

CLIMATE CHANGE

A discussion paper for the 2010 IVCO conference



by Philip Mulligan

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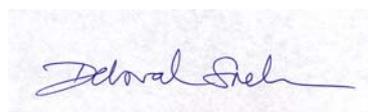
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Foreword

This is the sixth in a series of discussion papers produced by FORUM, which follows on from our research work on trends in international volunteering and co-operation in recent years. One of the key trends identified in this time has been how climate change affects us as International Volunteer and Co-operation Organisations (IVCOs).

This paper aims to consider some of the implications of climate change, what we can learn from this and identify some challenges for the future.

The views expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of FORUM or its Members or of the organisations for whom the author works. The responsibility for these views rests with the author alone.



Deborah Snelson, Chair of FORUM

About FORUM

The International FORUM on Development Service (known as “FORUM”) is the most significant global network of International Volunteer Co-operation Organisations. FORUM aims to share information, develop good practice and enhance co-operation and support between its Members. Together, FORUM Members explore innovative practice and research key contemporary issues, focusing on organisational learning and improved practice. This information is shared in person, at conferences and via the website.

- FORUM is a “virtual” organisation as well as a global one. We have grown our global Membership to include Associate Members.
- FORUM holds an annual conference to meet, share, learn and support each other.
- Members continue to find the FORUM network an invaluable resource and want us to continue the opportunities for learning and exchange, especially through research and conference/workshops.
- FORUM is resourced by Membership subscriptions, the staff time and budgets of the organisations providing the Chair and Executive Board of Officers as well as occasional grants.

The purpose of FORUM is to promote co-operation between Members:

- To provide a framework for exchange of information and experience on international development co-operation.
- To promote joint activities and/or collaboration amongst Members.
- To advocate and increase public awareness about the relationship between international volunteering and development issues such as, social justice and peace, human rights and a sustainable environment.
- To promote the movement of development service towards increased reciprocity and exchange.
- To promote the interests, values and activities of Members

Glossary of Terms

This glossary is designed for the reader (particularly, the non-English speaking reader) to have a quick reference point to understand Climate Change terminology that is referred to in this Discussion Paper. The glossary is not intended as a comprehensive definition guide of Climate Change terminology.

Global Warming and Climate Change

The terms “global warming” and “climate change” are often used interchangeably, but according to the *Australian Government Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency* there is a difference:

- Global warming refers to the gradual increase of the Earth’s average surface temperature, due to greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- Climate change is a broader term. It refers to long-term changes in climate, including average temperature and rainfall.¹

The above definitions vary from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, emphasising in the Convention that Climate Change is a result of human activity - "a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods."² In the latter sense climate change is synonymous with global warming.³ For the purpose of this Discussion Paper the terms will be predominantly focusing on the human activity definition and recommending practical ways that this can be addressed by IVCOs.

Adaptation

Ways of coping with the impacts of global warming on species, ecosystems and human society.⁴

Anthropogenic

Effects, processes or materials are those that are derived from human activities.⁵

Carbon Emissions

Polluting carbon substances (carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide) released into the atmosphere, produced by vehicles and industrial processes.⁶ Greenhouse gases is a term often used interchangeably with carbon emissions.

Emissions

In this paper, emissions refer to the emissions of air pollutants as defined under “carbon emissions”.

¹ *Australian Government Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency*, <http://www.climatechange.gov.au/en/climate-change.aspx>

² *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/background/items/1349.php

³ *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_change

⁴ *Climate Change Matters*, <http://www.climatechangematters.net.au/glossary.htm#C>

⁵ *Wikipedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthropogenic>

⁶ *Encarta Dictionary*, http://uk.encyclopedia.msn.com/dictionary_1481580136/carbon_emissions.html
Macmillan Dictionary
<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/carbon-emissions>

Emissions Trading

Emissions trading is a market-based scheme for environmental improvement that allows parties to buy and sell permits for emissions or credits for reductions in emissions of certain pollutants.⁷

Carbon Footprint

A measurement of the impact our activities have on the environment, in particular climate change. It relates to the total amount of greenhouse gases produced in our day-to-day lives through burning fossil fuels for electricity, heating and transportation. The measurement is usually expressed in equivalent tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂)⁸ and can relate to the emissions caused by people, organisations, events or products.⁹

Ecosystems

A dynamic and interdependent living community of people, parts, or mechanisms that interact with one another. The term was coined by Arthur Tansley, a British Ecologist, who said that ecosystems have the capacity to respond to change without altering the basic characteristics of the system. A business can be viewed as an ecosystem, as can a market, industry, or economy.¹⁰

