

Doubling Australian Aid Conference:
Crawford School, ANU

Aid and the Asian Tsunami

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7 February 2011

Outline:

1. Introduction – some disasters
2. The Asian tsunami – stages of response
3. Summary of lessons

(Theme: issues of aid delivery)

Topic 1:

Introduction – some disasters

(Main message: different disasters are very different)

We need to recall that ...

- The nature of megadisasters varies greatly (not just one animal!)
- And international responses to megadisasters vary greatly too
- There are big differences between (a) rich and poor countries, and (b) which disasters in poor countries the international community responds to (need is not the only criteria!)

Look at some recent ones...

Three recent megadisasters:

Event	Deaths	Spending US\$ bill	Comment <i>(Spending per death)</i>
Asian tsunami Asia region Dec 2004	230,000	18	Conditions very favourable for local and international support <i>(\$76,000)</i>
Katrina US Aug 2005	1,900	Over 100	Very high levels of US funding; also some international support <i>(\$50,000,000)</i>
Cyclone Nargis Myanmar May 2008	130,000	0.3	Myanmar govt isolationist; almost no international support <i>(\$2,300)</i>

Two more this year ...

Event	Deaths	Spending US\$ bill	Comment <i>(Spending per death)</i>
Haiti Caribbean Jan 2010	230,000	5	Mixed international response; spending has been very slow <i>(\$20,000)</i>
Pakistan Floods Aug 2010	1,600	1	Still evolving; little international support <i>(\$625,000)</i>

Haiti: Status after 6 months (Wikipedia)

July 2010 -- up to 98% of the rubble remains uncleared. ... Thousands of bodies remain in the rubble. ... The number in relief camps remains at 1.6 million; almost no transitional housing has been built. ... Most camps have no electricity, running water, or sewage disposal ... tents are beginning to fall apart. Crime in the camps is widespread, especially against women and girls.

Funds -- Between 23 major charities, \$1.1 billion has been collected for relief work ... 2% percent has been released.

Overall summary ...

(Q: how to explain this??)

