Strengths’ Model to Disaster Management:
Asian Perspective

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Disasters are not new to Asia. Floods, earthquakes and typhoons - evoked strong community responses - extra-ordinary mutual help and generous freewill donations.
Strengths model for social work intervention in disaster management:
-developed from theoretical frames and practice experiences

Asian Disasters
- tsunami Disaster affected Indonesia, Thailand, India and Sri Lanka
- several earthquakes and typhoons in Myanmar, China, Japan, Philippines and Taiwan.
Disaster process from prevention and mitigation as well as mobilization and response. Recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation take into consideration local contexts, capacities and resources.
Strengths Approach

- Different people and community are affected differently
- All dimensions of life affected by disaster
  - Housing, schooling, medical, transport...
  - Psychosocial aspects important, family and kin relations
- Strengths to cope vital
- Resilience – resourcefulness, ability to bounce back: cumulative "protective factors" and in opposition to "risk factors".
Strengths Approach

- Incorporates individual, family and community’s understanding of situation
- Believe the client, family and community’s capacity
- Move the assessment and intervention toward personal and community strengths
- Multidimensional assessment and intervention
- Discover uniqueness and indigenous ways of coping
Strengths Perspectives

Strengths

Resilience
• Strengths and resilience are highly correlated concepts
• Resilience is the resourcefulness of people, families and communities and their ability to ‘bounce back’
  • "protective factors" they have such as attitudes, skills and assets. History and culture could also play a protective role in dealing with crisis and disasters.
• believe that people, families and communities are capable of doing, and will do, what is right (empowers the community as it enables their active choices as well as the control of their own destinies.)
• Intervention harnesses not only the individual strengths but also community resources and assets.
• Cultural and contextual aspects of community recovery vital in facilitating rebuilding.
• Strengths model (Saleebey, 2006) provides framework for social recovery management.
Collaborative Approach

- Dialogue and meaning-generating process.
- Work in the reality.
- Look for possibilities and potentials.
Holistic Intervention

- Respect for people’s capacity - sensitivity, cultural appropriateness
- Empowerment through active choices and control
- Spiritual support and meaning
- Community response
Community Orientation

Assets

Physical assets – land, building, communication, transportation structures, businesses and buildings

People assets
- local residents’ skills, experiences, capabilities
- willingness to contribute

Community assets: organizations – voluntary assn, social cultural, faith-based organizations

Societal institutions – public institutions, schools, courts, hospitals
History and Culture as Community Asset

Asian societies are often featured as preferring social harmony and consensus rather than conflict.
- order and ‘place’, or position,
- rather than having rights and be poor they would prefer to have material wealth
- greater assertion of individual rights as part of social progress.

• sense of community and communitarian ideology permeates all areas of life including the field of disaster management and recovery.
Identity and history is asset of community:

Indonesian island of Simeulue, near earthquake’s epicentre, is right in line of the 2004 Asian tsunami = yet they had few casualties and fatalities.
Stories through the generations - island’s folklore:

- Recounted a tsunami in 1907
- Islanders fled to the hills after initial quake before tsunami struck.
- Island’s 70,000 people heeded folklore and escaped the waves
- Five minutes' warning to evacuate to safety
China – Historical Aspects of DM

Country of frequent natural disasters - average one natural disaster in every six months (Deng Tuo, 邓拓, 1937).

Natural disasters often associated with social unrest.
Chinese government had developed comprehensive disaster management system (Zhang Tao, 张涛 2006).

• Earliest law of disaster management in Zhou Dynasty (specified rituals for disaster relief in Zhou Li, 周礼)
Role of Government

• set up warehouses to store rice - prepare for impending disasters.
• engaged in physical constructions and weather observations - to prevent disasters or lessen damage.
• develop comprehensive strategies in disaster relief.
Spiritual dimension:
Emperor can issue imperial edicts that ‘blamed himself’ for not fulfilling his responsibility of taking care of the country.
Traditional Chinese value - emperor appointed governor by ‘heaven’ - responsible when natural disasters occur.
- “emperor could never be considered as a ‘good emperor’ if he does not manage disasters well.”
Structure of local community affects the way of disaster management.
Rural Chinese community is bonded in ‘adversity structure’ = People are related, like a ripple-kinship and geography. People who contribute to disaster relief can ‘broaden ripples’ - ideology of ‘self-help’, helping one another

Fei Xiaotong 费孝通 (1998).
Central government’s role in disaster management - make use of local resources...
• Yellow River overflowed its banks: resources and provisions for the people
Fu Bi persuaded local wealthy men and scholars to donate resources and provide homes for people affected by flood. He recorded the contributions and reported to central government. Good example of government officers mobilizing local resources (History of Song Dynasty)
Legend of Yu The Great King

大禹治水

Yu the Great King was renowned to Chinese for his contribution of flood management four thousands years ago. He is respected as a model Chinese ruler.