Greenhouse gases (GHGs)

Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. These atmospheric gases are responsible for causing global warming and climate change.¹¹ Some greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide occur naturally and are emitted to the atmosphere through natural processes and human activities. Other greenhouse gases (e.g., fluorinated gases) are created and emitted solely through human activities.¹² The principal greenhouse gases that enter the atmosphere because of human activities are; Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Methane (CH₄), Nitrous Oxide (N₂O) and Fluorinated Gases.¹³

Kyoto Protocol

An international agreement linked to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change made in 1997. The agreement set emission reduction targets for developed countries and establishes mechanisms to reduce the emissions of developing countries.¹⁴ The major distinction between the Protocol and the Convention is that while the Convention encouraged industrialised countries to stabilise Greenhouse Gas emissions, the Protocol commits them to do so.¹⁵

⁷ *Environment, Climate Change and Water, New South Wales Government, Australia,*
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/licensing/emissionstrading.htm>

⁸ *Carbon Footprint,*
<http://www.carbonfootprint.com/carbonfootprint.html>

⁹ *Wikipedia*
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon_footprint

¹⁰ *Sustainability Dictionary,*
<http://www.sustainabilitydictionary.com/e/ecosystem.php>

¹¹ *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,*
http://unfccc.int/essential_background/glossary/items/3666.php

¹² *Environmental Protection Authority Australia,*
<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/index.html>

¹³ *Ibid.*
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,
http://unfccc.int/essential_background/glossary/items/3666.php

¹⁴ *World Wildlife Fund,*
<http://wwf.org.au/ourwork/climatechange/glossary>

¹⁵ *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Kyoto Protocol,*
http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php

Mitigation

In relation to global warming or climate change: actions to reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions (in order to avoid global warming).¹⁶ Examples include using fossil fuels more efficiently for industrial processes or electricity generation, switching to solar energy or wind power, improving the insulation of buildings, and expanding forests and other "sinks" to remove greater amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.¹⁷

Off-grid renewable energy

Off-grid refers to energy and water sources that are self sufficient and without reliance on public facilities. *Renewable energy* refers to natural energy resources such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides, and geothermal heat, which are renewable (naturally replenished), i.e., for all practical purposes, cannot be depleted (unlike fossil fuels, for example). Alternative energy sources such as solar and wind power and water sources such as on-site dams or harvested water that are not public utilities are examples of off-grid renewable energy.¹⁸

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

An international treaty that requires world governments to avoid dangerous levels of climate change.¹⁹

¹⁶ World Wildlife Fund,

<http://wwf.org.au/ourwork/climatechange/glossary>

¹⁷ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

http://unfccc.int/essential_background/glossary/items/3666.php

¹⁸ Wikipedia,

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renewable_energy

World Wildlife Fund,

<http://www.wwf.org.au/ourwork/climatechange/glossary>

¹⁹ World Wildlife Fund,

<http://wwf.org.au/ourwork/climatechange/glossary>

Climate Change

Current thinking and work on climate change

Most agencies have been aware of the significance of climate change as an important issue in international development for some time. Strategic thinking has taken place within some organisations in the last couple of years, and some individual programmes have been addressing climate change issues, but in most agencies there has been little real corporate focus. Increasingly, however, climate change has emerged through consultation with staff, partners and programme offices as an important subject that needs careful consideration. The scale of climate change and its potential impact on efforts to reduce poverty necessitate clearer action. In addition, many governments are now identifying climate change as a priority issue and agencies cannot afford to ignore this reality if they wish to protect their funding. If any agency is going to be successful in responding to climate change then strong champions holding senior positions in the organisation will be needed. There will also need to be popular support, with the relevance of climate change to poverty reduction being made clear for people.

Climate change will affect all programmes

Climate change represents a serious threat to international development. It can be seen both as one of a number of underlying causes of poverty and exclusion and as being a symptom of global inequality and unsustainable practices. Poorer and more vulnerable countries, communities and individuals will be more seriously affected and therefore have the greatest needs for adaptation and to build their resilience. Low-income countries will predominantly be concerned with adaptation while middle-income countries will also be expected to address mitigation and follow lower carbon development paths in their own development.

