"Disasters" and "Disaster Recovery"
Case Study: The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami in Sri Lanka

Learning Module: *Long-Term Recovery from the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami—a Comparison of Two Communities in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka*

SECTION 1: "Disasters" and "Disaster Recovery" Case Study: The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami in Sri Lanka

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Key Concepts and Topics:

- What is the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami
- What is the "Sociology of Hazards and Disasters"
- What is a "disaster"?
- What is "disaster recovery"?
- How is "disaster recovery" a theoretical concept?
- What is "sustainable recovery"?
- What is "development" (in the context of disasters and disaster recovery)?

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  - What is "cultural competence"?

Learning Objectives:

- **Understand:**
  - Interpret the meaning of "disaster" as a concept that is multifaceted and has multiple definitions.
  - Summarize and compare the three different types of "disasters"
- **Analyze:**
  - Analyze ways in which their own communities may be vulnerable to a specific type of disaster
  - Define "sustainable disaster recovery" and differentiate it from a simplistic definition of "disaster recovery"

What is a "Disaster"?

- **DISASTER:** "a situation involving a natural hazard which has consequences in terms of damage, livelihoods/ economic disruption and/or casualties that are too great for the affected area and people to deal with properly on their own…" (Wisner et al. 2012; 30)

- **Three types of disasters (not mutually-exclusive categories):**
  1. "Natural Disasters"
  2. "Technological Disasters"
  3. "Man-made Disasters"

- *Can you think of of examples for each "type" of disaster?*

What is a Disaster?

- **A cycle: (Tierney 2007)**
  - Starting point
  - Onset of hazard event
  - Period of emergency
  - Relief & recovery
  - Long term recovery

- **"Communities" in disasters**
  - Social capital and social networks

"Communities" and Inequality

- Not all communities experience disasters in the same way

- Community can be defined in many different ways
  - When looking at the case of Sri Lanka in the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, we define "community" as a "Grama Niladhari division" (or GN Division)
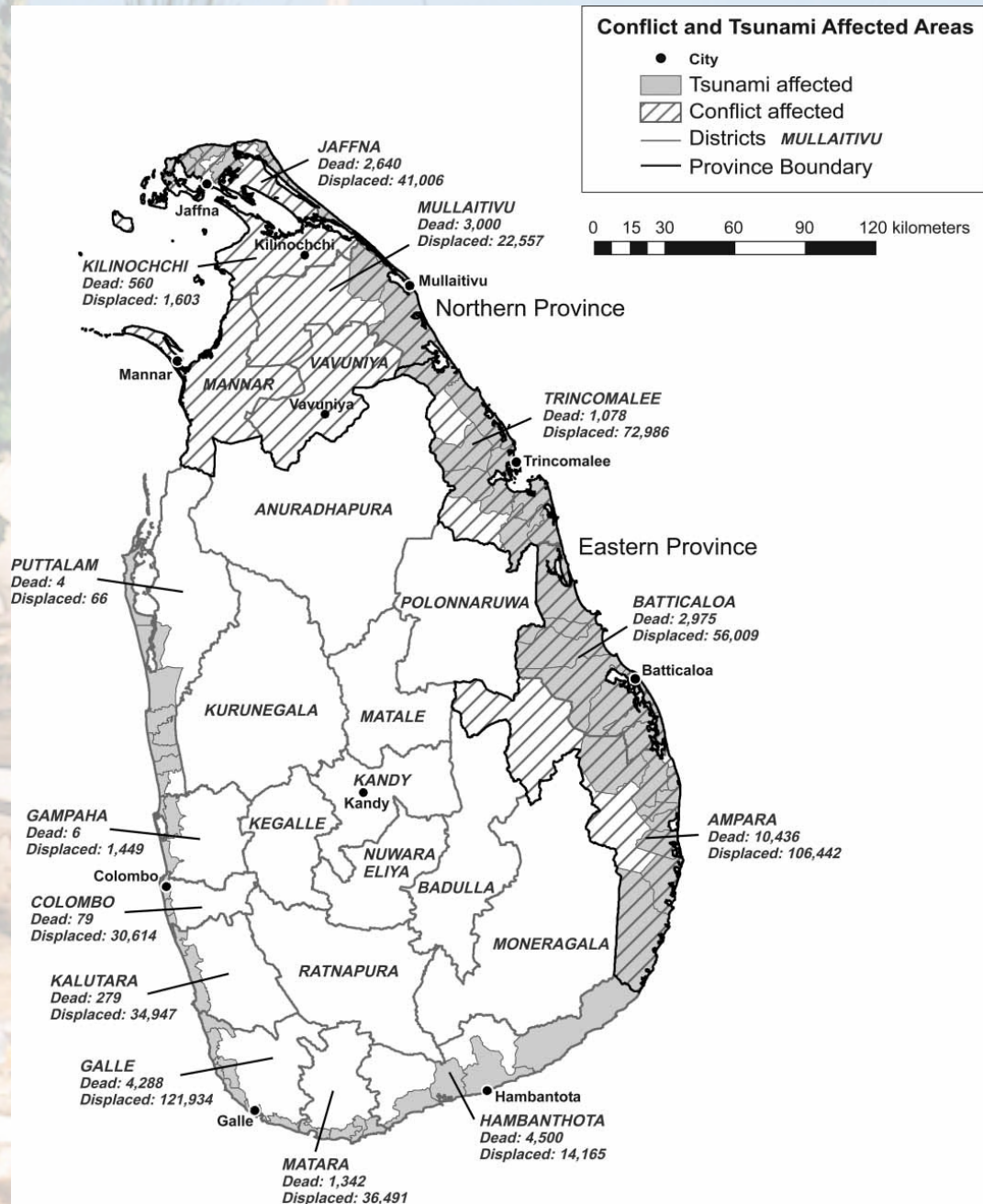
2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami