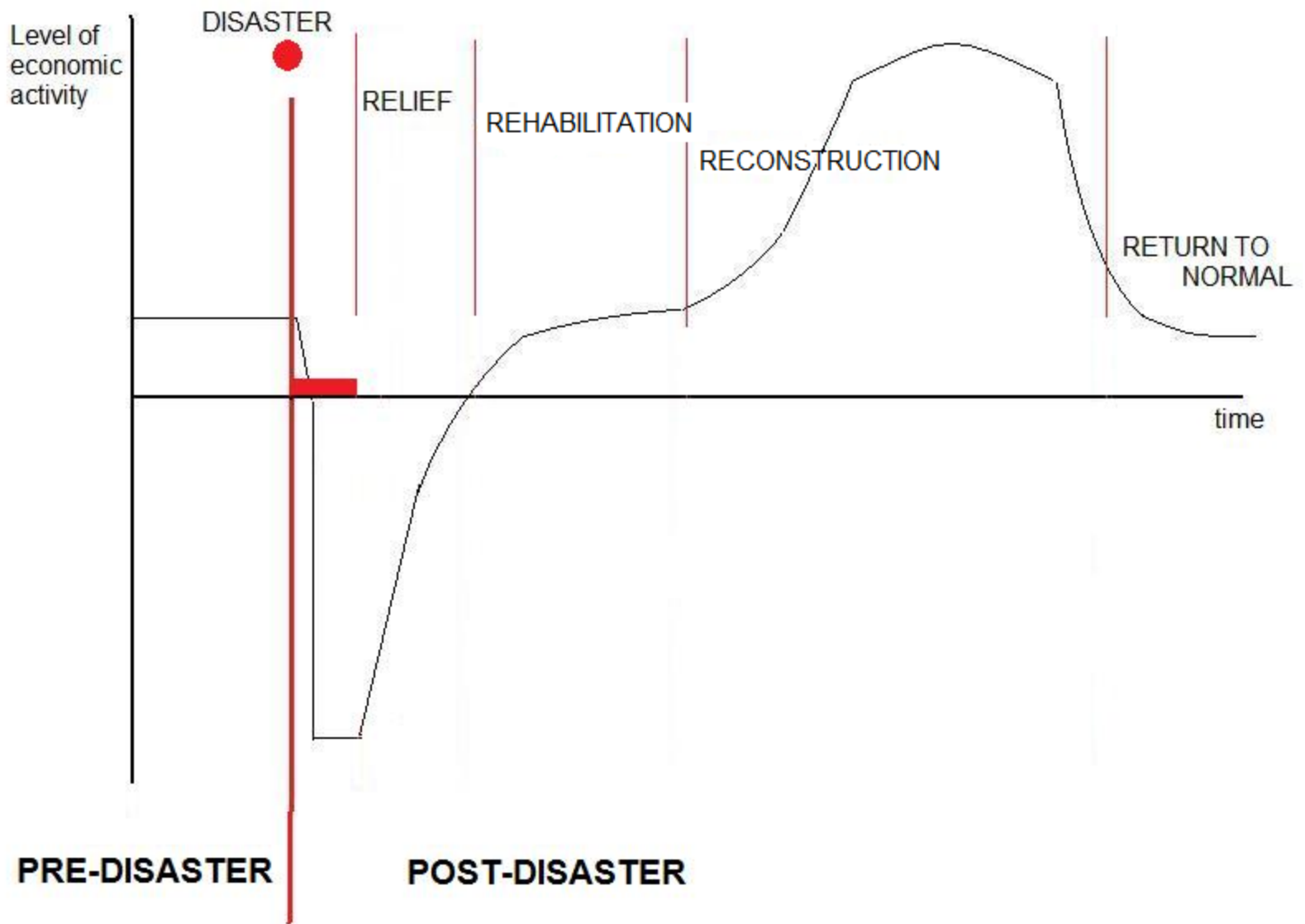
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Topic 2:

The Asian tsunami – stages of response

(Main message: different issues arise at different stages in responding to a disaster)

Disaster -- economic impact at various stages



NB: some key issues (not discussed today)...

- What are the links between the various stages?
- Should all aid agencies work in all stages? If not, who does what and when? (Comparative advantage.)
- Do actors in the process understand the differences?

Topic 3:

Summary of lessons

(Main message: preparation for (beforehand) and response to (after) disasters is difficult -- but we can do better)

