



No Natural Disasters: A Framework for Climate, Weather Events, & Pandemics

Protecting the vulnerable before, during, and after events



Syndemic: Social, environmental, economic, and political conditions influence outcomes.

COVID-19

weather events

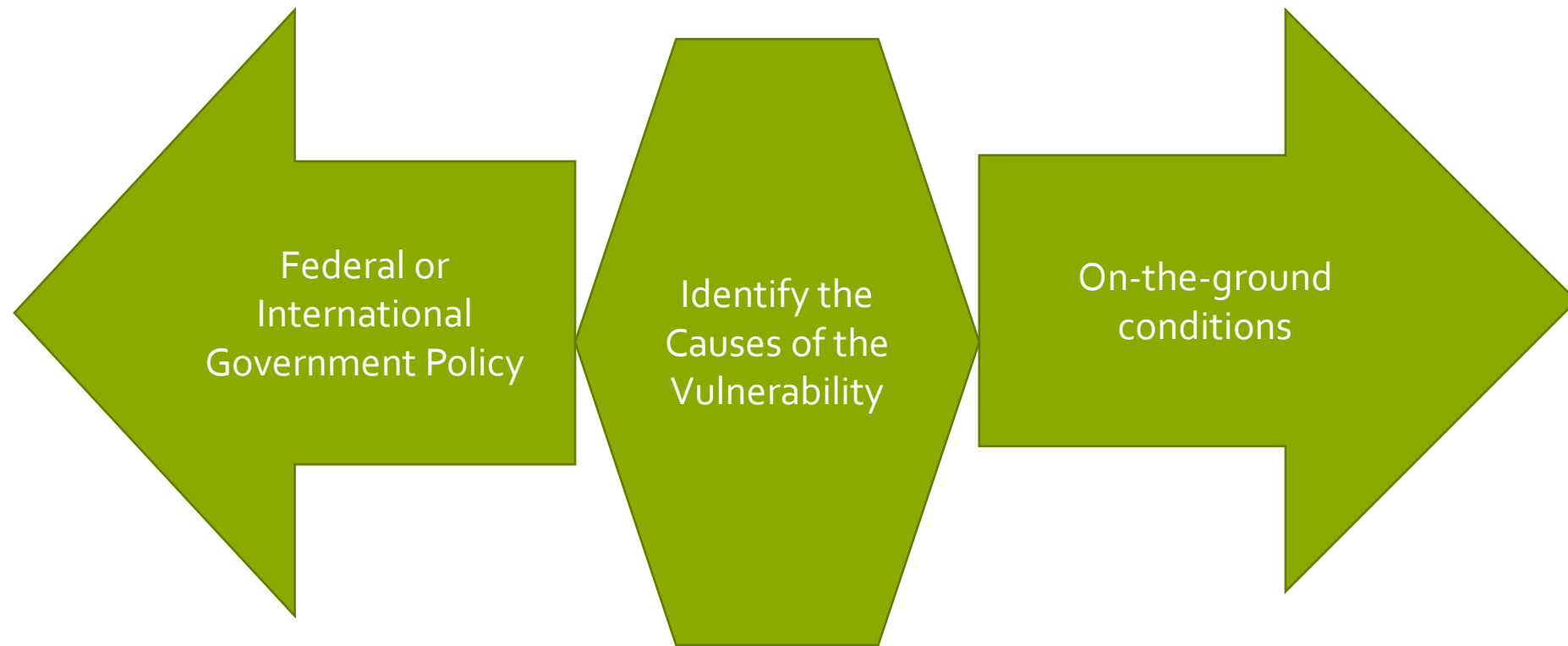
climate change

Stretch: inner city crime and gun violence

war and military actions



Two-Directional Analysis



Social Determinants and COVID-19

Possible Policy Problems: Low Minimum Wage; Low Taxes and Income Inequality; No Access to Free Higher Education; High Cost of Living



Possible on-the-ground problems: access to local public parks, hospital care, transportation, community and family support



