Recovering from a disaster
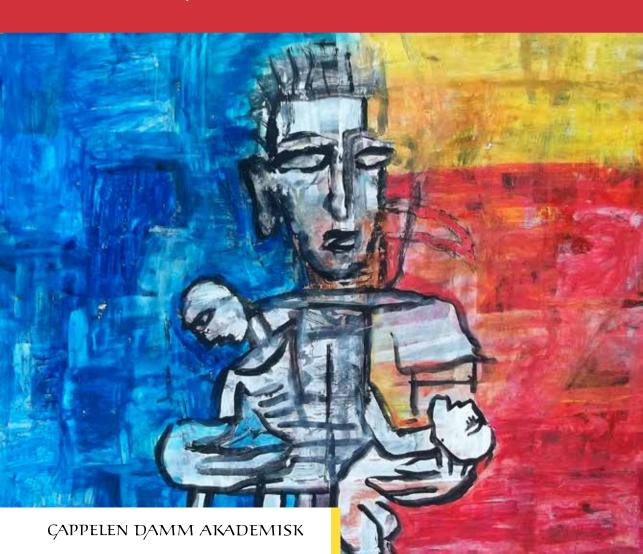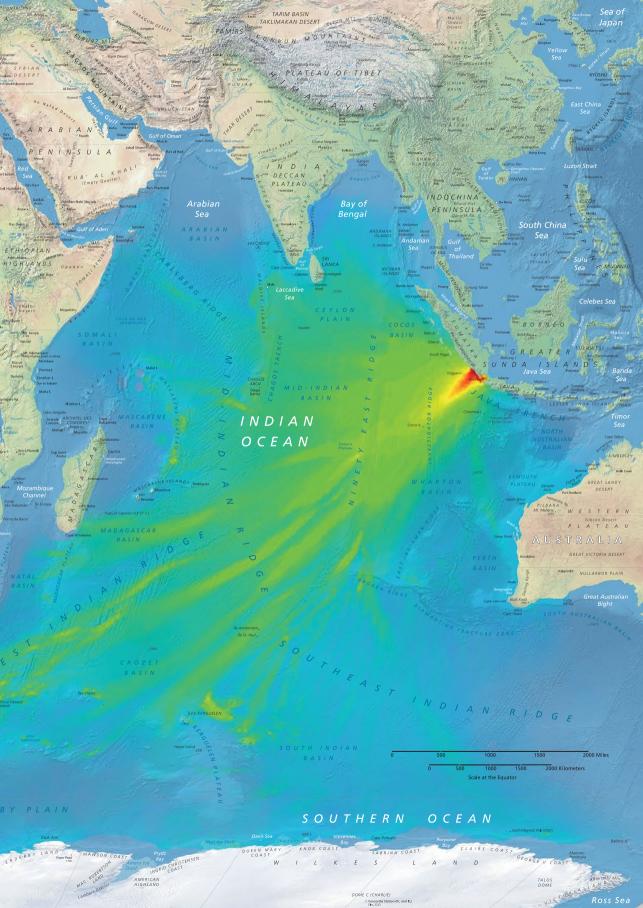
A Study of the Relief and Reconstruction Process in Sri Lanka After the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami

Arne Olav Øyhus

INDIAN OCEAN

SOUTHERN OCEAN

Major labelled features (oceans, seas, basins, ridges):

- Arabian Sea — Arabian Basin
- Bay of Bengal
- South China Sea
- Andaman Sea
- Java Sea
- Banda Sea
- Timor Sea
- Celebes Sea
- Sulu Sea
- Molucca Sea
- Red Sea
- Gulf of Aden
- Gulf of Oman
- Persian Gulf
- Gulf of Thailand
- Gulf of Tonkin
- Mozambique Channel
- Great Australian Bight
- Sea of Japan
- Yellow Sea
- East China Sea
- Ross Sea
- Davis Sea
- Vincennes Bay
- Porpoise Bay
- Prydz Bay

Landmasses / regions:

- ARABIAN PENINSULA
- RUB' AL KHALI (Empty Quarter)
- INDIA — DECCAN PLATEAU
- PLATEAU OF TIBET
- HIMALAYAS
- TARIM BASIN — TAKLIMAKAN DESERT
- INDOCHINA PENINSULA
- MALAY PENINSULA
- GREATER SUNDA ISLANDS
- LESSER SUNDA ISLANDS
- BORNEO
- SUMATRA
- JAVA
- SULAWESI
- MINDANAO
- LUZON
- TAIWAN
- PHILIPPINES
- AUSTRALIA
- WESTERN PLATEAU
- GREAT SANDY DESERT
- GIBSON DESERT
- GREAT VICTORIA DESERT
- NULLARBOR PLAIN
- KIMBERLEY
- PILBARA
- MADAGASCAR
- ETHIOPIAN HIGHLANDS
- SOMALI PENINSULA
- SYRIAN DESERT
- AN NAFUD DESERT
- THAR DESERT
- ZAGROS MOUNTAINS
- ELBURZ MTS.
- PAMIRS
- KUNLUN MOUNTAINS
- BALUCHISTAN
- PUNJAB
- SRI LANKA
- SEYCHELLES
- MASCARENE ISLANDS
- ÎLES KERGUÉLEN
- ÎLES CROZET
- Heard Island

Ocean-floor features:

- CARLSBERG RIDGE
- MID-INDIAN RIDGE
- SOUTHEAST INDIAN RIDGE
- NINETY EAST RIDGE
- INVESTIGATOR RIDGE
- EAST INDIAMAN RIDGE
- BROKEN RIDGE
- DIAMANTINA FRACTURE ZONE
- JAVA TRENCH
- CHAGOS TRENCH
- MID-INDIAN BASIN
- SOMALI BASIN
- MASCARENE BASIN
- MADAGASCAR BASIN
- NATAL BASIN
- CROZET BASIN
- SOUTH INDIAN BASIN
- CEYLON PLAIN
- COCOS BASIN
- WHARTON BASIN
- NORTH AUSTRALIAN BASIN
- EXMOUTH PLATEAU
- PERTH BASIN
- SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BASIN
- MADAGASCAR PLATEAU
- KERGUÉLEN PLATEAU
- MASCARENE PLATEAU
- OSBORN PLATEAU

Antarctic coasts:

- WILKES LAND
- QUEEN MARY COAST
- KNOX COAST
- SABRINA COAST
- CLAIRE COAST
- GEORGE V COAST
- MAWSON COAST
- MAC ROBERTSON LAND
- ENDERBY LAND
- AMERICAN HIGHLAND
- WEST Ice Shelf
- Amery Ice Shelf
- Shackleton Ice Shelf
- Lambert Glacier
- South Magnetic Pole (2007)
- Concordia Station (Fr. and It.)
- DOME C (CHARLIE)

Scale bars:

- 0 — 500 — 1000 — 1500 — 2000 Miles
- 0 — 500 — 1000 — 1500 — 2000 Kilometers
- Scale at the Equator

Deepest point in Indian Ocean (near Java Trench)

Recovering from a disaster

෫෫

Recovering from a disaster

A study of the relief and reconstruction process
in Sri Lanka after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami

℘

Arne Olav Øyhus

Editor

PORTAL

List of Contents

Part III

Lessons learnt
and what's next

Background

Since 2006, the University of Agder (UIA), Norway and Ruhuna University (RU), Sri Lanka have collaborated on a study regarding the impact of the Indian Ocean Tsunami (IOT) of 2004 with a particular focus on the Southern province of Sri Lanka. In June 2014, ten years after the Tsunami, a group of 20 postgraduate students from Asia, Africa, Europe and the USA, attending the international master programme in Development Management at the UIA, conducted a field study in the Hambantota District in the "Deep South" of Sri Lanka. The study was led by a professor, and got a lot of administrative support from the Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce (HDCC). The objective of the study was to analyse the impact of the recovery process among the local people and communities, and to explore to what degree they had managed to rehabilitate and reconstruct their communities ten years after this very dramatic event, and the obstacles faced in the rehabilitation process. The investigation examined which activities and agencies had functioned well in the recovery and rehabilitation process, and which did not function well. The study focused on four target groups, the Hambantota fishing community, a local village called Kirinda, the tourist industry in Tangalle town, and business people from Hambantota town. According to the findings from the study, the most important and well-functioning agents in the direct aftermath of the disaster were the local people themselves. The study also revealed a general sentiment among the local people that government authorities, both at a national, and local level, had not played a very active and progressive role in the recovery process, especially during the relief operations following immediately after the tsunami. The role played by international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was, in general, applauded. Findings from the study show that today, ten years after the Tsunami, the local people have, to a great extent, managed to re-establish the communities, raise new houses, build new infrastructure etc., but that the more invisible damages such as, for instance, psychological stress have still not healed. Quite importantly, the study detects that a lot of disputes and irregularities have hampered the recovery process.

Acknowledgements

This study is based on a long-term collaboration between the University of Agder and our partners in Sri Lanka, the University of Ruhuna (UR), and the Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce (HDCC). The partnership between our three institutions has included not only collaboration on research, but also training, student exchange, and much, much more. When we embarked on our Tsunami research in 2006, the then Vice-Chancellor (VC), Professor Ranjith Senaratne, was extremely helpful, engaged and motivated. His good spirit and high level of energy were absolutely instrumental in founding the basis for our collaboration. It was Ranjith who, in 2006, signed the application to the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU) on behalf of UR. The other signatory partner from UR was the person who became the most important person in the ten years of collaboration between our two universities, Professor Danny Atapattu. Surely, we could not have continued this fruitful partnership without his very, very active involvement. Danny is a rather quiet and humble person in appearance, but he is extremely efficient at achieving practical results. In a Sri Lankan context he is respected as "the" senior professor in economics and management studies. We are very happy for the seamless take-over of the coordination responsibilities over the last three-four years by Dr. B.M. Sumanaratne. We have noticed with great satisfaction that his motivation and eagerness is at the same level as Danny's. After Ranjith left his position as VC, the two next Vs, Professor Susirith Mendis and Professor Garmini Senanyake have committed UR to continue the good collaboration, of which we are surely grateful.

To have a partner like the HDCC has made UIA's engagement in Sri Lanka a great pleasure. The HDCC has for years prepared the foundation for the field exercises that are a compulsory part of our international Masters programme in Development Management (DM). Since 2009, HDCC has arranged field exercises and home-stays for about 20 international students every year; students coming from more than 20 countries in Africa, Asia, North and South America, and Europe. We must here mention that it was HDCC that arranged the field exercise that formed the basis for this study. In addition, HDCC has been the host receiving our Bachelor students during their field courses. At HDCC there are, in particular, two persons we

are especially grateful to. The first is the legendary, charismatic and iconic leader through 20 years, Mr. Azmi Thassim. Just to meet Azmi is an event; being his friend, is an honour. Azmi has been a close friend of Norway since the Hambantota Integrated Rural Development Programme was initiated in 1979, and he still is. Just about a month ago, he formally became the Sri Lankan Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and is now officially H.E. Azmi Thassim. Congratulations! The other person at HDCC whom we are extremely thankful to is Ms Krishanti Weerasinghe who was the CEO when we conducted this study. Although having a slightly lower profile than Azmi, she has been a key resource in the partnership between UIA and HDCC for the last three or four years, and has done a perfect job for our students and staff.

We are so grateful for the assistance that Doreen Misanya has contributed by proof reading and upgrading the text.

Last, but not at all least, we have to thank "the jack of all trades" and our main service man, Mr. Ajith Wasantha Liyanage. Ajith was working with HDCC when he was recruited to the DM Masters programme. After successfully completing the programme in 2012, he became "our man in Sri Lanka". Ajith has made contacts, arrangements, booked hotels, coordinating the field exercises, etc., etc. We have depended 100 % on his services, and he has never let us down!!!!

Thanks so much to all of you!

Best regards
Arne Olav Øyhus

List of Acronyms

ADB   Asian Development Bank
ADPC   Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre
AGD   Audit General Department
ASPIC   Portuguese Association for Cancer Research
BCPR   Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
BoC   Bank of Ceylon
CBDM   Community Based Disaster Management
CCA   Coastal Conservation Act
CIA   Central Intelligence Agency
CNO   Centre for National Operations
CRED   Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters
CZMP   Coastal Zone Management Plan
DFID   Department for International Development
DMC   Disaster Management Centre
DRM   Disaster Risk Management
DRR   Disaster Risk Reduction
EM-DAT   Emergency Events Data Base
FAO   Food and Agricultural Organisation
FIC   Feinstein International Centre
GDP   Gross Domestic Product
GNI   Gross National Income
GO   Government Organisations
GOSL   Government of Sri Lanka
GPS   Global Positioning System
GS   Grama Sevaka
GSMB   Geological Survey and Mine Bureau
HDCC   Hambatonta District Chamber of Commerce
HDI   Human Development Index
HFA   Hyogo Framework for Action
HNB   Hatton National Bank
HRO   Hotel and Restaurant Owners
IFRC   International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
IOT	Indian Ocean Tsunami
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
JIBC	Japan Bank for International Cooperation
LKR	Sri Lankan Rupee
LRRD	Links between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MHWL	Mean High Water Line
MLWL	Mean Low Water Line
NCDM	National Council for Disaster Management
NDMCC	National Disaster Management Coordination Centre
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NUFU	Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education
PTMC	Pacific Tsunami Monitoring Centre
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RADA	Reconstruction Development Agency
RC	Red Cross
RDCAC	Reclamation and Development Cooperation Amending Act
RU	Ruhuna University
SFDRR	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
SLCSF	Sri Lanka Civil Society Forum
TAFREN	Task Force for Rebuilding of the Nation
TEC Reports	Tsunami Evaluation Coalition Reports
TISL	Transparency International Sri Lanka
TRO	Tsunami Relocation Outcomes
TWS	Tsunami Warning System
TYA	Ten Years After the Tsunami
UiA	University of Agder
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme.
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-HIC	United Nations Humanitarian Information Centre
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's' Emergency Fund
UN-IOC	United Nations Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UN-OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollars
WB	World Bank
WV	World Vision

Public statistics on Sri Lanka

Public factors

Official name: The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
Government: Republic, headed by a president who is both head of government and head of state

Capital:	Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte	Population: 116,000 (2011)
Main city:	Colombo	Population: 753,000 (2011)
Land size:	65,610 Sq.km	

(Source: Central Intelligence Agency (CIA, n.d)

Demography

Total population:	20,271,464
Urban population, in percentage:	18.3%
Rural population:	77.3%
Estate Tamils (tea plantation area):	04.4%
Literacy rate:	95.6%

(Source: Department of Census and Statistics – Sri Lanka (2015)

Ethnic & religious composition:

Sinhala (predominantly Buddhists):	74.9%
Tamils (predominantly Hindus):	11.0%
Estate Tamils (predominantly Hindus):	5.0%
Muslims (Malays and Moors, predominantly Tamil speaking):	9.0%

Among the Sinhala and Tamils, approximately 6.2 % are Christians

(Source: Kallie, 2015)

Social and economic data

Average number of children per women above 15 years:	2.6
Life expectancy at birth:	74.3 years
Expected years of schooling:	13.6 years

GNI per capita (2011 PPP$):   9.250
(NB: From 1980 to 2013, GNI increased with 273.7 percent)
HDI value: 0.750
(rank 73 out of 187 countries. High Human Development)
(Source: UNDP, 2015)

Public statistics on Hambantota District

Land area: 2609 Sq. km
Population: 596.617
Population Hambantota town: 11.598

Ethnic composition of Hambantota District

Sinhala: 579032   97.10 %
Tamil: 2111   0.40%
Moor Muslim: 6556   1.10%
Malay Muslim: 8210   1.40%
Others (Burgher, Indian Tamil, etc.): 708   0.08 %

Religious composition of Hambantota District

Buddhist: 577284   96.8%
Hindu: 1243   0.2%
Islam: 15163   2.5%
Roman Catholic: 1098   0.2 %
Other Christian: 1511   0.3%
Other: 318   0.1%

(Source: Hambantota District Secretariat, 2011)

REFERENCES

CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) (n.d) *The World Factbook (Sri Lanka).* CIA: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ce.html (accessed 11 December 2015)

Department of Census and Statistics – Sri Lanka (2015) *Census of Population and Housing 2012.* Colombo: http://www.statistics.gov.lk/ (accessed 11 December 2015)

Hambantota District Secretariat (2011) *Statistical Information.* Hambantota, Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs: http:/:hambantota.dist.gov.lk (accessed 28 December 2015)

Kallie, S. (2015) *Sri Lanka, Facts and History.* Colombo: http://asianhistory.about.com/ od/Sri_Lanka/p/Sri-Lanka-Facts-and-History.htm (accessed 11 February 2015)

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2015) *Human Report 2015: Work for Human Development.* Colombo, UNDP: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/ hdr_theme/country-notes/LKA.pdf (accessed 11 December 2015)

KAZAKHSTAN

MONGOLIA

0   1000 Miles

0   1000 km

KYRGYZSTAN

TAJIKISTAN

Land area affected

How tsunami travelled

Tsunami (tidal waves) is a series of rapidly moving huge waves caused by sudden disturbances in the ocean. They can be caused by events such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and impact of meteorites.

C H I N A

NEPAL

BHUTAN

INDIA

BANGLADESH

Chittagong

MYANMAR

LAOS

South China Sea

Kendrapara

Bay of Bengal

Yangon

THAILAND

VIETNAM

Machilipatnam

KAMPUCHEA

Chennai

A & N Is.

Cuddalore

Nagapattinam

Phuket

SRI LANKA

nniyakumari

Colombo

Hambantota

Aceh

MALAYSIA

SUMATRA

INDIAN OCEAN

Epicentre of quake magnitude: 8.9

Jakarta

Part I

The Tsunami:
What happened and why?

Chapter 1

Introduction

The relevance of a "Ten Years After" study

Arne Olav Øyhus

In 2006, the University of Agder, Norway, and the University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka embarked on a research project to study the recovery and rehabilitation process of the disaster affected communities along the southern coastline of Sri Lanka. As a part of the project, I completed in the summer of 2006, one and a half year after the event, I visited several places and interviewed a number of Tsunami victims living in resettlement camps, or in temporary shelters within the destructed communities waiting to be allocated new homes. In some cases people had even moved back into their old houses when they had not been totally destroyed, doing some renovations on their own. At that time, many people were still pauperized and traumatized. I noted, however, another sentiment being expressed when talking to people – anger and frustration. This sentiment was directed towards the structure and system of relief and assistance rendered to the communities and the individual families. Many people, perhaps most of them, were of the opinion that the assistance was misused, was unjust and unfair, inefficient, and in many cases, directly corrupt, with people benefiting who had not been affected; such as members from the ruling party, persons in important positions, and relatives of influential persons. According to Silva (2009), this was not at all a farfetched sentiment. From his own post-disaster studies, he concluded that the political regime regularly utilized relief aid to strengthen and expand their political influence, with the consequence that benefits were given to people who had not been harmed by the disaster. In this way, a substantial amount of relief was taken away from the real victims in dire need of it (Silva, 2009). Another big problem was that people within the same community were treated differently by different organisations and agencies, even if their situation was more or less the same. For instance, while some portion of the community was given high standard houses that were both nicely designed and robust, and built with first class materials, others were given poorly designed, low class houses where, for instance, the rain

poured in during rainstorms. The main difference between the "lucky" and the "unlucky" portion of the population was mainly related to which NGO had the responsibility for the various zones or "colonies" of the village. The lucky ones were the clients of NGOs with a lot of means and a strong interest in achieving something. The unlucky ones were clients of NGOs with meagre means and poor management. This issue brought serious tension into the community as the unlucky felt unfairly and unjustly treated. As this study shows, such sentiments still exist in the communities, ten years after the event.

In my 2006 study, I observed that one of the local people's biggest grievances was that they were not heard; that they were sidelined and muted in the decision-making processes. Although people in general had a stronger trust and belief in the NGOs and civilian organisations than in the government and the parastatal agencies, none of these agencies listened to the local people when they planned and organised the relief and rehabilitation activities. The consequences were a lot of sub-standard, even ill-functioning projects. Residential areas were established in non-suitable areas: houses that were not fit for the household structure were erected: boats, fishing equipment etc. were given to persons who had never been fishing, while the fishermen got none. In some fishing communities there were no harbours, and they could therefore only use boats that could be pulled ashore. However, with some of the donated boats this was not possible, as the boats were too heavy, or not at all constructed to be pulled ashore. The problem was sometimes even graver than that. FAO found that in Sri Lanka, nearly 19 percent of the new boats were not even seaworthy (FAO, 2006).

In many areas, housing quarters were established far inland from the sea, making it both difficult and time consuming for the fishermen to get to work. It was not possible to have adequate control over the boat and the gear when they lived at such a distance. A big proportion of the local people were of the sincere opinion that the government was working against them instead of along with them.

When we have come to know, not only from this study, but from a whole range of studies performed in the aftermath of the Tsunami, that it was the local people themselves who were the real relief "heroes", rescuing the survivors, burying the dead, giving first aid, food, water and shelter, clearing the area of debris, moving the injured people to safe places, consoling those in shock, taking care of children that had lost their parents, or parents that had lost their children, then it is not possible to understand, or accept, that they were brushed aside when the relief, recovery and rehabilitation operations were planned and organised. This is possibly one of the most important facts that we should take notice of, and learn from, when it comes to the Tsunami recovery process, not only from Sri Lanka, but also in a more general perspective. If it is an aim to build resilient and robust communities, the main instrument will be, and has to be, the local people themselves, their structures, institutions and knowledge.

Ten Years After

It is ten years since I conducted this brief post-disaster study in Sri Lanka. Also, the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition Reports (Telford et al, 2006) and several other studies analysing the rehabilitation and recovery process in the aftermath of the Tsunami were undertaken in the first couple of years after the disaster. Reading these reports it seems that the Sri Lankan recovery process has been swift on one hand, and quite chaotic on the other. Reports flourish of uncoordinated relief activities and solutions implemented with little regard to the local context. There are many stories about what was done well and where, what was done badly

Now, with a ten years perspective, we felt that it was highly relevant to conduct a study of the long-term impacts of the recovery process among the local people and communities affected by the Tsunami, and explore to what degree it has been possible to rehabilitate and reconstruct these communities after this extremely dramatic event. The aim of the study was to learn which activities and which agencies had functioned well in the recovery and rehabilitation process, and which did not function so well. It was equally important to explore why/why not they functioned well/not well. Since the study has a broad scope, covering a variety of target groups, we feel that the results we can present are valuable lessons for future disaster risk reduction planning, not only in Sri Lanka, but also worldwide.

References

FAO (Food and Agricultural Organisation) (2006) *South Asia: Inferior boatbuilding undermines tsunami recovery*. South Asia, FAO: http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB. NSF/db900SID/DPAS-6NBGCX?OpenDocument (accessed 21 November 2015)

Silva, K. T. (2009) 'Tsunami third wave and the politics of disaster management in Sri Lanka'. *Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 63(1), pp. 61–72.

Telford, J., J. Cosgrave and R. Houghton. (Eds.) (2006) *Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami: Synthesis Report*. Tsunami Evaluation Coalition: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/5602 (accessed 6 October 2015)

Chapter 2

The Indian Ocean Tsunami
and its direct aftermath

Arne Olav Øyhus

On 26 December 2004 at 6.58 hours (Sri Lanka Time), a massive earthquake measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale, with its epicentre 30 km outside the west coast of Northern Sumatra, led to movement along a 1,200 km section of the sea floor. This generated a series of gigantic waves, *tsunamis that* killed people in 14 countries around the Indian Ocean as they hit the coastlines. Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, India and Thailand were the hardest hit. In addition to the fact that entire coastal zones were destroyed, the waves caused damages up to three km inland in some places. This event, later recognised as Indian Ocean Tsunami (IOT), killed more than 227,000 people, while some 1.7 million people were displaced (Aturkorala and Resosudarmo, 2005; Telford et al., 2006). The Tsunami was obviously an extreme, extraordinary event, and several researchers dealing with hazards have estimated that the probability for its reoccurrence is approximately 200–500 years (Carpenter, 2005). Aturkorala and Resosudarmo call it "the world's first truly global, natural disaster" as it shattered lives in more than a dozen countries on two continents (2005: 2). The Tsunami was truly a global disaster, but simultaneously regional, national and local. It was at the local level, i.e. in the local communities along the Asian coastline that the devastating and deadly impact of the disaster could be actually seen and felt. It was also at this local level that the most important rescue operations were managed and executed. Just minutes after the last waves had pulled back, survivors from the affected communities and their neighbours from surrounding communities started their rescue and recovery operations using the means at hand. "In Sri Lanka and Thailand, it was mostly the public from nearby areas that did the life-saving and immediate relief during the first two days. In Indonesia, 91 percent of those interviewed by the Fritz Institute (2005:3) reported that they had been rescued by private individuals, (Cosgrave, 2007: 10).

The intention behind the Ten Years After study

Several scientific reports, for instance the reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) suggest that there will in the future be radical shifts in the pattern and intensity of natural disasters due to climate change. A particularly adverse effect of these predicted changes is that the impacts of future natural disaster are expected to fall disproportionately on the poor (Haughton et al, 2001: 6). This future risk scenario underlines the importance of studies aimed at understanding what happens to people and communities seriously affected by disasters, both in a short-, medium- and long-term perspective. We believe that lessons learnt from such studies will be of fundamental value for strengthening local capacities to cope with disasters, especially among the poor in developing countries. It is of central importance to both understand what vulnerability implies for communities and also to learn about the adaptive capacity of households and local communities in disaster-prone areas. Vulnerability to disasters can be analysed at different levels, from the

individual to the national, even to the international level. The focus of this study is put primarily on the local level, including households and local communities. The aim of this study is to contribute to the understanding of actual and potential coping strategies at this level, and the importance of engaging available resources and structures in the form of "social capital" and "agency" to increase the robustness and resilience among disaster prone communities.

The Sri Lanka Case

The 26th of December 2004 was in many ways a special day in Sri Lanka. It was a Sunday, and for the Buddhists, who make up the great majority of Sri Lankans, it was also a "Poya" day, or Full Moon day, a very important Buddhist holiday, a day when practising Buddhists visit temples to show their respect to Lord Buddha. Thus, at 8.35 hours, less than two hours after the earthquake occurred, when the first gigantic waves hit the eastern coast of Sri Lanka, government offices, banks, supermarkets, teashops etc. were closed. This was most probably a lucky strike when in the next few minutes the waves crushed into the coastline from the east towards the southern and northern parts of Sri Lanka. Several places usually filled with people were now more or less empty, and most people living in the coastal villages stayed in their homes or in the temples to celebrate the holiday.

This devastating hazard revealed the enormous vulnerability of the coastal areas of Sri Lanka as a huge number of communities along the northern, eastern and southern coastlines were completely destroyed by the waves, with about 36.000 dead or missing, about 21.500 injured, and about 860.000 displaced persons (Birkmann et al., 2006; Jayasuriya et al., 2005; Weerakoon et al. 2007; UN-OCHA, 2014). The majority of dead and missing were women and children (Jayasuriya et. al., 2005).

While the Ampara District in the east, including the well-known Arugam Bay, was the hardest hit district with more than 10.000 deaths, Hambantota District, where this study was conducted, was the second, with more than 4.500 deaths (Jayasuriya et al., 2005). The power of the waves was enormous. If a person was caught by the waves, the chance of survival was slim. This is reflected in the fact that the number of dead was almost double of those injured.

The worst affected sector was the fisheries. According to a report from TAFREN, 7.500 fishermen died and one-third of the households affected by the Tsunami were engaged in fishing (TAFREN, 2005). It was a human tragedy, but it was not only a human tragedy. The economic losses were dramatic with about 16,500 boats destroyed, comprising almost 75 per cent of the fishing fleet, in addition to an enormous amount of nets and other fishing gear lost (Weerakon et al., 2007). The second most affected sector was tourism (Athurkorala and Resosudarmo, 2005), and in particular that part of the sector called "beach tourism". Almost one out of four registered hotels in Sri Lanka was damaged, partly or fully, bringing a big loss to a sector that was already in deep trouble after three decades of civil war (Jayasuriya

et al., 2005). The heaviest economic losses caused by the waves were connected to housing as tens of thousands of houses were demolished. Whole communities were, in actual fact, wiped out.

Sri Lanka was not at all prepared for the Tsunami as it had never experienced a natural disaster of this magnitude in its recorded history. According to Sri Lanka's local traditions, however, tsunami-like events have taken place several times earlier, in pre-historic times, with the first record dating back more than two thousand years, when, according to Mahawamsa, the great chronicle of Sri Lanka, huge waves crushed into Kelaniya, more than 40 km from the coast. According to another source, Rajavaliya, the saga of the Kings of Sri Lanka, this event destroyed about one hundred seaport towns and almost one thousand fishermen's villages (Geiger, 1953; Suraweera, 2000, cited in Athurkorala & Resosudarmo, 2005: 20). In more recent times, administrative records during the Portuguese colonial period (1505-1648) tell about an earthquake that made serious damages to Colombo in 1615 (Wimalaratne, 2005). During modern times, only two serious natural disasters have been witnessed in Sri Lanka before the Tsunami, a cyclone sweeping across North-Eastern Sri Lanka in 1978, and a flash flood in South-Central Sri Lanka in 2003. From 1975 to 2003, natural disasters killed about 1700 people in Sri Lanka (Athurkorala & Resosudarmo, 2005).

Sri Lanka had, however, 70 years earlier experienced a health disaster that was even more serious than the Tsunami regarding morbidity, namely the Great Malaria Epidemic from 1934-35, when more than 80.000 people died, at that time comprising about one per cent of the population (Silva, 2009). According to some estimates, almost half of the population in the country became ill with malaria during the epidemic. Also, this disaster had a natural foundation as Sri Lanka had experienced a prolonged drought in the couple of years preceding the outbreak. Rivers in the affected areas, mostly in the interior of the country, had almost dried out, just leaving shallow waters easily heated up by the sunlight. This gave rise to environmental conditions very much favourable for mosquitoes to breed rapidly (Silva, 2009).

In addition to the natural foundation of the epidemic, poverty also played its part as the prolonged drought resulted in crop failures that for the poorer segment of the population led to food scarcity (Silva, 2009). Some of the worst affected communities were lower caste communities, and within them children suffered most because of malnutrition and a lower level of immunity (Meyer, cited in Silva, 2009: 62). Silva finds similarities with the Tsunami, as he, referring to Shanmugaratnam (2005), argues that the disaster "mainly affected socially and politically marginalized Muslim and Tamil settlements in the eastern coastal belt and some mainstream Sinhala settlements in the south-western coastal belt" (Silva, 2009: 65). Nearly half of the people (46%) who were killed by the Tsunami lived in the two neighbouring districts of Ampara and Batticaloa along the eastern coast, both predominantly Tamil and Muslim, while the Hambantota and Galle districts along the southern coast, predominantly Sinhala, comprised a little more than one quarter (28%)

of the deaths (Thywissen and Renaud, 2006, cited in Silva 2009: 66). Here, we must add that a great proportion of the deaths in Hambantota were Muslim fishermen, a typical political and economically marginal community in the district.

In his article, Kalinga Tudor Silva looks upon the role of the state in the two catastrophes, emphasizing the pivotal role of the state during the epidemic in securing medical services and relief to the affected people, then rhetorically poses a question of high relevance for the Ten Years After study: "If the serious malaria epidemic of the 1930s that occurred in a colonial but decolonizing setting led to important endogenous developments and responses such as the development of a civil society and formation of a welfare state, why did an even more spectacular disaster such as the tsunami, which occurred in a far more globalized and a post-colonial setting, fail to galvanize similar lasting societal responses from within Sri Lanka?" (Silva, 2009: 62).

Returning now to our study, we might argue that due to what the country perceived as a relatively secure position regarding natural hazards of the kind and magnitude as that of the Tsunami, the country did not have any national early warning systems, and it was not part of any regional or international warning systems, such as for instance the Pacific Ocean Tsunami Warning System (TWS), operated by the Pacific Tsunami Monitoring Centre (PTMC) (Abbott, 2004). This weakness played a big role in the tragedy as the PTMC, originally established by the US government in Honolulu Hawaii in 1946, detected the earthquake only 18 minutes after its outbreak. In their communication with the member countries, PTMC informed member nations that the earthquake was not a threat to any of them. Later, they sent a new message to the members stating that the earthquake could possibly be a threat to countries around the Indian Ocean. The PTMC could not, however, inform the non-member countries about the actual threat as they did not have the contact addresses. And quite possibly, even if the Tsunami affected countries had received this information, the situation would perhaps not have been very different as these countries did not have effective communication systems for getting this crucial information out to the local people (Abbott, 2004). It is, however, a sad fact that already in the summer of 2004, half a year before the Tsunami, the UN Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission gave a warning that the 'Indian Ocean has a significant threat from both local and distant tsunamis' (Revkin cited in UNDP, 2011: 6). No notice was taken of this warning – with catastrophic results.

The enormous consequences of the Tsunami were a shock to Sri Lanka. It was second only to Indonesia as the most seriously affected country, but proportionally the impact was much harder considering, for instance, the death rate of the population. In Sri Lanka almost two per thousand, or more accurately 0.184 % of the population was lost to the Tsunami, compared to less than one per thousand, or 0.077 % for Indonesia. Also, economically, Sri Lanka suffered much more than the other countries, except for the Maldives (Telford et al., 2006: 37).

A remarkable feature was that although the population of Sri Lanka was shocked, it was not at all paralysed. As soon as the waves had receded, and the ocean seemed calm again, unharmed people from the affected communities and people from surrounding communities less severely damaged by the waves, and other volunteers came to rescue. It was "a massive outpouring of courage and humanity" (Jayasuriya et al., 2005). In the hours and days that followed, these brave people were able to face unbelievable conditions to ensure that the surviving victims were moved to safe places, given food, water, shelter and basic medical attention. Thousands of people that had not survived the waves were buried or cremated. People in shock and grief were comforted to the best of the volunteers' ability. Despite the confusion and the chaos, "there can be little doubt that Sri Lanka can be proud of how it responded to the immediate challenges of the tsunami impact" (Jayasuriya et al., 2005).

One day after the Tsunami, the government started the preparation of a professional, but politically independent organisation, with the mandate of supervising all reconstruction activities. The organisation was called Task Force for Rebuilding the Nation (TAFREN)[1], and worked closely with staff from ILO, FAO and the World Bank (Kapadia, 2008) TAFREN's main focus areas were construction of homes, restoring livelihoods, health and education, and infrastructure (TAFREN, 2005). TAFREN's work was based on certain guiding principles, for instance: subsidiarity, recovery should be decentralized as much as possible; consultation with local, affected communities; and communication and transparency at all levels. As we will see later, these guiding principles did not function very well in actual practice.

Within a week of the disaster, the first national and international agencies and organisations had arrived at the scene and established their structures and systems. The relief operation after the Tsunami became one of the largest international relief operations ever, involving UN agencies, international and local NGOs, local civic organisations, religious groups, private businesses, etc. The UN Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC) for Sri Lanka had in January 2005 listed 890 agencies doing post-tsunami operations in the country. In addition to the INGOs already active in Sri Lanka before the Tsunami, 500 INGOs arrive in Sri Lanka after the Tsunami, a situation that led to an intense competition for projects and beneficiaries (Silva, 2009). Many of these organisations had little or no prior knowledge about Sri Lanka, and the cultures and the societies within which they were going to work; many of them were quite inexperienced in doing relief work at all.

A high priority was given to the building of transitional settlements and shelters for the people who had lost their homes. It was a rush to implement such settlements without considering the connection to permanent homes and communities, and quite often this sector was managed by inexperienced and non-trained

1   TAFREN was replaced with Reconstruction and Development Agency (RADA) in 2006 after M. Rajapakse became the president in 2005.

persons as many of the local and international NGOs had little or no experience within this field of relief. An issue that aggravated this situation was that the organizations implementing the settlements scheme had strict timelines to spend the funds and therefore had to rush the projects, even if the result was poor quality housing (Kennedy et al., 2008). The tendency among the NGOs was to build as many settlements and shelters as quickly as possible without considering safety and security. Although the policy, for the government, the UN agencies and the NGOs was to 'build back better', the actual situation was that of 'build back faster' (Kennedy et al., 2008: 28). While reconstructing the Sri Lankan communities, many organisations did not perform an environmental impact analysis; neither did they consider long-term urban or rural planning in their settlements projects, implying that the vulnerabilities exposed by the Tsunami would just continue also into the future (Kennedy et al., 2008).

