a think tank person

perspective. We have the capability to do this. We have the knowhow to do it. We actually have the solutions. We are simply not invested in these issues. You can clap that out.

MARTIN: And I'll just add that there's a --okay, so I'm a nerd and I love numbers, and I think data's great. Quantifying stuff is amazing. Models are wonderful, and they're wonderful because they help us paint a picture of that is, that, that loosely resembles reality, right? But it loosely resembles it. It is not reality, because we don't have all the data, and some things we just never will have the data.

And there's other things that the, the qualitative value of it can't be quantified. And there are other that when it comes to kind of history and culture there's this piece where other communities are allowed to have value for cultural, historic, and cultural things without having to justify its quantitative value. So because this is a part of American history, the fact that it is American history is enough that it has value. So to, to expect that everything has to have a quantitative number is unrealistic, and it's sometimes it's disrespectful and used as a way to tell people no. Because other people are not expected to provide that quantitative value for the thing that they're fighting for.

BALACHANDRAN: Can I just say one of the things that I find really challenging in this space is how do you prove if something's working if it doesn't happen? And I think that's a lot of the energy that we're putting into training and preparedness work because we know it makes a big difference. And I think going to your comment about, you know, how, how do you quantify something like that we're about to come up on the 10th year anniversary of our heritage emergency and response training work, which is bringing together cultural heritage practitioners and emergency managers together. And some of the most powerful stories, and I think here storytelling can be deployed really beautifully, is when people say, "This worked because we did the training, we met the people in our local area, and we were able to care for this collection when something bad was about to happen."

So I think there are different ways in which we can think about proving the value, but it involves being really flexible and thinking about what really impacts people and reaches, you know, reaches people where they need to be reached. And I think it's often about those very personal stories that talk about a specific place and time, where it really transports them to, "Oh, I have something like that in my family or my community and I can understand why there is such a need."

PERRY: And after the federal investments, I think around five years after Katrina, there, it was the same amount as a year of a state budget in Louisiana, if I'm correct. It's around that. But after that same period, poverty in New Orleans was essentially at the same levels. Right? Which tells you that the flows of money did not reach the people in need, ultimately. So even in, and you hear this a lot, that disasters represent an opportunity And I don't like putting it that way, but there are opportunities to invest in people.

Like, literally on the cultural preservation side, we do need photographers to document what is happening in parts of St. Louis that are destroyed, parts of the Ninth Ward. We need that documentation, and guess who can do that work? The people who are actually burdened by these disasters. And so some of this, again, is getting, understanding what disaster management is all about and who it's for, and we just devalue parts of our community in ways that just keeps us from serving our missions.

BALACHANDRAN: Can, can I just add to that? I think the value of the cultural heritage places and collections that exist in community is that they can corroborate long histories of cultural resilience and preservation that have always been there. And I think this goes to this question of evidentiary value. I mean, one hates to think of cultural heritage as needing to have that, but it is something that I think is very important. Those community archives go to questions of people's birth records, title to people's houses, but also these long histories of

what was really important in those communities. So connecting that very long sweep of history to what is happening in the moment, I think is just a very powerful aspect of the cultural preservation work that we could do.

MARTIN: And I'll just say this quickly. Brooklyn, Illinois, it popped in my head, is that's the place where they have no fire department. Cash is full, y'all. The cash is full. But to this point around investment just to, you know, I kinda went on a tangent about kind of the challenges and what's expected of Black communities, and I just wanna be clear that I do support quantification of things, right? It's just a matter of what we're asking people to quantify that we're not asking other people.

So this gets, this is a policy issue, right? And when there's a policy or a structure or a process that is not done well, it leaves too much deference to individuals. And when individuals fill the gap of what policy and practice is supposed to do, their bias and their preferences determine what gets funded or not or whatever the case. So if there isn't a structured approach to how the quantification process is applied. If there isn't a structured approach to what are the alternatives, and if there isn't a structured approach to making sure that the analysis, to your point earlier, looks at, well, who got it and who didn't get it and why, right?

