

COASTAL ZONE DISASTER RECOVERY PROGRAMS

The Role of Community Organisations

Presented at the International Symposium on

*“Future vision on human beings and the sea
after the restoration from earthquake disaster”*

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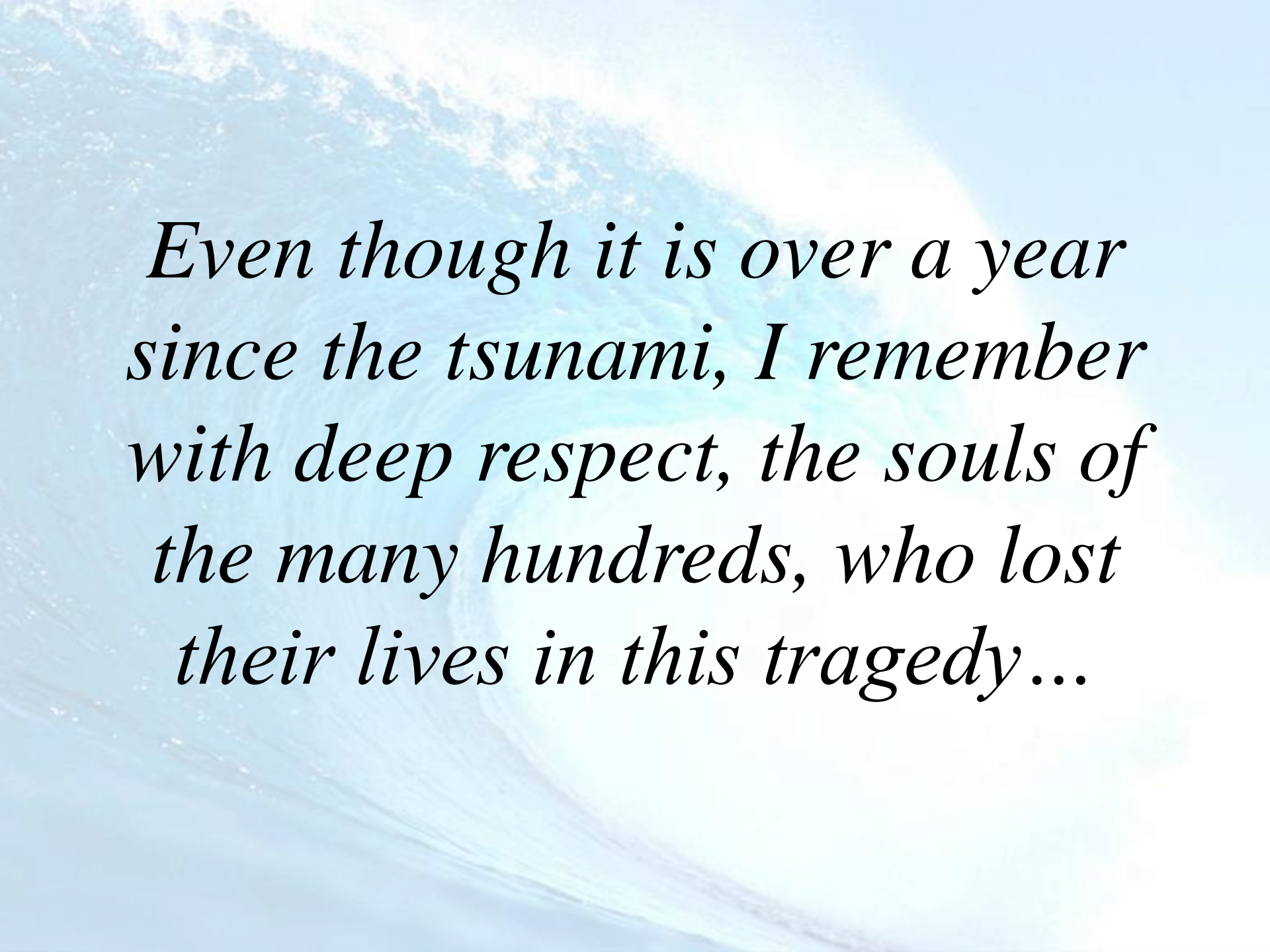
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Even though it is over a year since the tsunami, I remember with deep respect, the souls of the many hundreds, who lost their lives in this tragedy...

The last decade has witnessed some of the most dreadful coastal disasters triggered by earthquakes and followed by tsunamis.

Just to mention three of the major disasters...

- ✚ Aceh in Indonesia (2004)
- ✚ Chile (2010)
- ✚ Tohoku in Japan (2011)



Coastal Zone and Coastal People

Let us first reflect on some of the special features of the coastal zone and coastal people...