《孟子·离娄下》
Chuetsu, Niigata Earthquake

- **Chūetsu Earthquakes** (中越地震) occurred on October 23, 2004 in Niigata Prefecture
- Measured 6.9 on Richter scale
- 39 fatality
- Over 3,000 injuries reported in Niigata Prefecture.
- Over one hundred thousand people fled their homes.
- Shinkansen train derailed in service.
Japan Nigataa-Chuetsu (Yamakoshi) Earthquake

Community evacuation by helicopter - systematic by villages.
Temporary housing in Nagaoka
Cheutsu Earthquake Japan

• Evacuation management – city government.
• Process of recovery – partnership with different organizations develop in the process.
• Support for collaborating agencies.
• Self help approach – local participation in planning and rebuilding
• Housing: elderly and vulnerability move to group homes and continue.
• Remove barriers for elderly, elderly and those with wheelchairs – elderly service available.
• SW: 3 life support social workers in each local government participate in rehabilitation
• Policy to return to own community – support residents, home visits, social activities.
• Rehabilitation of life, autonomous management (organize activities by themselves)
• Vulnerable people – come together, build community ties, eg. elderly move to ‘final house’.
• Social workers visit people - case conference on support network of people.
Rebuilding and returning to Yamakoshiba in 3 years

Self-help and Community planning:

Dreams:
• To return to Yamakoshiba
• Keep culture of Yamakoshiba
• Rebuild lives and community
Model for Disaster Management

Stages
- Assessment
- Rescue
- Recovery
- Preparedness

Levels of Intervention
- Individual
- Community
- Societal

Focus on Community Social Recovery
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<th>Individual</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Society</th>
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<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Individual safety and social-psy condition</td>
<td>Physical and Social situation in Community</td>
<td>Impact on Society</td>
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<td>Personal strengths and resources</td>
<td>Capacity of self help network</td>
<td>Available societal resources</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rescue</strong></td>
<td>Removal from danger, safety of individuals</td>
<td>Mobilization for community rescue</td>
<td>Inter-organizational and structural provisions &amp; coordination</td>
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<td>Personal abilities and network</td>
<td>Existing social structures and networks</td>
<td>Communication and national infrastructure</td>
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<td>Stages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recovery</td>
<td>Interpersonal support</td>
<td>Family and network support</td>
<td>Organizational and institutional support</td>
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<td>Personal assets and resources</td>
<td>Family resources</td>
<td>Availability of organizational resources</td>
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<td>Preparedness</td>
<td>Readiness and understanding of individuals</td>
<td>Community structure and network in place</td>
<td>Societal resources and protocols for emergencies</td>
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<td>Personal mastery and competence</td>
<td>Availability of community assets</td>
<td>Planning and societal capacities</td>
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Principles for Social Recovery

- Individual and community differences
- Flexibility in approach
- Local community to be involved and manage as much as possible
- Empowerment approach in decision making and service delivery
- Recognize resources and strengths
- Effective coordination
Sri Lanka
Project for Psychosocial Intervention with Tsunami Victims from the Sri Lankan Association of Professional Social Workers (SLAPSW).

Three FAST projects in Hambantota District include the Home garden at Ba-Ata, Children and Youth Project and a Women’s Group.
Children’s Group is both therapeutic and developmental.
Home garden provided social and financial support

Resources from Agriculture department organized by social workers
Women’s group engaged in micro enterprise: facilitates social and community integration and supplements family income.
External initiatives enables local group to develop projects

Pilot project and training used as model and catalyst for bigger project.
Asian Perspective

- Reinforce family and community orientation
- Develop strengths of social network
- Actively utilize social capital – bonding and bridging capital
Asian culture – similarity in network

- Not just individual, community cope with disasters
- China’s history meant government’s involvement sets framework for disaster management and recovery. Those with resources share in social responsibility towards vulnerable. Mutual help between neighbors.
- Japan’s reconstruction uses both bonding and bridging capital.
- Sri Lanka/Indonesia – international collaboration emphasize bridging capital.
Asian Perspective as Integration of Strengths’ and Community Orientation

- community’s strength is the key concept of membership and inclusion. Sense of family and community.
- making connections with people and resources and empowerment of the community and collaboration with others that there is a sense of wholeness.
- McKnight and his colleagues have been key proponents for examining, developing, and utilizing the assets of the community.
- Asia’s social progress and participation.
Community assets include physical, individual, organizational, and societal assets. Use resources at various levels.

Physical assets include land, building, communication, transportation structures, and business complexes.

Individual assets are local residents, their experiences, capabilities, and willingness to contribute (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005).

Community assets are the different organizations such as voluntary association, social cultural groups and faith-based organizations.

Societal institutions are public institutions, schools, courts, hospitals as well as political structures of the country (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005).
• Putnam’s (2000) concept of social capital encompasses both the bonding and the bridging capital.
  - ability of the community to bond and support one another, individually and as groups builds the bonding capital. Relationship of community with other communities and resources provides bridging capital.
• Community members’ views and actions are valued and solicited through public meetings, surveys, consultations and task forces and committees.
• Community actions provide the impetus for social change and community development.
- Networking and participation are essence of both community development and disaster management
  - bonding and bridging capital necessary for action.
- Social capital is the means for developing and mobilizing the resources of the community
- Bonding capital focuses on latent assets or strengths of community and harnessing them for action
- Bridging capital aggregates resources and assets in other communities.
Conclusions

• Principles of social recovery and disaster management must involve the community - focus on organizational and community potentials and needs.

• Build the community’s capacity through the stages of assessment, intervention and prevention.

• Deal with present and success in coping - engenders hope in orientation.

• Emergence of new groups focusing on victim and community needs - increased social cohesion and volunteerism and material resources.
The suspension of community conflicts and increased therapeutic support ameliorated negative impact of disasters.

Disaster can enhance community bonding and social cohesion and bring positive changes at individual, community development and societal levels.

Social work intervention uses the inherent strengths and resilience - catalyst for social change.

Overcoming disaster and crisis lies in the resilience of people and community to surmount all odds building hope for the future.
THANK YOU for your work of SOCIAL RECOVERY
Family and Survivors of Tsunami Project
Thank You!

The End