So that accountability level, and that's why the folks that we heard from earlier from communities are so important because they are a network of accountability within their communities and across communities. And if we invest in them at the grassroots level, then we're investing in a network of, of accountability that helps to not only take the data that they have, 'cause they have quantitative data, let me tell you. And that the work that they're doing based on that quantitative data, then we will be able to be at much further than we are.

And so I just will end by saying, give the money to the folks who are doing the work again. They said it plainly themselves, and they did a wonderful job, and I'll stop there.

CAMPBELL: Thank you all for those responses. And we have a few questions from the audience. The first one is for Andre, and it's about how small businesses, how do they play a role in community disaster recovery and response, and how do we support them more given the role that they play in that regard?

PERRY: Again, this goes back to, in the recovery process, we need to hire local businesses in everything from the cleanup, the demolition, the distribution of goods and services. All of those things can be done at the local level. This is why we also, I keep going back to these groups, that we need to figure out ways to emphasize that if we build up these employers at the local level, they'll be, we'll be much better able to respond to the communities when a disaster comes.

CAMPBELL: And another question about climate change. And when it comes to climate change and relocation the displacement of communities, what are ways to still preserve stories and culture when buildings and things that can't be, when people move away from those buildings and other things that can't be replicated or relocated?

BALACHANDRAN: I mean, I think this is one of the biggest challenges of our time just given the scale of, you know, challenges I think that people are dealing with. And here, this is the beauty of being part of an institution like the Smithsonian where you have a range of organizations within one that does a lot of these different types of things.

So for example, the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage is involved in a lot of oral storytelling specifically to preserve stories of communities that might be at risk of needing to migrate due to changes in their environment. I think a lot of the work that we do specifically

around documentation of cultural objects and cultural sites is particularly prescient right now. I can say we've been working with communities who have belongings in the Smithsonian collections who can't actually physically come and visit with the collections with their belongings, but have asked us to actually digitize some of their collections. In some cases, do 3D prints of these items, so that they can go back home and actually be part of community use and education, particularly intergenerationally.

So I think this current moment offers, you know, a lot of opportunity to think about what are more flexible ways in which we can actually preserve cultural heritage that is at risk in a range of ways. And what are communities specifically asking of us? And that's something that we take very seriously. What does the community need, and how can we actually meet that need?

CAMPBELL: Okay, and we are at time. So thank you so much for all of your remarks.

PERRY: Thank you everyone. I'm just gonna have a few closing remarks. One, this has been an exciting day. What you did not see, earlier in the day, my colleague Manann Donoghoe, Atyia Martin, and others brought in a group of community organizers to talk about disaster management. And what we did not spend a lot of time on is the role of FEMA, the reimagining of FEMA. But I still invite people. Again, I mentioned Xav Briggs, who's done tremendous work, and our, again, Manann Donoghoe, who talked a lot about the reimagining of FEMA. We spend a lot of time talking about things at the federal level. We don't spend enough time talking about what's happening at the local level.

So we spent a great deal of time, and it was very intentional, how are we going to build policy from the ground up? I am convinced that the next wave of policies won't come from Washington. It will go to Washington. And it'll come from the work that you all are doing here in this room and here all around the country.

One of the phrases that bothers me tremendously that you hear a lot of time in, in places like this, though you will hear scholars proudly say they are data-driven. "I'm data-driven." No. We are community-driven. We use data as a tool. But if you, if you don't keep community at the core, you'll miss what we're doing. There are just so many nefarious ways to close gaps to get to an end goal, and you can absolutely hurt community in the process. You have to hold community's heart carefully when you're doing this work. And the only way I know how to do that is to work with people who are proximate to these issues.

And so I just wanna thank you for coming here, but more importantly, thank you for doing the good community work that, again, we can't just keep waiting for federal policy to come raining down. It's going to have to go to Washington, D.C., where we are today. So thank you, and we look forward to you coming and viewing the next event. Thank you very much.