



HIA2007 South East Asian and Oceania Regional Health Impact Assessment Conference

Linking HIA and Other Forms of Impact Assessment

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*Health Impact Assessment: Working across
boundaries, across the globe*



Key messages

- HIA has a context
 - in public health
 - but also in impact assessment
- Use the IA context...
 - to improve HIAs
 - to seize wider opportunities to further the cause of health



Context of HIA

- A little history
 - environmental health protection has a long heritage...
 - impacts of projects....1970s-80s
 - within EIA context especially
 - public health promotion, social determinants1980s-90s
- HIA “populated” by different groups, at different times
 - since mid 1990s, public health, and health policy emphases



Why do HIA?

- Depends who you ask...
 - healthier public policies...
 - reduce inequalities in health...
 - better (“healthier”) developments
 - reduce risks to population health
 - to empower local communities
 - stronger sense of controlling their health
 -etc...



But why health *impact* assessment?

- HIA uses specific thinking
 - look forward, identify possible outcomes of proposed actions
 - if we don't like the outcomes, change the action
 - looking especially for indirect impacts
- Common to all impact assessment
 - and distinct from policy assessments
 - “*is our policy having the desired impact?*”
 - we already have policy evaluation methods



What impact assessment offers

- Good practice principles
- Insight into issues and concerns emerging in HIA
- Extensive literature, strong practitioner community
- Active researcher community



Nature of health impacts

- Environmental health
 - e.g. pollute water supplies, people get sick
direct impacts, well understood, methods well developed...data may be the problem
- Community health
 - change the socio-economic environment, people's health will be affected
indirect impacts, complex cause-effect links, social, economic, cultural systems
physical health, mental health

An illustration...



Associated activities need to be included too...



And another ...

- Air quality standards in New Zealand
 - to improve public health
 - Otago Regional Council
 - draft air quality plan
 - reduce PM10s from coal and wood fires
 - proposed outright bans in some centres
 - a lot of public criticism
 - ironically used health as the issue
 - cold interior, alternative heat sources seen as too expensive...threat to older, poorer, etc.
 - Crying out for an HIA
 - strategic level, Ministry for the Environment?

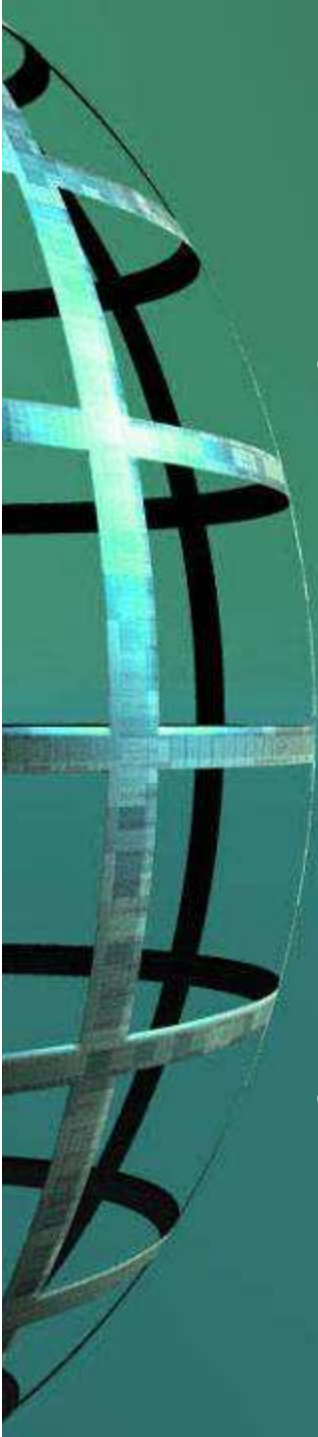




Links to wider impact assessment

- Don't re-invent the wheel...
 - Social impact assessment
 - Cultural impact assessment
 - Ecological impact assessment
 - Biodiversity impact assessment
 - Cumulative effects assessment
 - Strategic environmental assessment....etc.

Goal: Integrated impact assessment...?



Working with others

- Make use of impact predictions from other sectors...
 - then add the “health” perspective
 - complements more direct health impact work by HIA practitioners...
 - can also use IA specialists within dedicated HIAs
- Helps other impact assessment people think in health terms too...



Things to ponder...

- Health impact assessment?
 - or health in Impact Assessment ?
 - both possible....depends on context
- View HIA as a body of knowledge rather than a discrete process?
- Should all HIA practitioners have a generic impact assessment training?