Coastal Zone

- ✚ **Dynamic land-water interface**
(*fuzzy borderlines*);
- ✚ **Tail-end ecosystem**
(*often far away from centres of power and the place where all land-based pollution finally reaches*);
- ✚ **High natural productivity**
(*can support greater population density*);
- ✚ **More prone to natural disasters**
(*affected by elements – wind, waves – uncontrollable by humans*)

Coastal People

- ✚ **More close knit**
(*due to relative isolation; greater risk of occupations at sea*);
- ✚ **More temperamental**
(*conditioned by the unpredictable sea*);
- ✚ **More self-reliant**
(*function of being isolated and close knit*)
- ✚ **Disaster subculture communities**
(*being more prone to disasters they develop cultural means to face disaster*)

Coastal Zone Disaster

1. When the cause of disaster originates from the sea it is made by **Nature's Fury**;
2. When it originates from the land it is largely the result of **Human Callousness**;
3. When the two combine the consequences can be deadly. (*I would put the Fukushima nuclear disaster in this third category*)

Coastal Zone Recovery Processes

*Ten lessons from my professional experience
in Aceh Province, INDONESIA...*



Ten Lessons from Aceh...

1. **Make surviving victims an integral part of recovery**
(people integral to the solution)
2. **Assess conditions that existed before the disaster**
(understand pre-disaster 'initial conditions')
3. **Decision making to the lowest meaningful level**
(apply subsidiary principle)
4. **Avoid the tsunami of aid**
(don't accept everything which is given – material and ideas)
5. **Disasters not to be made marketing opportunities**
(be cautious of commercial interests)

Ten Lessons from Aceh...

6. **Avoid creating aid dependency**
(better have work-outs than hand-outs)
7. **Beware of the politics in disaster**
(fight corruption and divisiveness)
8. **Do not exacerbate injustice with recovery**
(focus on the poorest – Gandhian anthyodhya principle)
9. **Local accountability is key to sustainability of recovery**
(combine rights with responsibilities to the people)
10. **Hasten transition from relief to development**
(“build back better”)

Key Learning from Aceh

Vibrant community organizations are the most important institutional arrangement needed to implement such lessons.

What are Community Organizations?



Community organizations are basically...

“arrangements created by members of a community, representing its collective mind and functioning as problem solving entities”

They generally arise from **the lived-experience of the people** in their interactions with one another in their pursuit of life and livelihood activities.

Therefore, where such organizations exist, it is an indication that some degree of **collective solidarity** exists within the community.

Functions of Community Organizations

Community



Service



Community Organizations in normal times carry out five functions...

1. Organizing production – distribution – consumption
2. Facilitating socialization
3. Enhancing social participation
4. Exercising social control
5. Providing mutual support



Community Organizations in Japan

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS IN JAPAN



In Japan, the existence of many types of local organizations along the coast (*cooperatives, mutual assistance groups, satoumi, solidarity forums etc*) are importantly the result of...

- ✚ **Your special geographic features of the coast**
(a discordant coastline with many twists and turns giving rise to the formation of many coves and bays – making for greater visual control of the coastal land and sea)
- ✚ **Your historically situation where the *de jure* rights of the coast and coastal waters were given to the fishers**
- ✚ **Your national cultural tradition of greater group orientation**

Role of Community Organizations in Crisis and Recovery



As coastal communities and their community organizations have numerous experiences of natural disasters, and expect more to happen, they are better prepared.

As a Japanese proverb says... 雨降って地固まる
(ame futte chi katamaru) *Adversity builds character*



Community Organizations play exceptional roles in times of crisis and recovery because they...

- # Respond fast as they are right on the scene of the disaster
- # Can assess the situation and know the alternative courses of action
- # Have good understanding of the risks associated with each action
- # Also have greater institutional memory
- # Can prevent mistakes from recurring based on their experience of the past
- # Have a “collective mind” which facilitates coordinated action

Community Organizations, in crisis and recovery times, can therefore be said to carry out five functions...

1. Providing mutual support
2. Exercising social control
3. Enhancing social participation
4. Facilitating socialization
5. Organizing production – distribution – consumption

Notice that these are the same functions carried out in normal times -- but in REVERSE order!

Community Organizations also have...

1. Greater access to more credible and less asymmetric information
2. More holistic understanding of the needs and concerns of individuals and families which is crucial to ensure fair (which does NOT mean equal) distribution of aid and assistance
3. Their access to workable local knowledge and available local talent far greater
4. The transaction costs of disaster response is therefore much lower

Post-disaster experience from around the world has shown that all the investment in national organizations and specialized agencies for crisis management mechanisms and disaster relief prove ineffective without genuine local organizations

(Compare Aceh with Haiti or Cuba with the USA)

FUTURE VISION

The geographic realities of the coastal zone, the historical circumstances, the cultural context and the lived-reality in most coastal communities points clearly to an indispensable role for community organizations both during normal times and in times of crisis and disaster.

Negating or ignoring this fact will be at the risk of compromising on the future of coastal communities.

どうもありがとう。

Namaste !!!

Thank You !!!