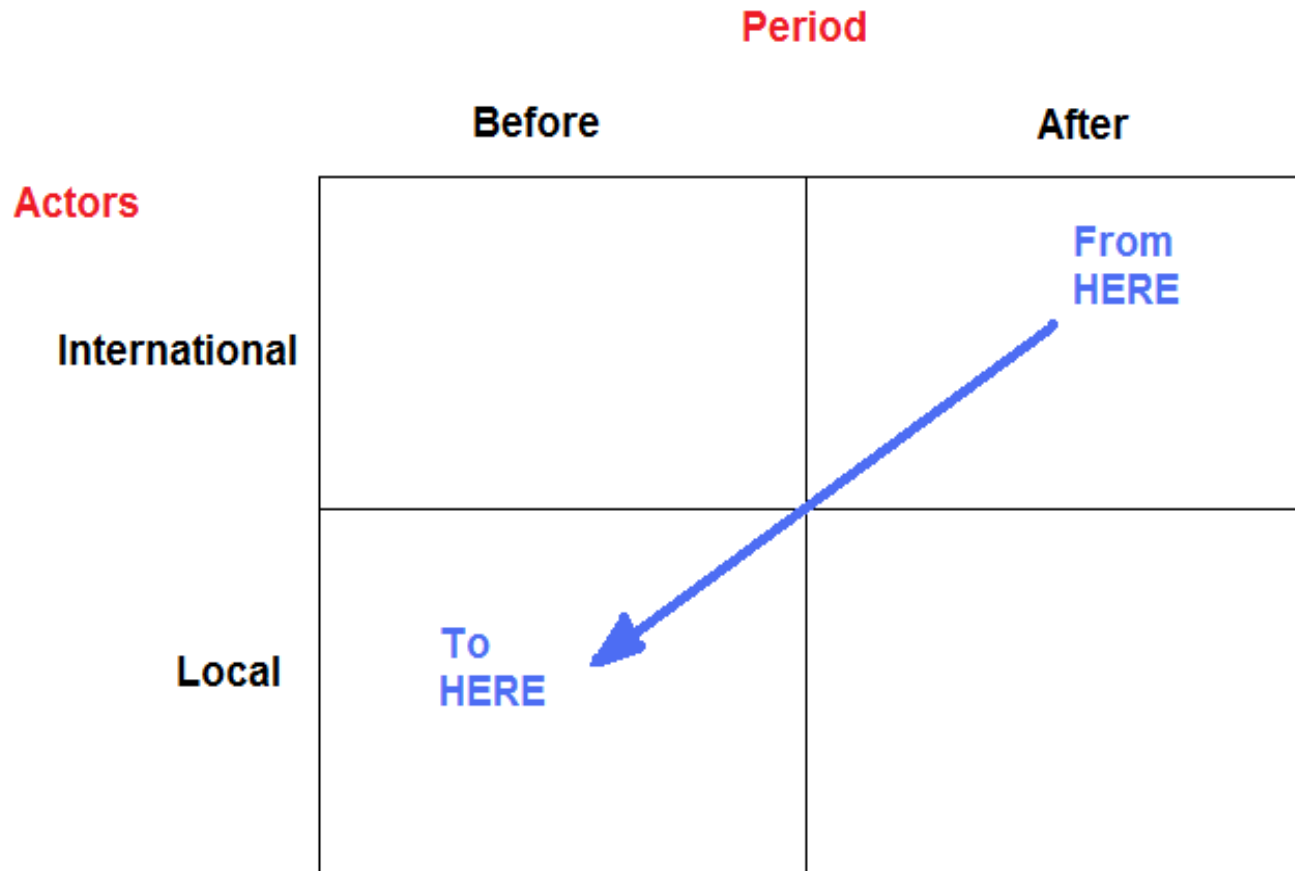
As Ban Ki-moon said, “Don’t wait for disaster” (Jakarta Post, 23 Mar 2010, emphasis added) . . .

“We cannot stop disasters from happening, but we can dramatically reduce their impact, if the right disaster risk reduction measures are taken in advance...

Donors need to fund disaster risk reduction and preparedness measures...

To prevent natural hazards turning into disasters, we must all act sooner and act smarter.”

One main lesson: a key change of mode is needed ...



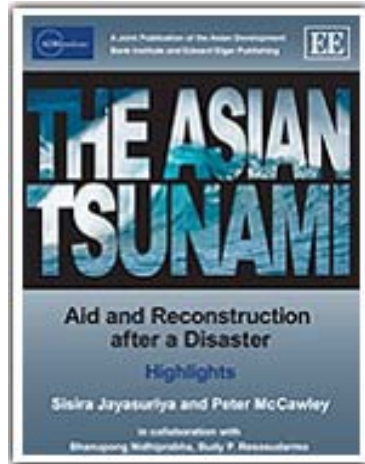
Lessons (1):

1. Objectives – many different objectives
2. Local responses – key element: policy should focus on local preparedness
3. Coordination – very hard; strong local lead is needed
4. Stages – pay attention to the different stages

Lessons (2):

5. Supply-oriented donors – need for local stakeholders to provide feedback
6. Finance – often hard to get details; often not well-monitored
7. Cost increases – Dutch Disease issue; plan for local cost increases
8. Methods of spending – very important; more use of cash often advisable

Further reading:



The Asian Tsunami: Aid and Reconstruction After a Disaster - Highlights version

... www.adbi.org