

Review of: "International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in Humanitarian Field: why and how to engage with Planetary Health?"

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This is an opinion article, in which the authors review the added value that the planetary health approach could have in the field of humanitarian aid. This is a work in a new field, on which there is hardly any formal scientific literature and in which the authors elaborate a well-articulated discussion. This work may contribute to a broader debate in the field of humanitarian aid, as well as attract academic and professional attention in the field of planetary health.

Page 2. Introduction.

In the 3rd paragraph of the introduction the authors introduce the concept of planetary health emphasizing the lack of consensus between the different approaches (ref 5 and 6). I suggest that in this section the authors refer to the landmark paper by Whitmee et al. (Lancet 2015) which, with its 26 pages and 420 references, established the foundation of this new field. In addition, the discussion by Whitmee et al. about challenges of imagination, knowledge and governance could be useful to give more cohesion to the many different issues that are raised by the authors.

A direct link between the Planetary Health approach and the field of humanitarian aid is the evidence of the planetary boundaries (Steffen W et al. Science 2015) with the associated evidence of more common extreme climate events and the prediction of tipping points. At contrast with prevalent fields like Global Health or Public Health, Planetary Health provides a framework that includes the increasing need of preparedness and aid to underserved vulnerable populations as part of the adaptation strategies. The seminal paper on planetary boundaries by Steffen et al. has recently been taken a step forward by the work of Rockstrom J et al. (Nature 2023), which integrates Earth stability (safe) and justice (just) in the new "safe and just planetary boundaries".

Page 2. Climate crisis is a humanitarian crisis.

An advantage of Planetary Health as compared with traditional Global and Public Health is the integrative framework where climate, biodiversity, geochemical flows, fresh and groundwaters in the Oceans and aerosols are shown as interlinked systems. Authors refer to SARS-CoV2 in the context of climate hazards (ref 9). The later could be an opportunity to mention the direct link between deforestation and degradation of large natural habitats, the loss of

biodiversity and the emergence of new zoonosis. In the same way, when the authors refer to the interactions between climate events and high pollution levels in large cities in LICs, referring to air Pollution as one of the planetary boundaries (aerosols) (Rockstrom J et al. Nature 2023) could provide a more integrated vision of the Anthropocene challenges.

Page 3. Humanitarian responses to the climate crisis.

In this section the authors describe both the opportunity of adaptation and the mitigation strategies in the INGOs agendas. The adaptation is probably the one that offers more space to link the humanitarian aid in specific extreme events with the implementation of adaptation programs that could make the affected populations less vulnerable to future event. It is not clear how much references 13 to 15 refer to this issue. A more detailed discussion of how adaptation to climate change is being considered by the humanitarian INGOs would help the readers.

Though adaptation and mitigation are often presented as separate pathways, there are opportunities to consider their interactions and complementarity. Extreme events like earthquakes, hurricanes and others do not only harm humans but also all other living species and their habitats in the affected areas. Here there is an opportunity to explore how different types of organizations can work together in providing the aid for to restauration of not only human functioning but also the affected ecosystems in which they could continue operating.

At the end of the second paragraph, in this section, the authors suggest that "...it is difficult to measure the carbon footprint of the humanitarian sector...". However, though previous studies of health care footprint assessments have not included the humanitarian aid, there should be no added difficulty to do it using the same type of input-output economic data as done in previous studies or even adopting a more detailed life-cycle analysis (Salas RN BMJ: BMJ 2020;371:m3785. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m3785>).

Page 3-4. Climate crisis is also a crisis of humanitarian aid.

I found this section hard to follow. There several passages where is hard to understand what the authors want to say. This happens in the first paragraphs when the authors suggest that adaptation and mitigation are useful but they "...hide a missing piece of the complex puzzle of...". Do you mean that the missing piece is a systemic understanding of how the humanitarian aid in extreme events is linked to the different distal pathways of the Anthropocene? Also, the critic to SDGs supported by reference 20 is hard to understand. The same happens with the last sentence of this section.

One issue that could perhaps be considered in this section is the loss and damage strategies together with the possibility to attribute specific extreme events to climate change (attributional methods). Loss and damage will receive particular attention in the next COP summit together with the human health issues. However, I don't know enough about loss and damage strategies as to be more concrete.

Altogether I'd suggest to review carefully this section to improve its articulation and clarity and considering the possibility of merging with the previous section.

Page 5. Planetary Health: A road map...

In this section I missed something related to the knowledge challenges and how Planetary Health could be of added value in identified and approaching relevant gaps. The emphasis of PH on complexity and crossdisciplinarity could be of importance here. I assume (without knowing) that research on humanitarian aid is in general largely underfunded; so, could PH help in fuelling and supporting a renewed interest in facing relevant knowledge gaps? The authors could look to a systematic assessment of knowledge on climate change and health to see how much is there on topics that are relevant for the humanitarian aid actors (Lea Berrang-Ford et al. Systematic mapping of global research on climate and health: a machine learning review. *Lancet Planet Health* 2021; 5: e514–25. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196\(21\)00179-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(21)00179-0))

Page 6. Barriers to adoption of the Planetary Health framework in the humanitarian field.

I'd name this section something like "Personal attitudes..." or "perceived resistances..." to distinguish from the more structural barriers like lack of education in planetary health or reductionism in funding agencies and philanthropes (among others), among others.

Page 7. Applying a Planetary Health lens to humanitarian art...

In this section the authors list and comment of a number of challenges that humanitarian actors interested in embracing a Planetary Health approach will need to face. This is a relevant and very useful section; below, I shortly comment on some of the challenges.

Reframing the issue of climate crisis. In some specific events like floods and droughts there is an increasing research capacity to attribute the extreme events to climate change, something that helps to make the link between the climate change and the health impacts more understandable and evident.

<https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2021/10/04/attribution-science-linking-climate-change-to-extreme-weather/>

Open dialogue. The conceptual framework for the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has adopted a conceptual framework that highlights the importance of considering knowledge systems others than western science (see: https://www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/downloads/Decision%20IPBES_2_4.pdf)

Develop a common language.

The authors may find useful to refer to the work of Chris G Buse et al who have reviewed how different fields like One Health, Global health or Planetary Health are addressing the Anthropocene challenges. This work is useful to understand the importance of the open dialog that authors rightly point out. (Buse CG et al. Public health guide to field developments linking ecosystems, environments and health in the Anthropocene. *J Epidemiol Community Health* 2018;0:1–6. doi:10.1136/jech-2017-210082).