What we can safely say, however, is that never before had the world witnessed such levels of aid and assistance, and the media coverage from the scenes of the disaster was unprecedented. The assistance promised from external donors should have been more than enough to cover both the costs of immediate relief and for long-term reconstruction. By April 2005, four months after the Tsunami, USD 2.7 billion was committed by the donors for reconstruction activities in Sri Lanka. This represent over USD 7000 per person affected in a country where the median annual income per income earner was USD 837 in 2003/2004 (Kapadia, 2008). Consequently, people had high, possibly unrealistic, expectations for assistance and support when they learned about the international community's promises of aid and support. Even in the midst of sorrow and desperation, these promises made people in affected communities quite optimistic for the future. In addition to the assistance stemming from the international community, remittances from Sri Lankans working abroad played an important role, especially when it came to re-building the homes (Deshingkar and Aheeyarse, 2006). We must add here that on December 23rd 2007, the optimism regarding international funding diminished as the Sri Lankan Reconstruction and Development Agency (RADA), in a press release disclosed that only USD 1.7 billion had been actually committed (Silva, 2009). When Transparency International Sri Lanka then also claimed that out of the USD 1.7 billion of international aid actually disbursed to the implementing agencies, USD 500 million could not be accounted for, and was perhaps used by the government for other purposes, and that no audit has been conducted by the Audit General Department since the Audit Report in 2005, we understand why all parties did not approve of all the government's actual involvements in the post-tsunami recovery efforts. As indicated by Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL), the distrust between the government and the civil organisations was particularly high (TISL, 2007). This distrust did not diminish when after a couple of years both TAFREN and its successor, RADA, had been closed down (Brusset et al., 2009). Very early in the recovery process, the Sri Lanka Civil Society Forum in 2005 stated that reconstruction policies

were imposed without any dialogue, and that many decisions were made by TAF-REN, which did not at all represent the affected communities but represented big business interests instead, and which had no professional experience on disasters matters (Brusset et al., 2009).

I think it is vital also to add at this juncture that the Tsunami incorporated a gender issue, recognised by the fact that it had a tougher impact on women in terms of fatalities and losses. Altogether, the Tsunami killed 40.000 to 45.000 more women than men (Telford, 2006, p. 70). A household study performed in the two Sri Lankan towns of Batticaloa and Galle showed that the number of dead and missing females was significantly higher than the number of dead and missing males. In Batticaloa, for instance, females accounted for 56 per cent of the dead and missing, whereas males accounted for 44 per cent. This tendency was even more striking in Galle were dead and missing females were almost twice as many as men, 65 per cent females as against 35 per cent men (Birkmann & Fernando, 2007). The indicator 'dead and missing by gender' demonstrates that gender played a significant role in the likelihood of death caused by the Tsunami. The reasons for this outcome are numerous. Men interviewed in the Batticaloa/Galle study reported that when they climbed on to the roof of their houses, their wives or daughters were not strong and quick enough to follow. Some studies also propose that women were more exposed since many of their activities take place in and around the houses. Some also pointed to the fact that women, in general, do not know how to swim (Birkmann & Fernando, 2007). In addition to gender, age was an important casualty factor. Birkmann & Fernando (2007) records from Batticaloa indicate that it was, relatively speaking, elderly people (61 years and older) and young people (0–10 years) who had the highest number of deaths. Now, returning to the gender factor, it is interesting to take notice of the fact that the TEC claim-holder survey in Sri Lanka indicated that women were less satisfied than their male counterparts with the Tsunami response in all phases, feeling that international agencies did less than they should have done to protect women, especially in camps (Telford, 2006: 70).

Conclusion

Natural disasters will continue, and most probably with increased frequency and strength. As a natural hazard, the Tsunami was unavoidable, but as a disaster, it was not. The good thing is that there is a lot that we can learn from it, in regards to pre-disaster mitigation and preparedness, pre-disaster management, and post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation policies and activities. Perhaps the most important lesson we can learn is that the Tsunami proved the capacity and engagement of local people to take charge when needed. In a disaster management perspective, we must do everything to strengthen this capacity and avoid everything that can limit

it. In this respect, knowledge, information and training based on concrete experiences will be crucial to ensure what we can call on disaster resilient communities.

References

Abbott, P. L. (2004) *Natural Disasters* (4th edition). New York: McGraw Hill

Athukorala, P. and B. P. Resosudarmo (2005) 'The Indian Ocean Tsunami: Economic Impact, Disaster Management and Lessons'. *Asian Economic Papers*, 4(1), pp. 1–39

Birkmann, J., N. Fernando., S. Hettige., S. Amarasinghe., T. Jawasingam., M. Ravi., D. Paranagama., M. Nandana., M. Nassel., S. Voigt., and J. Wolferts (2006) *Measuring revealed vulnerability in Sri Lanka at the local level.* Paper presented at the Regional Workshop on The Humanitarian Impact of Tsunami and Disaster Risk Reduction, 2006 Bangkok Thailand. UNU-EHS: http://www.unisdr.org/2006/ppew/tsunami/highlights/Summary-UNU-EHS-VulAss.pdf (accessed 13 December 2015)

Birkman, J. and N. Fernando. (2007) 'Measuring revealed and emergent vulnerabilities of coastal communities to tsunami in Sri Lanka.' *Disasters*, 32(1), pp. 82–105

Brusset, E., Bhatt, M., Bjornestad, K., Cosgrave, J., Davies, A., Deshmukh, Y., Haleem, J., Hidalgo, S., Immajati, Y., Jayasundere, R., Mattsson, A., Muhaimin, N., Polastro, R., and T, Wu (2009) *A ripple in development? Long-term perspectives on the response to the Indian Ocean tsunami 2004: A joint follow-up evaluation of the Links between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development.* Stockholm, SIDA.

Carpenter, G. (ed.) (2005) 'Indian Ocean Tsunami'. *Specialty Practice Briefing.* URL: http://www.guycarp.com/portal/extranet/pdf/GCBriefings/Indian%20Ocean%20Tsunami%2001_07_05.pdf (accessed 6 October 2015)

Cosgrave, J. (2007) *Joint evaluation of the international response to the Indian Ocean tsunami. Synthesis Report: Expanded Summary.* London, Tsunami Evaluation Coalition: http://www.alnap.org/resource/5536 (accessed 6 October 2015)

Deshingkar, P. and M. M. M. Aheeyarse (2006) *Remittances in crisis, Sri Lanka after the tsunami.* Overseas Development Institute, HPG background paper: http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/64.pdf (accessed 14 December 2015)

Fritz Institute (2005) *Recipient Perceptions of Aid Effectiveness: Rescue, Relief and Rehabilitation in Tsunami Affected Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka.* San Francisco: http://www.fritzinstitute.org/PDFs/findings/NineMonthReport.pdf (accessed 1 September 2015)

Geiger, W. (translator/editor) (1953) *The Mahavansa* (or The Great Chronicle of Sri Lanka), Government Publication Bureaus.

Houghton, J., Ding, Y., Griggs, D., Noguer, M., van der Linden, P., Dai, X., Maskell, K. and C. Johnson. (eds.) (2001) *Climate change 2001: the scientific basis.* Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Cambridge University Press: http://www.adbi.org/files/2005.10.dp39.tsunami.recovery.srilanka.pdf (accessed 15 December 2015)

Jayasuriya, S., Steele, P., Weerakoon, D., Knight-John, M., and N. Arunatilake (2005) *Post-tsunami recovery: issues and challenges in Sri Lanka.* ADB Institute Research Paper (71). Asian Development Bank Institute

Kapadia, K. H. (2008) *Development After a Disaster: The Tsunami, Poverty, Conflict and Reconstruction in Sri Lanka*, PhD Dissertation in Energy and Resources, University of California, Berkeley

Kennedy, J., Ashmore, J., Babister, E., and Kelman I. (2008) 'The Meaning of 'Build Back Better': Evidence From Post-Tsunami Aceh and Sri Lanka'. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 16(1), pp. 24–36

Meyer, E. (1982) 'L'epidemi de malaria a Sri Lanka: Fluctuations economiques et fluctuations climatiques. *Cultures et Development*, 14 (2–3), pp. 183–226

Shanmugaratnam, N. (2005) 'Tsunami victims' perception of the buffer zone. *Polity*, 2(4), pp. 13–15.

Silva, K. T. (2009) 'Tsunami third wave and the politics of disaster management in Sri Lanka'. *Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 63(1), pp. 61–72

Suraweera, A.V. (editor/translator) (2000) *Rajavalia: A Comprehensive Account of the Kings of Sri Lanka*, Ratmalana, Vishwa Lekha

TAFREN (Task Force for Rebuilding the Nation) (2005) *Sri Lanka Post Tsunami Recovery and Reconstruction*. Joint Report of the Government of Sri Lanka and Development Partners: http://www.preventionweb.net/files/1591_9792.pdf (accessed 14 December 2015)

Telford, J., J. Cosgrave and R. Houghton. (eds.) (2006) *Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami: Synthesis Report*. London, Tsunami Evaluation Coalition: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/5602 (accessed 6 October 2015)

Thywissen, K. and F. Renaud (2006) *Devastation and Reconstruction: The Situation in Sri Lanka After the 2004 Tsunami: Observations from 3 UNU-EHS missions to Sri Lanka in February 2005, July 2005 and January 2006.*United Nations University: (http://www.ehs.unu.edu/article:209?menu=73)

TISL (Transparency International Sri Lanka) (2007) *Three Years After the Tsunami*. TISL, Colombo

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2011) *Final Report on Outcome Evaluation on Disaster Risk Management Programme of UNDP, Sri Lanka*. New York, UNDP.

UN-OCHA(UnitedNationsOfficeforCoordinationofHumanitarianAffairs)(2014)SriLanka: Taking forward the lessons from the Tsunami. UN-OCHA: http://www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/sri-lanka-taking-forward-lessons-tsunami(accessed15December2015)

Weerakoon, D., Jayasuriya, S., Arunatilake, N. and P. Steele (2007) *Economic Challenges of Post-Tsunami Reconstruction in Sri Lanka*. Tokyo: Asian Development Bank Institute, Discussion Paper no. 75

Wimalaratne, K.D.G. (2005) Tsunami and Earthquakes in Sri Lanka: The Role of the Historian, *Daily News*, Colombo

Chapter 3

Interpreting the natural disasters and their impacts: Some theoretical considerations

Arne Olav Øyhus

Introduction

In the study of the Indian Ocean Tsunami (IOT) in 2004 and its effects on local people and communities, we will use a range of theories and concepts in our analysis. In this chapter, we will present and discuss some of the main theories and concepts that we believe will give our analysis a greater strength. Among those concepts and theories are social capital, social networks, agency, and bonds and bridges.

The disaster and its social implications

Lessons from the Tsunami tell us that natural disasters can have an extreme, almost overwhelming effect on local communities. Disasters of this size and intensity destroy the lives and livelihoods of a huge number of individuals, families and villages; they damage property and infrastructure, and force the survivors to abandon their homes. As they destroy livestock, crops and infrastructure, they cause food scarcity, disrupt access to water supplies, social services and business activities. They increase health risks in local communities due to increased exposures to water-borne pathogens, insect-borne infections and snakebites (Few, 2003). The prevalence of infections, for instance, is critically worsened by environmental challenges such as blockages to drainage channels, poor sanitation systems and dumping of solid waste (Cairncross and Ouano, 1990). Simultaneously, demolished medical facilities and an increased need for health resources can reduce people's access to necessary treatment and medicine (Yahmed and Koob, 1996; Rashid, 2000). It is also very important to recognise the potential mental health impacts of disasters resulting from stress (Durkin et al., 1993; McMichael et al. 2001), and the impact of inadequate access to nutrition following disruption to incomes and food distribution systems (Blaikie et al., 1994; IPCC, 2001). Some such effects may not become manifest until long after a disaster event.

Related to the theoretical deliberations above, and to see how we can apply them in a Sri Lankan context, it can be useful to see how this disaster, as most other disasters at this strength and intensity, usually comprise what we may conceive as a sequence of hazards. Analysing the Tsunami, the first, and most abrupt and dramatic hazard is represented by the waves themselves, causing immediate deaths and injuries to tens of thousands of people. The second hazard is represented by the damage to homes, communities, roads, hospitals and other important infrastructure that people need in their everyday life. The "human effect" of this secondary hazard was a large number of homeless people, many of whom were not able to take care of themselves because they were tormented by adverse physical and mental health issues. The third hazard is represented by the destruction of people's means of livelihood: farms, irrigation systems, fishing boats, hotels, businesses, i.e. means people depended on in order to re-establish their livelihoods. The effects of this third hazard quite often exacerbate and prolong the effects of the two first hazards, and have an accumulative effect on the community level. It is possible also to add a forth, but much less conspicuous hazard, recognised by the post-traumatic stress syndrome. A substantial number of people in the Tsunami affected communities in Sri Lanka are still, after ten years, traumatised by the disaster.

Internationally, up to now, we have experienced that most disaster management efforts have been connected to effects of the primary hazards, due – most probably – to its spectacular and dramatic features. Results from our study indicate that the emergency assistance activities conducted in Sri Lanka did have a reasonably good impact regarding both the second and third hazard.

Vulnerability and poverty

Disasters are first and foremost a major threat to development, and specifically to the development of the poorest and most marginalized people in the world. Disasters seek out the poor and ensure they stay poor. (Didier Cheripital, Secretary General of the IFRC, in "Breaking the Cycle", 2011).[2]

Accepting Cheripital's point of view, we must admit that disaster vulnerability is not only caused by poverty. It is a numbers of natural, economic, political and social factors in combination that create a vulnerable situation. However, in many developing countries, Sri Lanka included, it seems that poverty and vulnerability to environmental hazards go hand in hand in the sense that the poor, in general, suffer more from hazards than the wealthy or not-so-poor (Chan and Parker 1996: 314). At a community level, the poor are likely to occupy environments in which the consequences of natural hazards are more serious. According to Skidmore and Toya

2   http://www.ourplanet.com/imgversn/113/cherp.html

(2002), major disasters kill on average 140,000 annually worldwide, and among those, about 95 per cent of deaths occur in developing countries (Skidmore and Toya, 2002: 666). The connections between hazard, vulnerability and poverty are, however, complex. Therefore, we have to admit that if poverty itself has an impact on vulnerability, vulnerability to disasters has to be seen not only as a product of physical location, but also as a product of social conditions (Few, 2003; Cannon 2000 and 2008).

That vulnerability must be understood in a social context has been increasingly recognized in disaster studies for some decades now. Cannon (2000) emphasize this point strongly as he suggests that it is vital to recognise that vulnerability should be treated as a condition that derives from people's political-economic position. Cutter (1996: 534) notes that "explanations of the vulnerability arise from underlying social conditions that often are quite remote from the initiating event itself".

A NEW PARADIGM IN THE STUDY OF DISASTER VULNERABILITY

In a paper from 2008, Terry Cannon presents an analytical approach to the study of disasters that in many respects represents a paradigm shift in the understanding of people's vulnerability in disasters. Whereas we may argue that political economics is a direction within economics that examines the impact of political forces on economic policies, and political ecology is a direction within ecological studies which study the impact of political, economic and social factors on the environment and environmental issues and policies, Cannon's approach represents a direction in disaster studies that could be called political disaster studies. Cannon looks at to what extent political factors, including economic and social factors, have an impact on disasters caused by natural hazards.

Among disaster researchers, there is a general agreement that disasters are caused by vulnerable populations that "gets in the way" of a hazard (Pelling, 1999; Adger, 1999; Blaikie et al., 1994). Various economic, political and social factors, in most instances poverty, have put these people in a vulnerable situation. Thus, disasters can be triggered by hazards, but must be interpreted as products of processes involving those political, economic and social factors. Consequently, disasters are socially constructed, and the value of the concept of disaster vulnerability will be less if we remove from our analysis the political and social processes that generates people's vulnerability. It is in this context that Cannon brings in a new argument: there are different social constructions of vulnerability in disasters. Cannon considers vulnerability as a spectrum from weak or innocent to strong social constructed vulnerability (Cannon, 2008).

When he speaks about a relatively weak or innocent social construction of disasters, he is arguing that people who live in disaster-risk exposed places live there because it gives them some advantages; for instance access to resources that their livelihood depends on. They do not live in those dangerous places because political forces or power relations forces them to. Thus, certain disasters affect people who have not been forced to live in exposed areas based on exploitative relationships. People live under risky conditions for reasons that are socially and politically "neutral", implying that their vulnerability is constructed by neutral social factors. In order to explain why people expose themselves to risk when they are not forced to, we have to understand the cultural and psychological factors affecting people's behaviour: for instance social values, group behaviour and religious beliefs. We must understand these cultural and psychological factors to learn to differentiate between the insiders' perspective on risk compared to the outsiders more rational and politically oriented perspectives. Quite often then, we will find that people live in dangerous places due to the advantages it gives for their livelihood to live there. Some people choose to live in such places because they want to achieve something. There is, therefore, an element of choice involved.

It is exactly this comprehension that represents a paradigm shift in disaster vulnerability studies as it claims that people exposed to risk have certain personal characteristics that increases their probability of being exposed to dangers. In the traditional vulnerability paradigm, these characteristics – propensity to live in danger – were connected to poverty and marginalization. In this respect, social vulnerability was to a substantial degree connected to economic, social and political factors, or what Cannon (2008) calls strong socially constructed vulnerability. The Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005 was, according to Cannon (2008), an example of such strong socially constructed vulnerability. Social conditions forced people to live under dangerous and risky conditions. Cannon feels that it is an analytic danger of using the concept of vulnerability always in this strong sense as it may lead to it losing its analytical strength. It will become too vague and imprecise since in many instances there are disasters where people are not vulnerable in such a strong socially constructed manner (Cannon, 2008).

There are many cases where people and communities are vulnerable because they have chosen to live in dangerous places because this has supported their livelihoods. This was also, to a certain extent, the case with the Tsunami affected communities in Sri Lanka. The Tsunami was a relatively innocent disaster in that it was not strongly socially constructed. It was not based on typical class or exploitative relationships. Therefore, it is difficult to «blame» particular places, or agents and authorities to explain this disaster. People belonging for instance to the fishing sector or the beach tourism sector were living in coastal communities because they depended on the coast for their livelihood, not because they were forced to by

exploitative forces. But then, Cannon adds, even if a disaster is innocent in a social perspective, it must not at all be looked upon as natural. An innocent disaster is also socially constructed, but in a weak way. People have settled down along the coast to seek a livelihood despite knowing that these places can be potentially dangerous. The fishing communities, for instance, have for ages experienced storms and other calamities that have taken lives and destroyed their boats and gear.

It is, however, possible to argue that the relief and recovery activities following in the wake of the Tsunami can be referred to as strong in its social construction. Quite a number of people saw the assistance given as unjust and unfair, and strongly governed by social, political and economic relationships. Consequently, it is difficult to claim that the social construction of vulnerability is entirely neutral or strong since a great number of social, climatic and cultural factors will have an impact on vulnerability. If we, however, think about vulnerability as spectrum, the Tsunami will be situated at the innocent (weak) end, while the Hurricane Katarina will be situated at the strong end (Cannon, 2008).

Cannon's objective with his analysis is to develop a better framework for analysing the social factors behind disasters. An improved analytical framework can be a tool which will make it easier for us to understand what takes place under certain disasters, and therefore also to plan what to do to strengthen the vulnerable communities. According to Cannon, what we need are two types of policies that can reduce vulnerability: top-down policies and bottom-up policies. The first should be targeted on the reduction of the political and economic system's function on different groups and their level of vulnerability, i.e. the «strong» constructed vulnerability generated by the power system. Policies must be developed which can hinder the power system to force people into a vulnerable position.

The second type of policies concern people's own organisation. We must understand how people think and act, and how the distribution of resources can explain why people live in exposed places. We must understand people's values and choices. Since, however, also these «innocent» disasters are socially constructed we have to take into consideration the cultural and psychological factors because it will be among them that we will find the reasons why people make different priorities. To understand group behaviour, why people do what they do, their values and priorities is of fundamental importance in understanding how vulnerability is socially constructed and how it can be reduced (Cannon, 2008).

Community coping capacity

One of the main concerns in the "Ten Years After" study was exactly to understand how cultural and psychological factors have an impact on the beliefs and behaviour among people living in disaster prone areas. One way of approaching this concern was to look at what we may call people's capacities, both at an individ-

ual and community level. Our study of local communities in Sri Lanka has given us good examples on the importance of community capacities when faced with disasters. What seems to be an important lesson is that a community's capacity to cope with the impact of a disaster and recover from it depends to a substantial degree on the community's level of social cohesion and organisation, and its perception of disasters (Maskrey, 1999; Misanya and Øyhus, 2015). We may argue that the capacity to cope with disasters is the key component of a household, or a community's, level of vulnerability. This must be brought into the picture, for instance, regarding disaster risk reduction measures. It is fundamental to identify the capacities that exist within societies when designing disaster-related interventions that can lower a society's vulnerability to disasters (Anderson and Woodrow, 1998). In this regard, Pelling (1999: 250) identifies what he sees as the three components of vulnerability: exposure, resilience and resistance. Whereas exposure refers to the risk of a disaster event, resistance and resilience refer to the human capacity to minimize the impacts of that event's impact through some form of adaptation. Following Pelling's arguments, exposure, resilience and resistance are components that are simultaneously the products of political and socio-economic structures and the capacity of individual actors and social institutions to adapt to hazard stress (Pelling, 1999: 250). Adaptation is a key concept here, and households and communities bring various resources to use in their adaptation to environmental hazards and disasters.

In a Sri Lankan context, the risk of a disaster with the strength and intensity of the Tsunami was not foreseen by either the local communities or the national authorities as they had not experienced even something similar to this disaster since time immemorial. Therefore, the exposure component of vulnerability to such a disaster was not in the mind of the population. The resilience component was very much activated, and proved that the population, utilizing both bonds and bridges, were able to recuperate their livelihoods and community structures within a limited time span. To what degree their experiences, the re-established structures, and the availability of new resources and measures will enhance their capacity to adapt, and hence minimize the impacts of future disasters, remains to be seen.

The household livelihood approach

One approach for "measuring" the possibility for people to cope with disasters is to take the households' livelihood as a point of departure. In disaster research, the household livelihood approach concerns the households' assets and coping strategies. In this framework, Carney (1998) and Sanderson (2000) suggest that material and immaterial assets mediate the ability of households to pursue livelihood strategies designed to cope with 'shock' events (cited in Few, 2003: 53). Consequently, intervention efforts designed to build up the assets of the poor to

withstand shocks will be increasingly important in reducing the human burden from disasters (Sanderson, 2000). To create robust communities, there should be support for actions at the local level designed to strengthen the communities' own resistance and resilience to hazards. This support is particularly important in situations where the management capacity of governmental institutions is weak (Chan, 1997). Regarding the latter argument, I think there is no question that this was the actual situation in Sri Lanka when the Tsunami occurred.

There seem to be a strong international consensus today that only by harnessing the huge and largely untapped potential of vulnerable households and communities to manage and reduce risks at the local level, and by providing appropriate support to such efforts, will it be possible to look forward to a more sustainable future (Maskrey, 1999: 86). In the prolongation of this argument, we may refer to the second among the three *Strategic Goals* in the *Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)* which states the importance of : "The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards" (UNISDR, 2005: 4). This issue is also raised under HFA's "General Considerations" arguing that " Both communities and local authorities should be empowered to manage and reduce disaster risk by having access to the necessary information, resources and authority to implement actions for disaster risk reduction (UNISDR, 2005: 5).

In international disaster research and practice, it is increasingly accepted that people do not simply draw on their assets, but possess sophisticated skills in managing them to cope with adversity and take advantage of opportunities. "There is a growing recognition that the poor are strategic managers of complex asset portfolios" (Moser, 1998: 5).

Social capital and agency:
The importance of bonds and bridges in disaster management

In the discourse on sustainable development, the concepts of social capital and agency have been important for many years (see for example: Collier, 1998; Evans, 1996; Harvey 2002; Newman & Dale, 2005). These concepts can also be very usefully applied in the study of disaster management. To understand, for instance, the crucial role played by local people and local communities during the disaster caused by the Tsunami, but also the strength and the weaknesses of the relief and recovery activities after the Tsunami, the concepts of social capital and agency give a good theoretical insight into interpreting what actually took place. These concepts will be treated in more detail later in the chapter, but for the time being we may say that social capital is made up of social obligations and resources found in individual networks, and that this capital is dependent on the individual's membership in a

group. The bigger the network, the more resources will be involved, and thus also the greater the size of the capital. The concept of bonds are used to describe relationships, or ties, within local networks (micro level networks), whereas bridges are used to describe relationships, or ties, connecting the local networks into a more large-scale network (macro-level network).

Pierre Bordieu is perhaps the most influential author utilizing social capital in his analysis of the functioning of societies. Basically, he looks upon capital as accumulated labour, and he refers to social capital as one among three forms of capital: economic, cultural and social. Economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible to money (and to property rights); cultural capital which is, under certain conditions, convertible to economic capital; and social capital, which is made up of social obligations or 'connections', and which is also under certain conditions convertible into economic capital (Bordieu, 1986). When it comes to the linkages between social capital and networks, Bordieu argues that social capital is a person's aggregate of resources linked to his network of more or less institutionalized relationships. Social capital is dependent on a person's membership within a group that supports each of its members with the backing of the group's collectively owned capital. This capital exchanged between members can be both material and symbolic. The volume of a person's social capital depends fundamentally on the size of the network of connections he can mobilize, and on the volume of capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed by each of those persons to whom he is connected (Bordieu, 1986)

Although Bordieu has a rather individualistic approach to social capital, it is possible to utilize his theories on a societal level by viewing a society as an aggregate of individuals. The concept of social capital, in this respect, incorporates a group or society's material and immaterial resources of importance for social improvements and economic growth, resources that again can, for instance, be used for disaster management purposes. Quite possibly as an inheritance from Bordieu, social capital has become to refer to a network of local relationships, norms, values and institutions that bind the society together, or as argued by Narayan, "the glue that holds groups and societies together" (1999: 1). What differentiates social capital from other forms of capital (human, economic, natural) is that social capital is relational, i.e. social capital can only exist and grow among humans sharing a common structure and acting in a network of relationships.

Bordieu has a rather positive view on social capital, it creates advantages for individuals to belong to networks and have access to the social capital embedded in the members of the network. Although most of us may intuitively have a positive image of social capital, i.e. that its utilization will have positive outcomes for the society or group, this is according to some authors not always the case (Granovetter, 1973; Portes, 1998; Newman and Dale, 2005). Portes (1998) argues that social capital may have clear negative outcomes because the ties that bind some people together

exclude others. Social networks can restrict access to opportunities; they can restrict individual freedom. Here, we may add that for Amartya Sen, restriction on individual freedom is a most serious concern as freedom is agency, i.e. freedom is both the primary and principal means for development (Sen, 2001).

Returning to Portes' (1998) more negative view on social capital, his argument is taken rather directly from an influential paper published by Mark Granovetter (Granovetter, 1973). According to the exposition in this paper, it was a fundamental weakness in sociological theory that it was not able to link interactions at the micro-level with patterns and structures at the macro-level. Granovetter's intention with his paper was to bridge the micro and macro level in sociological theory, and here he took the analysis of interpersonal ties as a point of departure. His argument was that the analysis of processes in interpersonal networks would provide the most important bridge between micro and macro. Models of interpersonal networks did already exist in sociological theories, but they had an inherent weakness due to the fact, that most of them dealt only with small, well-defined groups, and the so-called "strong" interpersonal ties characterizing these groups. Much less emphasis was given to the so-called weak ties characterizing the relationship between groups. It is, however, exactly these latter relationships which, according to Granovetter, link micro and macro, that are of crucial importance in understanding the diffusion of social innovations and, consequently, social development (Granovetter, 1973). Obviously, studies of small groups may give us a good insight into what takes place at the micro-level, but they cannot give us a proper understanding on how interaction in small groups aggregates into, and generates large-scale phenomena such as, for instance, social mobility, political organization, and social cohesion (Granovetter, 1973). These weak ties are of particular importance because they function as bridges connecting the strong, local ties into a more holistic large-scale network.

Why the concept of a bridge? An individual usually has many contact persons within his or her local network, but when they interact, they interact on the same level of communication. They more or less share the same information. Nothing new is brought into the network, or as claimed by Granovetter: "Bridges will not be crossed" (1973: 1366). If, however, one person in the local network establishes a contact with one person from another person's network, information or influence can flow between the groups. This can function as a diffusion process between the local networks. In a development process when new thoughts, ideas and technologies are diffused, the consequence is that whatever it is to be diffused can reach a larger number of people and travel at greater social distances when going through weak rather than strong ties (Granovetter, 1973: 1366).

In a disaster perspective, persons with contacts only in local networks will quite possibly have limited knowledge and means on how to implement disaster risk, reduction measures, how to tackle the three sequential hazards described above and how to relate to outside groups both horizontally and vertically. When bridges

are constructed, both knowledge, technology and other means can more easily be brought into and being by the local communities.

Granovetter concludes by arguing that micro-macro linkages may generate a paradox: While weak ties are indispensable to individuals' opportunities and to their integration into the greater society, as they link members from different small groups together, strong ties, due to their importance for local cohesion, tend to be concentrated within particular groups and may therefore lead to overall fragmentation on the macro-level (Granovetter, 1973).

Following in the footsteps of Granovetter, several authors (for example; Nayaran, 1999; Newman & Dale, 2005) have used the concept of bonds to describe the interpersonal ties on the micro level, and bridges to describe the cross-community ties at the macro level.

We saw earlier that Portes (1998) followed Granovetter in his negative attitude to bonds. Also Nayaran is very much of the same opinion, claiming that the important bonds within a social group may restrict them from building relationships, or bridges, either horizontally to other social groups, or vertically to national or international authorities and agencies. These bridges, or cross-cutting ties, are essential in accessing information, resources and power (Nayaran, 1999). An effect of social capital, in the form of social network ties, can be exclusion since ties that bind also exclude. In addition, a lack of overlapping networks, or cross-cutting ties, among groups may result in unequal opportunities to take part in development activities (Narayan, 1999).

A cross-cutting category of ties of particular importance is the relationship between the local community and the state. According to O'Donnell, (1993), states have a multiplex relationship with their societies. The State is an apparatus, but also a set of relations to the societies within a given territory. Perhaps the State's most important task is to contribute to the most important public good, social predictability, law and order.

In Sri Lanka, we found that the ties between the State and the local communities both in the immediate period after the Tsunami, and in the years that followed, were not very efficient. It was a general sentiment that in Sri Lanka the relief and recovery activities reinforced and strengthened central authority at the expense of local authorities and organisations. While the donors often wanted to engage the local communities, for instance Municipality Councils, to deliver services, this was not accepted by the central government. Local government authorities were not endowed with adequate capacity and authority (Brusset et al., 2009). This is why we may argue that the relationships between the central government and local communities did not function very well as bridges. It was what we could call a lack of synergy between these actors. We must at this juncture add that based both on our study, and also on others, the people did not have a high trust in local government authorities. According to Brusset et al. (2007), less that 5 percent of the

Tsunami affected people expressed trust in the local government, far less than the central government. In a ten years perspective, we do however experience that an increasing synergy between the State and the local communities has developed, new bridges have been built. In the period after the first shock, it was, however, the bridges between international voluntary organisations and local communities that were of greatest importance.

Newman and Dale (2005) in line with Granovetter, question the importance of social capital for sustainable development at a community level since social capital can constrain development efforts. They make a division between two forms of social capital that is, to a large extent, connected to the "bonds and bridges" approach. Bonding social capital comprises the strong network ties that may include social norms, and that can have a constraining effect on innovative (positive) changes: bridging social capital composed of weak network ties allowing actors to engage in social change processes. It is, according to the authors, possible to define social capital as the combination of bonding and bridging ties found in a network of actors. Although Putnam's definition of social capital does not include bonding and bridging ties, it resembles Newman and Dale's definition when he defines social capital as "social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (Putnam, 2000: 20).

Newman and Dale, are very close to Bordieu (1986) when they argue that there is a close relationship between networks and social capital, even to the degree that networks are referred to as social capital, and consequently, that an increase in the size and density of a network is an increase in the amount of social capital. It will have a positive outcome for a community's development if there is an increase in networks among its members (Newman and Dale, 2005: 478). According to Newman and Dale, the two forms of social capital will have different effects within a network. Whereas bonding social capital is needed to bring people together, it can also function as a break in innovation by preventing actors from receiving important information, for instance by enforcing social norms that function as obstacles, or by rejecting the acceptance of outsiders. On the positive side, bonding capital leads to reciprocity and trust that are important ingredients for social relationship to function. As we can see, bonding social capital can therefore play a role that is both a contribution and a constraint to community development.

Also bridging social capital can play both a positive and negative role in development. On the positive side, it can supply actors with new information and knowledge, and help the actors overcome social norms constraining their activities. On the negative side, bridging capital can overrule local norms and values, and make initiatives and efforts that may have a negative, although unforeseen, effect on local community development. The history of aid is full of examples

where strong outside forces have had a negative effect on local development. Reading reports from the Tsunami, we will also find many examples of the same.[3]

Then, to enhance the strength of the social capital concept, Newman and Dale make an analytical twist by introducing the concept of agency; a concept focusing on the possibility for individuals or groups to actively engage in development activities by increasing their access to critical resources. Being particularly interested in local community development, the authors argue that communities can achieve agency by efficiently utilizing "a dynamic mix of bonding and bridging ties", and where agency is an indicator on how a community is able to respond and identify solutions to development challenges (Newman and Dale, 2005: 477/481). There is a close connection between social capital and social agency in the sense that social capital is dependent on agency. Agency is actually the force behind social action performed by actors within the social network. The authors refer to Krishna (2001) who argues that social capital as the potential; agency activates it (Newman and Dale, 2005: 481).

Returning to the bonding and bridging ties, the authors write that lessons from development research imply that agency can be stimulated by a mix of bonding and bridging ties; for instance, by diffusing new information and knowledge, and by establishing new horizontal and vertical connections between groups. What the authors do not discuss, however, is to what degree the role and value of bonding and bridging ties are dependent on the context, or the actual situation. From my own working experience in remote and fragile areas of Africa, I have observed rather directly how people in such marginal and isolated areas are very much dependent on each other both in their daily lives, and in a long-term perspective. A sustainable livelihood, although at a low material level, can only be secured by bonding ties. Poor and marginal people's tendency for risk avoidance is often related to the fact that the bridging social capital is not as safe and secure as bonding social capital. When hunger and famine is a more or less permanent threat, you rely on the interpersonal ties of close, local networks. Under such circumstances, it is quite often not at all an option to invest your resources in bridging ties as they are a too weak, unreliable, or even absent. In these situations, bonding ties are often a matter of life and death.

The relative importance of bonding and bridges can shift, sometimes rather abruptly, due, for instance, to a crisis, natural or social. My experience is that bonding ties will usually be the most important in the first phase of a crisis, as a first aid arrangement. Agency – the power to act (or react) – will be enacted by those in the immediate surroundings. After a while, the bridging ties may increase in importance as the local community becomes bridgeable, and/or the local agency is exhausted by lack of resources or fatigue. Then, we may have instances when the bridging

3   See e.g. the Telford et al., 2006.

ties take on an overarching role, overruling the bonding ties, and taking on functions that they do not have the knowledge, authority or capacity to fill. The worst situations are when the bonding ties are broken, even to the extent that there is almost nothing that the bridging ties can be connected to, where the bridges have difficulties finding functional anchoring point(s) "on the other side". This can be the situation during intense crises caused by hot, violent conflicts (e.g. the Rwanda genocide of 1994), or by natural disasters completely destroying social structures (e.g. the Haiti earthquake of 2010).

The concepts of bonds and bridges can, according to my opinion, be important analytical tools when studying the disaster management activities in connection with the Tsunami, in particular the relief and emergency activities following directly in the wake of the waves. The empirical findings from our study, and what we have learnt from several reports on the Tsunami, prove the value of the bonds, especially in the few minutes, hours and days after the waves struck the communities along the Sri Lankan coast. We are in no doubt that the interpersonal ties at the local level, the bonds, saved the communities for a much greater trauma. What we may call horizontal bridges between neighbouring communities were also of invaluable importance in the direct aftermath of the disaster. Here we should add that such horizontal bridges between neighbouring communities have characteristics that are very close to what we would call bonds, as the interpersonal ties between individuals from neighbouring communities are often very close. The vertical bridges to external agencies and authorities, for instance in the form of emergency aid, were not really crossed until several days after the event took place, when the aid started to pour into the local communities. But a problem emerged when these bridges started to function, since they sometimes inhibited the efficiency and strength of the existing bonds, perhaps to the extent that the recovery process was hampered by the weakening of the local structures. We may say that the bridges in certain instances made the bonds more or less irrelevant, as they were disregarded.