Over the next 5-10 years climate change will rise even further up the agenda of international development, although big temperature rises will not be experienced in this timescale. Rather, there will be a gradual worsening of climatic conditions with greater variations and more extremes. There will be high profile and major disasters but there will also be the on-going and deepening of many smaller scale disasters and environmental stresses. Climate change will make existing pressures on the lives of poor and marginalised people even worse.

Although the effects of climate change will be experienced differently around the world, there will be effects that reach every community in every country, to varying extents. Some of these effects will be direct; for example increasingly severe cyclones may destroy school buildings and therefore affect education programmes. Some will be more indirect; for example, increasingly severe droughts will affect harvests resulting in reduced household incomes to pay for costs associated with schooling. We can expect that some programmes, those promoting secure livelihoods and natural resource management for example, will experience the effects more directly, but all programmes will be affected.

Climate change is not going away

No matter how effectively future emissions are controlled, there will still be a significant temperature rise due to the time lag of warming effects and the longevity of some greenhouse gases. Current estimates are that a rise of two degrees in global average temperatures above pre-industrial levels is now inevitable by 2050 and that a rise of three degrees is likely. If a suitably stringent new international deal is not reached to curb future emissions, temperatures could rise by four degrees by the end of the century. Even a rise of two degrees will have major and traumatic effects on ecosystems and human activity. As temperatures rise there will be increased pressures on natural resources and ecosystems, resulting in competition for water, food, fuel, and land. There will be increases in diseases,

natural disasters, conflict and migration, all of which will disproportionately affect women. The physical and societal changes associated with rising temperatures will put each of the Millennium Development Goals under increased pressure.

The poor are affected disproportionately

Not everyone is equally vulnerable, with location, income, gender, etc being determining factors. The poorest and most marginalised women and men living in areas of highest risk will be most adversely affected by climate change yet they are also the least responsible for historic emissions and have the fewest resources to adapt to changes.

Climate change is a social justice issue

Agencies cannot respond effectively to climate change without considering a number of complex equity and social justice issues:

- Historic emissions – developed nations have achieved advanced economic development through high levels of historic fossil fuel usage.
- Per capita emissions – developing countries still have relatively low per capita emissions even if absolute levels can be greater than developed nations.
- The desire of many low-income countries to increase their emissions as part of an economic development process to reduce domestic poverty.
- The ‘origin’ of emissions – much of the emission increase in developing countries is driven by production for Western consumption.
- The cost of making emissions reductions – developed countries have the resources to fund cuts but the fastest growing and ‘dirtiest’ emissions are taking place in developing countries.

Uncertain outcomes of international negotiations

The Copenhagen Summit²⁰ negotiations for a new deal to limit emissions failed to result in a suitably ambitious and equitable deal. There was a broad statement of political consensus but the details, and particularly arrangements for international financing of adaptation measures, were left unresolved. It is unlikely that sufficient funds will be made available to support poor countries in their adaptation needs and there is a risk that aid budgets will be raided. Any such funding is likely to flow through big institutions, following the Paris Principles for Aid Effectiveness²¹, and favour large projects. This will result in multilateral and institutional arrangements that leave a significant gap to the poorest and local communities, where adaptation is most needed and effectively delivered. One upshot for volunteer agencies is that donors such as the Department for International Development UK (DfID) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) may want to strengthen links with Non Government Organisations (NGOs) that have a presence on the ground and more direct access at community level.

Despite the ongoing uncertainty around a future global deal on climate change, organisations need to press on with their own responses.

²⁰ 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen commonly known as the Copenhagen Summit.

²¹ The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was developed at a forum in Paris hosted by the French government and organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It looks at the responsibility of developed and developing countries for delivering and managing aid.

Key Strategic Questions

Where is there most need?

Even the largest volunteer sending agencies are relatively small players in terms of attempting to address climate change issues. Such organisations therefore have to be strategic about where to place resources. The locations where there may be the most absolute need for work on climate change may not always be those where agencies currently work. Most volunteer agencies now make a serious effort to specialise in work with poor and marginalised people, yet the poorest and most marginalised may be beyond their reach in some countries, even though these may be the people with the most needs in terms of support around climate change. Having said this, assessments can be made of where there are greater levels of vulnerability to the effects of climate change both in terms of a country-by-country assessment and within specific countries.

Where can agencies have most impact?

Impact can be measured in different ways. At one level agencies could try and impact on mitigation, i.e. reducing emissions. If agencies want to impact on the countries with the highest per capita emissions then it would need to focus on advocacy in the global North. Alternatively, or in addition, advocacy could focus on countries with rapidly growing and high absolute emissions levels such as China and India.

