

## **Stakeholders' narratives of vulnerability and adaptive capacity**

### **A multiple-impacts study design and application**

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Carina Keskitalo presented her work based on:

*The description on how local and regional stakeholders view change and their possibilities to adapt to change*

Based on two local level studies: Forestry, reindeer herding and fishing and economically vulnerable and sparsely populated regions (northern Norway, Sweden and Finland – northwestern Russia), that used a bottom up approach based on some projections from different scenarios and then studied how stakeholders adapted to the projected scenarios. This idea introduced the concept of adaptive capacity that is directly interlinked with the vulnerability and sensitivity of the systems to cope with their forces of change.

Vulnerability was defined as: *Vulnerability = sensitivity to impacts - adaptive capacity*, and adaptive capacity as *"the broader ability of a system to cope with change-related risks and opportunities"*. But both concepts are difficult to standardize. It is needed to take into account the general context of the situation as changes in economy, networks, communal policies, environment, work and specially their resources to adapt to those situations.

Some suggestions to take into account when preparing a vulnerability analysis:

- Reopen the questions done to the stakeholders: do not guide their answers and let the people use their own words.
- Take into account how the current conditions might have changed over time (idea of the trends).
- Detect where are the sensitivities and thresholds not forgetting to look at marginal cases (sometimes indigenous people give another perspective of the vulnerabilities of the area/situation).
- The interviews should include a pool of people that are used to take decisions understanding the decision making at different levels, as well as individual interviews (private decision making) not to miss perspectives. At this point it was

highlighted the need to give feedback to the people and to be sure that the process under question is understood by asking for feedback, verification and so on.

- “To understand a small issue , we should understand the whole system”

Interesting web site: [www. northportal.info](http://www.northportal.info)

For more information on this presentation, please check the power point presentation available at the ALTER-Net Summer School web site.

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