There are some shortcomings regarding how the concepts of bonds and bridges have been used by various authors, for instance both Newman and Dale (2005) and Nayaran (1999), namely where to draw the line? Where do the bonding ties end and the bridging ties start? Even within small, local communities there can be some ties that have a more bridging character, for instance the tie to the local owner of the fishing vessel, the local shop owner, or the local head of police. It is sometime possible to observe that some people, perhaps based on their status and position, are marginal in the local, social network. On the other hand, some interpersonal ties with a bridging character can function as bonding ties. Several hoteliers with their hotels demolished by the Tsunami told us that some customers that had stayed at their hotels regularly did whatever they could to help them when disaster struck, both with practical work and money.

Disasters and the role of governance

In much literature on disaster and disaster management, the role of governance is a core issue. As will be seen later in this report, the role of the governance system in Sri Lanka was heavily criticised by many of the victims of the Tsunami. For the purpose of this study we might add that Sri Lanka has been described as having a particularly centralized, bureaucratic and non-effective governance structure (see e.g. Asian Development Bank, 2011).

Ahrens and Rudolph (2006) emphasize the relationship between under-development and the susceptibility to disasters, arguing that only if the governance structure of a country makes it possible to implement and enforce policies that are conductive to socio-economic development can sustainable livelihoods and reduced risk of disasters be achieved. They identify what they consider to be the four most essential features of a governance structure: (1) *accountability*, i.e. that politicians and bureaucrats both at the national and local level are held accountable for their actions; (2) *participation*, i.e. secure the participation of individuals, groups and organisations, the civil society, in the policy making, planning and implementation processes; (3) *predictability*, i.e. ensure that a rule based system binding both public and private actors exists; and (4) *transparency*. Transparency is needed for several reasons, e.g. to hold policy makers accountable, to prevent corruption, and to secure the information flow between actors to facilitate the coordination of both development and disaster efforts. The two authors pay particular importance on decentralisation of administrative power and stronger community participation as features for securing a functioning governance structure (Ahrens and Rudolph, 2006). In this regard, Sri Lanka is not a good example. As argued by Shelton Wanasinghe: "The country's citizenry at the level of their local communities remain divorced from the processes of governance. This has over the post-Independence decades contributed, in no small measure, to the absence of transparency and accountability in governance" (Wanasinghe, 1999).

Albeit appreciating Ahrens and Rudolph's analysis, their description of the core issue, the governance structure, is a little difficult to utilize in practical research. Leaning heavily on Douglas North (1995) and his institutional economic approach, they define the governance structure to be the institutional matrix where individual actors, firms, social groups, civic organisations and policy makers interact. When they argue that susceptibility to disaster can be interpreted as a result of failing institutions, and that institution building with the aim of improving the quality of governance is important for disaster risk reduction, it is difficult to discern where to start, and what will be the most important point to attack in the governance structure as each and any actor in the society is a part of this structure. Perhaps it would be easier to study disaster management and risk reduction measures if we

here distinguish between the various categories of actors, the actual public system (government structure and administrative apparatus), firms, and the civic society (organisations and formal and informal social groups)?

Disasters and economic development

It may seem obvious that major natural disasters must have an adverse effect on economic development, but we have to ask, what are the actual short and long-term effects of great disasters on economic and social development? Quite interestingly, some economists raising this issue are questioning the opinion that natural disasters necessarily have a negative impact on economic growth, even arguing that disasters can have a positive economic impact (see e.g. Benson and Clay, 2005). Their argument is that the eventual net macro-economic impact of some disasters triggers a construction-led boom, very much in line with a Schumpeterian process of *creative destruction* (Benson and Clay, 2005: 3).

Along this line of thought, Mark Skidmore and Hideki Toya (2002) use empirical findings from a great number of studies to investigate the relationship between disasters and long-term economic growth. Using regression analysis based on a great sample of disasters occurring in the period from 1960-1990, they use statistics to present a number of interesting results. Perhaps the most spectacular finding is that it is "a robust correlation between disasters and long-run economic growth" (Skidmore and Toya, 2002: 674). Discussing this finding, they believe that as disaster prone areas most likely use resources for disaster management, a higher level of investment is expected. In addition, there is usually a rebuilding process in the direct aftermath of a disaster increasing the investment of physical capital (e.g. land, fishing equipment, houses and infrastructure). Not only that but natural disasters may also have a positive effect on long-term economic growth since disasters may trigger the adoption of new technologies. Disasters provide opportunities to modernize the stock of capital and adopt new technologies. Besides this, there can be cultural or psychological reasons for adopting new technologies more readily when living under disaster risk since this may instigate people to utilize technologies that will reduce disaster risk. According to Skidmore and Toya (2002), there is, however, an important nuance to the conclusion that natural disasters play an important role in macro-economic development: whereas climatic disasters (e.g. floods and hurricanes) are positively correlated with economic growth, geologic disasters (e.g. earthquakes and volcano eruptions) are not (Skidmore and Toya, 2002: 671). The authors infer that the positive relationship between climatic disasters and growth is led by improvements in technology and investments in human capital, inducing a higher GDP growth rate. On the other hand, geologic disasters more

often result in a greater loss of human life, i.e. a destruction of human capital, combined with a destruction of physical capital, resulting in a negative relationship between geologic disasters and economic growth (Skidmore and Toya, 2002). When the authors argue that GDP, in general, increases in the period directly following a natural disaster that damages physical capital and goods, they explain this by reminding us that a country's stock of capital is not measured in GDP, but that replacing the stock of capital after a disaster is measured in GDP. This implies that the damage of physical capital is neutral to the GDP, whereas replacing it is positive to GDP.

The connection between disasters and economic development, the case of Sri Lanka

What connection can we conceive between the Tsunami, a typical geologic disaster, and economic development in Sri Lanka? Several reports point to the fact that the Tsunami actually had a significant positive effect, not because it was a geologic disaster, but mainly because of the impact of international assistance. The Tsunami occurred at a time when there was a deterioration of the Sri Lanka macro-economic environment. The GDP growth was slowing down, inflation pressure was high, external current account deficits were growing, and the currency was depreciating. In this context, the Tsunami assistance brought a greater degree of stability to an economy that had been struggling for a long time with macroeconomic imbalances (Weerakoon et al., 2007). Not only for Sri Lanka, but also for several of the Tsunami affected countries receiving international aid, the promised assistance was more than enough to cover the full cost of both immediate relief measures and mid- to long-term reconstruction activities. In actual fact, the inflow of foreign capital made it possible for Sri Lanka to avoid an imminent currency crisis. For the period 2005-2006, expenditures for relief and reconstruction activities meant an annual average GDP growth of 6.7 per cent (Weerakoon et al. 2007: 1).

Jayasuriya et al. (2005) present an interesting study arguing that reconstruction spending in Sri Lanka after the Tsunami produced a particular type of 'Dutch Disease', spending with construction costs increasing between 40-60 per cent (Jayasuriya et al., 2005: 2). The external assistance "produced, for a while, an almost euphoric national mood" (Jayasuriya et al., 2005: 6). The government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) reported that the emergency relief given to Sri Lanka represented an unprecedented outpouring of private and institutional generosity to the affected people, meeting their immediate needs.[4] According to an assessment made in late January 2005 by the Asian Development Bank (AdB), the Japan Bank for Interna-

---

4   http://www.erd.gov.lk/devforum/Executive%20summary%20final.htm (accessed 16 September 2015)

tional Cooperation (JIBC), and the World Bank (WB), Sri Lanka had suffered damages on assets at around USD 1 billion (4.5 per cent of GDP), and that the medium-term financial needs (including relief) was around USD 1.5-1.6 billion (7.5 per cent of GDP). The GOSL's own estimate from May 2005 was that the total investment needs, including relief, was USD 2 billion (Jayasuriya et al., 2005: 13). Sri Lanka's request for assistance met a very positive response at the first meeting in the Sri Lanka Development Forum with international donors, multilateral, bilateral and private, in May Sri Lanka 2005. A total of USD 2.2 billion was pledged over the next couple of years, covering both relief and reconstruction activities. This amount was even more than GOSL had asked for (Jayasuriya et al., 2005: 16). Therefore, it seems fair that we draw the conclusion that the disaster triggered an economic boom in Sri Lanka through the heavy funding activities from the international donor community. As we will see in the empirical part of this report, many communities experienced what they conceived as an economic boost, stemming mainly from the international assistance received after the Tsunami.

A new disaster research agenda

An international shift has occurred in disaster management studies where the analytical focus has shifted from assessing the impacts of disasters to assessing responses to disasters, including understanding better how people make decisions about the risks they face. It has been widely accepted that both the international research community and the agencies engaged in development interventions have to get a better understanding of the means to strengthen resistance and/or resilience of the poor against the impacts of environmental hazards. An increased understanding of local adaptation and coping strategies is "one of the most important research issues within the area of global environmental change" (Adger, 1999: 250). Twigg et al. (2000) express a need for more case studies of disaster mitigation and disaster preparedness projects, but also of disaster-related components of broader projects. Bhatt (1999) calls for further development of tools and information sharing for vulnerability reduction, citing the successes of existing regional networks in South Asia and Latin America. A key means to enhance community capacity to reduce vulnerability to disasters is to foster South-South and North-South exchange of information and experience between communities.

Further theoretical and applied research is important in order to understand the nature of impacts, people's perceptions of the risks, their responses and the means to strengthen their coping capacity to deal with disasters. We must ask questions like: "What resources and assets do people draw on to cope with disasters? What is the role of social capital and under what conditions is it effective? What forms of community-based action are likely to be effective? Which coping

mechanisms function, and which fail? Which indigenous capacities, for instance, knowledge or structures/organizations are effective, and which are not effective? What is the difference between disaster hazards happening in rural and urban areas? Do differences in urban and rural contexts have an impact on vulnerability patterns and coping strategies?"

The leading idea behind this theoretical approach to the research on vulnerability, risk and coping strategies is that there is a need to put greater attention on building policies and interventions on the evidence-base of household and local communities (Few, 2003). We strongly believe that our study corresponds to this approach.

Linking emergencies and development

Simultaneously, there has been a shift of attention in the international aid community. Up to quite recently there has been a strong tendency to separate disaster management operations from conventional development work. In the last decade or so, a new consensus has developed among multilateral organisations, national governments and NGOs clearly expressing the importance to see risk reduction and sustainable development as part of the same process (Lewis, 1999; Winchester, 2000; IFRC, 2001; UNISDR, 2005). There is today a rather clear vision that, for instance, poverty eradication policies can go far towards disaster risk reduction because they raise people's capacity for recovery. Therefore, actions to counter vulnerability to hazards should work hand in hand with action to reduce poverty and promote sustainability (Chan and Parker, 1996).

References

ADB (Asian Development Bank) (2011) *Governance and Public Management in Sri Lanka: Country Partnership Strategy, Sri Lanka, 2012-2016*. ADB: http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/cps-sri-2012-2016-oth-04_0.pdf (accessed 14 December 2015)

Adger, W.N. (1999) 'Social vulnerability to climate change and extremes in coastal Vietnam'. *World Development,* 27(2), pp. 249–69

Ahrens, J. and P.M. Rudolph (2006) 'The importance of Governance in Risk Reduction and Disaster Management.' *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 14(4) pp. 207–220

Anderson, M.B. and P.J. Woodrow (1998) *Rising from the ashes: development strategies in times of disaster*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications

Benson, C. and E. Clay (2005) *Aftershocks: Natural disaster risk and economic development policy*. ODI Briefing paper November 2005. London: Overseas Development Institute

Bhatt, M.R. (1999) Mapping vulnerability – participatory tool kits. In Ingleton, J. (ed.), *Natural disaster management* (94–95). Leicester: Tudor Rose

Blaikie, P., Cannon, T., Davis, I. and B. Wisner (1994) *At risk: natural hazards, people's vulnerability, and disasters*. London: Routledge

Bordieu, P. (1986): The Forms of Capital. In J. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (241–258). New York, Greenwood: https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu-forms-capital.htm (accessed 15 December 2015)

Brusset, E., Bhatt, M., Bjornestad, K., Cosgrave, J., Davies, A., Deshmukh, Y., Haleem, J., Hidalgo, S., Immajati, Y., Jayasundere, R., Mattsson, A., Muhaimin, N., Polastro, R., and T, Wu (2009) *A ripple in development? Long term perspectives on the response to the Indian Ocean tsunami 2004: A joint follow-up evaluation of the Links between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development*. Stockholm, SIDA

Cairncross, S. and E.A.R. Ouano (1990). Surface water drainage in urban areas. In Hardoy, J.E., Cairncross, S. and D. Satterthwaite (eds.), *The poor die young: housing and health in Third World cities* (pp 158–68). London: Earthscan

Cannon, T. (2000). Vulnerability analysis and disasters. In Parker, D.J. (ed.), *Floods* (45–55). London: Routledge

Cannon, T. (2008) 'Vulnerability, "innocent" disasters and the imperative of cultural understanding'. *Disaster Prevention and Management*, 17(3), pp. 350–357

Carney, D. editor (1998) Sustainable rural livelihoods: what contributions can we make? London: Department for International Development

Chan, N.W. (1997) 'Institutional arrangements for flood hazard management in Malaysia: an evaluation using the criteria approach'. *Disasters,* 21(3), pp. 206–22

Chan, N.W. and D.J. Parker (1996) 'Response to dynamic flood hazard factors in peninsular Malaysia'. *The Geographical Journal,* 162(3), pp. 313–25

Collier, P. (1998) *Social Capital and Poverty*. Social Capital Initiative Working Paper No. 4. Washington, DC: World Bank

Cutter, S.L. (1996) 'Vulnerability to environmental hazards'. *Progress in Human Geography,* 20(4), pp. 529–39

Didier, C. (2011) *Breaking the Cycle*. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC): http://www.ourplanet.com/imgversn/113/cherp.html (accessed 15 December 2015)

Durkin, M.S., Khan, N., Davidson, L.L., Zaman, S.S. and Z.A. Stein (1993) 'The effects of a natural disaster on child behaviour: evidence for posttraumatic stress'. *American Journal of Public Health,* 83(11), pp. 1549–53

Evans, P. (1996) 'Government Action, Social Capital and Development: Reviewing the Evidence on Synergy.' *World Development*, 24(6), pp.1119–1132

Few, R. (2003) 'Flooding, vulnerability and coping strategies: local responses to a global threat'. *Progress in Development Studies*, 3(1), pp. 43–58

Granovetter, M. (1973) 'The Strength of Weak Ties.' *American Journal of Sociology*, 78, pp. 1360–80

Harvey, D. (2002) 'Agency and community: a critical realist paradigm.' *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, 32(2), pp. 163–194

Houghton, J., Ding, Y., Griggs, D., Noguer, M., van der Linden, P., Dai, X., Maskell, K. and C. Johnson. (eds.) (2001) *Climate change 2001: the scientific basis*. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Cambridge University Press

IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) (2001) World Disasters Report: *Focus on Recovery. Geneva*. IFRC: http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/WDR/21400_WDR2001.pdf (accessed 14 December 2015)

Jayasuriya, S., Steele, P., Weerakoon, D., Knight-John, M., and N. Arunatilake (2005) *Post-tsunami recovery: issues and challenges in Sri Lanka*. ADB Institute Research Paper. Asian Development Bank Institute

Krishna, A. (2001) 'Moving from the stock of social capital to the flow of benefits: the role of agency.' *World Development*, 29(6), pp. 925–943

Lewis, J. (1999) *Development in disaster-prone places: studies of vulnerability*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications

Maskrey, A. (1999). Reducing global disasters. In Ingleton, J. (ed.), *Natural disaster management* (84–86). Leicester: Tudor Rose

McMichael, A., Githeko, A., Akhtar, R., Carcavallo, R., Gubler, D., Haines, A., Kovats, R., Martens, P., Patz, J. and A. Sasaki (2001). Human health. In McCarthy, J., Canziani, O., Leary, N., Dokken, D. and K. White (eds.), *Climate change: impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability* (453–85). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Misanya, D. and A.O. Øyhus (2015) 'How communities' perceptions of disasters influence disaster response: managing landslides on Mount Elgon, Uganda'. *Disasters,* 39(2), pp. 389–405

Moser, C.O.N. (1998) 'The asset vulnerability framework: reassessing urban poverty reduction strategies'. *World Development*, 26(1), pp. 1–19

Nayaran, D. (1999) *Bonds and Bridges: Social capital and poverty*. Poverty Group, PREM, Washington, World Bank: https://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/9747/narayan.pdf (accessed 15 December 2015)

Newman, L. and A. Dale (2005) The role of agency in sustainable local community development. *Local Environment*, 10(5), pp. 477–486

North, D.C. (1995). The New Institutional Economics and Third World Development. In Harriss, J., Hunter, J. and C. M. Lewis (eds.), *The New Institutional Economics and Third World Development* (17–26). New York: Routledge

O' Donnell, G. (1993) 'On the State, Democratization and Some Conceptual Problems: A Latin American View with Glances at Some Post communist Countries.' *World Development,* 21(8), pp. 1355–1369

Pelling, M. (1999) 'The political ecology of flood hazard in urban Guyana'. *Geoforum,* 30(3), pp. 249–61

Portes, A. (1998) 'Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology.' *Annual Review of Sociology*, 22, pp. 1–24

Putnam, R. (2000) *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster

Rashid, S.F. (2000) 'The urban poor in Dhaka city: their struggles and coping strategies during the floods of 1998'. *Disasters,* 24(3), pp. 240–53

Sanderson, D. (2000) 'Cities, disasters and livelihoods'. *Environment and Urbanization*, 12(2), pp. 93–102

Sen, A. (2001) Development as Freedom (2nd edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press

Skidmore, M. and H. Toya (2002) 'Do Natural Disasters Promote Long-Run Growth' *Economic Enquiry,* 40(4), pp. 664–687

Twigg, J., Benson, C. and M. Myers (2000) *NGO initiatives in risk reduction: a summary of the research studies*. London: British Red Cross

UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) (2005). Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. Extract from paper presented at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction 2005, Kobe, and Hyogo, Japan: www.unisdr.org/wcdr (accessed 15 December 2015)

Wanasinghe, S. (1999) Effective Local Governance: The Foundation for a Functioning Democracy in Sri Lanka. Governance Series, IPS Publication: http://www.ips.lk/other_reserach/governance/governance.html (accessed.15 September 2015)

Winchester, P. (2000) 'Cyclone mitigation, resource allocation and post-disaster reconstruction in south India: lessons from two decades of research'. *Disasters,* 24(1), pp. 18–37

Part II

Hambantota Case Studies

Chapter 4

Introducing the case studies

Arne Olav Øyhus

Introduction

Ten years after the Tsunami the research partners at the University of Agder (UIA) and University of Ruhuna (UR) felt that more knowledge was needed in order to understand the situation and condition among the Tsunami affected people and communities in a longer-term perspective. We would like to know more about what local people had done to overcome the effects of the disaster, what type of assistance they had received, which type of assistance functioned and which did

not, how they look upon their future of disaster risk situation, what means and measures had been installed to mitigate future disaster, and so on. The Tsunami was by all means an extremely harmful event, but it is possible to draw some "positive" effects from it if we are able to learn what people did to survive and recover it, how they utilized social capital in the form of internal networks ("bonds"), indigenous knowledge and other local resources both in the emergency situation, and also for reconstruction. In addition to understanding the role played by local community structures and resources, we wanted to understand the role played by outside agencies, governmental or non-governmental, in a successful, or not so successful, recovery process. In this regard, it is an interesting fact that quite regularly we learned that Western experts on disasters did not recognise, or perhaps accept, that the local people quite often played the most important part in the post-disaster emergency situation. This might be because of the experts' "ethnocentric" perceptions, but can also be explained by the fact that local people have "invisible" knowledge, institutions and structures that are put into action when there is a desperate need. We are talking here about the aspect of social agency.

Ten years after the disaster, we may expect that the situation has stabilised, and that most recovery activities have been terminated. The time was therefore ripe to learn the key lessons from the Tsunami recovery process, and what could be abstracted from it so that Sri Lanka could be better prepared to deal with future disasters of this magnitude.

To gain an understanding of the ten year's long recovery and reconstruction process, and how it has led up to the present situation among disaster affected communities, an international group of post-graduate students from the master programme in Development Management at the UIA conducted a social study in the form of field work in the Hambantota District, Southern Province of Sri Lanka, in May/June 2014. Social analysis is a valuable instrument to understand both the role of the social fabric in such recovery process, and *visa versa*, the impact of the recovery process on the social fabric. The research method used was based on a qualitative approach where data and information was collected through individual interviews and focus group discussions. Hambantota, in this regard, was an "ideal" case as it was one of the most severely affected districts in Sri Lanka.

The students prepared and conducted four different studies in Hambantota District, presented in the four next chapters. The first is called: *An Act of God? A study of the Tsunami recovery process in the Hambantota fishing community*. The Hambantota fishermen represent, perhaps, the poorest segment of the Hambantota community. Being Muslim, they can also be considered a minority population in the district. The purpose of this case study was to reveal how the Tsunami affected the fishing community, to what extent the local fishing community has benefited from aid provided by both national and international aid

agencies, how the recovery process has been experienced by people, and what their main challenges are today.

The next chapter is titled: *The Golden Wave? The impact of the Tsunami recovery process in the Kirinda Community, Hambantota District.* Kirinda is a predominantly Muslim community with a substantial Buddhist minority population. Much of the infrastructure, residential areas, commercial and transportation sector, fisheries, tourism industry, and other businesses located in Kirinda were heavily affected by the Tsunami. The village was to a large extent demolished by the waves, but today roads, schools, medical facilities, etc. have been rebuilt, to the degree that some people in the village even call the Tsunami' the Golden Wave'.

The third chapter, *Bonds and Bridges: The Case of the Tourist Industry in Tangalle, Hambantota District* is based on fieldwork conducted mainly among the hoteliers in the town of Tangalle, the main beach tourism area in Hambantota district. The main objective of the study was to analyse the ten years recovery process of the tourism sector in Tangalle and identify obstacles that the sector has experienced. Quite interestingly, the end of the civil war in 2009 had a much more positive outcome on the tourism sector than the five first years of recovery after the Tsunami, indicating that tourists fear war more than natural disasters.

Chapter four, the last in this study, is called: *Back to business: The Case of Hambantota Businesspeople ten years later after the Tsunami.* This study, focusing on the business community in Hambantota town, describes several interesting findings from the ten years of recovery for the business community of Hambantota, for instance that the government sponsored mega projects (the seaport, the airport, roads, etc.) have had more negative impacts on the business community than the Tsunami, and that the lack of investment capital has been a continuous challenge throughout the whole recovery process. On the positive side, the study shows the positive roles played by NGOs and the civil society in getting people back in business.

It is hoped that the result from these four case studies can be valuable not only in understanding the recovery and reconstruction process after the Tsunami, but also in a more general sense. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC, argues that there are good reasons to believe that the level of natural calamities will increase both in a short and medium time perspective, mainly due to environmental factors such as deforestation, global warming, human encroachment into vulnerable areas, etc. It is a sad fact that both the natural and the man-made disasters have the worst effects on the poor people in the poor regions of the world (Haughton et al, 2001). Therefore, the lessons from the Tsunami recovery can be valuable in order to both prepare societies for future disasters by improved disaster risk, reduction strategies, but also to

see how recovery activities could be managed more efficiently, for instance by a closer collaboration between local communities and outside agencies.

Research is cumulative. By performing this post-disaster and recovery study, we will hopefully contribute with knowledge about the potential capacities and structures existing in communities in order to enhance the communities' resilience and resistance to possible future disasters. This will also provide important knowledge when planning and implementing actions and interventions aimed at reducing the consequences of a disaster. Moreover, we feel assured that knowledge from a special occurrence in a particular disaster may have importance and validity on a more general level.

References

Houghton, J., Ding, Y., Griggs, D., Noguer, M., van der Linden, P., Dai, X., Maskell, K. and C. Johnson. (eds.) (2001) *Climate change 2001: the scientific basis*. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Cambridge University Press

Yahmed, S.B. and P. Koob (1996) 'Health sector approach to vulnerability reduction and emergency preparedness'. *World Health Statistics Quarterly*, 49(3/4), pp. 172–78

Chapter 5

The Disaster – an Act of God?

A study of the Tsunami recovery process
in the Hambantota fishing community

*Kerenina Dansholm Kezarides, Susann Midling, Kitty Monostory,
and Wopara Goodness Ruhuoma, in association with Thuwan
Zulfikar Ali (HDCC co-ordinator)*

Abstract

This report intends to contribute to the studies and research on disaster management and its effectiveness in developing countries. Our research site was Hambantota town, and the fishing community was our target group as well as our main information source. The purpose of our study was to analyse to what extent the local fishing community has benefited from aid provided by both national and international aid agencies and what the main challenges are today. This is particularly important to find out in order to enhance the effectiveness of disaster management on a local level, and to make communities more resilient to natural disasters in a long-term perspective. This case study reveals certain failures and mistakes when it comes to the distribution of grants and services provided by aid agencies to the local fishing community.

Introduction

Hambantota was one of the worst Tsunami affected towns in Sri Lanka, and within Hambantota, the fishing community living close to the sea was hit the hardest. Ten years after the waves crashed down on the town, we believe that it is of great interest to examine and analyse to what extent the efforts and investments of local

authorities and international NGOs and the fishermen themselves had managed to rehabilitate the fishing community. As the fishermen and their families were the hardest hit group both physically and economically, it is important for them that an adequate, future disaster risk reduction strategy can be implemented. In this regard, it is relevant to address and analyse the problems that the fishing community faced in the aftermath of the Tsunami, and learn from them. To gain an insight into the fishing community, and understand its main challenges and main experiences during the last ten years, we conducted a study where we interviewed 20 fishermen and civic leaders. The main objective of this study was to gain knowledge about the main challenges, failures and successes related to short and long-term recovery of the fishing community.

Research Questions:

1.   To what extent has the recovery process been successful in rehabilitating the Hambantota fishing community?

2.   What are the main lessons learned from the recovery process?

3.   What are the main challenges the fishing community are facing today?

4.   To what extent has any disaster management system been established in order to mitigate and prepare for future hazards and disasters?

The majority of the interviewees in our study were Muslims. This also reflects the religious composition of the Hambantota fishing community. Interviewing different categories of respondents enabled us to analyse our research topic from different angles. Our empirical findings confirmed to a great extent what key findings from earlier studies closer in time to the event had revealed; for instance that there had been an unequal distribution of both boats and fishing equipment provided to the fishermen by different agencies. Our informants told us that it was, in general, administrative failures that were the main reason behind the inequality in resource allocations. These failures have had serious implications for the recovery and rehabilitation process. According to the interviewees, the quality and duration of the recovery process varied from household to household. When the fishermen were asked to what degree they were prepared for a possible future natural disaster of this nature, most of them told us that they were not more prepared now than what they had been before the Tsunami. Here we discovered a feature in their attitude to disaster preparedness that is fundamentally connected to their faith: you cannot really prepare for disasters since they happen according to Allah's will. Disasters are fundamentally acts of God (Allah).

Background

One particular reason why Hambantota suffered a high number of casualties was the Sunday market that took place close to the beach when the Tsunami struck. It is estimated that up to 2,000 people died in this town alone. While in Sri Lanka up to 16,500 boats were lost or damaged by the Tsunami, in Hambantota alone, civic leaders estimate the number of lost boats to be over 100. There was a great range of agencies and organisations engaged in the relief and recovery process: national and international NGOs, Sri Lankan government authorities, civilian and military forces. There were also several private initiatives, for instance among merchants, who contributed with aid to the fishing community. In addition to that, many international volunteers and humanitarian aid workers arrived on the scene to help with the immediate relief work (Mulligan & Shaw, 2007, p.66).

Sri Lanka did not have a proper disaster management strategy before the Tsunami hit the country, but this has now, to some degree, been dealt with. When it comes to future disaster risk reduction activities, perhaps the most important government initiative for disaster mitigation is the establishment of the Centre for National Operations (CNO) (Jirasinghe, 2007, p.25). In regards to short-term disaster recovery, it is claimed that the Sri Lankan government has made remarkable efforts to strengthen their mitigation policies (Jayasurija, Steele et al., 2005).

A lot of discussions regarding relief and recovery activities have taken place in the aftermath of the Tsunami. According to a study by Jayasurija, Steele et al, (2005, p. 19-20) NGOs failed to provide the right equipment necessary to Tsunami-affected fishermen. This can be attributed to miscommunication and/or lack of communication between NGOs and the fishing community. Another problem was the disorganized delivery of aid, caused by, among other things, administrative failures, which resulted in unequal distribution of boats and other fishing equipment (Jirasinghe, 2007, p.52). This definitely caused delays in the recovery process in Hambantota.

> "*While the macroeconomic impact of the tsunami is limited, the localized effects are severe. Catastrophic human and asset losses and disruption to markets and social networks have sharply reduced employment and output. Human suffering has been exacerbated by delays, inequities and inefficiencies in housing and livelihood rehabilitation processes which have increased poverty and threatened social stability* (Mulligan & Shaw, 2007, p.69).

An example of administrative failure was the lack of inadequate data bases regarding the number of boats and fishermen in the fishing industry (Jirasinghe, 2007, p.50). Before the Tsunami, the fishermen's houses where situated on a strip of land within the area of the Hambantota fishing harbour. These houses were destroyed by the Tsunami, and fishermen and their families were relocated to a distant area

– a newly constructed Tsunami village. This created several challenges for the fishermen, as they had to travel a much further distance to reach boats and gear. This represented both a practical problem, a time problem, and an economic problem, as they had to use a lot of time and pay for transportation from their new houses to the sites by the sea where they had their boats and equipment. The interviewees gave us the impression that this issue was one of the biggest grievances among the fishermen. They felt that these new settlements had a negative impact on their livelihoods. Fishermen located in the new houses on land claimed from the surrounding jungle area, are also exposed to other dangers, for example attacks from wild elephants, a common creature in the Sri Lankan fauna (Liyanage, 2012).

Methodology

We applied a qualitative methodological approach in the data collection for this study. Both primary and secondary data sources have been used: primary data from interviewees, and secondary data from previous studies done in the Hambantota District. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner. We were using a local interpreter to assist us. He worked very seriously to translate the information conveyed to him. We conducted twenty interviews altogether; nine with adult, married fishermen, two with young, unmarried fishermen, three with women related to the fishermen as wives or mothers, and six with civic leaders. With some few exceptions, the interviewees from the fishing community were Muslim. It is important to note here that the Hambantota fishing community is largely comprised of Muslims, quite often with a Malayan language and cultural origin. This group of Muslim fishermen was particularly affected by the Tsunami, as the day of the Tsunami was a Buddhist Poya-day, implying that Buddhist fishermen, in general, were not fishing that day.

A relevant feature that should be mentioned in this connection is that Sri Lanka is still today, to a certain degree, a cast society. The casts are generally occupational casts with the landowning cast at the peak. Traditionally, the casts are endemic, i.e. people marry within their own cast, but this is not a strong feature nowadays, except perhaps for the lower casts. The fishing cast belong to the lower part of the cast system, and is as such not held in a high esteem. Consequently, being both belonging to a low cast, and Muslim, implies that the fishermen rarely get the highest priority from the government authorities. This has led to a situation where the fishermen are rather sceptical of the government, perhaps more so than other categories of Sri Lankan residents.

All interviews with the fishermen and their relatives were conducted within their local community, often in the yard outside their houses. An interesting consequence of this was that some interviews turned into group meetings or informal

focus group discussions as neighbours and friends joined in. It could be argued that this was positive in the sense that it gave us a certain, albeit utterly limited, possibility to do participant observation. Through the interviewing process, we felt that we gained a good grasp of what challenges the fishermen face, both today, and during the recovery process after the Tsunami. Our study has been checked and complemented with previous studies from the district.

Findings

The recovery process and its main challenges

Interviews with representatives from the fishing community

As our study reveals, the fishing community suffered extremely high losses in both personnel and fishing equipment, like boats, nets, storage facilities, and houses. According to the fishermen, immediate emergency assistance from individuals in nearby villages arrived within hours after the disaster in the form of medical care, food, clothes and temporary shelter. Assistance from NGOs, religious organisations and government agencies arrived within the first couple of weeks up to a few months after the disaster.

   The fishermen explained that it took from a few months up to several years before they were able to overcome the fears, worries and traumas associated with the disaster, and be able to return to their profession. Today, ten years after, quite a number of fishermen are still suffering from the effects of the disaster. Although we are most certainly not experts in mental health problems, we believe that what these mental issues that they were talking about would fall under the diagnosis "post-traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD).

   When discussing the assistance they received after the Tsunami, they mentioned that family members from nearby villages, government agencies, the National Development Bank, and local and international NGOs, including the Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce (HDCC) have all been instrumental in the rehabilitation and reconstruction process of the fishing industry. The most often and positively mentioned NGOs were the Red Cross, Caritas and World Vision.

   The recovery and rehabilitation process took time and was very challenging due to factors ranging from institutional failures, to short-comings connected to the management of human and technical resources. Such factors were identified both by the fishermen and the leaders of the fishing industry. According to the fishermen, the NGOs' reconstruction efforts were not properly co-ordinated, caused mainly by the incompetence of certain individuals engaged by the NGOs and government agencies. These individuals acted as interpreters and coordinators, and they distributed money, boats and fishing equipment to the affected fishermen.

The interviewed fishermen believed that there was a high degree of corruption, and that goods were distributed unfairly; for instance that individuals working for NGOs, and staff from government agencies, distributed goods to friends, relatives, and supporters of the ruling party. The civic leaders also acknowledged that some affected people did not receive nets, boats and other fishing equipment as soon as they should have had in order to enable them to quickly resume their fishing activities.

Actually, many fishermen were of the opinion that non-affected people benefited more from the relief distribution than affected people. What they had experienced was that some people had lied and taken advantages of the situation to grab provisions for themselves. As a result, whereas some people got two or even more boats and a lot of fishing equipment, others received nothing at all.

The respondents felt frustration because the NGOs did not consult them directly to discover their needs and demands, for instance regarding the specifications of the type of boat suitable for their local marine conditions, fishing styles and capacities. Some boats were therefore inappropriate and substandard, and some boats were damaged and unusable within two weeks.

The fishermen also expressed their lack of confidence in the Fishing Association that they felt was not cohesive, strong and purposeful, and lacked the capacity to protect their interests. Regarding this issue, it was difficult for us to determine whether they were referring to both the current Fishing Association and the one that was in operation right before and after the Tsunami. Another issue often mentioned was that currently they cannot determine or even influence the prices of their produce in the market due to government price regulations. This causes them to incur debts as they buy expensive fuel to power their boats but receive a low price for the catch. This is compounded by the fact they quite often come back from the sea with a small catch, even sometimes no fish at all. This implies a serious loss for a poor fisherman. Consequently, it is difficult to make a living out of their fishing activities. The leaders of the Fishing Association confirmed these allegations, expressing their helplessness against the decisions of the government.

The fishermen also argued that the government authorities had not at all listened to their needs and demands when carrying out post-tsunami development projects. Some of these projects did even have adverse effect. One example often mentioned was the dysfunctional stone barrier (mole) in the harbour that the government had constructed to function as a wave breaker. This had caused several accidents and led to the death of three anglers. The fishermen claimed that the opening was too narrow, which makes the navigation through it difficult and dangerous. The housing situation, in which the government relocated their new houses from two-five kilometres away from the sea made it difficult for them to access their work place, was often mentioned. What rather clearly appeared during

the interviews was that the fishermen lacked trust and confidence in the government, both at a local and national level.

When comparing their situation today with the situation before the Tsunami, it was a general opinion among the fishermen that their standard of living was worse today. This was due to several factors; high inflation rate, expensive fuel used to power their boats, higher electricity and water bills coupled with poorer catches and lower prices on their produce. As a consequence, they were not able to build up savings or investments that could act as buffer funds – funds that could function as a future disaster risk reduction measure.

Through our study, we did get a certain impression that the fishermen were not particularly eager to prepare for future disasters. It was rarely mentioned during the interviews that it was important for the community to give a priority to establish risk, reduction measures. Perhaps the most important reason why the fishermen did not see a strong need to prepare for future disasters is their faith in Allah, as they believe that natural disasters are acts of God (Allah). As human beings, there is nothing much you can do except to accept a disaster as the will of God. The fishermen expressed a strong belief in the fact that they can only depend on God to protect them and their loved ones. However, when discussing more practical risk reduction activities, they mentioned that an alarm system had been installed by the government in the local police station. This system was meant to be a warning measure in case of a future tsunami which could help them escape future occurrences, unlike the 2004 Tsunami that caught them totally unaware.

