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# Guiding principles for climate change adaptation in humanitarian aid: How do we meet the challenges identified at this conference?

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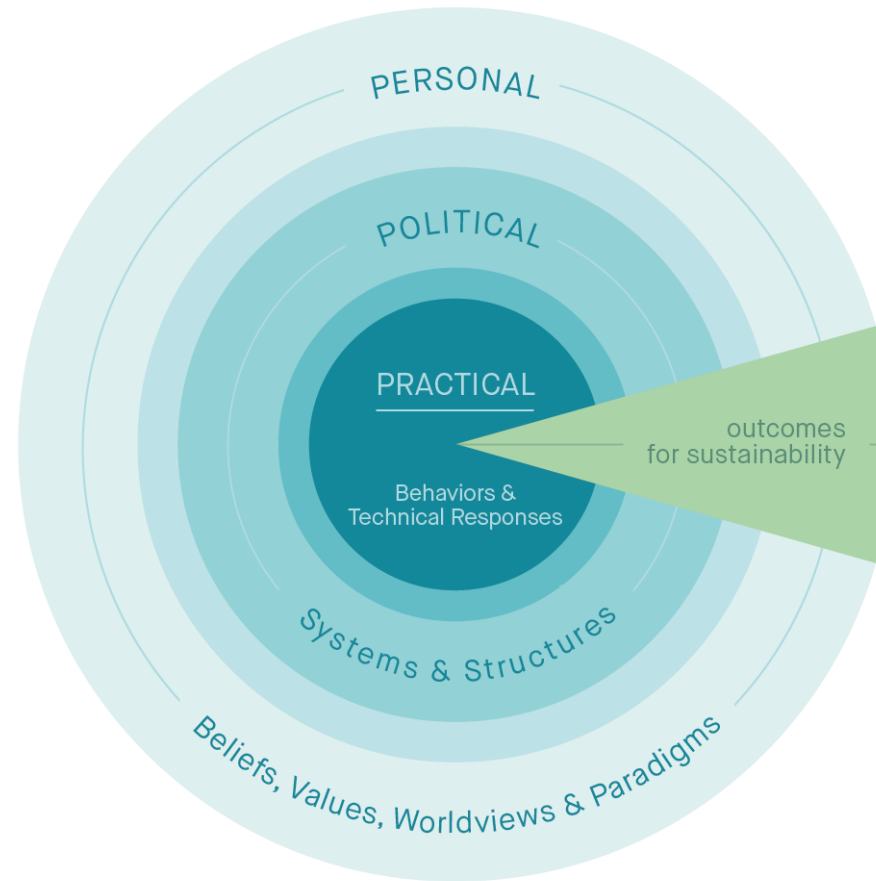
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## Key project objectives

- Develop **guiding principles** for how humanitarian interventions can better contribute to climate change adaptation in terms of use of information about complex climate and vulnerability contexts in operational decisions
- Build capacity among Norwegian research and humanitarian actors to **collaboratively engage in action-oriented knowledge production** regarding climate change adaptation

# Three spheres of transformation (O'Brien and Sygna 2013)



«...integrating adaptation into 'development as usual' often ignores the real factors that drive vulnerability – like the interests, power relations and structural factors that systematically perpetuate uneven development, environmental degradation, resource depletion and growing global emissions of greenhouse gases.» (O'Brien et al. 2014, p. 275)

«Adaptation is a social process that involves empowering individuals, households, communities, institutions and states, not only to react and respond to the impacts of climate change, but also to challenge the drivers of risk and promote alternative pathways to development» (O'Brien et al. 2014, p. 275)

Adaptation as part of a larger process that involves transforming development paradigms

## Five key findings across cases (Nagoda and Eriksen, in preparation):

1. Vulnerability is complex and its root causes are often multidimensional (problem understandings important).
2. Lasting solutions to humanitarian crises require that root causes for vulnerability are addressed (long term efforts, knowledges).





3. Power relations are important drivers of differential vulnerability patterns at the local level and shape which interests are taken into account into policy processes (knowledges, institutions, reflexivity).

4. Poorly designed humanitarian interventions risk enhancing local vulnerability patterns (reproducing vulnerability)

5. Preparedness and planning are key for avoiding protracted crises and ensuring early response (short term responses cannot be isolated from long term efforts).