Or, it may be argued that volunteer agencies could maximise their impact by focusing on adaptation. Such work might concentrate on adaptation in the poorest countries or for the poorest and most vulnerable communities within countries.

The argument of depth versus breadth is relevant here too. Volunteer agencies can have the deepest impact when working closely with communities at a local level but they can have the widest impact when working with higher level stakeholders such as provincial and national government functions.

Exactly what type of impact agencies can have will not always be in their own control. Access to ministries and national government is not always possible and when working with communities, agencies will have to respect the interests and priorities of partners.

What can volunteer agencies influence / change?

Many volunteer agencies have a good track record of bringing about both relatively small but sustained changes to practice and more strategic higher-level changes in policy. Many are also strong on documenting changes as part of their role in facilitating learning and sharing of good practice. The issues surrounding climate change are so huge that any agency needs to be selective in deciding who it is attempting to influence. Given the right circumstances there will be opportunities to influence national level responses to climate change. There will be other circumstances where more local responses can be influenced. Overall, the focus should probably be to influence adaptation over and above mitigation when working with poor countries and the poorest communities. This is because mitigation is less of an issue if there is already a relatively low level of emissions.

How seriously should agencies take climate change issues?

This is the key question. Few volunteer agencies are explicitly focused on climate change. Having said that, we cannot ignore the impact climate change is having/will have on our work. Nor should agencies with a global remit be ignoring the role that their own work plays in contributing to climate change. Each agency needs to decide if it is going to address the issue of climate change head on or whether it will continue to regard climate change as one of many issues that need engagement. There will be credibility issues if we make no suitable

response to climate change and there should be potential funding opportunities for such work in the future.

Key Strategic Choices

In trying to eliminate poverty there may be some policy contradictions or ‘rebound’ effects that result in a negative impact on climate change. For example, success at raising incomes will lead to increases in emissions. We need to be aware of such effects and seek to reduce or avoid them where possible, although in terms of social justice, relatively small increases in emissions by poor countries are insignificant compared to the emissions of rich countries.

In developing this paper, the five main options that could probably have the most traction for volunteer agencies have been explored and discussed with experts from specialist agencies, think tanks, academia, and donors. This is not an exhaustive list of options available and these options are not mutually exclusive. Each is presented below before recommendations for a ‘classical’ and ‘stretch’ response are given in section Five.

Option One – Addressing our own carbon footprints

Before seriously undertaking any other work on climate change, any organisation needs to better understand its own environmental impact. A *carbon* footprint represents only a sub-section of an organisation’s overall environmental footprint and wider sustainability. However, carbon is the current measurement or currency for such discussions. As a starting point, each organisation needs to follow three sequential steps in order to address its own carbon footprint. These are:

- Assessing the current carbon footprint (done through a combination of measurement, estimation and modelling)
- Setting targets to reduce the footprint
- Measuring performance in meeting these targets and transparently reporting on progress

This approach needs to be followed for the organisation as a whole, which means the following elements need to be included:

- Assessment of the ‘corporate’ footprint, i.e. centralised and regional management operations and related travel, including volunteers’ flights
- Assessment of programme offices
- Assessment of volunteer placements

An additional step would be to then work with partner organisations and bring them into the assessment, target setting and reporting process, as a way of both encouraging these values down the supply chain and being able to make decisions about prioritising support for lower carbon partners.

One immediate benefit from including an assessment of the specific environmental impact of each placement would be the development of a powerful narrative to counter concerns about the carbon impact of international travel associated with international volunteering. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) ‘One Planet’ methodology could usefully be employed to assess placements with the aim of focusing on ‘one planet placements’. A typical Western volunteer, who normally lives a 3-4 planet lifestyle, would save much more carbon over the lifetime of a placement (compared to their having stayed at home) than that expended in their travel to and from placement. This kind of methodology could potentially also be used pre-departure

and post-return to demonstrate that returned volunteers adopt more sustainable lifestyles as a result of their volunteering experience.

There are three compelling reasons why each agency needs to be documenting and reducing its own carbon footprint:

- **Responsibility:** All organisations have, a moral responsibility to take sustainability seriously. Sustainability needs to be embedded into all elements of society. We need to be part of the solution; not making the environmental problems we are setting out to address any worse.
- **Credibility:** Organisations need to ensure their own houses are in order before they can credibly work with partners on climate change issues or be involved in climate change advocacy.
- **Opportunity:** If an organisation is not acting sustainably it risks not being able to attract volunteers, supporters and staff that are increasingly concerned about this issue. Donors will be increasingly interested in the carbon impacts resulting from their funding.