Interviews with civic leaders

The interviews with local, civic leaders, as for instance local government officials, revealed some agreements and some disagreements with the arguments raised by the fishermen. The civic leaders agreed with the fishermen that the government's plan to make Hambantota a major tourist destination could have negative impacts on the livelihood of the fishermen. However, according to their arguments, even though some of the post-tsunami development projects and disaster prevention measures in Hambantota would not favour the fishermen, they were planned for the overall benefit of the Hambantota population. They had also a more positive attitude toward the mole constructed at the sea entrance to the Hambantota harbour. Their opinion was that that the mole would help in breaking the waves, and make the harbour area safer. They were also positive to the role of the harbour officers stationed at the fishing harbour with the task to regulate the fishermen's activities. It was a part of their duty to ensure that the fishermen had the required identity cards and that they signed the register before going out to sea. In this way,

the government was responsible for the fishermen's safety. If the fishermen had registered before going to sea, the government could give compensation in case of accidents or deaths.

The civic leaders also argued that the government, through the Hambantota Chamber of Commerce (HDCC) and other NGOs, did their best after the Tsunami to rehabilitate the livelihood of the fishermen. For example, an NGO called Pan-Lanka donated LKR (Sri Lanka Rupee)[5] 500,000 that was given as a loan of 5000 rupee to individual members of the Fishing Association. The government also gave financial assistance of 5000 rupees in three instalments to affected fishermen. They also mentioned that the HDCC provided 25 boats as part of the effort to restore the livelihoods of the fishermen.

Regarding the unfair distribution of disaster aid, the civic leaders explained that one reason for this was that some people took advantage of the aid coming in to gain more for themselves. In hindsight, they saw that while some community members were aggressive in gaining access to goods, others, who were possibly the most adversely affected, did not have the emotional stamina to compete. In addition, relevant information was not effectively gathered prior to the distribution of aid. One survey was distributed where people were asked to report their losses and also obtain a police report in order to verify this information. However, several fishermen for some reason ignored the call to report. In general, relief items were distributed according to the survey data collected. The problem was that as the survey was not very coherent, also non-affected people got relief items. Some even got more than they required.

Regarding future disaster management plans, the civic leaders listed the following priorities: life vests and GPS for the fishing boats. They pointed to the important fact that a Disaster Management Ministry had already been established by the government. This agency was meant to carry out awareness programs. Here, teachers and students were to undergo training on what to do in natural disaster situations. Teachers were, for instance, taught how to evacuate the students in case of emergencies. In addition, the general public were given information on disaster preparedness at particular events arranged at the open, communal playgrounds. Also religious institutions were active in post-tsunami work as they offered faith-based psychological assistance to their members.

Lessons learnt

A recurrent topic of criticism from the fishermen was that the NGOs should have come directly to them to recognise their needs. This would, to a great extent, have

---

5   In May 2014, one USD was about 130 LKR

avoided the problem of goods going to non-affected people. The civic leader, however, pointed to the fact that a major challenge to the entire distribution process was the lack of relevant data to facilitate the process.

One civic leader explained that the Red Cross' first priority of operation was to go from house to house to distribute forms to families where they could declare their losses as well as supplying basic family information. Many families did not understand the importance of this data collection process and therefore did not fill the forms. Another civic leader said that they did not cooperate with the Red Cross at all, implying that even if relevant data had been available, it would not have been properly utilised.

It is obvious that collecting accurate data in the midst of the post-tsunami mayhem must have been quite a daunting undertaking. Therefore, an important lesson learnt was that establishing and maintaining community databases is imperative. A civic leader emphasized that this was a process they were performing right now. He said that this was a priority, and that they should collect as much relevant information on the local population as possible. In this regard, they used several avenues, such as the fishing associations, schools, local police, and municipality offices.

The role of the fishing association

An important issue that rather clearly appeared from analysing the collected data was that at the time of the Tsunami, the local fishing association was very weak. According to one leader, the fishing association had only 35 members at the time of the Tsunami. The person who was selected as a leader three months after the Tsunami went to visit each fisherman personally. He collected data on their situation and invited fishermen to join the association. This leader managed to strengthen the association, building up an organisation with 500 members. This lasted for about two years. After two years, there were some internal tensions and political intrigues, after which the association was closed down. The short-lived associational strength did not seem to be sufficient to see the fishing community through the recovery process. For the local community it took five years before it was back on its feet. During the ten years after the Tsunami, there were many years when there was no fishing association at all in the area. In 2010, however, a new fishing association was established on the initiative of the Ministry of Fishery. This fishing association is not independent from the authorities, and many fishermen did not think it was strong enough to represent their needs and demands. The current fishing association has a fund from which it provides grants for funerals and loans for weddings. It has attempted to bring issues to the Ministry of Fishery, but has not received any definitive response on these issues.

Fishermen's complaints

A recurring complaint among the fishermen was the poor quality of some of the donated items, such as boats and equipment, and also the houses built for those who lost their homes in the Tsunami. In general, funding was not a problem as plenty of assistance was coming in. Management competence in the planning and execution process was the main bottleneck. Two examples can be given. The first regards an institution that wanted to donate assistance for a certain number of boats. As the regular boat manufacturers did not have the required boats available, the job of manufacturing the boats was given to another company. The boats produced by them were quite inferior and not at all useful for local fishermen. The other example regards the new homes built for those who had lost their houses under the Tsunami. As insufficient investigations were done regarding the needs and preferences of those who would receive the houses, many houses were completely inadequate. In addition, as the government had acquired land for the re-settlement housing project much further inland than where the fishermen previously had been located, a transport problem for the fishermen emerged. To live inland, but have the working site at the sea is no easy task. Who will guard the boats and the equipment? Fishing quite regularly takes place at late night and early morning, a time when public transport is not operating. How then to access the site of work?

Regarding aid distribution after possible future disaster situations, a civic leader suggested there should be a group meeting with the local community to seek an agreement with those affected how aid could be distributed, for instance, equally or according to proportion of loss. As a civic leader also highlighted the importance of having a member of the relevant community to head the disbursement of aid to that community.

Institutional failures, for example, in the form of inadequate management, left room for corruption. This generated a fair amount of grievance among the fishermen. Obviously, it is not possible to please everyone and there will usually be some who are disgruntled and view things as unfair. However, careful management can help diminish the degree of grievance.

Preparedness

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is a very important part of the development process as it is a way to prevent future hazards turning into big disasters (Ahrens & Rudolph, 2006, p. 217). Therefore, it was important for this study to see if the fishermen of Hambantota district have done anything to reduce the risk of future hazards. When conducting the interviews for this study, it was found that

the views of the fishermen and the civic leaders were quite different from each other on this issue.

Fishermen's perception on future hazards

> *"I have faith, and it's God's choice; we have to accept whatever He gives us."*
> – Fisherman, who lost many members of his family in the Tsunami.

The above statement is a typical example of the fishermen's response to the question about their perception on future disasters in a post-tsunami perspective. Almost all fishermen interviewed gave this, or a similar answer.

Although some also mentioned the importance of the alarm system located at the police station in Hambantota, the prevailing sentiment is that their belief in Allah is their main "security" precaution, and that they will accept whatever hazard comes their way as His will. This belief also played an important role in the mental recovery process of the fishermen. A civic leader said that mullahs came to talk with the affected people to provide psychological help to them, mainly by discussing the hazard as Allah's will.

One of the interviewed fishermen mentioned a discussion that took place in the mosque on the day prior to the Tsunami. Their reading of the Koran seemed to give them an indication of a coming catastrophic event. When the waves rolled in, his first thought was that this was what they had read in the Koran and discussed in the mosque the day before. He felt that the waves were sent by God to teach the people not to be corrupt. Now, he says he is quite often astonished that people have already forgotten about the Tsunami and the lessons he felt Allah was trying to teach them through it. According to him, people in Hambantota are still corrupt and are still doing bad things, including himself.

> *"People are fearful of another Tsunami, but they did not learn anything after the Tsunami, their behaviour is the same."*

As this theme was repeated continuously, we understood the importance of religion in their understanding of disasters, and also the role of religion in disaster preparedness.

> *"We got everything from the sea, and the sea took everything away,"* a young fisherman explained.

When asked: "What have you done to prepare yourself for a possibly future disaster like this?" most fishermen stated that it was out of their power. They could not prepare for a future disaster since their destiny was in the hands of Allah. We should add that this attitude was combined with the frustration of the present situation signified by a prolonged period with very low fishing yields and higher prices of

petrol and fishing gear. The great majority of fishermen are surviving on a day-to-day basis, implying that they have meagre means to prepare for future disasters.

Civic leaders' opinions

The civic leaders presented other views and opinions on the present situation and the preparedness issue. They focused on what had positively been done, such as training provided to teachers and students, fishermen, women and ordinary villagers; the new alarm system installed at the police station which was tested periodically; the distribution of life vests; the stone wall – mole – that secured the harbour and the entrance to it, and thus the fishing boats, giving them their own harbour area. A Disaster Management Department in the Hambantota District was also an important preparedness precaution. It seemed to us that not much of this information and training were noticed and used by the public. None of the fishermen mentioned anything about any disaster training given. There was also much disagreement about the mole. The fishermen saw it as a dangerous construction with too small an entrance that endangers the boats coming in from the sea, quite contrary to the civic leaders who saw it as an important protection from the sea, not only for the fishermen, but also for the town of Hambantota.

It was mentioned by some civic leaders that data availability has been improved and that they now have a much better information base about the households and the local community. This will, they believed, make it possible to operate more efficiently in future emergencies in the area. In addition, it will eliminate much of the corruption and false information that caused unfair distribution of aid ten years ago.

Even though most civic leaders promoted the preparations that have been done by the authorities, changes they were happy for, there were also a couple of them that stated that despite these preparations, disasters cannot be avoided: if Allah decides to cause a disaster, it will not be possible for them to stop the damages that Allah has decided for them.

Conclusion

During the fieldwork, and through our observations, conversations and interviews with local people, we gained a certain insight into people's individual experiences and perceptions about the recovery process after the Tsunami. What we learned was that both the quality and the duration of the recovery process varied a lot from household to household in the fishing community due to both external and internal factors. It was obvious, from their perception and experiences that there had been an unfair distribution of fishing equipment and boats. This had seriously impeded

the recovery process, as many fishermen lacked the necessary equipment for being able to recover their livelihoods after the Tsunami.

The political context cannot be ignored when analysing the ten-year period after the Tsunami. Politics both at the national and local government level benefited some, e.g. party members, relatives etc. whereas others were neglected. Based on our empirical findings, we can see that there were several factors that had implications on who benefited from grants and contributions from, for instance, the different NGOs. The fishing association was particularly weak both at the time of the Tsunami, and in a long period of the ten years recovery process. At the time of the Tsunami the fishing association had few members and played a minor role in local politics. Later, there had been a five-year suspension of the fishing association during the ten-year recovery period. That many fishermen lost their houses in the Hambantota harbour area and were displaced to areas distant from the seafront has also had serious implications on their present livelihood situation. Last, but not least, religious fatalism has, without any doubt, played an important role regarding preparedness, or more precisely – lack thereof – in the fishing community. Combined with poverty, i.e. lack of means to improve their situation, the fishermen are still in a precarious situation in a case of future hazards from the sea.

References

Ahrens, J. and P.M. Rudolph (2006) 'The importance of Governance in Risk Reduction and Disaster Management.' *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 14(4) pp. 207–220

Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods*, (4th edition). Oxford University Press Inc., New York

Jayasinghe C.R (2007) Annual Report 12/13. Hambantota: Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce: http://www.hdcc.lk/Arep/HDCC%20AR%20ENGLISH% 202012.pdf (accessed 14 December 2015)

Jayasuriya, S., Steele, P., Weerakoon, D., Knight-John, M., and N. Arunatilake (2005) Post-tsunami recovery: issues and challenges in Sri Lanka. ADB Institute Research Paper. Asian Development Bank Institute:

http://www.adbi.org/files/2005.10.dp39.tsunami.recovery.srilanka.pdf (accessed 15 December 2015)

Liyanage A.W. (2012). *The possibility for developing a sustainable strategy to solve the conflict between local people and Elephants in Hambantota District, Sri Lanka*. Master Thesis. Kristiansand, University Of Agder

Mulligan M., & Shaw J. (2007) 'What the World can learn from Sri Lanka's post-tsunami experiences'. *IJAPS,* 3(2). IJAPS: http://web.usm.my/ijaps/articles/3_ Mulligan_(65-91).pdf (accessed: 02 June 2014)

Chapter 6

The Golden Wave?

The impact of the Tsunami recovery process in the Kirinda Community, Hambantota District

*Sanaa Talha, Schola Busingye, Sehrish Noor,
and Anne Lie Nordberg, in association with
Rimzana Shazin (HDCC coordinator)*

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami left devastating impacts on the coastal regions of Sri Lanka. Much of the infrastructure, residential areas, commercial and transportation sector, fisheries, tourism industry, and other businesses located along the

coast were heavily affected. Amongst the most damaged areas was Hambantota District in the far south. It suffered serious destructions in almost all communities along the shore. Kirinda village, in the Tissamaharama municipality, was to a large extent demolished. Kirinda, a predominantly Muslim community with a substantial Buddhist minority, was the site for the study we performed in May/June 2014.

Kirinda is, like most coastal communities in Sri Lanka, a fishing community, and it was precisely these fishermen and their households that were the worst affected group in the village. The aim of our study was to analyse the recovery process of the community in general, and the households in particular. Our findings point to the fact that most families lost almost everything to the devastating waves, and had to rebuild their lives from scratch. One positive aspect of the Tsunami was that the global community came together in a time of unmatched adversity to give them the relief and assistance they desperately needed. It is possible to argue that the many national and international organizations that came to the rescue in many respects compensated the traumatized people for their material losses. Our findings indicate that there were two different sides to the recovery process; one generally positive side, and one side that was more negative. Today, ten years after, several fishermen and community leaders point to the positive development projects that are the results of the aid and assistance rendered to the community when in great need. Some even talk about the Tsunami as a "Golden wave".

Introduction

In December 2004, Sri Lanka experienced one of the greatest disasters of all time, the Indian Ocean Tsunami. This disaster resulted in an enormous destruction in the form of loss of lives, wounded and traumatized people, destroyed homes, ruined businesses, destroyed boats and fishing gear, and grave damages to the environment and infrastructure. Having said that, it was possibly also a great moment in human history as states, corporations, NGOs, civil societies, private people etc. around the world came together to give a support and assistance of unprecedented magnitude to those in need (Jayasuriya et al., 2005; Weerakoon et al., 2007).

Kirinda, located in Hambantota district in the "Deep South" (Southern Province) of Sri Lanka is a coastal, fishing village that was heavily affected by the calamity. Against the backdrop that it is ten years since the disaster struck the village, we wanted to study and analyse the recovery process among the local households in Kirinda, and how the people perceived their present situation.

We conducted altogether 22 semi-structured interviews, using a qualitative methodological approach. The respondents represented families directly affected by the Tsunami, community authorities and village leaders, and government officials.

Research Objectives

Before starting the empirical survey, we defined that our main research objective was to find out how the local community households in Kirinda perceived the recovery-process that has taken place in the ten-year period after the Tsunami.

Research Questions

To concretize the main objective, we identified five research questions:

1. How does the Kirinda community perceive the role and importance of "bonds and bridges", i.e. internal networks and structures (bonds), and external assistance (bridges), in the aftermath of the Tsunami?

2. What were, according to their own perception, the factors of success or failure?

3. How do community members perceive the present situation?

4. How do community members perceive efforts done towards future disaster, risk reduction?

Methodology

Research Strategy

In the study, we applied basically a qualitative research approach to find answers to the research questions. The choice to use a qualitative approach was influenced by our quest to "see through the eyes of the people being studied" (Bryman 2008:285), and thus aim at capturing the respondents own perceptions.

As qualitative research strategy focuses on words and meanings rather than numbers in the collection and analysis of data, we found this strategy to be the most suitable to cover our main objective and research questions. Our assumption was that in order to cover our research objective, the local people of Kirinda were the most appropriate respondents to explain their perceptions of the recovery-process.

Data Collection, Sources and Methods

The interview is probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research, often applied in an unstructured or semi-structured form (Bryman, 2012, p, 469). This form of interview was employed as the main tool for data

collection in this study. The interviews were conducted in Kirinda during late May and early June 2014, and with the necessary assistance from an interpreter *cum* coordinator. Respondents were representatives from families directly affected by the Tsunami, community authorities and village leaders, and government officials. We conducted, in total, 22 semi-structured interviews.

Before starting the actual interviewing, we developed an interview guide. This guide was not a list of rigid questions as flexibility is important to vary the order of questions, following up leads, and discovering inconsistencies in answers. Consequently, our original guide was after some few interviews revised based on the responses and follow-up questions.

We discussed the issue of informed consent with the interpreter, and agreed on how we were to ensure this. We also raised this issue with the respondents before starting the interviews. All respondents were also informed that they would remain anonymous.

Sampling

All sampling for this research was non-probability sampling. The choice of respondents was based on convenience sampling, and purposive sampling. For most of the interviews, our coordinator had already secured appointments with the respondents based on convenience sampling. Finally, some respondents were sampled based on the purposive approach since we assumed that certain target respondents had particular knowledge regarding the recovery process of local community households that would be of great relevance for the study.

The target group for this study was local community households. We therefore conducted interviews with families directly affected by the Tsunami. To broaden our data bases, we also interviewed community authorities, and local government officials. Our sample comprised 19 household members from three different areas within the Kirinda village. Among them, nine were females, usually housewives, and ten were males, usually heads of households. The age range was from 29-59 years. The other interviewees were one former government official, one former principal of the community school who was responsible for the collaboration with government authorities and NGOs in the first few days and weeks after the Tsunami, and as such, an important community leader. Lastly, we interviewed a local businessman involved in the village fishing industry, and very much involved in the distribution of emergency aid after the Tsunami.

Challenges

We faced several challenges during the fieldwork. One challenge was the language barrier. As we were dependent on an interpreter for most of the interviews, we had

to trust her skills and abilities. As there were some instances where the interpreter took over the role as respondent, it was sometimes felt that we had problems capturing the actual respondent's own perceptions.

As most of our interviews took place within the respondents' homes, there were quite regularly small children present, sometimes making it hard for both interviewer and interviewee to stay focused on the topic.

The issue of time was also a constraint during the research process. With only a limited period to do the interviews and also limited time to analyse the data, the degree to which we were able to complete our main objective and answer the research questions thoroughly became problematic. Finally, we are aware that the identification and selection of the respondents made it difficult to come up with a representative sample of the entire population. Cultural issues and language barriers limited our possibilities to select our own sample for this study, which opens the possibility that we were not being able to grasp the full picture. We feel, however, confident that we have understood the basic features of the recovery process, as we have presented our findings for a wider audience of Sri Lankans, and also by comparing our results with results from other studies.

Findings

Our field study generated some very interesting facts relating to the people's own perception of recovery from the disaster. The following sections discuss our main findings and analysis, and present a few case studies to illustrate key issues.

Local perceptions regarding bonds and bridges in relation to the recovery process

In this section, we discuss the internal and external structures, resources and networks that were employed in Kirinda during the emergency situation directly after the disaster, and in the ten-year recovery and reconstruction period after the Tsunami. Internal assistance refers to the engagement of local network ties, or "bonds", comprising members from the community or adjacent communities, relatives and other closely related persons or groups. The role of external relationships, "bridges" refer to "outside", extra-communal, national and international agencies, such as NGOs, external, informal support groups, government authorities, etc. that contributed with various resources, mostly of a financial type, to the local people (Newman and Dale, 2005).

Already at this early stage of the presentation, it is important to note the fact that almost all of the respondents emphasized that the immediate emergency assistance, i.e. the assistance that appeared on the scene only minutes and hours

after the waves, came from relatives, other community members, or people from surrounding communities, for instance from the close by town of Tissamaharama. As an example, several of those who were caught by the waves and taken by the sea, were rescued from drowning by their relatives or neighbours. The secondary role in the immediate emergency situation was played by local, religious organisations. Government bodies, like the police and the army, were also, to some degree, involved in rescue operations and in ensuring the delivery of victims to nearby hospitals for medical attention. Relatives and other local community members were invaluable in the identification of deceased people, tracing of missing members, and re-unification of family members. Several mothers and fathers were separated from their children when the waves struck, but many were successfully reunited.

About one to two days after the waves crashed in, some local opinion leaders formed a coordination committee. The principal of the local school took the responsibility for the overall coordination between the supporting groups that came to rescue and the local community. This was of crucial importance in generating an orderly and organised flow of external assistance to the people, i.e. bridging activities. The committee made a list of all affected people, a list that was used for the distribution of assistance. The committee also became the consulting body for most of the external aid organisations, through which also community needs were identified. For example, initial discussions regarding resettlement plans were done with this committee.

The assistance generated from within the community was considered as absolutely crucial in building coherent activities regarding the psychosocial recovery process. The respondents talked about how living together in the refugee camps and temporary houses helped them to talk about their traumas and reduce their feelings of fears, worries and anxieties regarding the situation they were in, and about their concerns for the future.

Their religious bonds, among both Muslims and Buddhists, served as sources of intrinsic power to overcome the fears of present and future challenges. The Muslim community in Kirinda received support from people from Colombo, Tissamaharama and overseas diaspora Sri Lankans in the form of food, groceries and other types of material support to assist the victims. This help was brought and delivered to the community through the coordination committee that ensured the distribution to the affected people.

An important bridge was the external assistance that came in the form of material and psychosocial support from NGOs like the World Vision, USAID, CARE international, Goal, ASPIC, and Collier International. All respondents reported that they had received material support from either one or several of these organisations. Both the administrative head of the village, the *Grama*

Sevaka (GS), [6] and the coordinator of the committee confirmed that they had been working closely with these organisations. Materials received from the NGOs included food, household items, resettlement houses and economic livelihood support. Regarding resettlement housing, World Vision, GOAL, and Collier International constructed and allocated houses to affected families.

People resettled by World Vision were moved to new plots, but they retained the ownership of land where they had resided before the Tsunami. People under the Collier International housing scheme were resettled at the plots where they lived before the Tsunami. The people resettled by GOAL had originally been part of the ASPIC scheme, but since this scheme did not materialise, GOAL took over in order to finish the construction plan and resettle the families. The variation between the various NGO schemes where substantial. For instance, the clients under the GOAL scheme were not at all happy with their situation. As one of the respondents under this scheme argued, their houses were poorly constructed and the roof leaked whenever it rained. In addition, although the roads within the GOAL scheme were upgraded with tarmac, they were not properly maintained.

Psychosocial support by NGOs included activities like professional health workers talking with affected people, especially those who had lost their loved ones. They also organised entertainment for school pupils to cater for their mental welfare. Children were given toys to ease their minds, and also a huge children's park was constructed by CARE International near the World Vision colony. However, this park was abandoned and is now covered by shrubs. The leader of the coordination committee explained that he had recommended a different location for the construction of this park, namely close to the beach were people before the Tsunami used to bring their children to play, but the NGO had ignored the advice.

Successes and Failures

Obviously, the Tsunami left a significant impact on the household community in Kirinda. According to numbers provided by a village leader, 68 people lost their lives in the Kirinda village. Other than the loss of human lives, the waves devastated a huge number of houses and boats, and a lot of fishing and business equipment. Most of what was destroyed has been replaced, either by the government or the aid agencies. Approximately two years after the disaster, most of those who had lost their homes were settled in new houses. The majority of boat owners who had lost their boats were provided with new ones within a year or two. Other items,

---

6   A *Grama Sevaka, GS,* (*Gama Niladhari* in the Sinhala language) or "village leader", is a public official appointed by the government to carry out administrative duties in his/her area of jurisdiction, which is a subunit under the district headed by the District Secretary. The GS is both an administrative and judicial position, but not (formally) political.

like furniture, kitchen appliances, clothes etc. lost in the waves were also either replaced or repaired. However, our findings from the Kirinda field study reveals varying opinions among the households and officials about which efforts were considered successful, and which were considered as failure, during the recovery process.

The recovery process after the Tsunami has left many positive footprints in the Kirinda villages despite some flaws in the planning and implementation of the recovery process. In general, the respondents expressed positive feelings regarding the reception of permanent houses. Most of the people explained that they received what was necessary during their two to three year's stay in temporary shelters. Still, the respondents expressed mixed feelings when it comes to what was happening during the first years of the recovery process. This can, at least partly, be explained by the fact that there were several NGOs, private donors, and government organizations in operation within a huge number of development activities, but there was a great variation between the various agencies. Due to limited time, our study group covered only three major resettlement areas, or colonies, in and around the Kirinda village, respectively restructured by World Vision, Collier International and ASPIC International.

What we found in the World Vision colony was that most of the residents did not complain about quality of houses. Their major source of criticism was regarding dishonesty in the distribution of houses, the size of the houses and the sanitation conditions. However, the majority of our respondents acknowledged that they received basic and timely recovery assistance from World Vision. They account their feelings of security to the location of the new colony.

In the other two sectors or colonies we visited, with houses provided by ASPIC/GOAL and Collier International, we found that the respondents revealed severe discontent because of what they considered to be fake promises, the quality of the houses, and also the structure and the dishonesty in the implementation of the recovery process. Consequently, most of the respondents in the Collier International and ASPIC/GOAL colonies expressed varying degrees of discontent with the resettlement process. Neither the government authorities, nor the international NGO's had included them in the planning process, and most of time these agencies deceived the locals and gave false promises.

According to residents of Collier International colony, and the leader of the coordination committee, the first sample houses were very nice, impressive even. They were designed by a famous Japanese architect who visited the area to learn about local ways of constructing houses before starting the construction work. Because of the design and the use of local materials, they even won a prize for construction of the best tsunami houses. The affected people, therefore, agreed on Collier's implementation plans, but in reality, what actually

happened was that not even a single house was built according to the sample. Instead, second-class construction materials were used, and the houses were of a poor quality.

Another issue raised by the respondents was neglect of the religious values of the Muslim community, for instance that the entrance to the washroom and toilet was located in the living-room area, so that anybody could watch people entering or leaving the washroom/toilet room, something which is completely unacceptable to Muslims. The same feature was also found in certain World Vision houses.

The respondents also explained that the District Secretary[7] came to Kirinda together with the local community leader, *Grama Sevaka* (GS), and suggested a relocation plan for them. According to the plan, the local people were not allowed to build a new house on the same site as that of the old house. If they did, that land would be confiscated by the government. If, however, they chose to build a new house on the land allocated to them by the authorities, they would be given a grant of 250,000 rupees to improve their standard of living in addition to a new house. This "rule" was, however, never implemented by the authorities. Some respondents claimed that there was a hidden political agenda behind this plan, namely that politicians tried to exploit the situation and use the relocation plan for their own advantage. Only a few people were really interested in re-building their houses on the old site, but some of them wanted to sell the property to private, business persons to be used, for instance, as sites for hotels. To stop this, the politicians wanted to purchase this land by the beach for themselves to do business, for instance building hotels, or selling it to potential hotel builders.

To complement the interviews conducted with the households, we also interviewed the present Grama Sevaka, GS, (village leader) and the former Grama Sevaka (who was in charge at the time of the disaster). According to the present GS, the discontent that was revealed regarding the quality of the houses was mainly connected to government authorities and contractors hired by the Collier International. The government and Collier International did not have adequate supervision of the construction process, and allowed the NGOs to make fragile houses using sub-standard materials. The GS explained that he raised his concerns about construction issues with the director of Collier International, but his concerns were not taken into consideration. However, as compensation for the building failures, and in order to settle the complaints, Collier International gave the residents that were reconstructing their houses an additional amount of 50,000 rupees to make necessary repairs and renovation of the structure. The former GS explained that one responsible government minister had made false promises to the innocent villagers when he promised to give them 250,000 rupees if they moved to the site allocated by the government. This promise was only used as a tactic to discourage members

7   The administrative head of Hambantota District, appointed by the government.

from settling at the former housing area that was situated close to the sea. Despite these fake promises, people insisted anyway on settling down and rebuilding their houses at the places they had lived before the Tsunami, even if these sites were exposed to risks.

When it comes to the Portuguese Association for Cancer Research (ASPIC) International's role in building homes for the Buddhist part of the population, the management of ASPIC consulted the residents regarding the location for resettlement. Initially they came to an agreement, deciding to build at a certain site. This agreement was, however, changed largely due to government decisions. According to the GS, these residents were neglected by the government regarding facilities because they opposed government regulations and instead trusted ASPIC international. In some respects, the locals found themselves in a crossfire between the government and ASPIC. Therefore, the project was stopped because it became too controversial. As a result, ASPIC did not complete their project of 50 houses. They left after building just 16 unfinished houses. After that, GOAL International selected 11 of these houses in the ASPIC sector and completed them.

Most of the affected people revealed that they sensed injustice regarding the distribution of assistance in the recovery period. The majority expressed the opinion that they did not feel that aid had been distributed according to the merits of being deserving, or undeserving. The general opinion was that distribution was governed on the basis of political gains or on the basis of personal friendships and relations. However, despite this sense of injustice and unfairness, people admitted that the majority got a fair financial assistance but only for a short period. Due to unfair distribution of relief means, most of the directly affected people claimed that they had faced severe economic challenges. When we raised this issue with the community leader, GS, he explained that there had been cases of unfair distribution of houses and material goods and supplies, but he claimed this had not happened at the cost of the affected people. The majority of affected people got all essentials necessary to sustain both their livelihood and businesses.

Ten years after the Tsunami Kirinda appears to have totally changed. Broken and worn-down roads have been replaced by tarmac roads. The old and worn-down local Muslim school received 120 million rupees in aid from UNICEF, and with this changed to become a front-runner school with enhanced facilities that have, for instance, attracted new and better teachers. Before the Tsunami, the people of Kirinda had to travel 16 km to get to the hospital. Today, there is a fully furnished, modern hospital within the village. Positive changes have also reached the fishing industry that sustains the livelihood of the majority of people in the community. Before the Tsunami, there were 50 motor boats in Kirinda, today there are approximately 200. Overall, the respondents, the village leader, and government officials seem pleased with the post-tsunami reconstruction of Kirinda.

Despite all the facts and complaints from the affected households presented to him, the former GS was generally satisfied with the recovery process. According to

him, 80% of the houses are successfully completed. He considered that the recovery process progressed smoothly, except for some few blemishes that he claimed were due to government negligence. Like the present community leader, he also perceives the Tsunami as "the Golden Waves" for the Kirinda community.

Evaluating the Present Status Quo

In this section, we take a closer look at people's general perception of the present *status quo* looking at the social situation, the educational situation, health situation, and other important topics. Despite the fact that the overall response from the interviewed people regarding their general satisfaction with the present situation was positive, everyone expressed that for different reasons their livelihood situation was better before the Tsunami struck.

The Social Situation

Socially, people said that Kirinda was a better community before the Tsunami, as it was more integrated with people more closely knit together (stronger bonds). After the Tsunami, there was still unity among the people, but people in general had become more "private" and individualistic, busier in building their own lives. Furthermore, religion played an important role in the recovery process. Immediately after the disaster struck, people turned their attention to the religious centres for prayers and observance. In so doing, a strong sense of unity and solidarity was created among people. This sentiment is not so strong anymore. People seem to have forgotten the important role of God (Allah).

The Educational Situation

The educational system is perceived to be far better at present than before the Tsunami. The reason mostly quoted is the establishment of the new school with many facilities that were not available before. This has also attracted new and better teachers to the community. UNICEF not only sponsored a new school building, but also supplied the school with facilities like, for instance, computer labs. This was considered to be a great improvement as children and people in Kirinda before the Tsunami did not know how to use a computer or the internet. This was also made possible because of improved telecommunications infrastructure that enabled the school to provide computer training for the students. The general opinion among community authorities was that most of the Kirinda people now own a mobile phone with data usage facilities.

The Health Situation

Before the Tsunami, there was no hospital in Kirinda, and the people had to go to other towns to get medical attention and treatment. The nearest hospital was 16 km from Kirinda. After the Tsunami, a modern, well-equipped hospital was built. This makes people feel safer, and it has improved the health condition among the people.

Some of the people who suffered a mental trauma have received professional help at the hospital. This, together with strong community ties, has made it possible to overcome the adversities raised in their hearts and minds due to the disaster.

Infrastructure and transport

The infrastructure and transportation to and from the village have improved radically after the Tsunami. The roads are often tarmacked, and there can now be observed a huge number of three-wheeler vehicles that are used as a mode of transportation. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has sponsored the main road into Kirinda. This has really improved the local businesses, especially the fisheries.

Perceptions regarding disaster preparedness

The local leaders and people themselves explained that an alarm system has been installed at the village school as an early warning mechanism. The community leaders also mentioned that several drills have been organised (three in the last 10 years) to prepare people in case of another disaster. However, there were mixed responses regarding the importance and the attendance to these drills. For instance, some respondents from the World Vision colony said that since this colony was based on the premise that the location should be secure in case of storms or floods, there would be no need for them to escape from their homes in case of emergencies; therefore, they did not need to attend the drills. On the issue of future preparedness, most people were of the opinion that what happened once will never happen again, and if it did, then it was the will of God. Because of their strong religious beliefs, most of the people were also very adamant in the fact that if they are meant to survive another disaster they will, if they are meant to die, they will. In many respects, Karma was to the Buddhist, what Allah was to the Muslims: you cannot escape your destiny in an emergency situation.

Conclusion

When analysing the relief and recovery assistance and the long term impacts of this assistance, we found that the respondents in general praised the role played by the local community, but that they also appreciated what the NGO's had done for them. The respondents had, however mixed feelings, and more negative than positive feelings, regarding the role played by national and local government authorities. According to the respondents' views, the government did not use a penny out of its own pocket to relieve the affected, and that the external aid coming in *via* the Government was distributed without taking into account who deserved it, and who did not. Therefore, the recovery process could have been far better and far smoother if the distribution process had been more accurate and fair. To a large extent, they blamed government authorities for weaknesses and shortcomings during the recovery process.

We also looked at some successful and some not so successful efforts during the recovery process, including the delivery of houses and replacement of business and occupational resources which could have provided an important starting point to improve the people's livelihood situation. Some had however received financial aid from the government and/or NGOs that made it possible for them to jumpstart some normalcy into their lives. Describing their present conditions, the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the state of social affairs. They praised the situation in their neighbourhoods and communities, emphasizing the social ties between people. Although the Tsunami had somehow disrupted the social network in the wake of the disaster, they felt that this network it was by now repaired. They also claimed that the health and educational situation was better than ever with a new and modern school and hospital catering for the needs of the locals. Both infrastructure and transportation services had been improved compared with the situation before the disaster. There was one aspect where the respondents were not entirely satisfied with the present situation: they felt that the general economic situation had deteriorated in the last few years due to an overall rise in the cost of living. They appreciated that this has nothing to do with Tsunami. However, it was a common sentiment among the majority of the interviewees that they their individual economic situation was worse today as a direct impact of what they lost in the Tsunami.

References

Bryman, A. (2008) *Social Research Methods* (3rd edition). New York: Oxford University Press

Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods*, (4th edition). New York: Oxford University Press

Jayasuriya, S., Steele, P., Weerakoon, D., Knight-John, M., and N. Arunatilake (2005) Post-tsunami recovery: issues and challenges in Sri Lanka. ADB Institute Research Paper. Asian Development Bank Institute: http://www.adbi.org/files/2005.10.dp39.tsunami.recovery.srilanka.pdf (accessed 15 December 2015)

Nayaran, D. (1999) *Bonds and Bridges: Social capital and poverty*. Poverty Group, PREM, Washington D.C, World Bank: https://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/9747/narayan.pdf (accessed 15 December 2015)

Newman, L. and A. Dale (2005) The role of agency in sustainable local community development. *Local Environment*, 10(5), pp. 477-486

Weerakoon, D., Jayasuriya, S., Arunatilake, N. and P. Steele (2007) *Economic Challenges of Post-Tsunami Reconstruction in Sri Lanka*. Tokyo: Asian Development Bank Institute, Discussion Paper no. 75: http://www.adbi.org/discussionpaper/2007/08/31/2354.sri.lanka.post.tsunami.reconstruction/ (accessed 6 October 2015)

Appendix 1:
Case studies of the Tsunami recovery process in Kirinda Community

In order to give a more detailed picture on how local people from Kirinda perceived the recovery process from the Tsunami, some case studies are presented here.

Case No. 1; Interview with woman in World Vision house

When the Tsunami hit this family it comprised of a husband, wife and two sons; aged eight and six. As the waves approached, the children were put into a vehicle and sent to safety. The husband and wife started running to higher ground, along with a servant woman and an 11-year-old female neighbour. Despite their efforts to escape, the small group was caught in the waves, struggling for about 20 minutes until they got on a slab for safety. They then discovered that the servant had disappeared. When they were rescued, they were taken for medical care by members of the local community. The wife had severe injuries to her head, but she survived. The Tsunami cost the family their dream home, built only two years prior to the disaster. The husband worked in a government organization, but on the side, he had also started a diving and sea shell business. Several oxygen tanks and other equipment from this business were either lost or stolen during the event.

