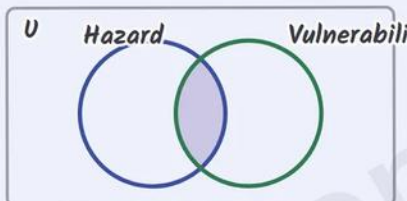


Disaster Management

what turns a hazard into a disaster, and the cycle of preparing, responding and rebuilding

Hazard, vulnerability and disaster

- a **hazard** is an event that could cause harm, such as an earthquake or a cyclone
- **vulnerability** is how exposed and unprepared the people and buildings in its path are
- a **disaster** is what happens when a hazard meets a vulnerable population: **hazard plus vulnerability**
- so an earthquake in an empty desert is a hazard but **not a disaster**, and the same earthquake under a crowded city is
- this matters because the hazard usually cannot be prevented but the vulnerability can be reduced
- that is the whole reason disaster management concentrates on preparation rather than on stopping the event



two overlapping circles with the shared middle shaded:
a disaster occurs only where a damaging event meets
people and buildings unable to withstand it, and
reducing either circle shrinks the overlap

The kinds of disaster

- **natural disasters** arise from natural processes: earthquakes, floods, cyclones, droughts, landslides and tsunamis
- **man made disasters** arise from human activity: industrial accidents, fires, building collapses, oil spills and war
- some are **both**: a flood worsened by blocked drains and building on a floodplain, or a landslide following deforestation
- **sudden onset** disasters such as earthquakes give almost no warning
- **slow onset** disasters such as droughts develop over months and can be watched coming
- the distinction matters because **warning time** decides what response is possible