Pros of addressing your organisation's carbon footprint

- This is a relatively easy first step to take with many resources and tools to support carbon measurement and reporting already in existence.
- The agency would be acting responsibly regarding its own impact, which would be motivating and inspiring for those in the organisation.
- The agency would gain credibility in regard to climate change, which would open the door to further work in this area.
- The agency would be bullet-proofing existing funding and opening up opportunities for new funding.
- The agency would be addressing an obvious carbon weakness in its current way of working by 'offsetting' international travel impact through reduced emissions associated with expected lifestyles in placement.
- Parts of the organisation (e.g. individual country offices) that are performing well could be identified and good practice documented and shared.
- Identifying and then reducing carbon is often co-beneficially associated with financial savings.

Cons of addressing your organisation's carbon footprint

- Although individual environmental audits could be made for various parts of an organisation, the greatest gains would come if the whole organisation was included in assessment and this may prove challenging in terms of generating data of comparable quality.
- Such a process may throw up uncomfortable data regarding the size of the current footprint.
- It may create difficulties for the organisation if it is unable to meet its reduction targets.
- Some steps necessary to reduce carbon might create operating challenges for the organisation.

Implications of addressing your organisation's carbon footprint

- A new carbon assessment toolkit and resources would need to be produced.
- It would take time to conduct the assessment, analyse results, set targets and report against these.
- For this to be successful there would need to be champions with responsibility for the process in senior positions and on governing boards. Carbon champions could also be appointed within each country programme and there would likely be training needs.

Option Two – Mainstreaming climate change across programmes

It is important to mainstream climate change if we do not want existing work to be undermined. There are two aspects to this type of mainstreaming. First, all current programmes would need to be assessed for climate change risk. A number of tools already exist for this, for example those produced by the World Bank, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), Progressio and the Institute of Development Service UK (IDS). Potential future programmes will also need to undertake climate change screening. Secondly, volunteers and staff would need to be encouraged to pick up the issue of climate change and to mainstream it into existing (non-climate change) work as a cross-cutting theme.

Every international development organisation will eventually be mainstreaming climate change out of necessity as the implications of climate change become more apparent and pressing. Initially it may be difficult to see tangible results and impact from such mainstreaming and it should be acknowledged that to mainstream successfully requires significant effort. Mainstreaming needs thorough integration and cannot be bolted on. It should also not be seen as a technocratic exercise and will not work if it is regarded as being 'imposed'. A particular challenge for climate change is that mainstreaming needs to happen across the organisation because the causes of climate change are global, although the impacts are local and vary greatly. Some agencies will be able to draw on their experiences from mainstreaming in other areas such as HIV, gender and disability, and apply the lessons they have in relation to climate change, agencies may have the opportunity to develop a strong reputation and leading position in this arena.

To mainstream climate change any agency would need to assess and then address both the impact of climate change on all its existing programmes and the impacts its existing programmes are having on climate change. While climate change will affect all development work, to varying degrees, this kind of assessment should allow agencies to identify the programmes that will be most affected and to focus attention on them.

Each country programme would also need to undertake an individualised assessment of the likely local impacts that climate change will have on its work and on the way programmes themselves may be impacting on climate change. The key questions are:

- How will existing work be affected by climate change? i.e. identifying vulnerability. For example, how will decreased precipitation affect existing education programmes (greater burden on children to collect water, crop failure resulting in less household income to finance school costs, etc)?
- How will existing work need to be changed in the light of the likely effects? For example, will health programmes that focus on sanitation need to be adapted to take into consideration a decrease in available water supply?
- Are there ways in which existing work is affecting climate change and are there any changes that need to be made as a result? For example, could current secure livelihoods work that promotes carbon intensive activities be changed to have a lower carbon focus?
- Can any existing work be re-badged to allow increased leverage of funding of climate change work? For example, programmes to introduce fuel-efficient stoves may currently be driven by a forest management perspective but they could be presented in terms of increasing fuel efficiency and reducing carbon.

For climate change to be mainstreamed by volunteers as a cross-cutting theme, volunteer knowledge and awareness will need to be raised through pre-departure and in-country training. Volunteers can act as an excellent entry point for increasing local understanding of climate change and helping communities and partners see the relevance of climate change

to their lives. Agencies will need to develop resources to support this type of mainstreaming, such as providing examples and ideas of things volunteers can do to reduce their own emissions and those of their partner organisations. As well as emission reduction, ideas can also be provided for how volunteers can support an increase in local resilience.