After receiving proper medical attention at a medical centre, the family was set up in a Government run refugee camp. They did not stay here for long, and moved in with the wife's family. One month later, they moved to the temporary houses provided by the Red Cross where they received free electricity, water, food, clothes, home appliances, furniture and other miscellaneous items from several different NGOs. Two years later World Vision Foundation built permanent houses for them.

Since the husband was a government servant, the family received the monthly LKR 5000 assigned by the government for relief to such families. Four of the oxygen tanks lost were replaced by the HDCC. Other than that the family did not receive any other financial aid, but the wife and children received six months of psychological counselling from the NGOs.

The family said that they have received some compensation, but not as much as they lost. They are, anyway, thankful for the relief and assistance provided to them. The wife commented that it took them two to three years to be settled back into their normal life routine. The children started schooling within two to three months after the disaster, getting busy with school activities. The husband's diving and sea shell business took off after some years and he has moved to the Qatar-Middle East to extend the business. She said that now the family is doing better economically, but also socially as most of her old neighbours were located in the same vicinity as well. However, the wife still misses her old house, the house of her dreams, which they lost to the waves.

We observed that the family lived very near to her extended family i.e. the wife's parents, sisters and brothers were located in the same vicinity (but in a non-affected area). This helped them psychologically, and today, no one in the family has mental problems. Furthermore, strong family bonds aided the husband to get back on his feet and start the business again. They are

living in a very comfortable environment surrounded by their loved ones and seemed to do well in most aspects.

Case No. 2: Woman in World Vision House accused of getting a house without being directly affected by the Tsunami

At the time of Tsunami, this family consisted of a husband, wife, five months pregnant, and one son, who had moved from Colombo to Kirinda shortly before the Tsunami. The husband did not have a specific, fixed occupation, but they had opened a small hotel on land belonging to the wife's father, who originally came from Kirinda. When the wave struck, the wife were caught and was slightly injured. Although both the hotel business and the buildings where they were living were affected, no lives were lost.

The wife was immediately taken to the hospital for medical assistance, and then taken to a refugee camp. As she was pregnant, she was given all the necessary supplies to cater for a newborn baby, just in case. They only spent five days in the refugee camp before they moved to a temporary house set up by Care Foundation. About one and half to two years later, the family was able to move into a permanent house provided by World Vision. The permanent house they now live in actually belongs to the wife's father, as he was a permanent resident of Kirinda, and thus entitled to a house. This situation has created a lot of discontent in the local community, as it was felt that the house was given to the family unfairly as they recently had moved into the community. The woman mentioned that her father owned a piece of land in the area where Collier International set up Tsunami houses and because of that, her father actually received a house from Collier International as well. Additionally, her father lost a boat in the Tsunami, which was also replaced by one of the NGOs.

On top of that, the family received much financial assistance. First, they received LKR 3,000/- per month from the Red Cross (she did not remember the duration of this stipend). Then the husband obtained a grant of LKR 5,000/- and a loan of LKR 10,000/- from an NGO (she did not remember the name) to buy a *tuk-tuk* (three-wheel taxi) to gene-

rate a livelihood. She herself obtained a loan of LKR 15,000/- from Brac Foundation to buy a sewing machine to start a small business on her own.

The wife was very grateful for all the assistance the family had received. She said that before the disaster, her life was not settled, and her husband could not find a fixed occupation. After the Tsunami, they received a house, initial monthly stipend, loans to start business and get a job. Therefore, her family is living in a much better condition than before the disaster. Today, they have a very stable economy. All the children attend school, and she is happy with their progress. Overall, she is very pleased with the family's progress and recovery after the Tsunami.

What we could observe was that this family, unlike many others we had interviewed, received a lot more relief assistance. They were not entitled to obtain a new house as they lived in a rented place before the Tsunami, but the wife's father gave them his house in the World Vision colony. At the same time, the father got another house built by the Collier inter-

national. This meant that the father received two houses as a result of the Tsunami when he lost only one. Furthermore, the family received a lot of financial assistance, again unlike most other families, to buy equipment to start earning. Other families only got replacements for the items they had lost, and some did not even receive that.

Case No. 3; Interview with woman with family still living in a temporary house

This case came up as a very important turning point in our research as it seems to be highly controversial. There are two opposing views regarding this case, presented to us by two opposing parties. The first perspective is represented by a family living in the temporary house, the other from the retired Population Control Officer (who was serving at the time of the Tsunami). We have included his comments to see the case from both sides.

When the disaster struck, the family consisted of a husband and wife living together with the husband's parents and his brothers and sisters in a joint

extended family structure. According to Sri Lankan law, every newly married couple must register themselves as a separate family after marriage, even if they live in a joint family household. The wife said that they got married in 2003, but they were not registered. The extended family lost six members and their house in the disaster. Her husband was a farmer and a day labourer, but they also lost their family farmland in the disaster.

When the waves hit, the neighbours came to the rescue, and they were taken to the refugee camp where they stayed for three weeks. In some parts of Kirinda; for instance the Andra Gasiya division; the temporary houses were in fact tents. The family was given one tent that they shared with the husband's parents. They stayed in the tent for two years after which they were given a temporary house in the ASPIC colony. It was only the foundation and one foot of the building made out of bricks, the rest was also made out of tent material, tarpaulin. Another two years later, in 2008, the husband's parents were also given a house in the ASPIC colony. The parents received the LKR 5,000/- per month allowance from the Government for six months. Other than that, no financial assistance was given. Since 2008, when the husband's parents moved to the permanent house, her family has not received any support or assistance except for some medical assistance. Some counselling was also given for one year as she had been in shock and is still afraid of the sea. Some supplies were given by the GOAL Foundation, but other than that, not much help was extended to the family. According to her, the couple registered as married in 2009 at which time some houses were still vacant, but the couple was not considered for allocation, and the houses were given to some undeserving people.

According to the women, the family has not recovered from the impact of the Tsunami. They now have a disabled daughter, almost five years of age. The husband does some cultivation on government land, which he can be forced to vacate at any time. Some governmental officials even came and told the family to vacate the current impermanent house. However, after observing their situation the Government officer gave a signed letter saying that the family could live on this land and house indefinitely. But they do not have a deed and the land still belongs to the government. The house does not have an electricity or water connection, but some non-functioning taps and wires could be seen in the house. The house is in a poor state with walls of old tarpaulin material, which can be seen through, the roof is rusted iron sheets with holes all over, and there is no rear door. There is no bathroom or latrine inside the house, just an outdoor toilet without a

door. Considering all the problems they are facing, the women said that there has been no recovery for them after the Tsunami, and the living conditions have gone from bad to worse. The situation is precarious since they also have to take their daughter to Colombo for medical check-ups once every month, which is very expensive. According to her, the family is in a far worse condition now than before the disaster.

The GS officer serving at the time of Tsunami was contacted for information. When enquiring from him regarding the situation of the seemingly neglected family, still residing in the temporary house made out of tent material, the GS replied that he knew the family and their condition well. He said that no doubt the family is in dire need of help and support from the government and the local community. However, he explained, their current situation is not the result of the Tsunami. He explained that it was not a question of being registered as a family or not, but that the couple in question were not married at the time of the Tsunami. Both the man and woman were living with their respective parents at the time of the Tsunami, and got married after the disaster. Because they could not afford a house of their own, they stayed in the temporary house originally donated to the husband's parents. He said that according to government rules they had no formal claim to a permanent house built by any of the NGO's. Several people had fought for the couple and given them all the help they could, but to no avail. Also, he knew that the man was now farming on government land and in such cases, after a while such lands will be allotted to those cultivating it. So in reality, they are not in such a bad condition.

Here, we see separate views on an issue concerning the recovery process. On the one hand, we observed a family living in misery. The woman looked malnourished with a sick child on her lap, the house was breaking down, the toilet had no door, and there was no electricity or water connection, a situation caused by the fact, according to the woman, that the couple had not registered as a separate family. Therefore, they were not entitled to a house. For the woman and her family it was important to prove they were wrongfully neglected and not given the help they so desperately needed. On the other hand, according to the GS officer they were not entitled to get a separate house, as they did not fulfil the formal requirements, as they were not even married at the time of the Tsunami. We cannot say what are the actual facts here, but it is a pity that the family does not get the help they need, Tsunami or not.

Chapter 7

Bonds or Bridges?

The Case of the Tourist Industry in Tangalle, Hambantota District

*Sandra Baldvinsson Sotkajærvi, Maria Sjuve, Pia Cecilie Wedø,
Rebecca Plath, Edwin Wuadom WardenWoode and Hilary A.
Enyiekere in association with Damith Priyantha (HDCC coordinator)*

Abstract

Sri Lanka was the second worst affected country by the Indian Ocean Tsunami on December 26th 2004, with between 30 to40.000 deaths, tens of thousands wounded, and approximately half a million people made homeless. Overall, the Tsunami affected two-thirds of the coastline of Sri Lanka. One of the hardest hit sites was the tourist areas in Tangalle, a town of about 10,500 people in the Hambantota District. In Hambantota District, approximately ten per cent of the population depends on tourism for their livelihood, with Tangalle as the most important tourist town in the district. The main objective of this study has been to expand our understanding and knowledge of the recovery process that has taken place in the tourist sector in Tangalle in the ten years after the Tsunami, and to identify both the successful and the not so successful activities and endeavours during this

process, seen mainly from the affected population's point of view. In our study, we have used the concepts of "bonds" and "bridges" to analyse the role of the internal ties and networks (bonds) and the relationships (bridges) between Tangalle and external agencies and institutions in the recovery process. The main finding from our study is that, although challenges still exist, the tourist industry in Tangalle has generally recovered from the Tsunami. Quite interestingly, the people interviewed were of the opinion that the civil war, lasting for thirty years, and ending with a total defeat for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009, was a stronger strain on the tourist industry than the Tsunami. The end of the civil war had had a remarkable effect on the growth of the tourism sector in Tangalle. Most hoteliers interviewed were therefore positive regarding the future of their businesses.

Introduction

Sri Lanka was the second worst affected country of the Tsunami December 26th 2004, with between 30 to 40.000 deaths, tens of thousands seriously wounded, and approximately half a million people made homeless. Overall, the Tsunami affected two-thirds of the coastline of Sri Lanka, where the eastern, north-eastern and south-eastern coast of Sri Lanka were particularly affected. As tourism was suspended at the height of its peak season, many people working in coastal hotels and guest houses were affected (UNDP, 2005).

According to the Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce (HDCC, 2005; HDCC, 2006), one of the hardest hit sectors within the Hambantota district was the tourist industry in the town of Tangalle, with a death toll of about 400 people. Also according to the HDCC (2005), around ten percent of Hambantota district's population depends on tourism for their livelihood, with Tangalle as the most important centre for tourism. Based on our findings, the number of people engaged in this industry is steadily increasing. The main objective of this study is to expand our understanding and knowledge about the tourist sector in Tangalle's recovery process in the ten years after the Tsunami. Further, we seek to identify any specific obstacles that may have occurred during this time. In order to evaluate the success of the recovery process, we have found it necessary to address the tripartite relationship between local government authorities, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGO and INGO), and the local people.

In our analysis we use the terms of "bonds" and "bridges" (Nayaran, 1999; Newman and Dale, 2005), where bonds describe the local relationships and networks used in the recovery process, and bridges describe the relationship to "external"

organisations and agencies, such as government authorities and institutions, and NGOs and INGOs, but also to other voluntary commitments, for instance from tourists or outside businesspeople.

Our study was based on a qualitative methodology with a specific focus on the role and function of aid and assistance during the ten years after the Tsunami. Through in-depth interviews with members of the local tourist industry, consisting of Hotel and Restaurant Owners (HRO), tourist shops, local businesses (suppliers), NGOs, banks, and local governmental authorities, we have been able to the identify post-disaster experiences of the local people, more specifically the obstacles in regards to the recovery process. Our specific research questions were the following:

1.   What was the impact of the Tsunami on the tourist sector in Tangalle?

2.   How did the affected businesses manage to recover? (What resources were made available and by whom?)

3.   What have been the main challenges and constraints for the tourist sector in Tangalle during the recovery process?

4.   What are the future prospects of the tourism sector in Tangalle?

Methodology

Since the research objective was to understand how people working in the tourist industry in Tangalle were affected by the Tsunami, and how they have managed to recover, we felt it was sensible to use a qualitative approach (Bryman, 2012). In order also to obtain an in-depth understanding of how disaster risk reduction (DRR) programmes may have had an effect on tourism, we believed it was important that the informants could speak freely and present their perspectives and perceptions in their own words.

In order to understand people's perceptions, and to compare the various conditions and experiences of what took place during the recovery process, we visited different sites in Tangalle, including eight small and medium size hotels (both inland and at the beach), one bakery that supplied baked goods to hotels, one local NGO, a local branch of the People's Bank, a government institution and a transport and rental company. The selection of respondents for our interviews was based primarily on contacts made by our coordinator Mr. Damith Priyantha, who also functioned as an interpreter. We applied semi-structured interviews, meaning that the topics and questions were prepared beforehand in the form of an interview guide. The sequence and importance of questions were determined during the interview according to the situation and the person being interviewed. Flexibility was important, as the inter-

viewer must be able to relate questions to each individual interviewee. We used the same interview guide for all interviews.

During the study, we conducted 17 in-depth interviews with 19 different respondents comprising 13 men and six women. Each interview lasted for up to one hour. Some of the informants interviewed expressed concerns regarding the sensitivity of information. They feared losing their jobs and/or getting in trouble with the government. We explained that anonymity was a basic concern for this study. Interestingly, however, most of our respondents expressed that they would have no problem being named in the study report.

Findings

Limitations and challenges

When doing a field study for the first time in a foreign, cultural context, the challenges are many. The researchers' own background, including such factors as gender, age, educational level and cultural norms not only affect the way we position ourselves during the fieldwork, but also the way local people perceive us. Luckily, all informants seemed very interested to talk with us, and to share their stories with us. Nevertheless, the fact that we were sometimes as many as six people conducting an interview may obviously affect the quality of the data received, as the respondents may have felt uncomfortable talking to so many foreigners at the same time. They never, however, expressed that this was a problem for them.

The language barrier was another challenge we encountered in the field. Overcoming this obstacle required that we had to use an interpreter in some of the interviews. We are aware of the fact that it may have implications when sensitive information goes through a third person. This might have led to misunderstandings and loss of important details. This was an issue we discussed with the interpreter. We should also mention that none of the respondents was acquainted with the concept of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), a fact that limited the data collection on this topic.

Understanding the recovery process – Bonds and bridges

The disaster: Day 1 and the following days

Almost all the participants in this study were themselves directly affected by the Tsunami, with only two indirectly affected. The information gathered is thus based on an eyewitness account of the disaster. This section focuses on the initial phase, i.e. from the actual event when the Tsunami occurred and the few

following days and weeks. It is actually an account of the force of the wave, the experiences of the survival victims, and how the rescue operations and emergency assistance took place.

The information gathered about the first impacts of the disaster is dominated by the narrative on how the gigantic waves cracked down on them with an immense power, and then the subsequent effects on the communities and the tourist sector (see Appendix, Case 1). It starts from their recollection of some strange movements in the sea, continued with gigantic waves appearing as a surprising force coming from the sea, and then to the destruction of the environment, properties and businesses. This dramatic event led to an immediate collapse of the Tangalle tourist industry. When the waves struck, none of the respondents knew what a tsunami was, or how to react in such a situation. Everyone was taken by surprise. The only thing to do was to try to escape. Many of the respondents managed to escape but lost family members as well as all or most of their belongings and businesses. The tourist industry was almost totally crushed by one blow as the tourists fled the area and all attractions, nature, hotels and restaurants were damaged.

The respondents reacted different to the Tsunami, and also told different stories from the day when the Tsunami struck. Some of them were carried almost three kilometres inland by the waves, some managed to hang on to a roof, while others were able to climb a palm tree. The majority of the people took to their heels and were able to run to higher lying areas. After the shock, some took refuge in various institutions and places of worship. Those who had gone to the morning markets inland now tried to return to their properties to see what was left and what damage was inflicted. It was a sad day for all. This deep sadness was accentuated by the fact that there was no warning systems or secure places to hide. «The same night was a sleepless night» (male HRO).

There was a common perception among the respondents regarding the initial assistance and where it came from. Except for those that were indirectly affected (see Appendix, Case 2), the rest were assisted by local people from the same area, or people from the inland. Some also got help from tourists. The first days after the Tsunami was characterised by friends and relatives helping each other out. Some temples provided food, clothes and shelter for those who took refuge and were open for anyone who wanted help irrespective of religion. Affected people even started to provide self-help by organizing themselves into cooking groups collecting money and preparing food for those in need. Government aid did not come during the first days of the disaster. When they were asked what they believed was the reason for the government's absence, some answered that it might have been due to the logistics that were required before a massive aid operation could be organised. However, some INGOs and NGOs were able to move in with emergency aid packages during the initial phase. The victims' immediate needs were food, clothes, shelter and medicines. These items were provided as soon as roads

were cleared of debris and the infrastructure was functioning. The distribution of food and other basic stuff to the affected people was improved from day to day as many INGOs, NGOs and other agencies moved in to help. The assistance from INGOs and NGOs was, however, a delicate issue. While some respondents expressed a gratitude for the help they received from them, others blamed the organisations for being corrupt, spending money in improper ways, and taking advantage of the situation.

The recovery process and future prospect

It was now 10 years since the Tsunami struck the shores of Sri Lanka; leaving memories, breeding bonds, building bridges and presenting a new life ahead. This section presents our findings and analysis of the time period from a few weeks after the Tsunami, the following ten years, but also the future prospects.

The rebuilding process

Among those hoteliers and restaurant owners directly affected by the Tsunami, the timeframe for rebuilding their businesses differ from one to six years, with most of the respondents saying they had completed the rebuilding around 2007. One hotel stands out from the others as it was fully rebuilt and back in business after only ten months. A possible reason behind this extraordinary case might be that the hotelier (HRO) had political influence and important connections, but obviously, he was also an efficient entrepreneur. This hotelier was staying at the restaurant the day the Tsunami struck, and was carried three kilometres into the interior with the second wave. Unconscious, he was brought to the hospital but after a week, he was back on his feet. He wanted to start the rebuilding immediately but explained that he could not do it due to restrictions from the government. Instead, he went to the bank where he got a loan. He also got financial donations from some individual tourists, and good help from the HDCC, friends and family. Another challenge for him – which was also mentioned by all of our respondents – was the lack of infrastructure after the tsunami. The beach area was damaged, with blocked roads, mud, debris and lack of electricity. Together with friends and family, the hotelier carried all the necessary building materials to the site, and started the rebuilding process after only one and a half months. Though this case differs from the others in terms of the rebuilding timeframe, it also shares a common feature with several other cases, namely that it was rebuilt on the exact same spot as it had been located before the Tsunami.

The role of the government

Prior to the Tsunami, the government had set up a buffer zone of 30 meters from the shore, implying that no buildings were allowed closer than 30 metres from the shore. This zone was not a security zone, but a zone to ensure that the hotels should not close the access along the sea. This buffer zone was extended to 100 meters after the Tsunami for security measures. With one exception, all the hotels belonging to the interviewed hoteliers were rebuilt and located at the beach limit of 30 metres, clearly ignoring the 100-meter buffer zone policy. The respondents told us that the major reason for this was connected to the ownership of the land where their hotels and restaurants were located. They did not own the land situated 100 meter from the shore. Several HROs expressed anger towards government restrictions, as they were threatened by the government to have their hotels torn down if they built them at the old site. When asked about the risk of getting his hotel demolished by the government, another HRO responded: *"I don't care anymore. If they (ed. note the government) comes and destroy it, then let them. There is always a risk because you never know with those guys".* He was very dissatisfied with the government's role in the entire recovery process. One specific example he brought up was that the government first announced through public media that the electricity and water should be distributed for free during the rebuilding process, but later they told the citizens to bring their bills for payment: *"How could we do that when roads were blocked and everything was damaged?"*

These two mentioned respondents expressed a deep dissatisfaction with the government. Whereas one of them received financial support from the NGO, Adopt Sri Lanka, none of them got any help from the government during the recovery process. Most of the other HROs interviewed said that they received 5000 rupee per month for one year in addition to necessary food and clothes. They also got Tsunami loans. These were loans with low interest (9% instead of 15 to 16%) aimed at Tsunami affected businesses where the biggest group of recipients in Tangalle was the tourist businesses. All respondents who had taken this loan said that it was a great contribution to the rebuilding of the hotels, though not enough for full recovery. An HRO (male) said: *"The government did their best. It was not good enough but they did the best they could"* and followed up with *"we are not satisfied with the government's assistance now – ten years after – we need skilled labour and training programmes: the government can solve this problem, but they don't. They only take persons from the street and ask them to work."*

The role of NGOs and INGOs

An important finding is that most respondents felt that INGOs and NGOs con-
tributed more to the recovery process than the government, both in scope and
scale. The INGOs and NGOs built temporarily houses, provided food, clothes
and grants, and, most importantly, filled up the non-damaged hotels when they
arrived on the scene. An anonymous (female) owner of a small home-stay near
the beach told us that *"some people were very poor before the Tsunami, and
became rich after"* due to the help given by NGOs. According to another guest-
house owner *"there was improvement with my business after the Tsunami and
that is why I have gotten my own license now"*. While some expanded the
number of rooms in the rebuilding process, others rebuilt with more durable
materials.

   In spite of this positive attitude to the INGOs and NGOs, there are a few
cases where respondents expressed mistrust towards them, and blamed them
for corruption. A male hotel employee said that *"the NGO workers had a great
time, drinking wine and spending a lot of money that I don't think was their
own. We couldn't do anything, but accept what we were given, because these
were the people that came to help us."*

   A "beachman" (i.e. a man selling souvenirs etc. to tourists on the beach)
described something similar. He thought the NGOs' aid and assistance was
not very transparent because most of what they brought was not really useful.
Due to limited time, we were not able elaborate on this issue. Therefore, it is
important to stress that even though there might have been corruptive prac-
tices, the views presented above are these respondents' own perceptions and not
necessarily the truth. As the head of the NGO 'Business Creation' in Tangalle
(Appendix, Case 2) made us aware of, the attitude of people was often coloured
by unrealistic demands or desires for what the INGOs, NGOs and government
authorities could provide them with. This may be an important cause for the
accusations about corruptive practices among aid organisations.

Lack of synergy between the public and the private sphere

Based on the findings from the above sections, we may draw the conclusion that
there was a rather weak social relationship, or lack of synergy, between individuals
in the tourist industry and government authorities. This can be experienced by the
fact that, at one side, the individuals expect certain things from the government,
while they, on the other side, ignore governmental restrictions. Despite this lack of
synergy, the manager of Tangalle People's Bank informed us that the governmental
Tsunami loans were successfully repaid, with an almost 100% repayment rate after
five years. Both the local government, NGOs (aiding with business creations), and

the HRO agreed that loans and support received during the early recovery stages have been successfully repaid. Based on our findings, we assume that this successful repayment story is, largely, due to increased tourism in the aftermath of the Tsunami (and the civil war), with subsequent higher income to the hotels.

A male hotel owner expressed the role of the Tsunami in this manner: *The Tsunami was both a good thing and a bad thing".* While the Tsunami caused both short and long-term negative effects, such as loss of friends and family and destruction of businesses, there were also some positive impacts, such as, for instance, an expansion and upgrading of hotels and restaurants. Economically, all respondents except for one (see Appendix, Case 3) informed us that things are more or less back to normal, and that the tourist industry has improved after the Tsunami. Based on our findings, it seems to be a tendency that bridges rather than bonds have been most important in the long-term recovery process. It is, however, important to stress that since we are dealing with the tourist industry as a business sector, bridges have been a more important factor since access to capital was of such a vital concern.

The end of the war

Contrary to our initial idea that an immediate and successful post-tsunami recovery process would have a substantial impact on the tourist industry, it was interesting to note that the majority of our respondents believed that it was the end of the civil war in 2009 that has been the main reason for the success of the hotel industry in the recent years. Several respondents stated that tourists had forgotten about the Tsunami a short while after it happened, but that they were afraid of the war. Thus, it was after 2009 that tourism had this remarkable growth. An hotelier told us that *"the tourism is very good now, full rooms in the high seasons, and we also have a restaurant so we have many guests. It is a family hotel. I think it is going to be better in the future also as the tourist is not afraid."*

A female hotelier emphasised the importance of beautiful nature and long, white and clean beaches for tourists. This demand for "paradise" may also be a possible explanation why hotels were rebuilt close to shore. Those who started up their business before the end of the war in 2009, say that the same number of tourists came back right after they had re-opened their hotels and shops. However, the first two years after the Tsunami were very quiet due to the damaged hotels and restaurants.

Data gap 2006–2009

Regarding the recovery process, there seems to be a kind of gap in our data for the period between 2006 and the end of the war. None of our respondents actually mentioned any big challenges, developments or specific situations during this time. The reason for this data gap is most probably that people felt that when they had rebuilt their hotels after a couple of years, they received approximately the same number of tourists as before the Tsunami. So, the most substantial change they experienced was when the war ended in 2009. The most important challenges they have faced during the last decade, even after 2009, was mostly connected to lack of infrastructure, and the unwillingness of the government to listen to their claims and demands.

Disaster risk reduction

When studying the disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities organized by the government within the first months and years after the Tsunami, we found that little or no training has been carried out in recent years. This does not only go for DRR activities. The government's role in the recovery process decreased, almost seized up, after the first year. As one HRO told us: *"The government provided food and some money monthly that we used on essential needs. However, they stopped after one year. Ten years after, we do not receive any help from the government"*.

There was also diverging responses between the local government and HROs in regards to DRR training. While many HROs argued that the disaster training organized by the government after the Tsunami was no longer in operation, the local government secretary in an interview maintained that the training was organised once every year.

There are various opinions regarding the feeling of safety among the local people. To a certain degree, there seems to be a gender difference here. Women tended to answer that they were still afraid of the Tsunami, while men did not express any specific concerns in this regard. A female owner of a small hotel explained that she was especially worried when there is a rough sea, and that she was still afraid of going to sleep. Another female owner of a home-stay mentioned that she got afraid of the sound when big rocks crashed into each other, a sound that today comes from the building of wave break constructions – a governmental project. Some respondents were sceptical of this project when they said that it had already started causing environmental challenges such as noise pollution and beach removal. But also here the responses are ambivalent. Although the constructions are making the area safer, most respondents feared that the project could have negative long-term effects on the environment as well as the tourist industry.

When asked about emergency training as part of disaster management programmes, none of our respondents was aware of any taking place. We were often answered with a contra-question: "*What training do you mean?*" This strengthened our earlier findings that it has been due to a lack of government presence after the first year. The general response we were given was that there were no specific training programs for disaster preparedness other than an alarm system, which two of our respondents said they could not even hear. The rest gave quite different responses in regards to when and how the alarm system functioned as a drill. Other than this, one respondent said that they had received some training from the Navy Camp staff four or five times right after the Tsunami, but training ended a long time ago. It seems that the only drills taking place were between family and friends, a training based on the experiences from those who survived the Tsunami.

According to the local government Assistant Secretary, the 100-meter buffer zone regulation has now been amended to 60 meters in order to meet the demands of the tourist industry, while still maintaining some level of security. It was, however, clear from our observations that several hotels and restaurants were situated much less than 60 meters from the sea.

Whilst discussing with our respondents, we noticed that all respondents had a plan in mind of what they would do in case of a disaster, e.g. climbing a coconut tree or running to a higher ground, indicating that there was still a high consciousness about the possibility for future disasters. Some respondents, mostly female, were, quite clearly still very much afraid of future disaster.

The role of religion

An interesting finding from our study was the people's religious perceptions. The respondents from the study in Tangalle are Buddhists, and they demonstrated a high level of religious faith during the Tsunami events. This is also reflected in the answers we received in our interviews. Although the respondents in general considered the Tsunami in itself to be a natural phenomenon, the majority of them said that they and their families had been protected by Lord Buddha during the disaster. Some referred to the temples and Buddhist (or even Christian) statues, either in the hotels or at home, that were not damaged by the waves. They were proofs of the protection from Lord Buddha. A female hotelier referred to the importance of Karma by saying "*Every morning I clean the beach, so I take care of the environment and by doing so, the environment is taking care of me*". This task gave her a good Karma.

A man who lost his daughter insisted that the death of his daughter did not alter his perception about Lord Buddha's role in his life: Buddha must have had his

own plans for the destiny of this family. Similarly, a female respondent (see Appendix, Case 3) displayed the same belief and courage in Lord Buddha, despite the fact that the disaster had destroyed both her business and marriage, and put her in a constant dispute with the authority in Sri Lanka. She still believed that it was Lord Buddha who saved the life of her ex-husband who was severely injured.

From the responses, it seems fair to claim that the victims' religious faith provided answers to their daily problems and the hardships encountered in life as well as a being a refuge to unanswered questions about the purpose in life.

Future prospects

Considering the current situation, all respondents, except for one (see Appendix, Case 3), were optimistic for the future of the tourist industry. Many had plans and initiated efforts to increase the business capacity (more rooms, more land, and more workers) in anticipation of an increasing number of tourists in the future. A couple that owns a small bakery providing the hotels with fresh breads and pastries, told us that their future plan was to relocate their bakery to a bigger premises in town, instead of inland where they are now located. A female home-stay owner wanted to renovate the rooms and build a new bathroom. A female hotelier and her father were hoping to build a new kitchen. The owners of small hotels and souvenir shops believed that the competition from newer and bigger hotels would give a positive impact on their businesses. Though they were hopeful and positive about the future of tourism, some also expressed a concern regarding the preservation of the natural environment. Others argued that Tangalle needs new attractions such as a better nightlife to attract more tourists. The government, for its part, has a goal of attracting 2.5 million tourists to Sri Lanka by 2016. Specific development projects are planned for Tangalle, such as a botanical garden, bird watching places and a blowhole-viewing place. As part of the big national enterprise plan, huge infrastructure development projects are going on across the country and some of the biggest in Hambantota district. In this regard, the future looks bright for the tourist industry in Tangalle.

Conclusion

The 2004 Tsunami had a massive impact on tourism in Tangalle. Most of the hotels, restaurants and attractions were completely destroyed, with beaches filled with mud and debris, leaving no place for tourists to stay and enjoy beach life. However, most HROs were able to rebuild their businesses, with even more rooms and more durable material, within two years, mostly due to contributions from various NGOs, INGOs, and with Tsunami loans from the local state owned bank. Although these

loans made a great contribution to the recovery process, most respondents stated that it was the NGOs and INGOs who contributed most to the recovery process, both in scope and scale.

Some of the most important constraints during the recovery process have been restrictions from the government, e.g. the 100 metres buffer zone, and lack of infrastructure and electricity. Additionally, there were a few cases where respondents expressed mistrust towards the INGOs and NGOs, and blamed them for corruption. These latter respondents were workers in the hotel industry, not owners. Nevertheless, it is important to underpin that these are the perceptions of some respondents, and not stated facts. Unrealistic demands and desires for what the INGOs and NGOs could provide might have coloured their opinions. We also found that the relationship, or synergy, between the tourist industry and the government was rather weak, almost absent. This situation is not necessarily a consequence of the Tsunami and the recovery activities, but rather a general mistrust and dissatisfaction with the government.

Overall, the tourism industry seems to have recovered well after the Tsunami. The fact that the Tsunami loans had been successfully repaid, and that most respondents have expanded their businesses point in this direction. Most hotels were back in business after two years, but it was only after the end of the civil war in 2009 that tourism had a substantial growth. Consequently, it may seem that it was the war more than the Tsunami that had constrained the development of the tourist industry. As stated by one of the respondents: *"Tourists are not afraid of the Tsunami, but they are afraid of the war"*.

References

Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods*, (4th edition). New York: Oxford University Press

HDCC (Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce) (2005) *Annual Report 2004/2015*. Tangalle Road, Hambantota. Sri Lanka.

HDCC (Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce) (2006) *One Year After*. HDCC, Tangalle Road, Hambantota. Sri Lanka.

Nayaran, D. (1999) *Bonds and Bridges: Social capital and poverty*. Poverty Group, PREM, Washington D.C, World Bank: https://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/9747/narayan.pdf (accessed 15 December 2015)

Newman, L. and A. Dale (2005) The role of agency in sustainable local community development. *Local Environment*, 10(5), pp. 477-486

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2005) *National Rapid Environmental Assessment – Sri Lanka*. UNDP: http://www.unep.org/tsunami/reports/tsunami_srilanka_layout.pdf. (Accessed: 4 June 2014)

UNEP (United Nations Environmental Program UNEP) (2005) *Sri Lanka Post Tsunami Environmental Assessment*. UNEP: http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/dmb_srilanka.pdf (accessed 5 June 2014)

Appendix II: Case studies regarding the tourist industry in Tangalle

Case 1: We lived through it

Informants: A father and daughter, owners of guest house and restaurant', Medaketiya Beach, Tangalle

Early on the 26th of December 2004, the male informant – a fisherman and a hotel owner in Tangalle -went down to his two guests to ask if they wanted something to eat for breakfast. He registered quickly that something had changed in the sea as the water had elevated. He politely asked his guests to come with him further up the hill, away from the shore. Less than ten minutes later, the big wave came. His intuitions rescued his family and two guests that day. He says: *"The wave came very slowly at first, with elevated water 5 km into shore. Then it went back before the big wave came back ten minutes later"*.

This is his daughter's story of the recovery process of the family run guesthouse in Tangalle: *Because our guesthouse was part of our home, we lost not only our business, we also lost our home. We therefore had to stay in a temple situated inland the following week. We did not receive any help and had to rely on our family for help. After one week, we moved into my grandmother's house and from there we started cleaning up the property.*

During the two first years after the Tsunami, we received some aid to manage our basic expenses and medicine. Adopt Sri Lanka, a local NGO, gave us monthly grants and the Government gave us a temporary home and a new boat so that my father could work as a fisherman. Adopt Sri Lanka also gave us LKR 500 000 to rebuild our house and guesthouse. The NGOs provided more help than the government. The government provided food and some money monthly that we used on essential needs. However, they stopped after one year. Ten years after, we do not receive any help from the government.

After two years, we also managed to open up a new and improved guesthouse, situated at the exact place as before, even though the Government put a 100-meter buffer zone It is my father's land, and I grew up here, it is also good for business being so close to the beach as it is what tourists want.

Ten years later, we divide living in the guesthouse and the house provided by the government, depending on the season. Our main income is still tour-

ism, and we have managed to increase our business with a bigger guesthouse. Because of the war, the demand was still not too big before 2009. The war affected the tourism more than the Tsunami. My father is still a fisherman, supporting our income and he supplies the guesthouse with fish. We have built a new restaurant and I hope to build a new kitchen that is closer to the restaurant. I am very hopeful for the future, the tourism is very good now, full rooms in the high seasons, and we also have a restaurant so we have many guests. I think it is going to be better in the future also as the tourist is not afraid of a new disaster, but I am still afraid.

Case 2: How we managed

Informant: Head of the NGO 'Business Creation' in Tangalle

On the 26th of December, the informant was at the local Sunday market inland to buy some products for his house, when people around him started acting scared. He did not understand the seriousness of the situation before he saw the elevated water coming, and reacted by running away. On that particular day, he was lucky and lost only his car. He tells:

Following the disaster, I did everything I could to assist the people that were impacted by the tsunami, and I was involved with a local rescue group of volunteers, helping injured people, and collecting dead bodies. I also received many phone calls from friends in need that day, so I did my best to provide medicine and food for them as well.

During the two first years after the Tsunami, I also expanded my business to include disaster relief programs, and I worked closely with international and local NGOs, including World Vision Sri Lanka, Child Found, Chamber of Commerce, UNDP and Caritas. I provided the NGOs with internet services and local information about the area. In addition to this, I was functioning as a local contact mediator between the areas' NGOs and the people affected in regards to loans and grants. To be able to provide what was needed, I visited the people affected individually to hear their stories. During the first year, I helped around 60 individuals to rebuild their businesses.

