

Climate change and the complexity of emergency response

Ian Christoplos

Swedish University of Agricultural
Sciences

Reflections from...

Combined conflict and natural disaster response

- Hurricane Mitch
- Horn of Africa
- Afghanistan
- South Asia Tsunami
- British Red Cross study of combined response

Linking relief, risk reduction, rehabilitation, and development

- Tsunami Evaluation Coalition
- Agricultural recovery studies in Afghanistan, Western Balkans, etc.
- Engagement with ISDR, ProVention, ALNAP, etc.

Links or chasms?

Humanitarian perspectives

- Acceptance that states are becoming weaker and can do little about CC
- Saving lives comes first
- We must do what we *can* with the tools available
- It is WE who are responsible for action
- NGOs and the UN to the rescue, based on IHL
- Equity through equitable hand-outs and advocacy against private sector exploitation

Developmental and risk reduction perspectives

- Conviction that states need to be stronger to address CC and reduce risk
- Sustainability (and livelihoods?) comes first
- We must do what we *should* do to address CC
- THEY must lead response
- The Paris Agenda is the Bible and the MDGs are the Ten Commandments
- Economic growth is a pre-condition for sustainable development

Links or chasms?

- Nobody likes messy storylines with unclear objectives and outcomes, even if evidence-based
 - Combining goals makes people nervous
- Decision-makers tend to 'get lost on the first page' when faced with multiple causal factors
 - It pays to simplify
- Fixed narratives still override evidence and steer assumptions about risks and responses to vulnerability and CC
- There are even some signs of CC programming displacing disaster risk reduction
 - 'Common sense' synergies should not be taken for granted!

CC as 'security imperative'

- Increasingly political actors are linking climate change to national security, which is logical since the link to conflict is undeniable, but...
 - Opening the door to more military response and running roughshod over humanitarian principles?
 - Counter-productive reaction to weak states?
 - UN Security Council versus GA?
 - Would the White House listen more to scientists if they worked for the CIA?

Livelihoods in crisis: The crux of change

- Development actors see livelihoods as the linchpin of preventing conflict while mitigating CC and disaster risk
 - But they haven't quite figured out what to do about it
 - Signs of a retreat to simplistic 'green revolution' dreams -failing to consider conflict, exclusion or increasing droughts/floods
 - New research shows that 'environmentally friendly' solutions do not reach the poor and most vulnerable –reductionism again
- Humanitarians have recently discovered the topic
 - And are so far generally handing out assets such as seeds, boats and cash, with little analysis of livelihood outcomes
 - Stuck in false assumptions about the potential of humanitarian response 'turning back the clock' due to a weak understanding of (trust in) the markets and historical trends that underpin livelihoods

Livelihoods in crisis: The crux of change

- Food insecurity and other risks are growing, but due to CC (and other factors), reduction of vulnerability after disasters can no longer be achieved through return to peasant livelihoods
- CC (and other factors) must be addressed through a broader approach to both economic development and social protection, but there is limited experience in relating these areas in a CC perspective
- This could and should provide a new basis for bringing together developmental and humanitarian actors, but so far...