Pros of mainstreaming climate change across programmes

- Without undertaking climate risk assessments and making appropriate responses, programmes risk being undermined.
- This is a strategic approach to the issue.
- This would comprehensively address the issue and give some consistency of response.
- The agency would be able to identify and share good practice across programmes.
- Beginning mainstreaming now is good practice for if/when carbon impact or climate risk assessments become a requirement of donors.
- This is a way of integrating climate change into other goal areas.

Cons of mainstreaming climate change across programmes

- There are varying levels of information available on likely local effects of climate change and it may not be possible to get reliable data for some areas.
- Risk of perception that all work is overshadowed by climate change.
- Mainstreaming can result in people feeling the issue is 'done' once it has been mainstreamed.
- Does mainstreaming actually make a difference? Questionable track record of the success of previous mainstreaming within the international development movement.
- Maybe issues of loss/lack of autonomy in programme offices if they feel this mainstreaming is being 'imposed'.

Implications of mainstreaming climate change across programmes

- Information on regional projections and local knowledge of climate impacts will need to be gathered and assessed.
- Resources needed for climate risk assessments (templates/tools will need developing, staffing time) and capacity of staff for this will need to be developed.
- Major piece of work to assess all programmes – could phase assessments, starting with programmes in more vulnerable areas.

Option Three – Addressing climate change through programmes in secure livelihoods / natural resource management

Much existing livelihoods work, particularly natural resource management (NRM), is geared around managing pressures on natural resources. Climate change is another, albeit extreme, pressure. However, it is not just NRM that agencies should focus on. Poor people and those most vulnerable to climate change need to be supported in diversifying their livelihoods so they are less dependent on meeting their needs through activities that require a predictable climate. They need to be supported to reduce the risks of disaster. Such work could be more explicitly drawn out and focused upon as an effective way of reducing vulnerability.

Within livelihoods agencies could emphasis work that supported those most vulnerable to climate change. Adaptation rather than mitigation should be the primary focus of livelihoods work although where adaptation also has mitigation benefits this is an additional benefit. Every aspect of livelihoods will eventually have to adapt and it is better to make the strategic decision to support adaptation now rather than be forced into adapting at a later date by necessity. Our traditional engagement with communities lends itself to supporting

community-based adaptation (as opposed to national processes), and this is also the current approach of other agencies such as Oxfam, Action Aid, Care and World Vision.

Many agencies have significant experience with forestry. VSO, for example, currently supports projects in the Model Forest Network in Latin America. Such work could be replicated in Africa and Asia. Forestry is a key sector within livelihoods as forests (and avoiding deforestation) are important for mitigation as well as adaptation. Agriculture is another sector within livelihoods where many agencies have experience and agricultural work could be prioritised that addresses both adaptation and mitigation.

At a community level agencies could also focus on promoting off-grid renewable energy and low carbon solutions. Promoting renewable energy sources (renewables) has multiple benefits as renewable energy is cheaper and more secure than fossil fuels in the long run and it reduces susceptibility to energy price increases. Renewables allow a technological 'leapfrogging' so that the benefits of development can be accessed without increases in emissions. It is unlikely that any volunteer agency would be able to make a significant impact working on energy or transport issues nationally as these are vast sectors with powerful vested interests.

Pros of addressing climate change through programmes in secure livelihoods/ natural resource management

- Many agencies have significant experience to draw on.
- Existing pockets of relevant livelihoods work could be developed and expanded into adaptation-focused programmes.
- Opportunity to address both adaptation and mitigation.
- Disaster reduction and reduced pressure for natural resources will lessen other symptoms of climate change such as migration and conflict.
- Adaptation funding may be available for partners.

Cons of addressing climate change through programmes in secure livelihoods/ natural resource management

- Risk of climate change being seen only as a livelihoods issue - all programmes are going to be affected by climate change, not just livelihoods programmes.
- There are human rights and gender concerns with some approaches being taken to decarbonise livelihoods work, for example the 'treadle'.

Implications of addressing climate change through programmes in secure livelihoods/ natural resource management

- May need to change emphasis of some existing livelihoods programmes or start new programmes.
- Recruitment of volunteers with appropriate skills for climate change focused livelihoods work should not be an issue.