The main challenge of the recovery process for my business, but also in general, has been to change the mind-set of the directly affected people in regards to bad attitude. My organization experienced that many affected people were displeased with the help provided by the NGOs, in the way that they always compared what they received in grants, loans and help with other people. For example if one person got two boats from the government or the NGOs, and another person got a fishing rod, the person who got the fishing rod was displeased as he or she did not take into account the fact that people had lost different things with different values. In my opinion, the NGOs did their best to return the things that people actually had lost, regardless of what the people

wanted in grants and equipment. However, this was not easy to explain for those who had lost everything, as they wanted the same treatment and donations. We also had some challenges attached to limited funds, information on how to get back in business, technology to make the process go faster and information, regarding how to reduce the risk of future disasters. The last challenge is also evident today, as the only preparedness tool we have is an alarm system.

Despite these challenges, the people and their businesses recovered very fast in Tangalle. This may be because of international aid, and the fact that we opened up our doors for foreigners very fast. Personally, I believe that 80 per cent of the help came from the local NGOs and international help. However, local people and tourists also made an effort. Only 10 per cent of the help came from the government, and only in the first year.

Today, I see a bright future for the tourism sector here in Tangalle. Costumer care and service training is, however, a big challenge in this area and the main barrier to attracting tourists, and to make them come back again.

Case 3: No assistance

In comparison to the majority of the cases from the tourist industry in Tangalle discussed in this report, the following case represents a different perspective on the recovery process. While the majority of the

informants received a varying amount of aid after the disaster and experienced a general increase in income, the following case represents an interesting exception

Informant: Female owner of a guest house and restaurant, Medaketiya Beach, Tangalle

The small guesthouse is located directly at the Madeketiya Beach in Tangalle. The place is owned and managed by the informant, and was built in 1979, being the first guesthouse in the area. In the events of the Tsunami 2004 that especially hit the Eastern beach side in Tangalle, the property was completely destroyed.

On the day of the Tsunami in December 2004, the informant was not in Tangalle. She was in Germany with her two sons where she now lives. She was immediately informed about the Tsunami disaster in Sri Lanka via phone by a friend in Colombo: "Sri Lanka is under water". Her then German husband was at the guesthouse at that time and was seriously injured under the impact of the wave, but managed to climb on the roof of the building, which saved his life. The informant managed to come to Tangalle one month after the Tsunami, where she was able to see the entire impact of the disaster on her property. In the meantime, her husband at the time stayed with her family, a bit further inland. Since everybody in the area was directly affected, it was difficult to help and support each other in the local community. Most crucial, therefore, in the first days was self-help, but also the emergency help received from other villages inland. Due to the delayed arrival of the owner and the severe injury of her former husband, they were not able to apply for assistance from NGOs and the government until a month after the Tsunami. The applications were rejected, based on the arguments of the delay, the German citizenship of the husband and the fact that the owner and her children permanently reside in Germany. Another factor was that the guesthouse was registered as a business building, and not a private home, which made it unfitted for aid programs targeting the recovery of private households.

The family owned a private house nearby, but due to the low standard and other difficulties, it was unsuitable for them to live in. As a result, they used a small annex to the guesthouse. Accordingly, the only assistance the family received was a grant from the government

(LKR 250.000) to rebuild the foundation of a private house. Apart from this one-time payment, which was heavily delayed, the family and their tourist business neither received any further assistance from NGOs or the government, nor loans from banks in the aftermath of the Tsunami.

Instead, they were expected to use private savings in order to clean up the property and rebuild the house and the business. In addition, they tried to collect donations (NGOs, church and private people) in Germany. This was not successful, because of the general wish to donate to the country, not to give individual assistance, and the overwhelming presence of media charity events in German media at that time.

The rebuilding process started in 2006 and was mostly finished one year later, in 2007. Nonetheless, according to the informant, there are still many parts of the building that are under construction, incomplete or of a temporary nature (e.g. kitchen). Regarding the overall recovery process, there has been little progress and mostly challenges in the years after the Tsunami. She is very frustrated and disappointed about the unfair distribution of resources by the government and NGOs. While most neighbouring places are better off after the disaster and managed to improve buildings and business, adjusting to the rising tourist numbers, business at her guesthouse is still significantly weakened after the Tsunami, facing an unsure future.

Ten years after the Tsunami, the informant still feels disadvantaged and neglected in the recovery process: "The Tsunami destroyed our business, and the money went in the wrong hands, the government didn't distribute the money in a fair way, so the rich became richer." "We were the first place here, there were only huts here before the Tsunami, now everybody has nice houses and are rich, and we have nothing."

In addition, she experiences challenges connected to the general/global economic development (with ups and downs), which is reflected in the tourist industry (i.e. tourist numbers and prices). However, the greatest challenge is seen in the government's restrictions to tourism (prices for water and electricity, beer sale, taxes). Moreover, there were 'punishment' payments resulting from a court case on property issues. As business payments (e.g. water, electricity) are more expensive than for private homes, many places engaged in tourism use the private registration

for the business as well, saving a considerable amount of payments. As the guesthouse is registered as a business building, even though the family also lives there when they are in the country, they pay business prices also for private usage.

The current economic and social situation of the family business is quite difficult. Tourism has always been the main income for the family, but the former husband is now old and permanently unable to work after the Tsunami injuries; he only receives a small pension. As the business does not generate much income, it is difficult to accumulate new savings, since all private savings were used for rebuilding the house. In order to finance the sons' education, the owner has to take up low-paid part-time jobs in Germany. The children have German citizenship, and do not visit Sri Lanka so often (due to costs and visa problems). The social network, including family bonds, is quite weak, as the family is spread over two countries/cultures. They would all like to live at the beach in Sri Lanka, but see many problems (e.g. health, education, infrastructure, government, traumatic experience). Therefore, the owner is interested in partnership and other investors in the business. Due to all the various factors and challenges, she perceived the future of the business as uncertain. She is even considering selling the place in order to pay for her sons' higher education in Germany, which she clearly prioritizes: "My children have a bright future" [in Germany].

Concerning environmental issues influencing business after the Tsunami, the guesthouse owner mentions the value of the beach for tourism: "The beach is our source of income, like an insurance." There is a construction of a large breakwater rock-structure at the beach right in front of the guesthouse. The construction is connected to a considerable amount of disturbance for the tourist business (i.e. noise and dust, interruption of long beach). Even though she did not mention the constructions in the interview, one might predict the possible impact of these large breakwater structures for tourism in the future.

Chapter 8

Back to business?

The Case of Hambantota Business people ten years after the Tsunami

Brennan Purtzer, Didier Nduwayo, Harald Bang-Braaten Thoresen, Suman Nepal, and Thorbjørn Waal Lundsgaard in association with Kumara Kaldera (HDCC coordinator)

Abstract

This study was conducted to explore the ten years of recovery for the business community of Hambantota after the 2004 Tsunami. Twenty-one interviews were conducted during this study. The study reveals three interesting findings. Firstly, that the government's approach to establish a mega infrastructure development project in the Hambantota district has negatively impacted on the

business community. Secondly, that the lack of investment capital has been the most significant challenge throughout the recovery process. Some business people experienced problems finding loan guarantees, while low interest rates and longer repayment periods were found to be helpful, the researchers found the financial infrastructure to be inadequate. Thirdly, that the roles of NGOs and civil society were encouraging and supportive in the recovery process, despite some mismanagement of databases and irregular distribution of resources. The study found that the business community of Hambantota has still not fully recovered.

Acknowledgements

This study has given us a tremendous amount of practical training on how to conduct a comprehensive study in an unknown setting. This would have been close to impossible without the great effort of certain institutions and individuals. Therefore, we would like to express our deep gratitude to the coordinator *cum* interpreter *cum* host Mr. Kumara Caldera, and his lovely and caring family. We are also thankful to Prof. Arne Olav Øyhus, Mr. Azmi Thassim and the entire Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce (HDCC) for their warm welcome and excellent services during our study. Finally, we would also like to thank Ajith Wasantha Liyanage for his coordination and helpfulness throughout our monthly stay in Sri Lanka. Thank you all. Furthermore, we are all indebted to the University of Agder, for giving us this opportunity. Last, but not least, we are thankful to all our respondents and the entire DM team for making our field studies a success.

Introduction

The role played by the business community is vital anywhere in the world. Therefore, to examine how, and to what degree, the business community has responded and recovered from the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami it is of paramount importance to learn from mistakes and develop more accurate responses to disasters in the future.

This study examines the economic impact of the Tsunami on the business community in Hambantota, as well as its recovery from it during the last ten years. The recovery and development of the business sector will be mapped in the light of economic growth and other impacting factors that can be said to have a direct effect on the business community e.g. social and cultural elements.

Micro, small, and medium enterprises have always been the core of Hambantota's business community. Farming and fishing are the main economic activities. Similarly, retail trading, wholesale trading, salt production and the service industry together constitute the business activities of the city.

Further, the study looks at business community measures taken to limit future impacts on business activity from disasters. Ten years comprises a rational span of time to investigate the recovery efforts undertaken and the current status of the business community. A decade is a sufficient time window for institutions, the government, NGOs and other relevant bodies in the post-tsunami recovery to re-mobilize and focus their efforts where needed. Considering the above, this report asks how well the business sector in Hambantota has recovered.

Research Questions

1. What are the main factors that have influenced the business recovery?

2. What have been the main challenges in this process?

3. What are the current challenges?

4. To what extent has the business sector fully recovered from the Tsunami?

The report is based on findings from an intensive fieldwork where five researchers in two groups carried out a total of 21 in-depth interviews. The respondents were small business owners affected by the Tsunami, and several relevant stakeholders based on a locally-assisted stakeholder-mapping study.

This report proceeds as follows: 1) The methodology used to collect, validate and verify data is briefly presented together with a reflection on relevant ethical issues and challenges based on group discussions held throughout the research process, 2) data is presented and tied to the research questions, and 3) based on the findings, an analysis focuses on the investigation of factors that repeatedly surfaced amongst data subjects.

Methodology

It is a challenge to acquire an adequate understanding of the overall business sector in Hambantota, both in regards to its general structure, and when mapping the development of the business sector through the last ten years after the 2004 Tsunami. In order to meet this challenge, this report – and the data it presents – was

based on qualitative methodology. The data needed was gathered mainly through semi-structured interviews, and by analysing existing literature on the topic[8].

Qualitative Interview

Interviews are recognised as the most important and widely used qualitative method (Ryen 2002: 15). The main purpose behind an interview is to get thorough and comprehensive information about how people perceive their life, and the views and perspectives they have on topics that are addressed in the interview situation (Thagaard 1998: 87). In order to create a report on the state of the local business sector, the researchers had to make direct contact with a wide range of different business owners, trade association- and political representatives, as well as local bank- and insurance companies. In this context, interviewing is an adequate way of addressing issues that would be difficult to observe directly (Bryman 2012: 494). Through these interviews, we received valuable information about the experiences, thoughts and feelings amongst the local business community.

The interviews used in this report are semi-structured. As Bryman (2012: 470) explains – a semi-structured interview has a determined theme in advance, but the order of the questions can be changed along the way. This enables a more flexible interview process, which helps to build trust between the interviewee and interviewer, which again leads to a more open and honest interview.

Literature Review

In addition to interviews, this report utilized previous HDCC reports on the topic, as well as indicative articles and reports from both scholars and governmental authorities. This enabled us to get an overall understanding of the local business sector, the severe impacts of the Tsunami, and the recovery process throughout the ten years since the disaster.

Reliability and Validity

After collecting data and analysing our findings, we immediately started to triangulate the information in order to cross-reference and validate it, and secure that we all agreed about what results our data revealed. We codified and operationalized all the issues raised by respondents in the interviews into quantified and measurable data, in order to enable quick identification by counting repeatedly raised elements. This, in an effective manner, gave us solid information

8   See literature review.

about the similarities and differences in our findings, and in effect was used for guiding the main focus of this report.

Limitations and Ethical Considerations

Conducting research in a foreign country will always involve process limitations. Most prominent was the limited time we had to collect data and finalize this report. So, in order to adapt to this factor, we had to divide our group and plan our research approach accordingly. Luckily, we had an experienced local coordinator, who was helpful in putting us in contact with various businesses and other informants.

We also encountered a language barrier. Many Sri Lankans speak very good English, but due to, among other things, Hambantota's relatively low exposure to foreigners, many of the city's older population have limited English vocabularies. Communicating via a local translator effectively solved this. Regardless of the research area and research topic, one should always take ethical aspects into consideration. In this report, we have continuously gathered data bearing in mind the four aspects presented by Diener and Crandall (in Bryman 2012, p.135):

•   Whether there is harm to participants;

•   Whether there is a lack of informed consent;

•   Whether there is an invasion of privacy;

•   Whether deception is involved.

By conducting the research in accordance with these considerations, the chances for breaking ethical principles became significantly smaller. We have done so by carefully explaining what our agenda has been, and why, to the interviewees. The interviews this report is based on are all the result of voluntary participation, and the interviewees remain anonymous.

Findings

Neglecting small businesses

One single factor was clearly visible throughout the 21 interviews conducted; the small business owners, insurance company and local politician all had the impression that the government neglected small businesses in the process of identifying needs, and taking action in general. Eleven out of the 21 subjects cited this directly. In particular, the closure of the Old Tangalle Road (which resulted in significantly less customer exposure) was highlighted; 11 mentioned

this, thus representing the lack of weak-local stakeholder engagement as one of the major findings in this report. This notion is also supported by a government official respondent, who stated: "There were no feedback sessions to assess community interests on this matter" (pers. comment).

Several different replies to this question can be interpreted in support of this notion. For example, a typical response to the question was: "New shops after Tsunami was torn down by government to make room for the seashore development project. We were given no compensation".[9] This indirectly confirms the above tendency to neglect small stakeholder interests.

On the other hand, five respondents interpreted the urban development project as a positive long-term project, and nine have a positive outlook on the future, despite their weak involvement in the development and recovery process. Another element that repeatedly surfaced was the small number of businesses that have fully recovered. Only six of 17 business owners claim to have fully recovered.

Bank loans

During our interview with a representative from the Bank of Ceylon (BoC), a major government-owned commercial bank, we learned that the Central Bank of Sri Lanka instructed banks to give out loans, including micro loans, to people affected by the Tsunami. These loans had a 6% interest rate, lower than the standard 10% at the time, with six months or a one-year grace period, payable over a three to four years' time period, with a maximum loan amount of 400,000 rupees. However, the Central Bank did not guarantee the loans, and so approval was at the discretion of the individual banks. The individual banks evaluated applicants by their personal means to repay, including bank relationships, credit history, etc.

In our interviews of 17 business managers from Hambantota, we found that four had been denied loans to rebuild their businesses. Five people chose, for various reasons, not to apply for a loan through banks, while seven chose to do so. In addition to this, three persons borrowed money from friends or family. Two of these were among the four that had been denied commercial loans.

We were also informed through our interview with an experienced insurance manager that all Sri Lankan insurance companies decided to pay out 100% to all affected policyholders – even though Tsunami coverage was not included in policies at the time of the disaster. On the other hand, we found that only four out of the 17 business managers we spoke to actually had insurance at that time. Two out of the 13 that did not have insurance wanted it, but could not afford the costs, while five respondents now have insurance following the Tsunami, but did not

9   This was the case for six respondents.

have it at that time. The remaining six had never been insured, and had no intention of getting an insurance policy.

Nearly all respondents had the urgent need of capital or/and access to credit after the Tsunami in common. Some received financial assistance from the Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce (HDCC), but these amounts were generally too low by themselves to restore their businesses.

The respondents' answer to the question on their engagement in disaster, risk reduction activities after the disaster varied. Six said they had been participating in such activities, while others were positive about the idea, but had not actively participated themselves.

On the question of external assistance in the recovery process, all the respondents described the Tzu Chi foundation, a Taiwanese NGO, as the best organisation working for the recovery of Hambantota. Six respondents were, however, critical about the national and international organizations' responses. Their main criticisms regarded inappropriate database management, inappropriate allocation of resources, as well as irregular distribution of cash and other basic amenities.

Analysis

The above findings suggest a strong correlation between a low engagement among both the local business people and the government in the development and recovery efforts, and an overall limited economic recovery among small business owners. This was not only connected to efforts directly related to the Tsunami. There were also many projects not related to the Tsunami that had a negative impact on the business community (see under "The post-tsunami recovery process and the impact of the large scale development projects"). Several business people mentioned the negative effects of the closure of the previous main road running through the centre of Hambantota (The Old Tangalle Road). This road had provided local small businesses located near the road with the main contingent of customers. This important business opportunity disappeared with the closure of the road. Although the closure of the road and other urban development schemes, e.g. the building of the seaside amusement park and moving the district and municipality administration three km. out of the town centre forced several business people out of their traditional business area, it cannot be said to have happened as a direct cause of the Tsunami. Challenges from other factors measured in the study (e.g. access to capital, poorly coordinated NGO response and a weak response from the government) only adds these urban development schemes to the pile of existing complications that retarded the development and recovery process for the business community. As a result, the urban development schemes can be said to have had a damaging effect on the overall post-Tsunami

business recovery process, though not as a direct consequence of the concrete post-Tsunami recovery projects themselves.

Legal issues

The government behaviour in response to the business recovery efforts, and the policy behind the urban development projects, are legally questionable. The Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (2011) Article 27 (2)(e) mentions how "the equitable distribution among all citizens of the material resources of the community and the social product" must benefit "the common good", and the concurrent list III (7:1), (7:2), (7:3) specifies a focus on: "i) Relief, rehabilitation and resettlement of displaced persons; ii) Relief of distress due to floods, droughts, epidemics or other exceptional causes and rehabilitation and resettlement of those affected; iii) Restoration, reconstruction and rehabilitation of towns, villages, public institutions and properties, industries, business places, places of worship and other properties destroyed or damaged, grant of compensation or relief to persons or institutions who have sustained loss or damage and the reorganization of civil life."

According to the findings from this study, small business owners were experiencing circumstances that may amount to breaches of their constitutional rights. Legal contradictions that prevent an effective safeguarding of businesses and business recovery, especially with regard to Hambantota with significant coastal activity, can be seen in the following legislation: The Coast Conservation Act (No. 57 of 1981), which in its section 42 defines the coastal zone as "three hundred meters landwards of the Mean High Water Line and a limit of two kilometres seawards of the Mean Low Water Line." Any development within this area has to be consistent with Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP), which means it must not have an impact on the stability, productivity, and environment quality of the coastal zone.

These two above points clash with section 2(b)1 & 4A of the Reclamation and Development Corporation Amending Act (RDCAC No. 52 of 1982 because they are poorly enforced (Jayawardane. 2010: 3). Further, caution with regard to business development and recovery fails to be addressed by the derogations found in section 31 of the Mines and Minerals Act (No. 33 of 1992), which, in turn, also clashes with Coast Conservation Act (No. 57 of 1981).

Post-tsunami recovery and the impact of the large scale development projects

Since 2007, Hambantota District has been engaged in large-scale development activities, some of which were discussed as far back as 1998, when it was known

as the Ruhunapura project. Seven out of 17 business managers interviewed expressed frustration that the district had failed to involve the community in the planning of these major infrastructure projects. A partial list of these development projects include a new seaport meant to compete with Singapore, an international airport, a highway, a railway, the largest conference hall in South Asia, an international cricket stadium, an administration complex, a new hospital and a wind-power plant. Most of these large-scale projects have been funded with loans from China. The respondents explained that they did not see the benefits for the townspeople in these developments, and that they did not have the opportunity to express their concerns because the projects were never presented in a public forum. The most significant effect of these development projects for the business people was by far the harbour project, which necessitated the closing of Old Tangalle Road in 2007, and the relocation of businesses there.

One respondent said he was angry at the projects in general because they were not what businesspersons needed at the present time, and he could see how much was being spent on the activity. Another added that he believed the projects had made the overall business climate worse in Hambantota. A bank manager responded that they had observed the negative effect on their customers, who now have less money. He said that over the past three years, he had observed a downward trend in deposits, and that the bank had to reduce their lending rates from 16% to 6% to attract borrowers.

A respondent said the infrastructure projects were hurting 75% of the businesses in town. One respondent owning a construction business reported that he had been chosen as a supplier for one year on the harbour project, but after experiencing what he described as frustrating "political problems", he had chosen not to seek contract renewal. One respondent, who was not a businessperson, pointed out the benefits of the airport, which he said would be convenient for Sri Lankans living in the four southernmost provinces in Sri Lanka.[10]

Other respondents reported that they expected long-term benefits through bringing in more business from outside the community. A respondent from the municipal planning department echoed this statement. He believed the eventual effect of the development efforts would be very positive, though he could understand how local business people were unable to see the immediate benefits as their businesses struggled in their present situations. "Construction takes time," he said.

A respondent who had seen increased business while servicing construction vehicles accepted the benefits of the project, but said he was very aware that such benefits would be short lived. He said he expected as soon as the construction was finished, this additional business would go away. The Hambantota salt farm, which relies heavily on manual labour, might have to adjust its pay scale if thousands of

---

10   In June 2015, this new airport was closed down due to lack of passengers.

service jobs coming into the area cause an increase in average wages. In an industry with so many labourers, this could have an impact on their overall business or pricing model. Another respondent said he was "happy" about the harbour development project.

Relocation of Town Centre

One frequent theme from the interviews included references to the relocation of the town centre with the new Hambantota District and Municipality complex as the hub. The Hambantota District Secretariats and the Hambantota Municipality Secretariat are now relocated several kilometres from the existing town centre, near to the other new infrastructure projects.

Several respondents who received new homes from either the government or NGOs are now located in new villages, closer to the centre of the new town being built closer to these newly constructed public assets. A planning department employee who was interviewed described how they had for a long time been in the process of moving the city, and that the disaster provided an opportunity, after some re-zoning work was done, to actively move some people in the direction of the new town centre.

Broken promises to shopkeepers and the beach volleyball complex

One recurring frustration among many of the shopkeepers that we spoke to was that they were promised an attractive market space along the beachfront in downtown Hambantota. Many had already relocated from Old Tangalle Road to the beachfront market location. However, between 2009-2011, a decision was made in the municipal council to construct a beach volleyball stadium at this attractive location, and all shops were abruptly demolished.

A new attractive space was promised to the shopkeepers who were evicted from the beachfront market, but it was never delivered. The respondents reported that a shopping space was actually created, but not in an attractive location as there was little commercial appeal in the location provided. Other respondents added that the new, less attractive location was not large enough to accommodate all the sellers who had previously occupied the selling spaces close to the beach. According to some respondents, the beach volleyball complex was used for an event approximately once a month.

More than one-third of the business people in this study had been relocated from Old Tangalle Road to the seaside shopping centre that was eventually demolished. Some described the events in dramatic language: "It was like I got

hit by three Tsunamis: first the real one, then when they made me close my shop in 2007, and then when they demolished the market in 2011 (Interviewee).

The constant trend of what seemed to the business people as a total disregard for their livelihoods had the effect of wearing down their economic resilience. The same respondent commented, "I felt like I had been thrown away."

Economic recovery

This study reveals that, out of 17 business managers, six are fully economically recovered, one businessman is not yet fully recovered, while the rest are struggling to reach the same level they were ten years ago. It took three to four years for most of the businesses to recover. For instance, a furniture factory owner said: "A *loan from Hatton National Bank (HNB) with 6% of interest rate and one year grace period was an immediate relief for me. That is what made me recover in four years*".

Similarly, a Tuk-tuk repair owner said about his recovery that "*I got a large amount of turnover immediately after the Tsunami because there were 110 damaged Tuk-tuk's out of which I repaired 90, and I have a monopoly now. An NGO paid for all those services and my supplier supported me strongly*".

But the case was certainly not like the Tuk-tuk mechanic's shop for all. Some did not find customers for a long time due to lack of money and demand. Some were dislocated, and the NGO's assistance with food and clothing hit against some of the micro and small and medium businesses after just a few weeks as people received consumer goods for free. A textile trader said: "*I did not have any business immediately because I did not have any stock to sell. Once I had some stocks in the new location, due to NGOs' assistance, people didn't demand clothes*".

Eleven respondents revealed that the Tsunami had damaged their business. The rest of them said that their businesses were partially destroyed. For instance, a respondent owning a hardware shop said, "*my business was partially destroyed, however I got some loans from HDCC and it took ten years to recover and be in this position*".

In the economic recovery process of the Hambantota business community, most of the respondents disclosed that it was the large-scale development projects executed after the Tsunami that had destroyed their businesses, and very few respondents linked the long-term development projects to positive hopes towards their future. A significant proportion of respondents considered money as the main challenge in the recovery process, and the first priority to manage. The second aspect was networking and relations. A lubricant shop owner said "*I posted in the newspaper to let people know that I am still alive and doing*

my business in another location." Some of the respondents expressed that the closeness within the business community now was economically weaker, while some said it was stronger.

For instance, a construction contractor said that due to new technology, competence and new products in the market, the economy has recovered. However, the furniture factory owner said due to lack of a proper location and customers with decreasing purchasing power, the business community is weaker. He said, *"Everything is going to the new town even the town administration."*

Role of HDCC before, and after the Tsunami

The Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce (HDCC) have for more than 20 years provided business development services to promote business in Hambantota. Some other roles of HDCC are investment promotion, counselling services, publications, human resource supply to the business community, E-commerce services, business information systems, awards, lobbying and networking (interview with HDCC staff).

Immediately after the Tsunami, HDCC mapped 549 as severely affected businesses (HDCC, 2005: 14). The report said that one and half million Sri Lanka rupees (LKR) were distributed to 102 micro enterprises, while seven and half million rupees were distributed to 212 small and medium-sized entrepreneurs. HDCC coordinated their efforts with national and international organizations to provide loans and capital of LKR 15 million to 225 businesspersons. Despite these efforts, the majority of the severely affected business community initially received little or no financial aid (HDCC, 2006:17).

After the Tsunami, the first thing the HDCC did was to prepare individual reports on businesspersons and direct them to concessionary loan schemes at various banks. On this scheme, 64 businesspersons were granted LKR 88.3 million in loans (HDCC, 2005: 14). Similarly, 50 shops and 50 houses were constructed to support Tsunami affected business people and their families. Ten Awareness programs were conducted to re-commerce the affected businesses, and normalize the usual trading. This included, for example, replacing fishing boats, nets, engines and fishing gear.

However, our observations from the study revealed that there had been some mismanagement of data bases that resulted in not serving the appropriate scheme for each appropriate person. Gunasinghe (2012: 10) confirms that the compensation distributed was inadequate and in an irregular manner. Another issue we repeatedly came across was lack of credit. Several business people revealed that credit was one of the biggest challenges they faced, which often remained unaddressed

in the recovery process. The HDCC identified the lack of access to capital early on in the post-tsunami business recovery process. Concrete action was taken, i.e. plans for a credit guarantee fund was pursued for a period of five years (pers. comment, HDCC staff). The plans were coordinated with the Norwegian Embassy as the donor, a process that was finally approved after extensive modifications. Unfortunately, the program failed to launch due to undisclosed legal complications. Nonetheless, this shows that HDCC's strategy appears to be consistent with our findings in terms of the identified need for guarantors of loans for capital investment in the business community. Businesspersons who had seen their properties, homes and inventories decimated were sometimes refused loans due to lack of collateral for which to secure the loan upon. This led to the question of loan guarantees, which the HDCC had identified as a priority issue, but had not been able to solve. A third issue was the detachment of the business community from the political/governance system. As a consequence, a new trade association had been formed in competition with the HDCC.

Trade-associations and NGOs response

In total, six out of 17 Tsunami affected small-scale business owners were critical of the NGOs response in the relief and recovery process. Some said that some NGOs came in and "threw money at people." This made the situation on the ground even worse as it caused inflation for a period. However, four respondents acknowledged having received a house from an NGO. Dissatisfaction with the NGO response is also perceptible in the existing literature:

> *"There was a large influx of local and international NGOs to conduct recovery operations who were in competition with each other and worked under pressure to achieve fast results in an uncoordinated manner resulting in a disjointed recovery effort"*

> (Boano, 2009; Khasalamwa, 2009; cited in Mannakkara . & Wilkinson . 2013, p. 114).

One NGO has, however, distinguished itself by the quality of assistance provided to victims of the Tsunami. Tzu Chi Foundation was positively described by several respondents that appreciated the effectiveness and the appropriateness of their interventions. Their modus operandi was that they first interviewed the victims and identified their needs before responding accordingly. In 2005, they began building and a village of 649 homes, 100% free of charge, finishing in 2008 with full occupancy. The village includes a community centre, a school, a medical centre and a vocational clinic.

Strength of the business community

The study revealed that only six out of the total 21 respondents considered the business community cohesion in Hambantota to be stronger now than it was prior to the Tsunami. This study cannot give any clear indication that the reasons for this were related to the Tsunami. However, 11 people said they are currently suffering from the negative economic consequences due to the seaside development project (including the closure of the old main road), which demolished their businesses. In addition, six people responded that the current, large, scale construction schemes are poorly coordinated, with negative consequences for local businesses.

After analysing the data, a concern has been raised that some of the intended meaning behind the question: "Do you consider the local business community to be stronger now than prior to the 2004 Tsunami?" got lost in translation. The reason behind this suspicion is that many of the respondents seemed to be unified in their critique of both the aid received after the Tsunami, as well as the aforementioned development projects. There were also eight people who had positive feedback about HDCC's "Back to Business Workshop", which also focused on building stronger networks within the local business community.

Conclusion

This conclusion will answer the research questions identified at the outset of this report, by reflecting on the main findings and analysis.

First, the failure of the government to address the local business community's needs and ignoring them in the recovery, planning process was the factor given the highest attention throughout the report. It has been argued that these findings, which are supported by secondary literature, have had a negative impact on the recovery of the business community.

Secondly, the report suggests that the financial infrastructure was inadequate to meet the needs of the business community, especially in the first years of the post-tsunami recovery process. Still, it is not completely deficient; several respondents show how banks supported the business recovery process with personal guarantees, low interest rates and longer repayment plans. Yet, without the central element of loan guarantees to provide for those who had lost their security, the analysis shows that these efforts were insufficient, short-term solutions.

Third, the NGO and civil society responses have been varied. Generally, with some exceptions, the NGOs involved in the recovery process had largely failed to coordinate their activities, and as the report has demonstrated, this has negatively affected the business recovery. However, the NGO's role remained vital throughout the recovery process. Hence, the broad criticism of NGOs is not fully justified, due

to misinterpreted responsibilities and low capacity. NGOs were under pressure to act quickly, but most did not invest in bottom up business recovery work in a long-term perspective. This could have strengthened the self-sustaining abilities of the Hambantota business sector.

In sum, these three factors, which represent the main challenges that the business community have experienced, lead to the conclusion that the business community has not fully recovered ten years after the Tsunami. But, here it must be added that many businesses have been negatively impacted by the huge government initiated development projects which have constrained the local business sector without creating the positive effects promised. Not only were many businesses damaged during the Tsunami, but also many have sustained new impacts after the Tsunami from e.g. closing the main road to make the area available for the new harbour construction, and tearing down the shops and businesses on the seaside of the town to clear the area for an amusement park and a volley ball ground. The factors that crippled business recovery efforts have continued to retard both short term and long-term business recovery and development.

References

Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods*, (4th edition). New York: Oxford University Press

Gunasinghe, M. (2012) 'In Whose Interest?' Mega-Development Projects in Hambantota'. *LST Rewiew*, 23(299), pp.1-21. URL: http://lawandsocietytrust.org/PDF/Mega%20Development%20Projects%20in%20Hambantota%20(September%202012).pdf . (Accessed on 3 June 2014)

HDCC (Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce) (2005) *Annual Report 2004/2015*. Tangalle Road, Hambantota. Sri Lanka.

HDCC (Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce) (2006) *One Year After*. HDCC, Tangalle Road, Hambantota, Sri Lanka

International Water Management Institute (2005) Bringing *Hambantota Back to Normal: A Post-Tsunami Livelihoods Needs Assessment*. Colombo: Sri Lanka

Jayawardane. A.K.W. (2010) *Disaster mitigation initiatives in Sri Lanka*.' Sri Lanka: University of Moratuwa

Mannakkara S. and S. Wilkinson (2013) Build Back Better: Lessons from Sri Lanka Recovery from the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. Retrieved from http://www.archnet-ijar.net/index.php/IJAR/article/view/52/58 (accessed 4 June 2014)

Ryen, A. (2002) *Det kvalitative intervjuet: Fra vitenskapsteori til feltarbeid («The Qualitative Interview: From theory of science to fieldwork»)*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.

Thagaard, T. (1998) *Systematikk og innlevelse – En innføring i kvalitativ metode («System thinking and compassion – An introduction to qualitative methodology»)*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget

The Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (2011) Signed into force 7 September 1978 (as amended 9 September 2010)

World Bank (2012) Ter I K Management in South A: A Regional Overview. Retrieved from: http://www.zaragoza.es/contenidos/medioambiente/onu/985-eng.pdf.

Appendix:
A Case study of a Hambantota businessman ten years after the Tsunami

Case study: Textile business owner

The subject case is a member of HDCC and engaged in small textile trading. He is 44 years old and started his business before the Tsunami. He is living in the city cent, behind a Hambantota mosque, with his parents and three children in the home. He is the only breadwinner in the family, and his business enterprises are vulnerable.

He was at his home when the Tsunami waves hit Hambantota city. Fortunately, he did not have any casualties in his home, but his business was totally knocked out by the Boxing Day Tsunami of 2004. The Tsunami affected his existing customers, suppliers and nothing remained of his inventory. A well-off businessperson was suddenly without customers, money, location, stock or suppliers. He could not reopen his business immediately because institutions were primarily assisting people with clothes. Now, after ten years he says: "*I couldn't recover my business from my Tsunami losses*".

He was affected not only by the Tsunami, but two other government mega projects in the last ten years, which seems to be the major factors influencing his business recovery. Loss of customers due to the demolition of his location was a significant loss in 2007 because of the seaport construction under the Greater Hambantota development project. However, he stated that business communities were told to believe that new jobs and better location would be provided by these projects. He did not have enough money to import the same products, so with a personal loan he imported used products from the USA and other countries. He was surviving with his reduced business, but due to the seaport project, he was again forced to move to a new location. He then moved to a popular marketplace near the ocean with his small inventory. But, once again, this area was demolished due to the beach volleyball park project. He was promised a place to relocate, but it was never delivered. His shop is now a small table in his home. He is a dislocated businessperson now because he did not get support from any organization to recover after the Tsunami.

Money was the primary challenge during the recovery process, as he did not get any financial support from any institution. He said that HDCC essentially represented only the larger businesspersons in town, but he appreciated the emotional healing and inspiring role of HDCC through their "back to business" program. However, he says there were many businesspersons suffering from lack of collaterals, guarantees, or re-investment funds. These businesspersons are the potential entrepreneurs of the business community of Hambantota, but they have the same list of challenges that he has, which could be making the community weaker than it was before. But he said the business community is stronger than before due to a new trade association and high registrations in the HDCC. He said he had applied for a loan at the HDCC, but was not eligible for the loan because he was too old. Today, he is not able to feed his family with the textile business, so he began installing electrical lamps in his village of Kirinda[11] under a reduced payment scheme.

He is aware of Tsunami risks now, and prefers to hold an insurance. Speaking from his present site of employment in the village of Kirinda, he had some interesting observations regarding future risk reduction activities. He did, for instance, point out that there are certain questionable issues connected to the new Tsunami siren that has been installed at the new school, such as, for instance, language and ignorance. Regarding language, police issue warnings in Singhalese after the siren, but there are many families in the community who do not understand Sinhalese as Malay and Tamil is very common in Kirinda. Regarding ignorance, on several occasions people ignore the test alarm, believing that as it is only a test they do not respond to it at all. These conditions make it a less effective mechanism for disaster risk reduction in the community.

11   Kirinda is situated about 25 km from Hambantota town and is a part of Tissamaharama municipality.

Part III

Lessons learnt and what's next

Chapter 9

Comparing Findings

How do findings from the Ten Years After study
compare with the international and national evaluations
of the disaster response and recovery process
after the Indian Ocean Tsunami (IOT) 2004?

Arne Olav Øyhus

Evaluation of the IOT relief and recovery assistance: The general level

In the aftermath of the 2004 Tsunami a lot of international reports were written covering various aspects of the relief and recovery activities conducted by national and international agencies (Birkmann et al., 2006; Fritz Institute, 2005; UNOCHA, 2014; Telford et al., 2006).

Several reports were critical about both the governments and the agencies' post-tsunami recovery activities. One often mentioned critique in these reports was that recovery poses a particular problem for agencies normally working with relief, among which a huge number were attracted to the scene of the Tsunami. As Telford et al. (2006) notice, whereas the goals of relief are usually more direct, explicit and measurable, intending to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during, and in the aftermath of disasters, recovery concerns post-disaster development activities with a broader perspective, and with a more vague goal of restoring a population to at least its pre-disaster situation.