- This video is a BBC Special Report about the tsunami immediately following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami on December 26, 2004 (click here to open a link to the video):

Context

- 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami as a "*megacatastrophe*"
  - In Sri Lanka alone, more than 35,000 people were killed and roughly 70% of the small island's coastline was affected

- Sri Lankan Civil War (1983-2009)

- **"Community" defined as Grama Niladhari Divisions**
  - "**GN Person**" or village leader is a government appointed position

Conflict and Tsunami Affected Areas
- City
- Tsunami affected
- Conflict affected
- Districts *MULLAITIVU*
- Province Boundary

0 15 30   60   90   120 kilometers

JAFFNA
Dead: 2,640
Displaced: 41,006

MULLAITIVU
Dead: 3,000
Displaced: 22,557

KILINOCHCHI
Dead: 560
Displaced: 1,603

Jaffna
Kilinochchi
Mullaitivu

Northern Province

VAVUNIYA
Mannar
MANNAR
Vavuniya

TRINCOMALEE
Dead: 1,078
Displaced: 72,986

Trincomalee

ANURADHAPURA

Eastern Province

PUTTALAM
Dead: 4
Displaced: 66

POLONNARUWA

BATTICALOA
Dead: 2,975
Displaced: 56,009

Batticaloa

KURUNEGALA   MATALE

KANDY
Kandy

GAMPAHA
Dead: 6
Displaced: 1,449

KEGALLE

NUWARA
ELIYA

AMPARA
Dead: 10,436
Displaced: 106,442

Colombo
BADULLA

COLOMBO
Dead: 79
Displaced: 30,614

MONERAGALA

KALUTARA
Dead: 279
Displaced: 34,947

RATNAPURA

GALLE
Dead: 4,288
Displaced: 121,934

Galle

MATARA
Dead: 1,342
Displaced: 36,491

Hambantota

HAMBANTHOTA
Dead: 4,500
Displaced: 14,165

Map of Tsunami and Conflict Impacts in Sri Lanka (Kleinfeld 2007)

Inequality and Disaster Vulnerability

- "Disasters do not affect all members of society equally" (Fothergill and Peek 2004; 89)

- "Vulnerability (to a disaster) is a function of exposure (who is at risk) and sensitivity of system (the degree to which people and places can be harmed)" (Cutter et al. 2008, 559).

- Vulnerability is a function of social class, gender, race/ethnicity, social capital, and political dis/enfranchisemet among other axes of social inequity (Tierney 2007, Cannon 2000).

ANALYZE:
Vulnerability in YOUR Community?

- How and why are different communities differentially vulnerable to disasters?

- ***Can you think of the ways in which your own community may or may not be "vulnerable" to a specific disaster?***

Disaster Recovery

- **Disaster recovery is multi-dimensional and is studied by scientists and practitioners from a wide array of fields**
  - Sustainable disaster recovery or "building back better" (Smith and Wenger 2007)

- Building a theory of "sustainable community-level recovery from disasters"

Vulnerability and Disaster Recovery

- Not all communities experience the same levels of pre-disaster vulnerability.
  - As such, the process of recovery following a disaster event is a function of pre-existing social inequalities (Phillips 2009, Tierney 2006).

- Disaster recovery is a non-linear process

Four Types of Disaster Recovery

1. Social Recovery
2. Economic Recovery
3. Infrastructure Recovery
4. Risk Reduction

- *Can you think of specific examples of each of these types of recovery?*

Two Communities and Two Different Recoveries

- **This case study looks at the recoveries of two different communities on Sri Lanka's East coast to investigate both:**
  1. The interplay between "natural" and "man-made" disasters, and
  2. Differential recovery as a result of differential vulnerabilities (ethnicity and religion)

- The communities:
  - One Tamil/Hindu Community
  - One 100% Muslim Community

For Example: Infrastructure Recovery

Tamil/Hindu Community In Kallady, Batticaloa

Muslim Community in Kattankudy, Batticaloa

Disaster Recovery and Development

- Sri Lanka and the *Golden Wave* (Gamburd 2013)
  - The massive wave of foreign aid and resources flowing into Sri Lanka following the tsunami

- **"Development"**

- Recovery projects as development project means *foreign influence on local cultures*

Disaster Recovery and Development in Communities in Batticaloa

- Examples of "development" embedded within recovery projects:
  - Introduction of new household technologies
  - Introduction of new economies (including tourism)

- **Cultural Competence**: a sensitivity to local cultural norms

- *Brainstorm: How might the influx of foreign tourists affect local social structures?*

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