Option Four – Deliberately focus on climate change as a key programme area

Agencies could create a specific programme focus on climate change with an emphasis on supporting capacity building for strategic responses to climate change by governments and civil society. Programmes would specifically focus on capacity building at national, provincial and especially local levels to support strategic planning for climate mitigation and adaptation. Middle-income countries are going to have to develop plans for how they are going to fulfil commitments on emissions limitations while poorer countries will concentrate on how they are going to adapt to inevitable warming. Capacity building will also be needed to support NGOs and communities in trying to access international funding for adaptation and mitigation projects to ensure such funding is not captured by elites. Governance functions will need to be strengthened, such as contingency planning, climate and weather prediction, emissions monitoring, negotiation skills, monitoring progress against national plans, etc. Communication and understanding within government could also be improved to encourage horizontal spread of climate considerations across departments. Work in this new goal area could also include support research functions and education aimed at increasing community understanding of climate change.

At a community level agencies could help to build understanding about climate change and make it relevant to poor people. Agencies could also help bridge the gaps between national mechanisms and local communities. National climate change policies and planning needs to be pro-poor and many volunteer agencies are well placed to support communities to articulate their position and needs. Agencies could play a major role building capacity and assisting communities to develop and implement participatory adaptation and mitigation plans. Local environmental governance functions could be strengthened. Agencies might also support local services, such as health and education departments to develop their own adaptation and mitigation plans. There is also the possibility of support to businesses in mitigation planning.

Some agencies already have some programmes that are linked to national governments and ministries in support of strategic responses to climate change. But most are more often active at the community level. As such work is topical there could well be a desire within programme offices to move in this direction, especially as timely intervention now could have a major influence on the shape of national plans.

Pros of deliberately focussing on climate change as a key programme area

- Gives possibility of having a strategic and higher level impact through supporting national processes.
- Good positioning and profile raising for any agency.
- Allows broader alliances to be built, e.g. across departments of government, bringing together a range of NGOs at a community level, etc.
- Builds on such work already being undertaken.
- Could increase the effectiveness of funding for adaptation and help make communities more resilient.
- Policy becomes more influenced by poorer and marginalised voices.

Cons of deliberately focussing on climate change as a key programme area

- New goal area that would need resourcing.
- Can be difficult to establish national level placements/partnerships.
- Different countries will have very different approaches and be at different stages.
- Danger that if concentration on community level then hard to achieve breadth of impact.

Implications of deliberately focussing on climate change as a key programme area

- Resources required for new work.
- Would existing work need to be dropped to allow this to be taken on?
- Could detract from organisational focus
- Sufficient and suitable leadership would need to be dedicated to a new goal area

Option Five – Advocacy and global education

Volunteer agencies often have advocacy staff, but they also have an incredible advocacy resource in Returned Volunteers (RVs). RVs are often inspired by their experiences and keen to contribute to global education. Agencies could harness RVs to contribute to advocacy focused around climate change being a social justice issue. Many volunteers will have seen for themselves that those most affected by climate change are least responsible for causing it. RVs could be encouraged to reduce their own emissions (building on the one planet methodology) and lobby and educate for similar changes in their communities. They could become a powerful global education resource for countering prejudice and xenophobia around the migration that will result from climate change.

It would probably be more effective for agencies to concentrate climate change advocacy on trying to change the lives of other citizens through RVs rather than on trying to change high level government and intergovernmental decision makers. There are two reasons for this. First, international negotiation processes are already fairly clamped down and there are limited opportunities to try and influence these debates. Second, the international climate change advocacy arena is already crowded with other development agencies, many of which have been dedicating significant resourcing into this area for several years. It is hard to see the value that volunteer agencies could add at this level. Having said that, there would be opportunities to join national and international campaigns and coalitions to add weight to existing activities.

An additional approach to advocacy might be to identify key partners in southern countries and try to build their capacity for advocacy. Identifying and supporting potentially strong and influential southern voices so that these people can be more effective in their own advocacy could either be run through programme offices or with central support.

Pros of advocacy and global education

- RVs are potentially an excellent resource that could bring about significant local change if they are guided and directed in their advocacy.
- Global education through RVs is a unique selling point for volunteer agencies and one that donors are often keen on.
- Significant results can be achieved with relatively few central resources.
- Would help to maintain local profile as climate change will continue to be a dominant issue.

Cons of advocacy and global education

- A concentration on climate change might take RVs away from other useful areas of advocacy and global education.
- It is hard to ensure RVs do take on advocacy and global education roles after return home.
- It is not possible to ensure the quality of RV advocacy is always of a high standard.
- The agency's profile in global negotiations and processes would remain low.