Among the international reports, perhaps the most authoritative and influential, are the various reports coming from the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC), comprising five thematic reports, and one synthesis report

(Telford et al., 2006)[12] reflecting the most important findings from the thematic reports.

The synthesis report (Telford et al., 2006), was written 11 months after the Tsunami. It raised and discussed a series of items and issues regarding the relief work during the emergency period, and the following period of recovery activities. Although revealing a great number of failures, weaknesses and shortcomings, we have to recall that the complexity and scale of constraints that the local people, national authorities and international agencies and organisations had to face were enormous. One serious weakness that has been pinpointed on several occasions was the lack of disaster management capacity and competence both among national authorities and local communities before the on-set of the event. Of particular importance was the complete lack of early warning systems: "Unlike the tsunami warning system in the Pacific, set up after a tsunami killed 159 people in Hawaii in 1946, no tsunami warning system had been installed in the Indian Ocean" (Telford et al., 2006, p. 40). It took more than an hour and-a-half after the earthquake happened before the shores of Sri Lanka were hit, more than enough time for a warning message to reach the threatened areas, but nothing happened (Telford et al., 2006, p. 41).

For the international agencies involved in the relief and recovery process, a large number of activities and efforts were needed: taking care of the victims, construction of shelters, risk reduction and livelihood recovery work. Under the prevailing circumstances, such activities were necessarily both slow and complex, and frequently involving factors outside the organisations' control. In addition, many agencies had neither the technical, social nor cultural competence needed. What, therefore, appeared on the ground was a fragmented approach comprising a great variety of international agencies with various structures, competences, ideologies and approaches. This limited the effectiveness of the recovery activities (Telford et al., 2006, p. 17).

Despite these limitations, an enormous amount of aid supplied the impacted communities with resources to rebuild their societies, structures and institutions. Within some months, there were clear signs of recovery in many areas. Children were back in school and health facilities were back in service. Economically, it could be observed that in Sri Lanka, more than 80 percent of damaged fish markets,

---

12 The TEC synthesis report was prepared by J. Telford, J. Cosgrave and R. Houghton (2006), with the title: *Joint Evaluation of the international response to the Indian Ocean tsunami: Synthesis Report,* Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC), London. The synthesis report is based on five thematic reports: (1) TEC Funding Response Report (2006); (2) TEC LRRD Report (Links between relief, rehabilitation and development in the tsunami response) (2006); (3) TEC Capacities Report (2006); (4) TEC Coordination Report; (5) TEC Needs Report. TEC is a multi-agency initiative in the humanitarian sector established in 2005.

boats and fishing equipment were rapidly restored, and over 70 percent of affected households report that they have regained a steady income (TEC Capacities Report, 2006, ref. in Telford et al., 2006).

A very important fact emerging from the post-disaster evaluation reports is that the disaster response directly following the event was mostly conducted by the local people in the affected communities themselves. Almost all immediate life-saving actions and emergency support in the first couple of days after the disaster was provided by local people: "In Sri Lanka and Thailand, life-saving and immediate relief during the first two days was led almost entirely by the general public from adjacent areas (TEC Capacities Report, 2006, ref. in Telford et al., 2006). Few, if any of the international agencies, managed to save significant numbers of lives. As an example; in the Aceh province, Indonesia, it took one week before the first international relief operation was received (Telford et al 2006, p. 55). At that stage the acute situation was over, diseased people buried, wounded under treatment, and under ad-hoc shelters. A lesson learnt was that the role of local response and host families is often both under-valued and overlooked. The quality of the international response was most effective when enabling, facilitating and supporting local actors.

A typical feature during the relief phase was the pressure among international agencies to spend money both quickly and visibly. This was, however, not effective regarding the best utilization of local and national capacities. Few international agencies lived up to their own standards with regard to the respect for and support to local and national ownership: "Local ownership…was undermined and some local capacities were rendered more vulnerable" (TEC Capacities Report, 2006, ref. in Telford et al., 2006). The post-tsunami situation was characterised by the fact that activities, knowledge, and capacities of locals and nationals were largely marginalised by a flood of international agencies (as well as hundreds of private individuals and organisations) controlling enormous amounts of resources. It was an uncontrolled growth of international agencies involved in relief activities. "Well-resourced agencies and very small ones, competent and incompetent, well prepared and unprepared, secular and faith-based, reputable and disreputable, household names and unknown, ambitious and humble, opportunistic and committed, governmental and non-governmental, national and international, bilateral and multilateral, well-established and just-formed – they all turned up" (Telford et al., 2006, p. 55).

The TEC LRRD Report (2006, p. 10) notes: 'A tragic combination of arrogance and ignorance has characterised how much of the aid community…misled people .' (p83); Some…interventions may actually undermine future development [.] For instance, lack of information to local community's about reconstruction plans greatly limited their capacity to proceed with their own LRRD projects' (ref. in Telford et al., 2006).

A lot of assistance was 'supply-driven', and not in accordance with local needs and demands, for instance inappropriate housing designs and livelihoods solutions. Some groups and categories were discriminated and neglected, for instance women, fishermen, small farmers and small entrepreneurs. The consequences were greater inequalities, gender- and conflict-insensitive programming, cultural offence and waste. Quite often local authorities, local communities and local organisations were brushed aside. Local competent staff were sidelined, while poorly trained international staff with no, or little, local competence were given power and authority. It was a 'misrecognition' of local capacities resulting in inefficient implementation of project activities, 'poaching' of staff from national and local entities, and limited participation of the affected-population. (Telford et al., 2006). Local people frequently complained that NGOs dealt only with village officials and that poorer people were marginalised. At best, the international response restored the status quo before the tsunami; at worst, it strengthened those who were better off and/or more articulate.

According to the TEC Report 2006, the 2004 Tsunami disaster response was the most rapidly and generously funded disaster response in history. An amount of more than US$13 billion was pledged or donated internationally for emergency relief and reconstruction; including more than US$5.5 billion from the general public in developed countries. This funding was too much to handle properly and cautiously for the international aid system. One effect was that new and inexperienced NGOs were attracted to the scene of the disaster, a scene where they had no, or limited, competence (Telford et al., 2006). Governments and international agencies from several countries failed to ensure that their activities and funding were based on local needs. The result was imbalances, assistance not driven by local demands, and also supporting NGOs based in a donor's own country, regardless of whether they had any competence or not. "Poor 'end-user' traceability and inadequate monitoring were evident among official donor responses" (Telford et al., 2006).

Evaluation of the IOT relief and recovery assistance: Sri Lanka

Several post-disaster studies conducted in Sri Lanka report that it was a general satisfaction among Tsunami affected communities for the assistance received during the initial, relief stages of the Tsunami response. It seems, however, that the satisfaction with the relief phase changed during the recovery phase. This was possibly a consequence of people's expectations that now moved away from the allocation of relief-items to longer-term recovery opportunities. After only some few months, it became clear that moving away from relief operations to a broader and more encompassing reconstruction process was not that simple, bringing forth a complex set of non-anticipated challenges. Many reports from the recovery process indicate that there was a growing frustration among people with the speed

and direction of efforts, but also lack of local participation. In a dissertation written four years after the Tsunami, Kamal Hoshi Kapadia argues that the post-tsunami reconstruction efforts in Sri Lanka have failed as it has not reduced economic vulnerability and poverty, that coastal poverty is on the rise, and that the Tsunami affected people are still largely worse off, economic wise, than before the Tsunami (Kapadia, 2008:20). It has also been argued that aid was used mainly on the rich. Naomi Klein (2007) argued that the Tsunami gave big business the opportunity to take over the Sri Lankan coastline.

Most of the critique in Sri Lanka has not primarily been directed against the international assistance. For example, a claim-holder survey conducted in Sri Lanka indicated that affected communities felt that their local leaders had failed them in ensuring equity and inclusion (Telford et al., 2006). The Fritz Institute found that "85% of the affected families surveyed ranked international NGOs highest in terms of quality, maintenance of dignity, and fairness in distribution of aid" (Fritz Institute, 2005: 7).

The main target of the criticism was the government of Sri Lanka. Possibly, the most important piece of criticism, especially from international quarters, was the lack of an early warning system. Information of the impeding catastrophe was actually available, but could not be utilized due to lack of a system for analysing and distributing the warning messages. Athurkorala and Resosudarmo (2005) write that already at 7.05 hrs in the morning of the disaster, seven minutes after the earthquake erupted, a tremor was felt by the Director of the National Geological Survey and Mine Bureau (GSMB). A seismological station transmitted the data one minute later, but the GSMB did not have the capability of analysing the data. At around 10.00 hrs, GSMB received the necessary analysis of the data from the University of California and the US Geological Survey (USGS), but by then it was too late. Governmental failures did also characterise the later recovery activities. A household study performed in Ampara and Hambantota by Duyne Barenstein (Barenstein, 2013), states that post-tsunami recovery activities increased inequalities both between people and regions. An important issue in this context was connected to the government's resettlement programme. Originally, the government decided that no new reconstruction would be allowed within a 100-200 metre buffer zone from the coast in order to reduce the vulnerability of the coastal communities for future disasters. Very little consideration was given to the people depending on the beach and the coast for their livelihood. Due, however, to practical difficulties, finding the right amount of land, but also due to the negative sentiments among local people, the government reduced the buffer zone to 55-100 metres from the sea. There are many NGOs and civil organisations that have questioned the real motive for the government to enforce this policy, as they saw that the consequence of this policy was that while poor, coastal communities had to leave the very valuable beaches, the luxury hotels were allowed to remain (Barenstein, 2013). According

to this author, "Sri Lanka's reconstruction policy was characterized by continuous amendments and lack of transparency" (Barenstein, 2013:220). Lack of institutional continuity, clarity and accountability was utilized by political leaders and powerful persons to forward their own interests. They forced, for instance, local administrators to include on the list of people needing assistance persons who were neither poor nor residents of the area. "We also learned that, in several settlements, members of parliament had forced agencies to give at least 20% of the houses to their supporters" (Bernstein, 2013: 220).

The problem with a plethora of humanitarian agencies, a great portion of them lacking both local knowledge and experience, and operating more or less on their own, was also an important constraint for Sri Lankan recovery process. The government allowed an enormous amount of humanitarian agencies to take on huge reconstruction projects, but there was little or no mechanism for coordinating the activities between the agencies, or between the agencies and their own activities. "Thus a mismatch between the GO and the NGO actors emerged" (Ahmed and Charlesworth, 2015:432). Many of the NGOs, both national and international, were – due to their lack of experience – rather powerless against political interference. While some of them adapted to the claims from the political actors, others withdrew from Sri Lanka before completing their projects.

Evaluation of the IOT relief and recovery assistance: The Local Level

To properly and adequately assist disaster-affected communities, it is of fundamental importance to understand the affected communities' structures and institutions, and also the local people's knowledge, their cultural and religious beliefs. The Ten Years After (TYA) study gives us some important facts in this regards, for instance that the fishermen in Hambantota, who are mainly Muslims, strongly believed that the Tsunami, and everything that takes place on earth, is an act of Allah. We see similar aspects among the Buddhist population who referred to Karma when explaining why the misfortune of the disaster affected some more than others. Some months after the disaster, I did an interview survey in some villages close to the southern town of Matara, about 50 km west of Hambantota. One of the interviewees was a man whose family was very much hurt by the disaster. He told in detail how the waves came upon them, how they tried to flee, and when the wave caught them how he tried to hold on to his youngest daughter's arm while trying to climb up on a roof. Eventually he lost his grip and had to see that she was caught by the waves and washed away. When I asked him why he thought that exactly this daughter had this destiny while his other children survived, he answered with one word: Karma. During this survey, and the Ten Years After study, this explanation was repeatedly given, underlining that from a local perspective, cultural and religious factors are crucial for explaining both the causes behind dis-

asters, but also who will suffer. This understanding must be in place in the planning and management of future disaster and risk reduction activities.

Lessons learnt from the case studies

Hambantota Fishermen

But there are other important lessons that have been learned as well. The fishermen had, both before and after the Tsunami, a general lack of trust towards government authorities. This attitude had in many ways been strengthened by what took place during and in the direct aftermath of the disaster. One example is when the fishermen were asked to fill in forms to report their losses. Many of them did not so because they were not sure how this information would be used.

Seen from the fishermen's perspective, the relationship between the aid agencies and the local fishing communities was characterised by lack of communication and local participation, the agencies' lack of competence and use of corruptive practises, resulting in a situation where the assistance rendered to the fishing community was quite often misplaced, for instance by distributing the wrong types of boats and equipment. In addition to the aid delivery being disorganised, it was also distributed unequally and unfairly. The fishermen sincerely believed that aid was primarily given to certain persons in high positions, relatives to the people in charge of the distribution, and so on. They were also very displeased with the relocation of their new post-tsunami homes as this process did not take their livelihood situation into consideration, and also made everything much more difficult and expensive for them.

When interpreting the views and perspectives of the fishermen, we must understand their position in the society. Sri Lanka is still in many respects a cast society, and the fishermen cast belongs to the lowest levels in the cast hierarchy. Still, some fishermen can be rather well off economically. In Tangalle, for instance, there are rich fishermen owning ocean-going trawlers. But the great majority of fishermen in Hambantota town are small and rather poor fishermen, living mainly from a hand to mouth basis. In addition, these fishermen are mainly Muslim with a Malay or Moor origin. Hence, both religious and ethnic wise, they belong to a small and marginal minority, comprising between 2-3 per cent of the population in Hambantota District although comprising a much larger segment of Hambantota town, percentage wise. As they feel discriminated against by government authorities, they also look upon these authorities with suspicion. Concretely, they believe that they are over-ruled by government authorities regarding the price on fish, which they think are set all too low on purpose in order to supply urban people with cheap food.

Very much in correspondence with the TEC Report (2006), the fishermen claimed that emergency activities were planned and organised over their heads, as there was no participation of local people in planning and implementing recovery activities. In many ways, we must admit that this was a two-sided concern: there was a lack of initiative to involve local fishermen to participate in emergency activities, but it was also a lack of interest among the fishermen to involve themselves in communal emergency activities, or activities beyond their local families and neighbourhoods. Applying the concepts of bonds and bridges (Nayaran, 1999; Newman and Dale, 2005) for the fishing community in Hambantota town, the bonds – for instance family ties – were very important both in the emergency and recovery phase, whereas the bridges were shaky and narrow.

The village of Kirinda

The situation was quite different in Kirinda where the local people, the majority being Muslims, organised themselves and established a communal coordination committee to be a part of the emergency work. Perhaps the fact that the Muslims are a majority population in Kirinda can be an explanatory factor for this communal engagement, but also the "class" system could have had an impact in Kirinda. Kirinda is basically a fishing village, but the fishing fleet consist of many bigger boats; boats that are rare among the Hambantota fishermen. This leaves the impression that the people in Kirinda, are living at a higher socio-economic level.

Kirinda represents a very interesting case regarding the emergency phase after the Tsunami as a coordination committee was quickly established. Why exactly this happened here is not known, but it seems that there were a couple of civic "entrepreneurs" who took the initiative, among them the schoolmaster at the time. By forming this committee, they managed to have a say in the emergency and recovery work. We may say that they managed to utilize bonds comprising local institutions and networks to create a fund of social capital used in the construction of bridges to external agencies. Here, we must admit that it is not easy to define where bonds end and bridges begin, for instance regarding the ties to their neighbours in the town of Tissamaharama. Kirinda got a lot of support in the first instance after the Tsunami from individuals and groups from Tissamaharama (most often called Tissa), laying some kilometres into the interior – and spared from the waves. This assistance was not in any respect connected to religious favouritism, as the people of Tissa are mainly Buddhist. The people from Tissa and other surrounding areas did a great job, bringing food and water, organising rescue operations both at sea and on land, comforting people in deep grief, etc.

The fact that the people of Kirinda managed to establish a local coordination and consequently participated in the emergency and recovery activities, does not imply that they felt that they were in control of the situation The general opin-

ion we could detect among local people was that when the outside organisations and agencies entered the scene, they themselves were more or less brushed away. During the relief operations, the committee was, to a certain extent, listened to, and it was also participating in the relief distribution. But later, especially when the government authorities were in position, and the NGOs and INGOs really launched their operations in full, the committee become more and more marginalised. According to the local people's perception, many negative things then started to happen, for instance that many representatives from the local, public authorities did their best to exploit the situation for their own advantage. They distributed relief, money, boats and equipment, and houses unequally and unfairly. The local people's trust in the government came to an absolute low.

The NGOs fared much better: at least most of them did. Even though the NGOs, in general, did a good job, they also committed many failures, most of them because they communicated rather poorly with the local people, did not respect the local culture, and because they were rather reluctant to open for local participation. Due to this, the NGOs started projects and activities that were not adjusted to local material and immaterial conditions, and which, in the long run, could be counter-productive to a sustainable development process. A vital concern for the community was that the various NGOs treated people differently, e.g. various NGOs did various things for various people. If you were so lucky enough to be in the "colony" of a well-functioning and prosperous NGO, you could get a very nice house and many other valuable items. But then it was *visa versa* for people belonging to poor and ill-functioning NGOs. This implied that people in this community, a community that to a certain extent could be characterised as homogenous and harmonious before the disaster, were treated unequally and unfairly. Families who were not very much affected by the disaster, and thus did not "deserve" a lot, got plenty, whereas families who had lost almost everything, and therefore deserved a lot, got almost nothing. Here, we must add that we should not exaggerate the aspect of homogeneity and harmony in the disaster affected communities, neither before nor after the disaster. All of these communities were heterogeneous regarding power, wealth, gender, age, religion, family relationships etc. before the disaster struck, and also ten years after. Even if we saw that individuals and families were fighting for their own interest, this did not, however, exclude the communal sentiment, and a sense of justice and fairness. The social capital created to a large extent by the network of bonds, did absolutely not serve everybody equally, but still played an invaluable role in the local setting, both directly after the disaster, and ten years after.

Kirinda, due both to internal motivation and hard work and a strong influx of external assistance, has today been completely rehabilitated, even at a substantially higher standard regarding such issues as education, health, housing and infrastructure facilities. Some even call the Tsunami "a golden wave". But perhaps

this golden wave can be a blessing in disguise, because what one can be a bit more uncertain about is the invisible structures and conditions. We know for sure that many people are struggling with mental issues after the Tsunami. Many fishermen are afraid to go out for fishing when the sea is rough, even if they now have bigger and better boats. Several people mention that their mental condition has not been healed. This we can rather easily understand. Despite this negative aspect, I believe that the most significant feature of the Kirinda recovery process is the role of the bonds. It was the networks and relationships between neighbours, friends and families that came to the rescue on December 26th 2004, proving their strength and effectiveness. A central question we have to ask is if these bonds are as strong today, or have the incidents and events that took place in the relief, recovery and rehabilitation phases after the Tsunami weakened these life-saving networks and relationships. The short answer is, we do not know, and quite possibly, only a gigantic disaster in the future can give an answer to that question.

Tangalle tourist industry

The town of Tangalle, the most important beach tourist destination in Hambantota District, was damaged enormously by the Tsunami. Hundreds of people died, several hundred were injured, and many thousands were left homeless. Not only was the big fishing harbour destroyed – with big trawlers found several hundred metres inland, but also the whole town centre was destroyed, as was also the case with almost the entire tourist industry.

Quite interestingly, the hotel industry has proved to be highly resilient. The process of rebuilding the tourist industry was a task that most of the hotel and restaurant owners managed to complete within two to three years. But it was not before the end of the civil war in 2009 that the hotel industry was in full swing, with a much higher level of guests than ever before. As with the general, material situation in Kirinda, the tourist industry in Tangalle came back with an improved standard compared with the conditions before the Tsunami. Hotels were modernised and expanded, and built with higher quality materials. In most ways, this is a success story. But here there are also lessons to be learnt. Perhaps the most interesting lesson is that according to the majority of hoteliers, the most important obstacle in the recovery and rehabilitation process has been the government with its rules and regulations. The government made laws that were impossible to follow if you wanted to continue your business, for instance the 100-200 meter buffer zone law. According to this, you were not allowed to build the new hotel at the same site as before, as previously there had been only a 30-metre buffer zone regulation, i.e. the hotel buildings had to be a minimum of 30 metres from the seashore at tide. With the 100-200 metre buffer zone, the hotels were to be built on land that the hoteliers did not own, and where there was no infrastructure, for instance there were no roads. Obviously, the hoteliers

could not abide by this regulation, but tried to build as far from the shore as possible, but within the limits of their property. This meant that some built almost at the same site as before, while some pulled back to about 60 metres if their property extended that far. In doing this, they have been threatened by the government, who have said that their hotels would be demolished. This has not yet happened.

Also, it was a general complaint that the government has not contributed with infrastructure; mainly roads, from the main road and out to the hotels at the beach. In addition, the government did nothing to train people so that they would be suitable for employment at the hotels, and it was impossible to get a license to sell alcohol to tourists, which of course was a necessity if you wanted to survive. This meant that beer and wine had to be served in secret. Several hoteliers said that the only way to acquire a license for selling alcohol was through bribery.

Then again, the hoteliers felt positively about the role played by both national and international NGOs, both. Not only were the NGOs important agencies in the general recovery and rehabilitation process for Tangalle as a town; they also carried out an important job for the hotel owners, for instance by contributing with both grants and loans. Since they also made use of the few hotels that were not destroyed to stay in during their recovery operations, it meant that they brought some important income as guests as well. Quite interestingly, the people most negative to the NGOs, arguing that they were corrupt and used money for their own benefit, were not hotel owners, but workers. Perhaps this attitude was connected to the fact that they personally received few benefits from the NGOs.

Hambantota business community

The business community in Hambantota town had, understandably, many of the same grievances as the hotel owners in Tangalle as they were generally in the same situation. They were almost unanimous in their criticism of the government. Not only were they denied loans to rebuild their businesses after the Tsunami, the government also promoted a lot of efforts and projects after the Tsunami that ran against the interest of the business community. Very importantly, here was the 2009 closure of the New Tangalle Road, the main road through Hambantota where a lot of businesses were situated. The closure of the road was done in order to enable the construction of the huge seaport, a project none of the business people saw as of value to for their own businesses. Then later, after they had moved away from the closed New Tangalle Road and established themselves along the seaside of Hambantota town, they again had to hastily evacuate, as all buildings at this site were to be demolished to open the area for an amusement park and a volleyball pitch. For both these incidents, the business people were promised compensation, and new premises to open their businesses, but none of this ever materialised. The business people felt that small businesses were of nil value to the government, even if they gave employment to many people.

The business community felt that they had received very little support from the government during and after the disaster. They were, however, as were the business people in Tangalle, much more satisfied with the assistance they had received from NGOs, including the local Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce (HDCC), which in many ways acted as a representative for the business community in the whole district. Besides giving both financial and practical assistance on their own, HDCC often operated as a mediator between national and international NGOs and the local business community. There were, of course, also business people that were not entirely satisfied with the role played by either the NGOs or HDCC perhaps because they felt that the assistance they received did not live up to expectations. Some were also sceptical about HDCC's "neutral" role in distributing relief and loans. This was most probably the main reason why a new business association was established in competition with HDCC.
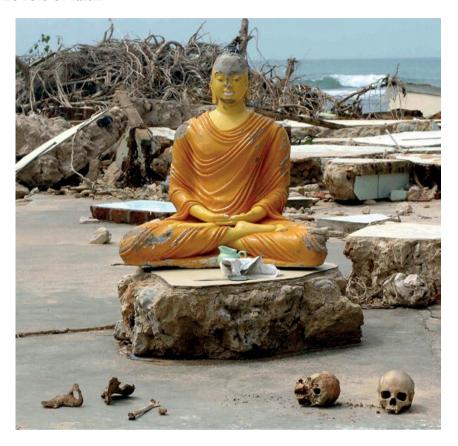
Summary of findings

The ten years recovery process has in most instances been a success. The communities are basically back on their feet, most of them at an even higher material level than before the disaster. New roads, new schools, new hospitals have been erected in many communities. But there are individuals and groups who are still struggling, for instance business people. While we can see that the hoteliers in Tangalle, in general, have managed to re-establish their businesses, many even at a higher level than before, many business people in Hambantota are still struggling. But here we can not only refer to the post-tsunami recovery process. Whereas many Hambantota business people have been negatively affected by the government's huge infrastructure projects, the Tangalle tourist sector experienced a substantial boom after the end of the civil war in 2009. Also, the Hambantota fishing community is not that happy with their present situation, feeling that they are in a more difficult position than before. But again, this is not only connected to the recovery process. The government's price policy, combined with lesser catches and high fuel prices, have made their living conditions more vulnerable.

The Ten Years After study reveals that the general perception among local people in Hambantota district is that the government was the weak partner in the recovery process, some were also of the opinion that the government's activities were counter-productive. The study ca not state clearly if this perception is mainly directed towards policies and activities of the national government in Colombo, or the district or municipality councils, or if it is a consequence of some government officers and servicemen that did a poor job. It could also be that the expectations were too high. We did, however, discern a common feeling of mistrust towards government authorities, both at the national and the local level. Very often, we heard in conversation with local people that the government was plagued by corrupt

practices, practices that you can also frequently read about in the national news-papers. It was a general sentiment that during the recovery process, people work-ing in the government apparatus were utilizing their position to take substantial portions of the incoming aid for their own benefit. And, obviously, knowing about all the privileges accrued by the members of the parliament and in government offices, you can easily understand people's feelings. Future governments have to make some extraordinary achievements if they want to overcome what we could call the "public-private" divide, and create synergies between themselves and civil societies for a more sustainable development of the country.

The Hambantota people, in general, recognised the positive role played by civil organisations, mainly those we call NGOs (or INGOs). Some of them did a very good job, for instance the Tzu Chi Foundation from Taiwan, while many others were recognized as giving aid and assistance that really benefitted the communities. However, there were some that should never had been allowed to take part in the recovery process due to their lack of local knowledge, com-petence and skills, interest, motivation and funds. The main criticism raised against the NGOs was that there were quite often (more often than not) a lack of communication with local people or institutions both in the emergency and the recovery phases after the Tsunami. This had two main negative effects. Firstly, many projects were misplaced, poorly planned, or did not take into con-sideration local cultural, religious, social or environmental concerns. Therefore, they were not as time and cost effective as they could have been. Secondly, aid and assistance distributed was sometimes unjust, unfair and unequal. Houses, boats and other goods were often distributed to people who did not "deserve" it since they were not that much affected by the event, while others that really "deserved" it were given little. With limited communication, there was also a limited local participation. Even the *ad hoc* coordination committee established by the local people themselves in Kirinda, and which played a certain role in the relief phase, was gradually put aside when the bigger recovery projects were planned and implemented.

The role of faith

In a summary of findings from this study, it is not possible to avoid the issue of faith. During the discussions with the victims of the disaster, it soon become clear that faith was not only important, faith was fundamental. It seemed that faith could rationalize, explain, and even give meaning to the seemingly meaningless. Two of the groups we studied were mainly Muslim (the Kirinda village and the fishing community in Hambantota) and mainly Buddhist (the Tangalle tourist sector, and the Hambantota business community). Although religion and faith were not major ingredients in our study, their importance always shone through. Among the Hambantota fishermen, this was very explicit, as – according to their perception – the Tsunami was an act of Allah. The role of faith does not only have an impact on how people interpret events, such as disasters, it also explain why they take place, and what can be done to avoid them, or actually, why disasters are unavoidable. Allah uses disasters to inform people about his will and his powers, and if Allah wants to cast a disaster over us, there is nothing we can do to escape it. The only protection we may try to build is to be faithful and

follow his commands, but even that is not a guarantee against unlucky events. Even faithful, strong believers can be exposed to disasters, if Allah wants it so.

When raising the issue of faith with Buddhists, the situation was somewhat the same, but also somewhat different. Buddhists do not have a God. Lord Buddha is a teacher, a messenger, a purified human being. His teachings can allow us to live according to the highest principles. We should not be so occupied with earthly activities, but try to live a full, ethical life. We have to look into ourselves, and try our level best to avoid thoughts and activities that can negatively impact on ourselves, or others. Here, Karma is important. Karma is basically connected to morality; it explains that the inequality between people has a moral causation. When something good happens to a person, it has a moral foundation, the same if something evil happens. In this sense, Buddhism is very individualistic or personalised. Nothing happens to a person, good or bad, which that person does not deserve. The cause for this happening can be more or less invisible, and is not only confined to how the person has lived his present life, but also how he has lived his former lives. Karma is the accumulated result of actions in past and present lives. In this way, it is we, each and any of us, who are responsible for our own destiny, our own happiness or sorrows. We can create our own heaven, but also our own hell.

In the same way as with the belief in the act of Allah, the belief in Karma gives to Buddhist a perfectly rational explanation of the "destiny" of the people affected by the Tsunami: why some died, some survived, some were injured, and some were completely unharmed. According to our interpretation of the responses from the Tsunami affected people, people's faith makes it is easier to tackle life after a disaster, as what happens to you or your dearest is explainable. If this interpretation is correct, it will be essential to incorporate such beliefs in future disaster risk reduction programmes as they will have a bearing on how they should be planned and organised according to a community based approach. As Cannon (2008) argues, we must understand people's cultural and psychological factors to understand the insiders' perspective. Since a society's vulnerability to disasters, such as the Tsunami, is socially constructed, we must understand people's values and choices to see how vulnerability can be reduced. These values and choices will always, although to a higher or lesser degree, be faith based.

Conclusion

Perhaps the most important lesson from the Ten Years After study regards the role and importance of local communities themselves, individuals, structures, networks and institutions, what we often denote as social capital. In the villages along the coast, from the moment when the first wave hit their shores, and for the first two- to three days later (for some communities even up to a week) the local people,

struck by an event beyond any imagination, were more or less left on their own. Many people had been carried away far into the sea, others carried away to the hinterland, death, and dying people everywhere. All over, there were people screaming, people in deep shock, people running around and calling for their loved ones. It was a completely terrible situation, not possible to describe. But help was to come, and very fast. Local people less harmed started to carry people found in sea, dead or alive, into safety. They started comforting people in grief, carried the wounded to schools, temples, mosques and churches not destroyed by the waves. They brought what amount of food and water they had to the injured and cooked for them. Then, less than an hour later, people from adjacent communities started to appear, running to the zone of disaster as fast as their feet could bear them. They did whatever they could to help the hurt, injured and harmed.

The waves came cracking down on them an early Sunday morning. Two days later, except for enormous amounts of debris, mud, broken trees, and rubble, stones, glass and pieces of furniture from the broken houses, the scene was very much improved. Dead people had been buried, injured people had been brought to safe places, wounds had been treated to the best of their ability and the availability of medicines and other health care products, broken limbs had been preliminary mended. Individuals with dead family members were consoled. People suffering mentally were taken care of. When I, in my 2006 survey, visited a small village close to Matara, I asked a local person who had lost several family members: "what about the local government, what did they do?" He replied that an officer from the local government came on a motorbike, had a look around, and then left again. But what in actual fact could the local government do? The situation was so overwhelming, and their resources so few. This was only a small community, a village, in the midst of a great number of other small communities, and many bigger towns.

In the bigger towns, the situation was quite different. As the damages were so massive, the local people were not able to cope with the situation, but they did what they could do. Luckily, however, several groups of volunteers, individuals and organisations, local as well as non-local, came and started rescue operations within a couple of days. The towns had institutions that could be activated quickly, such as hospitals, fire squads and police forces, but also private companies and civic organisations could be engaged, and they were. According to my understanding, listening to people, reading books and seeing photographs and videos, the synergy between the local people and these organisations, i.e. the combination of bonds and bridges, was the success factor salvaging the situation in the Tsunami affected towns of Sri Lanka.

References

Ahmed, I., and E. Charlesworth (2015) Housing and Resilience: Case Studies from Sri Lanka. In Shaw, R. (ed.), *Recovery from the Indian Ocean Tsunami: A Ten-Year Journey*. Tokyo: Springer

Athukorala, P. and B. P. Resosudarmo (2005) 'The Indian Ocean Tsunami: Economic Impact, Disaster Management and Lessons'. *Asian Economic Papers*, 4(1), pp. 1–39

Barenstein, J.E.D. (2013) Post-Tsunami Relocation Outcomes in Sri Lanka: Communities' Perspectives in Ampara and Hambantota. In Barenstein, J.E.D. and E. Leeman (eds.), *Post-Disaster Reconstruction and Change: Communities' Perspectives*. London: CRC Press

Birkmann, J., N. Fernando., S. Hettige., S. Amarasinghe., T. Jawasingam., M. Ravi., D. Paranagama., M. Nandana., M. Nassel., S. Voigt., and J. Wolferts. (2006) *Measuring revealed vulnerability in Sri Lanka at the local level*. Paper presented at the Regional Workshop on The Humanitarian Impact of Tsunami and Disaster Risk Reduction, 2006 Bangkok Thailand. UNU-EHS: http://www.unisdr.org/2006/ppew/tsunami/highlights/Summary-UNU-EHS-VulAss.pdf (accessed 13 December 2015)

Fritz Institute (2005) *Recipient Perceptions of Aid Effectiveness: Rescue, Relief and Rehabilitation in Tsunami Affected Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka*. San Francisco: http://www.fritzinstitute.org/PDFs/findings/NineMonthReport.pdf (accessed 1 September 2015)

Kapadia, K. H. (2008) Development After a Disaster: The Tsunami, Poverty, Conflict and Reconstruction in Sri Lanka, PhD Dissertation in Energy and Resources, University of California, Berkeley

Klein, N. (2007). *The Shock Doctrine: The Raise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Henry Holt and Company

Nayaran, D. (1999) *Bonds and Bridges: Social capital and poverty*. Poverty Group, PREM, Washington, World Bank: https://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/9747/narayan.pdf (accessed 15 December 2015)

Newman, L. and A. Dale (2005) The role of agency in sustainable local community development. *Local Environment*, 10(5), pp. 477–486

Telford, J., J. Cosgrave and R. Houghton. (eds.) (2006) *Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami: Synthesis Report*. London, Tsunami Evaluation Coalition: http://www.urban-response.org/resource/5602 (accessed 6 October 2015)

UN-OCHA (United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) (2014) Sri Lanka: Taking forward the lessons from the Tsunami. UN-OCHA: http://www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/sri-lanka-taking-forward-lessons-tsunami (accessed 15 December 2015)

Chapter 10

The next chapter

Managing natural disasters
and sustaining local development:
The importance of building robust communities
– a quest for human security

Arne Olav Øyhus and Kim Øvland

Introduction

The Indian Ocean Tsunami came as a shock. Even Indonesia, where natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and volcano eruptions are regular features almost on a daily basis, was caught by surprise by the magnitude of this hazard. Both the human and socioeconomic costs of the disaster were so enormous that they were far beyond imagination. Even though the immediate effects were of a catastrophic nature, the damaged societies are today largely "materially" restored, but there are deep cutting psycho-social effects that most probably will never be resolved among the present population. The problem is that such disasters are bound to re-appear, but we do not know where and when. What we know is that the impacts of such disasters can be reduced.

As a point of departure, we must accept that about half of the present global population lives in areas that are exposed to natural disasters, and the number of people affected by natural disasters has increased year by year for the last 20 years. From 1994 to 2013, EM-DAT recorded 6.873 natural disasters worldwide causing 1.35 million deaths, an average of almost 68.000 deaths per year. In addition, 218 million people were affected by natural disasters on average per year during the same period. While the frequency of geophysical disasters (earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions and landslides) were almost constant in this period, there was a steady rise in climate-related events (mainly floods and storms), increasing the total number of natural disasters significantly.

Since 2000, EM-DAT have recorded an average of 341 climate-related disasters per year, a 44% rise from the 1994-2000 average, and well over double the level in 1980–1989 (CRED, 2015).

It is generally accepted that natural disasters have an adverse effect on development gains, and that they are most damaging for poor and vulnerable communities (UN, 2004; WB, 2006). To reduce the impact from disasters, it is important to make the disaster-exposed communities more robust. This can be done by applying various mitigation measures aimed at local communities, and by an increased support for community based disaster management (CBDM) activities. Local communities can potentially be the main actors to manage both acute disasters and long term sustainable development. In many respect the Tsunami was a disaster completely beyond the imagination of both the Sri Lankan authorities and the public, but still simple precautions such as a functioning early warning system and communities prepared for disasters could have reduced the impact of the disaster profoundly, and saved many lives. Improved mitigation and preparedness systems would also have made the reconstruction process more effective. In this respect it is disappointing to read a UNDP report that while UNDP assisted the Disaster Management Center (DMC) to design and implement many activities, including early warnings systems and preparedness plans, 'little attempt has been made to maintain those activities' (UNDP, 2011: 6).