Storm: Policies Affect Circumstances



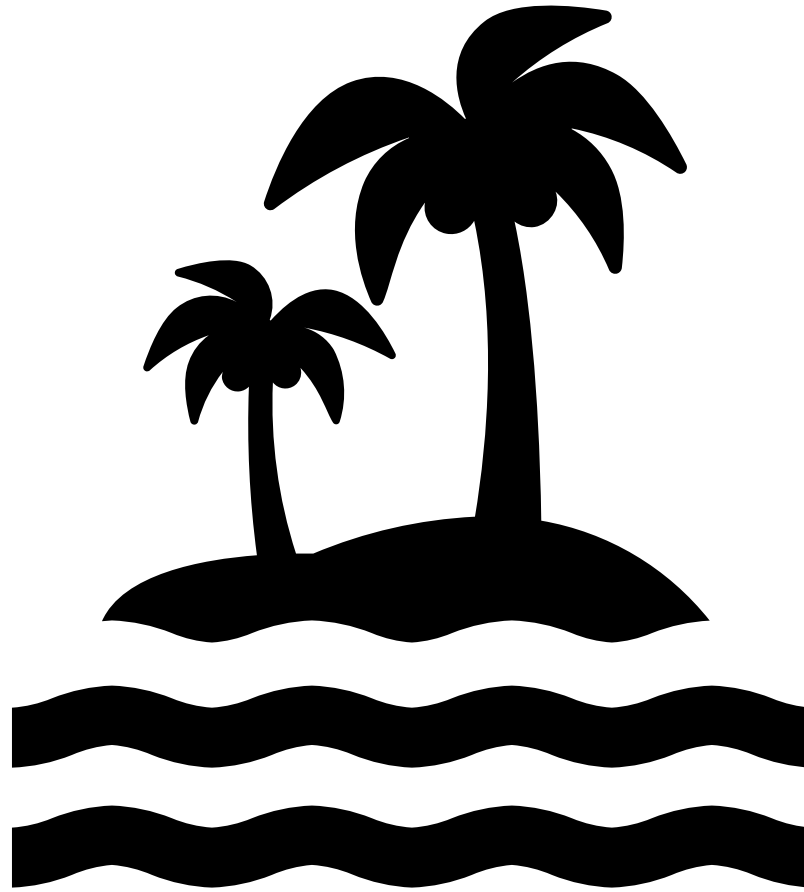
Housing strength and materials

Savings and insurance

Environmental justice: macro policies behind who lives where



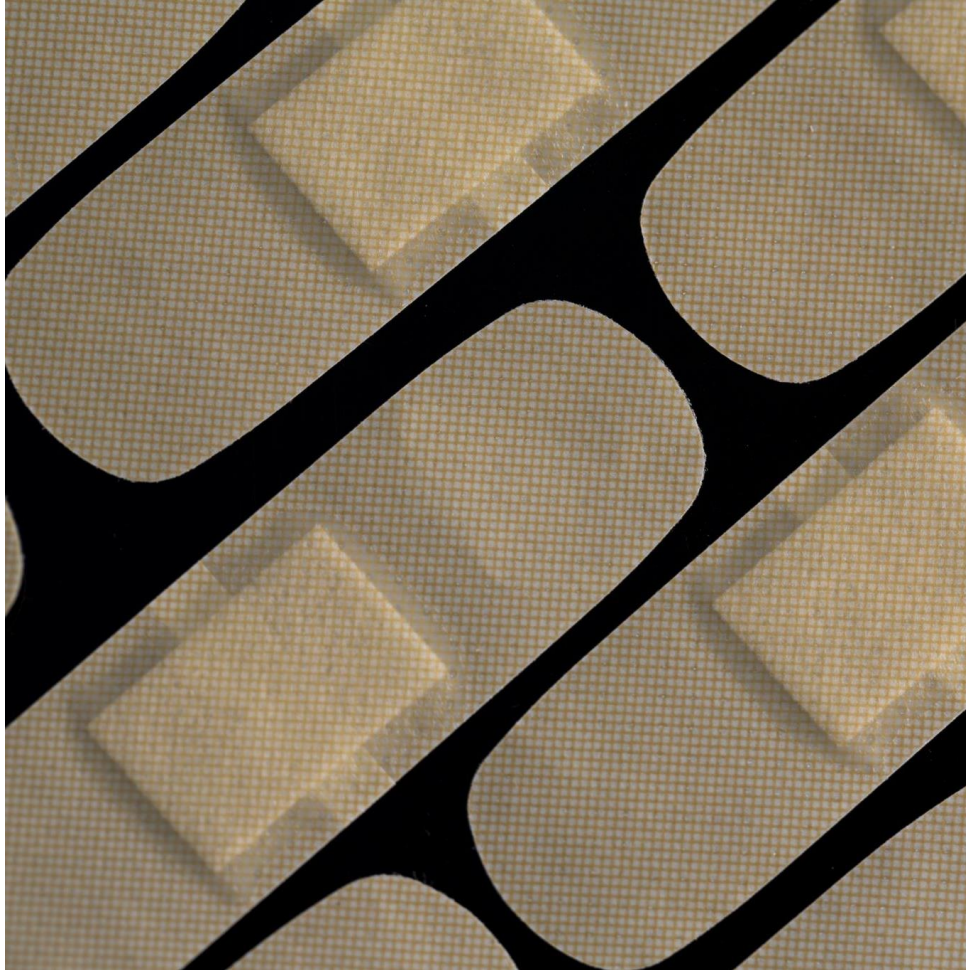
Through the Lens of Poverty



Is Vulnerability



Suffering, Trauma, and Disaster Ethics



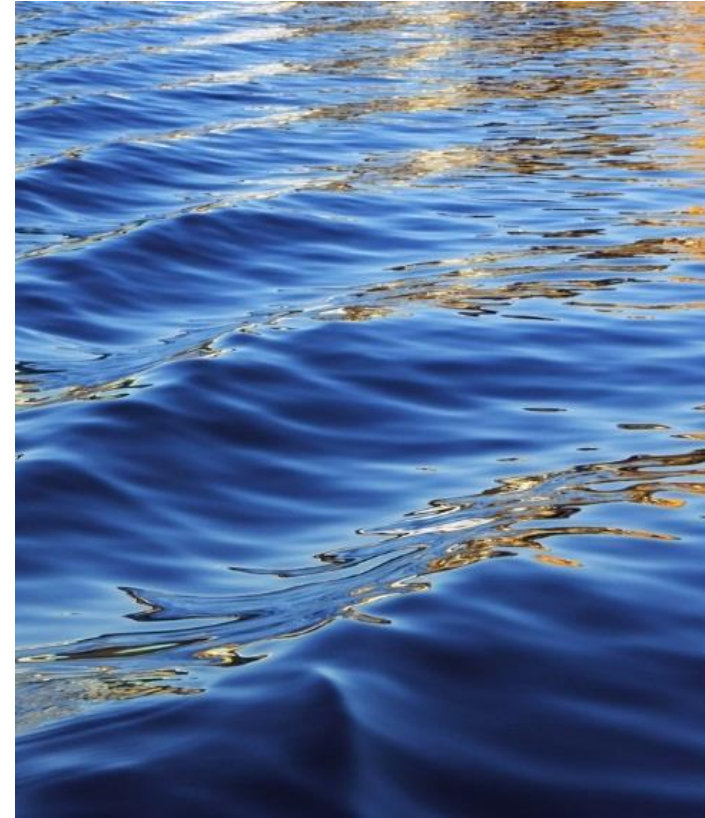
- The disaster may reflect an ethical failure or lapse
- The disaster will stay with the vulnerable longer (rescue and the emergency are a small part)
- End apathy—encourage empathy
- “Natural” absolves people of blame or guilt
- Social suffering should have a collective response
- Kaikini, S. (2020). The Necessity of Understanding Disasters in the Language of Suffering. *Voices in Bioethics*, 6.
<https://doi.org/10.7916/vib.v6i.6667>





Access to Help

People are less vulnerable if...



Limit Vulnerability & Reduce Harm: many people do not want to relocate or cannot control their physical vulnerability to disease

PPE in pandemic

Storm shutters,
better housing
materials

Orderly evacuation
plans

Infrastructure

Warning systems
(tsunami,
avalanche, flood,
hurricane)

Savings and
insurance to
manage financial
effects



Prevention Upstream

01

Upstream
policy can
prevent harm

02

Prevent
climate
change

03

Encourage
good health

04

Encourage
savings

05

Make plans
for weather
events



No Natural Disasters Examples

Asthma from pollution

Storm deaths

Mosquito-born diseases

Violence as public health issue

Islands with severe erosion

Gun deaths



Framework

Macro \ Upstream

Prevent the vulnerability for those willing to engage in preventive measures

Protect the remaining vulnerable at the place or in the situation

Predict and plan (medical necessities, safe evacuation locations)

Provide solutions in the moment to those whose vulnerability is not resolved

Rescue and long term



No Natural Disasters: A Syndemic Framework

Protecting those vulnerable to climate change, weather events, and pandemics (as well as chemical spills and manmade environmental disasters)

Fact Pattern: Cyclone Amphan in India and Bangladesh kills 85 in 2020. Pandemic in India 238,000 deaths.