Implications of advocacy and global education

- Agencies would need to document case studies and produce resources to support RVs.
- May need specialist climate change knowledge in central advocacy units.
- May need to withdraw from some current advocacy activities.

Recommended Options and Rationale

Classical option

Overall, volunteer agencies should probably seek to focus their climate change work on adaptation, particularly in the poorest countries. These countries are already experiencing the impacts of climate change and they are most in need of increasing their resilience to climate risks. Such countries are also where many agencies have experience and expertise and this is where the most political space exists to add value. To gain additional benefit, adaptation work that is also low carbon should be prioritised. Similarly, adaptation work that also has a positive impact on mitigation should be pursued.

Of the five options presented above, the recommended approach for a 'classical' response would be as follows:

- Start with option one – addressing the agency's own carbon footprint. This is not really an option as the organisation will have to do this to remain credible going forward. This option is easy to adopt as it does not depend on anyone else, it will raise organisational awareness of climate change and it should result in cost savings due to reduced emissions. Work on this could start immediately.
- Begin implementing option two – mainstreaming climate change across programmes. This work can be introduced on a prioritised basis. All new programmes in any goal area should be required to screen for climate risk. Existing programmes can be screened starting with those in areas of greatest vulnerability to climate risk. Eventually all programmes should be assessed and any necessary changes made to climate proof them. Mainstreaming climate change as a cross-cutting theme should be piloted where there is initially the most interest or existing climate change work. This strand of mainstreaming can be expanded and spread at a suitable pace after a successful pilot.
- Begin implementing option three – addressing climate change through secure livelihoods/natural resource management. Existing livelihoods programmes should be assessed to see if a greater emphasis could be placed on adaptation, and where possible, also mitigation. Existing livelihoods programmes that do directly address climate change should be built upon and where possible these types of programmes should be replicated taking into account local communities' needs, wants and issues.
- The first three options can be started simultaneously, with option one being unconditional across the whole organisation, and options two and three initially being phased in on a targeted basis.
- Only when option one has been successfully implemented can any large scale work begin on option four – creating a new and specific focus on climate change. Until this point, agencies should continue with programmes that are supporting a strategic response to climate change, so that experience and reputation can be built in this arena. As such experience builds and as new opportunities are capitalised upon, a critical mass of such work will develop, allowing space to legitimately create a specific focus.

- Option five – advocacy and global education, will not form part of the headline of the agency’s climate change response but as the organisation completes option one and begins work on option two and three, there will be increased awareness and desire by RVs to participate in this type of climate change social justice response.

Overall, what is being proposed is a phased response with successes in the categories of the first few options helping to create the momentum and legitimacy for the later options. The phased approach, in combination with the building up of climate change related work from where it exists or could potentially be adapted to exist at the moment, will mean any agency’s response to climate change will look different in different countries. Factors such as the income of a country, its vulnerability to climate risk and the profile of existing programmes, will all contribute to determining the depth and extent of response to climate change in any one location.

Stretch option

To stretch option one (own house in order), any agency could emphasise lower carbon development ways of working. As international volunteer sending agencies, it will be impossible to eliminate all carbon emission from operations but there may be potential to introduce policies and ‘rewards’ to try and incentivise lower carbon volunteering options such as:

- More in-country transfers
- Less shorter term volunteering
- More in-country recruitment
- More support for local/national volunteering
- Attempting to match volunteers to placements closer to their home countries

To stretch option two (mainstreaming across programmes), an agency could *require* all programmes to undertake a climate screening and *require* all programmes to mainstream climate change as a cross-cutting theme. Climate change could become the dominant cross-cutting theme in the organisation to really galvanise focus and action.

To stretch option three (livelihoods work), an agency could make climate change the explicit focus of all livelihoods work. This would require greater ruthlessness about what existing work continues and change the nature of future work taken on. With this stretch option livelihoods work and climate change work would be one and the same.

To stretch option four (supporting strategic responses), an agency could from the outset create a new goal area in climate change and set itself a demanding target that in a certain number of countries or a certain percentage of countries, there will be high level programmes working with national governments on climate change issues.

To stretch option five (RV advocacy), an agency could create a community of RV Climate Champions, supported centrally, utilising social networking, who organise local actions and campaigns. There is a hunger for climate activism and agencies could be supporting this more explicitly. In terms of supporting southern advocacy, rather than this happening on a piecemeal basis an agency could develop national training programmes and create international networks of trained and supported southern advocates.