Opportunities

- Be aware of trends in wider impact assessment
 - get health on those agendas



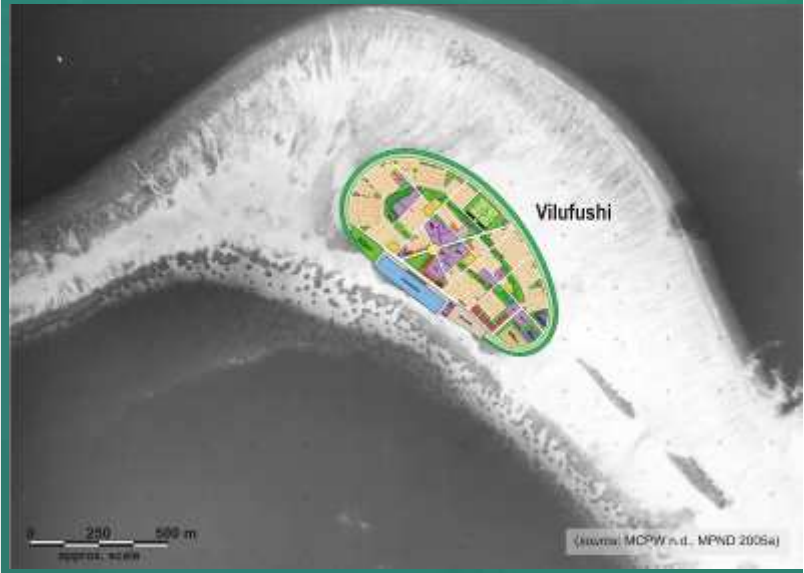
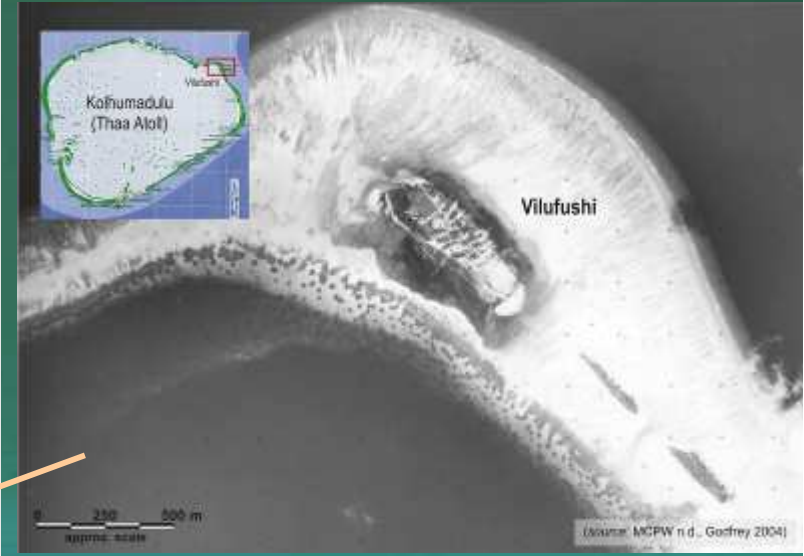
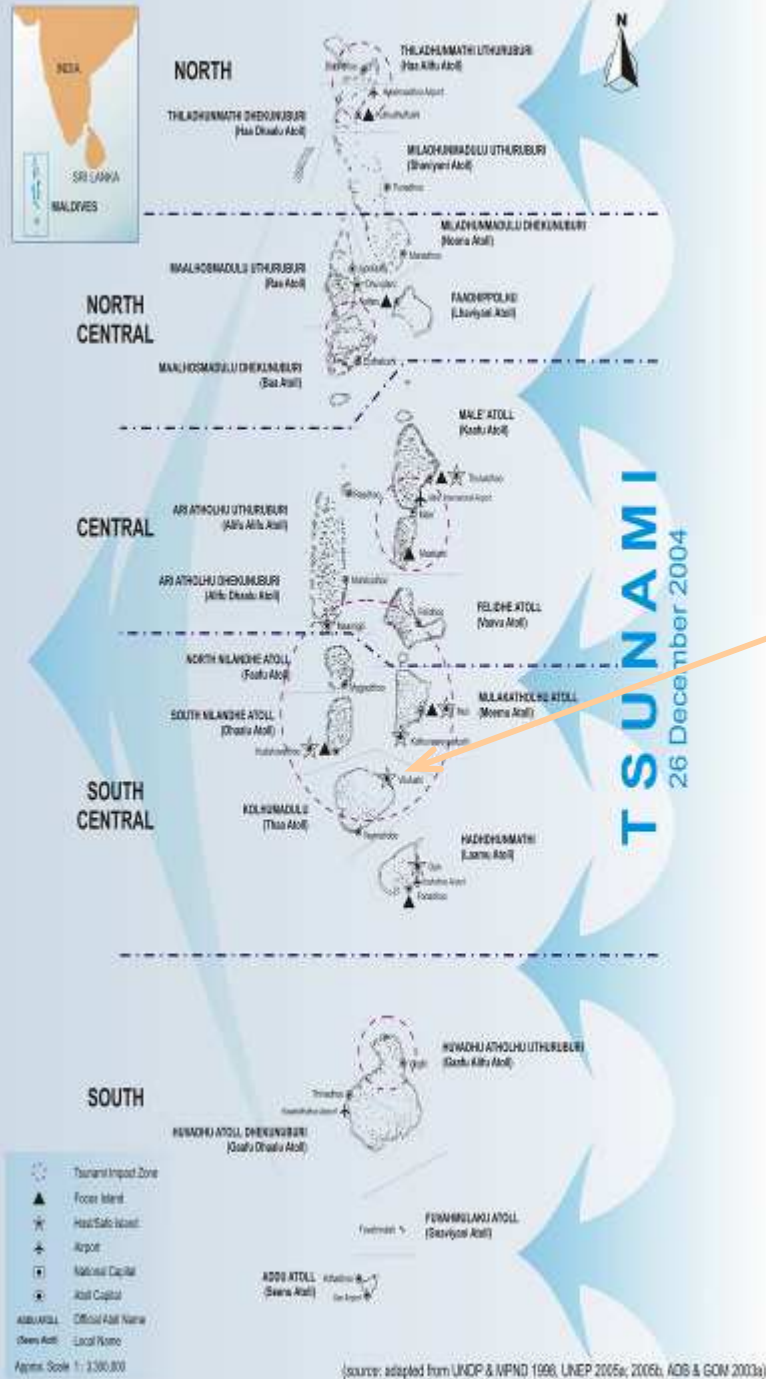
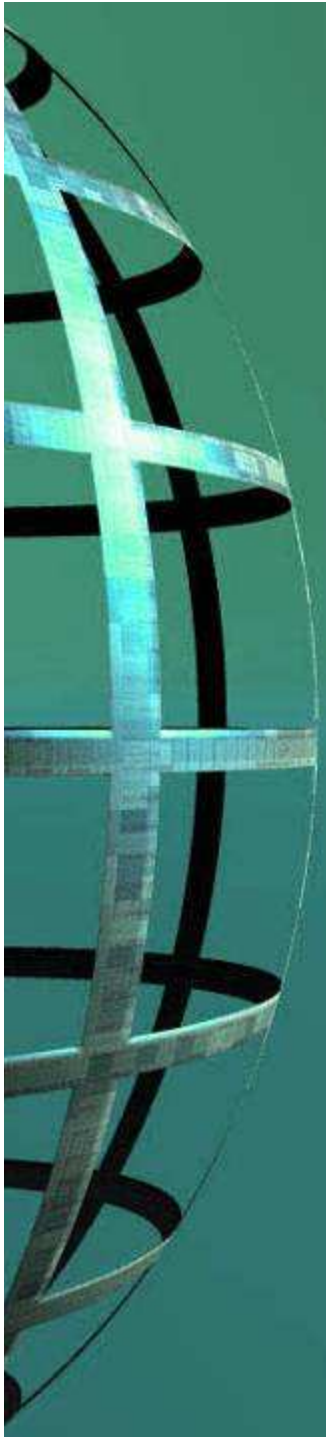
Strategic environmental assessment

- Assessment of policies, plans, etc.
 - increasingly institutionalised esp in countries of EU
 - WHO working to get health into European SEA protocols
 - as it spreads, we must ensure health is recognised explicitly
- Sustainability assessment
 - related process, again critical to have health recognised....

After the tsunami...Maldives



1100+ islands, 200+ inhabited at present
total population c 330,000....so difficult to protect all islands
Plan: concentrate settlements on fewer but safer islands





Regulatory impact assessment

- Popular with governments
 - origin: avoid impacts on businesses...
 - economic/monetary focus
 - evolving to include wider considerations
 - in UK, now refer to health impacts....
- Uses an existing mechanism
 - more direct route to political decision-makers
 - health can make good use of this process



Private sector finance

- Equator Principles....
 - private sector financial institutions
 - social and environmental assessment of development projects....
 - including developed countries...
 - tend to see health in terms of H&S
 - Important sector to educate.....



In conclusion

- HIA emerging as strong movement in impact assessment field
 - it is still young, with a diverse practitioner base, varied expectations and approaches
 - worth looking at links with IA
 - how to benefit from existing body of IA knowledge
 - to promote health in other IA activities