What We Know

Poverty creates vulnerability due to living conditions. Public policy contributes to climate change, increasing weather events. Public policy contributes to pandemic response.

Human suffering, sickness, vulnerability to storm and virus, commonalities. Rural villages are ill-equipped a year in to COVID-19 global pandemic.

Stakeholders

Broadly analyze who could be affected by the problem and the solution.

Global organizations (parties Paris climate accord), global interest in sustainability, vulnerable people, vulnerable indigenous groups, socioeconomically disadvantaged groups, those with sickness due to environmental exposures, corporations, governments.

Ethical Issue

Does the international community have an ethical duty to care for the vulnerable globally? How should countries weigh caring for their own citizens against providing humanitarian aid? Do corporations that pay less for labor in foreign countries have a moral duty to create fair pay and improve living conditions? Individual responsibilities. (Largescale actions like the Montreal protocol and Paris Climate Accord)

Who is empowered and who are the decision makers? Solutions recognize synergistic negative effects and how one can spiral downward when vulnerable to multiple events or circumstances. Climate change and the pandemic act synergistically.

Objective and subjective components. Anthropology. Public policy. Upstream and downstream. Do not isolate the variables.

How have the global community, local policymakers, incorporated prevention of suffering into policies?

Think Critically

“A syndemics framework examines the health consequences of identifiable disease interactions and the social, environmental, or economic factors that promote such interaction and worsen disease.” (Lancet) Identifying multiple contributing factors is necessary to solving largescale vulnerability.

Analyze policies that affect corporate behavior, protect indigenous people, corporate land use in other countries, broaden the context, then narrow to local actions, policies, and innovations. Biosocial.

