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Class of 2021
Rock Island, IL

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As a 2020/2021 Burch Fellow, I had the pleasure of joining the “Re-Energize Governance of DR3 for Sustainable Development Project” at University College London (UCL). The project, known as “Re-Energize DR3” for short, is a seven-team project sponsored by the Belmont Forum for 2020-2023, created to analyze “the governance of disaster risk reduction and resilience to boost the sustainable development goals.” UCL Energy Institute houses the primary team, and the other teams work in Italy, Qatar, Japan, Mauritius, Ghana, and the United States (at the UNC Water Institute). I arrived in London mid-June and worked with UCL until late August (about nine weeks).

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Re-Energize Governance of DR3 for Sustainable Development Project



In short, the project seeks to understand how to better organize governance structures related to natural disasters. There is a strong focus on how to better manage this concept within least-developed countries (LDCs) as these countries are more likely to be adversely affected by climate change and the increasing severity and frequency of natural disasters. A combination of



quantitative and qualitative tools are used by all teams, however, the majority of my contributions were qualitative and written. That being said, one of the benefits of the in-person time this summer was the development of my quantitative skills by working alongside GIS, AI, and social media specialists on the team.

Challenges

As I finalized my project plans, COVID-19 cases in the United Kingdom were rapidly declining, however, over the summer, cases began to spike again, and many restrictions remained in place. Despite the UK’s continued struggles with COVID hindering my ability to do the in-person interviews with vulnerable populations in the city that I had desired (these populations were also most vulnerable to the summer Delta variant outbreak), the outputs we were able to work on were still high-level. Many of these interviews and correspondence were able to be carried out over Zoom with little trouble, however, it was my suggestion that the team

do as much in the future in-person as possible, as many vulnerable populations struggle with Wi-Fi and accessibility issues. Failure to conduct in-person meetings eventually is counter-intuitive to the goal of better incorporating at-risk, most-vulnerable populations.



Outputs

At UCL, my primary outputs were a comprehensive, 12-page report on existing natural disaster policies, actors, and plans in Ghana, press releases on the team’s upcoming conference presentations or stakeholder summits, and assistant work on 1) a mitigation report for island nations and 2) a cross-comparison paper on Western vs. non-Western DR3 policies which used our seven member states as a sample.