The present global scenario

As indicated by Webster et al. (2009) the increasing interconnectedness of world economic and political systems and the effects of climate change on natural processes have made disasters more complex and destructive than ever before. In the Bali Action Plan, the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change have identified disaster risk reduction strategies as tools for adaptation and mitigation (UNFCCC, 2007), and these tools are meant to pay special attention to the poorest most vulnerable communities (UN/ISDR, 2007c). This means that investments in mitigation and preparedness efforts should be made so that they provide for the long-term welfare of poor communities (Somers and Svara, 2009:181). This is very much in accordance with UNDP's recommendations for DMC's DRR activities in Sri Lanka, arguing that disaster management should be linked to the development and promotion of local people's livelihood patterns that could empower disaster-prone communities to cope with natural hazards and help poor people to survive disasters. This item was, however, not adequately considered in the projects implemented between UNDP and DMC (UNDP, 2011, 48).

According to Webster et al., the intensity and frequency of disasters will increase, hence far more resources will be required to maintain even the existing levels of preparedness and response, which is only about 50–70% of what is actually appealed for (Webster, 2009:20). In addition to more resources, future disaster management needs to be more efficient, flexible, holistic and participatory. This means that both present and future high-risk countries and communities need to increase their coping capacity to put in place effective measures to reduce risk, such as early warning systems, community based disaster management activities and sensitive local development plans (BCPR/UNDP, 2009). This could be done in different ways, e.g. through multi-scalar, multi--sectoral or multilateral processes, with crucial emphasis on local involvement and participation. In Sri Lanka, the government has now developed structures and policies along this line. In May 2005, they enacted the "Sri Lanka Disaster Management Act No. 13 of 2005" establishing the foundation for a Disaster Risk Management (DRM) system in the country, simultaneously the Act establishes the National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM) chaired by the president. They have established a Ministry of Disaster Management, a Disaster Management Centre (DMC) with the mandate to implement disaster management programmers in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action, and a National Disaster Management Coordination Committee (NDMCC). NDMCC is a multi-stakeholder committee comprising people from the government, parliament, universities, civil societies, etc., with the aim of mobilizing knowledge, skills and resources to strengthen disaster, risk reduction activities (NDMCC, n.d). NDMCC are pointing to climate change as the main cause behind possible future disaster risks, emphasizing the possibility for an increased frequency and intensity of climate related disasters, and sea level rise. In collaboration with the UNDP the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) in December 2005, published a comprehensive report called "Towards a Safer Sri Lanka: Road Map for Disaster Risk Management" only one year after the Tsunami. The Road Map incorporates seven thematic components that will support plans both in disaster risk management and development planning. Among the seven components we will mention the following three strategical areas; *Multi-hazard Early Warning System*; *Mitigation and Integration of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into Development Planning*; and *Community-based Disaster Risk Management* (DMC/UNDP, 2005: xiv). Quite interestingly, the Road Map argues: "Communities bear the primary impact of disasters, yet the first and continued response to disasters comes from community members. Well prepared and protected communities are the first line of defence against disasters and a key to reducing vulnerability and increasing disaster resilience" (DMC/UNDP, 2005: 47). Along similar way of thinking we find the following three propositions among ten from the UN's Special Envoy for the Tsunami Recovery, former president

W.J. Clinton: *Proposition 1: Governments, donors and aid agencies must recognize that families and communities drive their own recovery*; *Proposition 2: Recovery must promote fairness and equity*; and *Proposition 3: Good recovery must leave the communities safer by reducing risks and building resilience* (Clinton, 2006).

Community Based Disaster Management

The importance of local community involvement in disaster management activities

According to the Yokohama strategy (UNDP, 1994) preventive measures should involve local community participation in disaster risk reduction activities. In practice, however, CRED argues that the dominant approach has been to focus on the post-disaster phase. Little funding and policy priority have been given to issues such as community preparedness. This is true of both national government activities and policies, and the policies and practices of UN and other development institutions (Guha-Sapir et al., 2004).

National models of mitigation and preparedness have often been too top-down and technology driven to make much impact on local vulnerability reduction (IFRC, 2002), and central governments in developing countries often possess narrow power structures with limited concern for local issues. This was also very much the case in Sri Lanka. Silva (2009), for instance, claims that funds for the disaster-affected people were seriously mismanaged by political interference at various levels. Comparing the Muslim dominated Ampara along the eastern coast and the Sinhala dominated Hambantota on the southern coast, he argues that while Ampara suffered 24% of total homes damaged, they only received 14% of total pledges, whereas Hambantota, the home district of the then president, received almost five times the requirements, and that in one housing scheme more than 30% of the recipients were political nominees of the president not at all affected by the Tsunami (Silva, 2009: 70). Regarding Sri Lanka, Silva also supports the suggestion that disaster management has often been too top-down and technology driven, as it does not build on existing social processes, or "leave behind any viable entities that add to the resilience and coping mechanisms of the affected populations" (Silva, 2009: 71).

According to Somers and Svara (2009) there is also a chance that local government leaders will pay more attention to other issues when the prospects of a crisis seem remote, meaning the need for disaster management does not become obvious before a crisis occurs.

Presently, among agencies working with disaster management, priority is given to increased support for more community-based approaches to disaster management, supporting the suggestion to let community-driven projects and programs developed by NGOs be the main contributor of local disaster management initiatives. "Such an approach to risk management is not guaranteed to be comprehensive, but applies directly to identifiable needs and the empowerment of local populations" (Freeman et al, 2003: i). What is important when one talks about empowerment, or agency, is that the participation that takes place should focus not only on processes but also on content, meaning local communities should not only follow a process but also be enabled to shape the process. This will create a greater sense of ownership for the disaster management activities, which is important for a lasting impact and sustainability. Regarding the post-tsunami recovery process in Sri Lanka, UNDP (2011) forwards the same message regarding Sri Lanka, arguing that since communities are the lowest and most basic and effective entity for disaster management in any society, there are inherent strengths in these communities. They have local knowledge and networks (bonds), they are aware of locally available resources, material as well as spiritual. In other words, they can command the social capital that can be utilized to form the basis a functioning disaster management system. In a majority of disasters, the local communities proves their agency in the sense that they are utilizing their networks to respond, and they have the best knowledge of local risks and vulnerabilities, but also of available capacities and coping mechanisms. The local communities prove that they have the social capital necessary to enact agency, i.e. the possibility to engage actively in emergency activities (Newman and Dale, 2005). Regrettably, neither the social capital, nor the agency of the local communities and authorities, have been properly involved in the disaster management structures and systems of Sri Lanka (UNDP, 2011). The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC), citing several influential organisations, e.g. the World Bank (2006), UN/ISDR (2007), and IFRC (2004) advocates for the view that decisions that can be made and actions conducted close to the individual- and community-level have more immediate and significant effects than do more distant ones. This implies that the appropriate management level for certain kinds of disaster management activities should be at the local level. Among the various actors at this level, we may find civic organisations such as fishing and farming associations, faith based organisations, women's groups, small business cooperatives, etc. These organisations possess local social-, demographic- and economic knowledge and can easily spread information, and thus they have the possibility to identify and share information regarding projects and activities that may increase or decrease

hazard vulnerability. By utilizing both the bonding and bridging relationships existing among the civic organisations emergency and recovery activities can be both broader and better, and, hence, more efficient. Then you have local government institutions, and well-functioning local government institutions will have experiences related to local structural and management issues as well as an understanding of local conditions that can guide local vulnerability reduction efforts through policies and technical assistance. The last type of organisations we can mention that belong to this local context, is locally established and based disaster committees. Given the "bonds, i.e. their local ties, networks, and knowledge, local disaster committees represent an important form of social capital that can be utilized for implementing plans and activities described by national and international disaster organizations in a more context specific and appropriate way than organizations anchored at higher levels.

The Sri Lankan government do, at least rhetorically, adhere to such a local community approach. One of the "Primary Activities" of NDMCC is to "Initiate the Community Based/led Disaster Management" (CBDM) approach at the national level to strengthen community's decision-making processes and implement CBDM. Despite this promising attitude, we learnt from the Ten Years After case studies from Hambantota district that the local people were not very much acquainted with this government policy. This may reflect that it is a long way from theory to practice, or from politics to implementation.

According to Bristow (2004), heightened communication with first responders and communities at risk is one of the most important ways to minimize the effects of a disaster (cited in Kapucu, 2008: 247), and conducting this communication prior to a disaster is a key aspect of truly effective community preparedness and response (Tobin and Montz, 1997). The Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), of which Sri Lanka is a member, emphasises the importance of CBDM as:

- Community people are the first responders therefore they must be equipped to respond

- Community people have local knowledge and experience

- Community people know local norms and societal relationships

- Community people are important for the implementation of mitigation measures and action plans

- Community people's participation and contributions make CBDM more cost effective as this generates additional resources
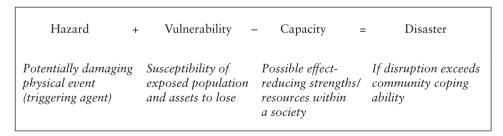
(Torrente, E., Zhang, J. and T. Le-Huu , 2008: 9–10).

Based on their post-tsunami experiences from Sri Lanka and Aceh, Kennedy et al. (2008) also discuss the necessity of community involvement in relief and reconstruction, emphasizing the importance of communication between the agencies and the local communities. For them, community involvement implies that communities inform and are informed about resources available for reconstruction options and the consequences of choosing each option. The basic principle of community involvement is to exchange information necessary for relief and reconstruction. They present a very important point of view when they argue that inadequate communication on issues such as resource availability and timeframes led the Tsunami affected people to have too high expectations of settlements and shelter, expectations that were not possible to meet, leading to frustration and tension among the victims (Kennedy et al., 2008).

The importance of disaster resilience for a robust community

If a community is to become more robust, one must map and acknowledge its risks and vulnerabilities and try to reduce them, and at the same time utilize and strengthen its capacities, i.e. its agency. This is not an easy task, but it is necessary in order to make the community more resilient. It is the relationship between a community's vulnerability and its coping capacity that establishes the community's ability to cope with stress, and sets its level of resilience, and – in the last instance – determines whether a hazard will turn into a disaster or not.

Elements of a disaster

Hazard	+	Vulnerability	−	Capacity	=	Disaster
Potentially damaging physical event (triggering agent)		*Susceptibility of exposed population and assets to lose*		*Possible effect-reducing strengths/ resources within a society*		*If disruption exceeds community coping ability*

Source: UN/ISDR, 2004a; Freeman et al., 2003.

Resilience; a question of vulnerability

Westgate and O'Keefe (cited in Jeffery, 1982:38) were among the first to recognize the importance of vulnerability by defining disaster as "the interaction between extreme physical or natural phenomena and a vulnerable human group".

Vulnerability may be described as the conditions which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards. These vulnerable conditions are determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors (UN/ISDR, 2004*a*). This makes vulnerability one of the key determinates of disaster (Alexander, 1997), one which is often correlated with underdevelopment and poverty (Blaikie et al., 1994). According to David Alexander, however, natural disasters are less salient problems for those really poor people than for people who are not so poor. The reason for this is that poor people have a higher *total vulnerability* given their "precariousness of life in general" (Alexander, 1997:292), and disasters will not fundamentally change poor people's situation, they merely magnify the existing social and economic trends (Kates, 1977), which again obviously undermines any existing development activities and makes it less sustainable.

The IFRC (2005) suggests that instead of focusing on needs and vulnerabilities, one should focus on building capacity and resilience, i.e. strengthen agency. This means putting emphasis on the strengths and capacities rather than the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of a community (Twigg, 2007). No community can be totally safe from hazards, but its capacity to absorb stress and destructive forces, its capacity to maintain and manage community functions and structures, and its ability to 'bounce back' after a hazardous event, describes its level of resilience (Twigg, 2007:p.6). A disaster resilient community may be described as "the safest possible community that we have the knowledge to design and build in a natural hazard context" (Geis, 2000). In their discussion on 'building back better' in Sri Lanka (and Aceh), Kennedy et al. (2008) are very explicit on the importance of capacity building as they claim that the only way to address natural hazards is in the wider context of building sustainable communities. Many organisations working with post-tsunami relief and recovery projects in Sri Lanka did not build local capacities for planning and decision-making in order to ensure proper exit or hand-over strategies. Lack of local planning and decision-making capacities can cause a continuation of disaster vulnerabilities, even aggravating such vulnerabilities (Kennedy et al., 2008).

There is, however, no one-size-fits-all approach to how we can design or build a robust and resilient community. Preparedness, response and recovery plans must take into account the temporal and spatial changes in social vulnerability; if not the mitigation efforts may turn out to have little effect when it comes to improving local resilience to hazards (Cutter and Emerich, 2006:p.102). This means that whereas it is fairly easy to prepare for the physical aspects imbued by a disaster by studying data produced based on historic events, the temporal and spatial vulnerability impacting the social aspects are harder to prepare for (Cutter and Emerich, 2006). What we should recognise is that in many developing countries shortsighted policies and practices may actually increase societal vulnerabilities (Holmes, 2007).

Two researchers, Jørn Birkman and Nishara Fernando (2007), have tried to measure the differences in vulnerabilities between two coastal communities in Sri

Lanka, Galle – a Sinhala dominated town along the southern coast, and Batticaloa – a Muslim dominated town along the eastern coast. Their main argument is that sustainable recovery and development of coastal communities in Sri Lanka require a systematic approach for reducing vulnerability and risk. In their analysis they use the concept of revealed and emergent vulnerabilities, and argues that the identification and assessment of 'most vulnerable' areas, groups and infrastructures are of crucial importance, especially after a disaster, in order to safeguard a recovery that will be sustainable, instead of just rebuilding the structures that have proven to be vulnerable (Birkman and Fernando, 2007). When defining vulnerability, they propose that vulnerability has two main dimensions: susceptibility (the likelihood of an extreme event) and coping capacity (the ability to recover from an extreme event). Within this frame, they accept, for instance, that poor people are the most vulnerable (susceptible) in a disaster, but these people also have various resources or capacities to cope, for instance social networks (social capital). Therefore, how a hazard affects a society is a combination of both the negative characteristics (susceptibility) and the positive characteristics (coping capacity). In their actual study, the authors focused on different susceptibility factors among households and on different coping factors, such as, for instance, formal and informal networks. We will not go into details regarding the findings from their study, but will mentioned that that factors such as age, gender, education, employment and location were significant susceptibility factors, whereas informal networks was the most important coping mechanism (Birkman and Fernando, 2007).

Managing disasters, sustaining development: A shared responsibility

More than 20 years ago, the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World (UNDP, 1994: 2) claimed that, "disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and relief are four elements which contribute to and gain from the implementation of sustainable development policies". Here, the direct connection between disaster management and sustainable development is made explicit. The fact that development theory has become more focused on multi-scalar partnerships and multilateral cooperation, and putting more emphasis on informal channels (Pieterse, 2001), means that there is increased recognition that development is best achieved if different actors share the responsibility. But this is also a vital concern for disaster management. We must admit that both the causes for disasters and disaster management in itself are complex issues which must be defined in a holistic setting, and "new initiatives (should be) found in order to ensure that a disaster is viewed as a shared responsibility" (Trim, 2004:219). Various factors that are strengthened by globalisation, such as capitalism, marginalisation of the poor and politicised relief in developing countries have created more complex realities where fewer fixed assumptions can be permitted now than before (Alexander, 1997:299). This

means that we must rethink and adapt the way we conduct disaster management and support communities facing disasters. Increased community involvement is a good start. Based on their collaboration with DMC, the UNDP (2011) in their "Recommendations for Future Programming of DRR activities" in Sri Lanka write that disaster management should be linked to development activities aiming at promoting local livelihood patterns, structures and capacities that can empower disaster-prone communities to cope with hazards, and enable livelihood systems that will help poor people to survive disasters (UNDP, 2011: 48). To achieve this, the present Sri Lankan disaster management system must, according to UNDP, change their top-down approach to development into a more integrated and holistic approach that gives priority to disaster risk reduction as a development concern (UNDP, 2011).

In order to create a linkage between sustainable development and disaster management, we may outline the following process; poverty reduction (a sustainable development issue) means reduced vulnerability, and reduced vulnerability means reduced impacts of disasters on development (a disaster management issue) (Alexander, 1997). It is a problem, however, that theories that link, e.g. emergency relief and development assistance, are rarely manifested in practical situations and activities (Larsen, 2005).

According to the UN/ISDR (2005), it is important that disaster risk reduction is integrated into development activities, as disasters associated with natural hazards are fundamentally an issue of development. How failed or unsustainable development planning and investments contribute to development is made evident after each natural disaster, and the reasons for connecting disaster management and sustainable development thinking becomes clear, as does the fact that disasters associated with natural hazards are fundamentally an issue of development. This linkage has also in principle been accepted by the Sri Lankan government, as we can see from the report "Towards a Safer Sri Lanka: Road Map for Disaster Management" (DMC/UNDP, 2005).

How people and communities, as well as professionals and practitioners working in the field of disaster management, handle the pre-, per-, and post-disaster phases will affect the sustainability of existing development processes in a society. At the same time, prospective sustainable development initiatives can affect disaster management actions, both in the pre-, per- and post-disaster phases. If one is working with, and focusing on, pre-disaster activities, it is important that one does not forget or ignore post-disaster efforts, or assume that the pre-disaster initiatives are so well implemented and functioning so that post-disaster work is less important. International organisations, such as the World Bank and UN, are advocating for the view that it is more beneficial or effective to invest in preparedness and mitigation, rather than focusing resources on response. This will also be the most cost effective disaster management approach in the future, given the projected

increase in frequency and intensity of disasters (World Bank, 2006; UNDP/BCPR, 2004; FIC, 2009: 21). Thinking and planning ahead is essential.

Not only are disasters and development closely linked, so also is poverty and environmental degradation (UNEP, 2002) and "there are clear signs that this exacerbates the impact of disaster" (Alexander, 1997:287), hence flawed development activities drives disasters (IFRC, 2002:11). At the same time, destruction by natural disasters typically has disproportionate impacts on the poorest and most vulnerable populations including women, children, youth and the elderly (UNDP/BCPR, 2004).

If we are to experience increased resilience and sustained development for poor communities, facing reoccurring natural disasters, the status of such communities must be heightened (McEntire, 2001). The social, political and economic status of poor individuals is obviously undermined, as their resources are inadequate when handling disasters and politicians more often than not, overlook or even hinder the chances of the most vulnerable to cope with the threats of disasters.

The magnitude of disaster impacts increases more in poor developing countries, than in more developed countries, and as long as preparedness and prevention remains inadequate, disasters will remain a major unsolved problem for sustainable development in developing countries (Basher, 2008). Natural disasters are not a category of events that can be separated from the broader issues of development as natural disasters create serious setbacks to the development process (CRED, 2004:13). Therefore, it is important that development efforts, especially those initiated by the international community "aspire to promote social, political and economic advances and minimize the possibility that such progress may be nullified by disaster" (McEntire, 2001:194).

David A. McEntire emphasises that vulnerability must be understood and directly addressed if the effects of disasters are to be reduced (2001). He refers to what he calls *invulnerable development*, which is a sustainable development thought that also encompasses the concept of vulnerability reduction in all development decisions and activities. At the same time as development activities should be linked to vulnerability issues, the capacity, cooperation and effectiveness of people and organisations working with vulnerability reduction and disaster management needs to be increased, if the disastrous threat to development is to be limited (McEntire, 2001). This underlines the need for good management in the work towards making communities more resilient. A problem however is that many disaster management engagements do not have a long-term view, but are often put aside by shortsighted initiatives aimed at economic growth, rather than societal stability and sustainability. This does not comply well with what Monday describes as one of the six principles of community sustainability: "Incorporate disaster resilience and mitigation into actions and decisions" (Monday, 2002, in UN/ISDR, 2004*b*:18). In their "build back better"

article on Sri Lanka, Kennedy et al. (2008) absolutely support this view, stating that we need to place environmental hazards into the broader context of building sustainable communities and avoid re-creating vulnerabilities. If we do not address the root causes of vulnerability, we may risk that reconstruction efforts may leave the community in the same situation as before the disaster, or even worse (Kennedy et al., 2008). In this regard, Shaw et al. (2012) are very much critical of the post-tsunami relief and recovery activities in Sri Lanka, saying that relatively few relief efforts were connected to the long-term development activities. Likewise, Silva (2009) writes that disaster response activities in Sri Lanka did not leave behind structures that enhanced the affected communities' resilience and coping mechanisms.

So where are we?

One of the strategic goals of the UNISDR's Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA)[13] is the integration of disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policies and planning, and substantially reduce disaster losses by 2015. Since the publication of the reports *Reducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge to Development* (UNDP/BCPR, 2004) and *Disaster Risk Reduction: A Development Concern* (DFID, 2005), mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development planning, and that disaster risk accumulates within inappropriate development has gained recognition (Pelling, 2007). The Sri Lankan disaster management system, through the Ministry of Disaster Management has implemented the policies and principles of HFA.

The UNDP/BCPR[14] report from 2004 focused among other things on bringing disasters and development together, as "a developmentally informed perspective on disasters lies (between) development planners and disaster risk reduction practitioners" (UNDP/BCPR, 2004:17). The end of the previous millennium and the start of the current one saw several major disasters occur in all corners of the world. This led to a more articulated and serious consideration of the disaster-development relationship and discussions surrounding the social and economic causes of disaster risk. The result was that reducing disaster risk was acknowledged as a long-term engagement with processes of international development (UNDP/BCPR, 2004). Also in the ISDR publication *Living with Risk: A Global Review of Disaster Reduction Initiatives* (UN/ISDR, 2004*b*) the issues of disaster mitigation and sustainable development came together.

---

13   The Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) has now been succeeded by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030. The main shift between the two is that the latter has a stronger emphasis on disaster risk reduction.
14   Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery

Disasters undermine hard-won development gains and have devastating effects. But through integrating natural disaster programs with overall development objectives, governments and communities may minimize their losses (UN/ISDR, 2007*b*). Because of the enormous development losses suffered around the world from disasters, "development banks and international assistance institutions now increasingly place importance on integrating risk reduction into development policies and practices" (UN/ISDR, 2007*b*). An inconvenient truth, however, is that development programmers often neglect the importance of disaster reduction due to the absence of convincing analyses of trends and estimated losses. There is little demand by the development sector for reliable and systematic data on disasters to assess their socio-economic impact over the short term and even less so over the long term. As a result, disaster prevention activities often appear costly (CRED, 2004:13)

A central question which comes to the surface when working with disaster management issues is; can humans reduce disasters? Vulnerability is an important element of the effects and outcomes of disasters, and the most probable disaster "cause" humans can control. Therefore, vulnerability should be a focal point when working with disaster management and disaster reduction in poor communities. Education regarding risk and vulnerabilities is perhaps the most important disaster management activity for disaster-exposed communities. It is emphasised by professionals that education about disaster triggering factors and the understanding of vulnerability should be top priorities (McEntire, 2001); emphasizing the importance of training local people and helping them to understand and map their own vulnerabilities related to possible disaster triggering agents. The issue of education is also raised as a core issue by Shaw and Krishnamurthy (2009) who argues that education must play a key role in future disaster risk reduction planning, and that there is a need to enhance the efforts to bring disaster education into the curriculum both in schools and higher education (Shaw and Krishnamurthy, 2009: 636). Universities should engage both in education and research on disaster management, but make sure that this is linked with field practices to support human security in the local communities.

It is important to keep in mind that the experiences people have made and the threats they are facing vary from situation to situation. Disasters are often characterized by generality rather than uniqueness (Alexander, 1997), but when it comes to finding ways of supporting communities in their effort to reduce the effects of disasters it will be important to understand the societal distinctiveness in order to sustain development while managing disasters. Different communities located nearby each other geographically, may still tell different stories and face different problems. This indicates that the probability for succeeding with disaster management activities is heightened if the process is sensitive to social and cultural idiosyncrasies since sustainable development is best achieved when the local commu-

nity is involved as an active and influential participant, and the local natural, social and cultural context is taken as the point of departure.

The quest for human security

Accepting the future scenario as presented by the IPCC, UN, the World Bank and other international agencies, disaster management will become one of the most important – perhaps the most important – global issues in the years to come. Consequently, disaster management needs to be mainstreamed in all its connections and relationships from pre-disaster, through per-disaster, to post-disaster issues. Shaw and Krishnamurthy (2009) suggest that all disaster related activities need to include human security, a concept that is concerned with reducing and, if possible removing the insecurities that are threats to human livelihoods. In a sustainable development perspective, human security is directly concerned with the interface between society and the physical environment – the nature. Emphasizing human security implies that we cannot plan for a future sustainable development process without taking the management of the environment into our plans, but recognise the fact that such plans may be futile if we do not include plans and policies for disaster risk reduction. We might argue that the quest for human security is basically a question of disaster risk reduction.

Human livelihood depends fundamentally on the environment and the access to natural resources. We can easily see that some societies depend directly on environmental resources for their livelihood, but even sophisticated and ultra-modern urban societies depend on food, water, energy, construction materials etc. to sustain their livelihoods. There is always a connection between human life and the environment: for some societies, it is more critical and direct, for other it is more obscure and indirect. But as environment and human life is interlinked, so is the environment and disasters. Environmental degradation has an impact on both natural and social processes; it affects the natural resource base and increases vulnerability. It weakens a community's resilience and threatens traditional coping mechanisms: environmental degradation enhances vulnerability and leads to a stronger human insecurity. According to Shaw and Krishnamuthy (2009) there is a need to reinforce environmental concerns in the whole disaster management cycle from pre- to post-disaster efforts and to integrate environmental concerns into all phases of disaster management planning.

Quite regularly, when a community is exposed to a huge disaster, even to the degree that it is almost physically eradicated – as Aceh after the Tsunami, or Kashmir after the earthquake in 2005 – we as outside observers cannot understand how this community can survive and continue without being completely reconstructed from scratch with the utilisation of assistance from outside agencies, be it from the national government or international organisations. Then we learn that after

some years, the community is back on its feet. During the last 30-40 years we have repeatedly received bad news from the African continent telling us that millions of people are threatened by drought and/or desertification, and that they will surely die if aid in sufficient amount, and at the earliest possible time, will not reach them. We have even experienced this personally during the great Sahelian/Ethiopian hunger in 1984/85. But aid never does reach the poor people in time and in sufficient amounts, still people never die in millions. Why? Because communities have "hidden" means. In times of crisis communities manage to mobilize local resources, structures, systems, institutions and knowledge to tackle the crises, if not fully, at least partially. We have some, but very few examples during the last decades where a community succumbs to a crisis, but – as far as we know – never to a natural disaster. Sometimes a disaster-ridden community receives a substantial amount of outside assistance, other times only limited assistance is made available, but basically a community demonstrates strength and resilience by depending on its own resources. This indicates that any community has indigenous coping mechanisms, or what is called a "culture of coping with crisis" (Shaw and Krishnamurthy, 2009: 636). Consequently, disaster management efforts, for instance risk assessment, should include the participation of local communities, and take into close consideration their perceptions on vulnerability, their estimates on their coping capacity, and their structures and knowledge applicable to a disaster event. Since the community-based approaches are best suited to cover the issue of human security, they should be given both a national and international priority, as for instance stated in the Hyogo Framework of Action.

Conclusion

In the quest for human security, we cannot avoid the challenges brought about by climate change, implying that in the planning of disaster risk reduction activities the possible effects that climate change will imply for local communities must be put into consideration (Shaw and Krishnamurthy, 2009). Here, a particular emphasis should be given to local communities in poor, developing countries since natural disasters have an adverse impact on them, undermining the lives and livelihoods of the people in these communities. Sometimes, it can be difficult today to discern between a natural disaster and the impact from climate change as the impact from climate change can be observed and interpreted as a slow moving natural disaster. When the effects of climate change lead to an increased level of poverty and a more vulnerable pattern of livelihood, i.e. to enhanced human insecurity, this is a disaster for the people affected. We have discussed how local communities have indigenous knowledge and traditional structures that they can utilize in times of need, but these items will quite possibly not be enough in a future scenario char-

acterised by the insecurities brought about by climate change. To ensure human security, new knowledge, new structures and new practices are needed to adapt to climate change, and thereby to sustain the livelihood of the vulnerable communities.

References

Alexander, D. (1997), "The Study of Natural Disasters, 1977–1997: Some Reflections on a Changing Field of Knowledge." *Disasters*, 21(4), pp. 284–304

Basher, R. (2008), "Disaster Impacts: Implications and Policy Responses." *Social Research*, 75(3), pp. 937–954

Birkman, J. and N. Fernando (2007), "Measuring revealed and emergent vulnerabilities of coastal communities to tsunami in Sri Lanka." *Disasters*, 32(1), pp. 82–105

Blaikie, P.M., Cannon, T., Davis, I. and B.Wisner, B. (1994), *At risk: natural hazards, people's vulnerability, and disasters*. London: Routledge

Bristow, L. (2004) "Emergency Notification Technology Improves Severe Weather response." *Disaster Recovery Journal*, 17(4), pp. 20–22

Clinton, W.J. (2006) *Lessons Learned from Tsunami Recovery: Key Propositions for Building Back Better*. United Nations General-Secretary's Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, United Nations, New York

CRED (Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters) (2015). *The human cost of natural disasters 2015: a global perspective*. CRED, United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction: http://reliefweb.int/report/world/human-cost-natural-disasters-2015-global-perspective (accessed 6 March 2015)

Cutter, S. L. (ed.) (2001), *American Hazardscapes: The Regionalization of Hazards and Disasters*. Washington D.C: Joseph Henry Press

Cutter, S. L. and C.T. Emerich (2006), "Moral Hazard, Social Catastrophe: The Changing Face of Vulnerability along the Hurricane Coasts." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 604(102), pp. 102–112

DFID (Department for International Development) (2005) D*isaster Risk Reduction: A Development Concern*. London: DFID

DMC/UNDP (Disaster Management Centre/United Nations Development Programme) (2005) *Towards a safer Sri Lanka: A Roadmap for Disaster Risk Management*. DMC/UNDP: http://www.adrc.asia/documents/dm_information/srilanka_plan02.pdf (accessed 15 December 2015)

Freeman, P.K., Martin, L.A., Linnerooth-Bayer, J., Mechler, R., Pflug, G., & Warner, K., (2003) *Disaster Risk Management: National Systems for the Comprehensive Management of Disaster Risk and Financial Strategies for Natural Disaster Reconstruction*. Washington D.C: Inter-American Development Bank.

Geis, D.E. (2000), "By design: The disaster resistant and quality-of-life community." *Natural Hazards Review*, 1(3), pp.152

Guha-Sapir, D., Hargitt, D. and P. Hoyois (eds.) (2004), *Thirty Years of Natural Disasters, 1974-2003: The Numbers*. Louvain-La-Neuve: Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters.

IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) (2002), *World Disasters Report 2002: Focus on reducing risk*. IFCR, Bloomfield: Kumarian Press Inc.

IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), (2004), *World Disasters Report 2004: Focus on community resilience*. IFRC, Bloomfield: Kumarian Press Inc.

IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), (2005), *World Disasters Report 2005: Focus on information in disasters*. IFRC: http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/WDR/69001-WDR2005-english-LR.pdf (accessed April 2016)

Jeffery, S.E. (1982), "The creation of vulnerability to natural disasters: Case studies from the Dominican Republic." *Disasters*, 6(1), pp. 38–43

Kapucu, N. (2008) "Collaborative emergency management: better community organising, better public preparedness and response." *Disasters*, 32(2), p. 239–262

Kates, R.W. (1977) Major insights: A summary and recommendation. In Haas, J. E., Kates, R. W., and M.J. Bowden (eds.), *Reconstruction following disaster (261–93)*. Cambridge: MIT Press

Kennedy, J., Ashmore, J., Babister, E., and Kelman I. (2008) 'The Meaning of 'Build Back Better': Evidence From Post-Tsunami Aceh and Sri Lanka'. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 16(1), pp. 24–36

Larsen, Ø (2005), *Development assistance and emergency relief*. Bachelor thesis. Department of Development Studies, University of Agder, Kristiansand, Norway

McEntire, D.A. (2001), "Triggering agents, vulnerabilities and disaster reduction: Towards a holistic paradigm." *Disaster Prevention and Management*, 10(3), pp. 189–196

NDMCCC (National Disaster Management Coordination Committee) (n.d.) *Disaster Risk Reduction*. NDMCC: http://www.dmc.gov.lk/index_ndmcc.htm (accessed 15 December 2015)

Newman, L. and A. Dale (2005) The role of agency in sustainable local community development. *Local Environment*, 10(5), pp. 477–486

Pieterse, N.J. (2001), *Development Theory: Deconstructions and Reconstructions*. Sage, London (UK)

Pelling, M. (2007) "Learning from others: the scope and challenges for participatory disaster risk assessment." *Disasters,* 31(4), pp. 373–385

Shaw, R. and R.R. Krishnamurthy (2009) Disaster Management: The Way Ahead. In R. Shaw and K.K. Krishnamurthy (eds.), *Disaster Management: Global Challenges and Local Solutions,* Universities Press, Hyderabad, India

Silva, K. T. (2009) 'Tsunami third wave and the politics of disaster management in Sri Lanka'. *Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 63(1), pp. 61–72

Somers, S. and J.H. Svara (2009) "Assessing and Managing Environmental Risk: Connecting Local Government Management with Emergency Management", *Public Administration Review*, 69(2), pp.181–193

Tobin, G.A. and B.E. Montz (1997), *Natural Hazards: Explanation and Integration.* New York: The Guilford Press

Torrente, E., Zhang, J. and T. Le-Huu (eds.) (2008), *Community Based Disaster and Risk Management and Poverty reduction.* The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP) and Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), the PDRSEA project

Trim, P.R.J. (2004) "An integrative approach to disaster management and planning." *Disaster Prevention and Management*, 13(3), pp. 218–225

Twigg, J. (2007), *Characteristics of a Disaster-resilient Community. A Guidance Note.* DFID, Disaster Risk Reduction Interagency Coordination Group

UN (United Nations) (2004) Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World. Paper presented at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction 2004, Yokohama, Japan

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (1994), *Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World. Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation.* Paper presented at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, 1994, Yokohama, Japan. UNDP: http://www.ifrc.org/Docs/1248EN.pdf (accessed April 2016)

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2005) *National Rapid Environmental Assessment – Sri Lanka.* UNDP: http://www.unep.org/tsunami/reports/tsunami_srilanka_layout.pdf. (Accessed: 4 June 2014)

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2011) *Final Report on Outcome Evaluation on Disaster Risk Management Programme of UNDP, Sri Lanka.* New York: UNDP.

UNDP/BCPR (United Nations Development Programme/Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery) (2004), *Reducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge for Development.* New York, UNDP/BCPR: http://www.preventionweb.net/files/1096_rdenglish.pdf (accessed April 2016).

UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) (2002), *Global Environmental Outlook 3.* London: Earthscan Publications Ltd

UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) (2008), Bali Action Plan, agreed. Paper presented at the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) 2008, Bali, Indonesia. UNFCCC: http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/cop13/eng/06a01.pdf#page=3 (accessed 1 October 2015)

UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) (2004a) *Terminology of disaster risk reduction*. UN-ISDR: http://www.unisdr.org/eng/library/lib-terminology-eng%20home.htm (accessed 1 October 2015)

UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) (2004b), *Living with Risk: A Global Review of Disaster Reduction Initiatives*, Inter Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction: http://www.unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/bd-lwr-2004-eng.htm (accessed 1 October 2015)

UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) (2005). Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. Extract from paper presented at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction 2005, Kobe, and Hyogo, Japan: www.unisdr.org/wcdr (accessed 15 December 2015)

UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction), 2007, *Hyogo Framework for Action -brochure*. UNISDR: http://www.unisdr.org/files/1217_HFAbrochureEnglish.pdf (accessed April 2016)

UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) (2007b), *Acting with Common Purpose*. Proceedings from the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR), 2007, Geneva, Austria: http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/2007/first-session/docs/session_docs/GP-Acting-with-common-purpose.pdf (accessed 12 October 2015)

UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) (2005). Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. Extract from paper presented at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction 2005, Kobe, and Hyogo, Japan: www.unisdr.org/wcdr (accessed 15 December 2015)

UNISDR (2007), Foreword by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator to the "Hyogo Framework for Action" – brochure http://www.unisdr.org/files/1217_HFAbrochureEnglish.pdf (accessed April 2016)

Webster, M., Ginnetti, J., Walker, P., Coppard, D. and R. Kent (eds.) (2009) *The Humanitarian Costs Of Climate Change*. Tufts University, Boston: https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/download/attachments/21938045/climate_change.pdf?version=1 (accessed 12 October 2015)

World Bank (2006) *Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery: Mainstreaming disaster resilience and adaptation in poverty reduction*. Washington D.C.: The World Bank