# Towards guiding principles

- How humanitarian interventions can better contribute to climate change adaptation in terms of use of information about complex climate and vulnerability contexts in operational decisions
- Outline questions to be posed at various stages of planning, implementing and evaluating humanitarian interventions (further detailed in Nagoda and Eriksen, in progress).
- The five principles of sustainable adaptation described in Eriksen, et al. (2011) and Eriksen and Marin (2015) frame these questions:

# Principle 1. Recognize the context for vulnerability, including multiple stressors (stressors other than climate change)

- Given that responses should be sensitive to the wider vulnerability context, including multiple stressors that contribute to vulnerability, any intervention needs to have asked the following key questions:
  - *What are the main reasons for being vulnerable (Castes, women, poverty, disability...)?*
  - *What factors other than climate change (political, social, economic and environmental), contribute to their vulnerability? How do these processes interact and influence people differently?*
  - *What are the historical, cultural and political processes that have shaped the vulnerability of individuals or groups?*
  - *Which interventions have been carried out before? Which projects/programmes have been considered successful? Why and for whom?*
- Entry point: Tools may take up social vulnerability rather than hazard-based understanding of vulnerability? I.e. in VCAs



## Principle 2. Acknowledge that differing values and interests affect adaptation outcomes

- Given that responses should take into account that different actors have different values and interests that may affect adaptation outcomes, the mapping should attempt to answer questions about how interests differ between different groups/actors involved in adaptation (including differential interests within local populations) and the extent to which varying interests and needs are taken into account in humanitarian actions.
  - *Entry point: Create arenas for collaboration, information exchange and knowledge building between research, practitioners, government*
  - *Create such forums at the district/local level*

- Entry point: Add intergenerational (and other considerations) to the principles guiding humanitarian assistance:
  - humanity – saving human lives and alleviating suffering wherever it is found
  - impartiality – acting solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected populations
  - neutrality – acting without favouring any side in an armed conflict or other dispute where such action is carried out
  - independence – the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented
- Entry point: Work more through government. Transparency and accountability of the use of funds.
- Entry point: Institutional mapping (who are your allies and who do you work around)
- Transparency in structures and distribution of funding

# Principle 3. Integrate local knowledge into adaptation responses

- Need to turn information flows around, from top down dissemination of information (expert knowledge) to taking up of multiple vulnerability knowledges.
- Given that successful responses need to have conscious approach towards which knowledge is recognized and how it is used in project design and decision-making, an intervention should be conscious of the various local vulnerability knowledges, as well as the mechanisms and authorities through which different interests are sought promoted. In particular, what can be done to ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable are taken into account within the formulation and the implementation of policies and programs at both local and national levels?
  - Alter VCA processes and scope to take up different local understandings of causes of vulnerability and adaptation practices, across different socio-economic groups (intra-community)
  - Forums at local level, real inclusion of different vulnerable groups
  - See people as solutions, not as disaster victims
  - Processes for information flow, space for reflection on own assumptions, make space for multiple vulnerability knowledges in decision making processes
  - Strengthen civil society – government partnerships
  - Strengthen local capacity for transparent development planning/decision making

## Principle 4. Consider potential feedbacks between local and global processes.

- Given that responses to reduce vulnerability do not happen in isolation but may directly or indirectly influence and be influenced by larger scale processes, an intervention or strategy needs to identify the way that it is shaped by, and contributes to particular development policies, interests and discourses.
  - Include research in programmes?
  - Roundtables?
  - Formal linkages between short term and longer term interventions (prevention, recovery etc) – provision of a mechanism for short term action to release longer term actions



# Principle 5. Empower vulnerable groups in influencing development pathways and their climate change outcomes

- Given that marginalisation and social exclusion are important reasons shaping vulnerability processes, an intervention also needs to identify what are the political, economical, cultural and social processes that hinder the most vulnerable to influence decision making processes at local, regional and national level?

What are the opportunities that exist within the humanitarian action in question to support their active participation in influencing development pathways?

- Entry point: Include vulnerable groups like children in planning processes and ensure their access to information. (Formal requirement of representation?)
- Entry point: Education



Thank you!



# Humanitarianism and climate change adaptation – where now?

- How do the key themes of this conference inform larger agendas?
- What are the key research questions to be addressed, and how?
- Publications? Research programmes? Arenas for collaboration and knowledge building?