

# Reproducing Vulnerability Through Climate Change Adaptation? Policy Processes, Local Power Relations and Food Insecurity in northwestern Nepal

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Photo: Sigrid Nagoda

The aim of the case study in Nepal is to examine the role of politics in driving vulnerability in rural households in western Nepal. It is based on empirical data collected through extensive fieldwork in the district of Humla and in Kathmandu, and investigates how power relations influence differential vulnerability patterns at the local level and how Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) policies are influenced by and influence on key drivers of vulnerability.

Main findings of the case study in Nepal:

- Power relations as expressed through processes of marginalization, oppression, social status and subjectivity are particularly important in driving differential vulnerability patterns within the villages.
- Current CCA approaches attempt to build adaptive capacity are limited to address vulnerability outcomes with apolitical and technocratic measures rather than the social and power relations that contribute to the vulnerability context of the most vulnerable households.
- Climate change is only one among several stressors contributing to vulnerability, and since CCA itself forms part of the local vulnerability context it interacts with local social structures and power relations and risks reinforcing, rather than addressing, pre-existing vulnerability patterns.
- Nepal's CCA policies are limited by, and do not go beyond, existing development approaches when addressing climate vulnerability. There is a need to challenge the way we look at development approaches to better respond to root causes of vulnerability.
- The knowledge of the most vulnerable households is marginalized in the CCA policy process while the narratives of local elites converge with district and national level interests to shape policy outcomes that in turn acts to reinforce structural inequity and marginalization process at local level.