Welcome to this MOOC on Framing and thank you for joining us!

In this first episode, we will show you the main characteristics of a frame. Let's start with an example. In many countries, there is a public debate about development aid. Should rich countries give aid to poor countries? There are parties – usually on the right of the political spectrum – that are against giving development aid. They use a number of arguments, and their frame is:

*Don't give a poor man a fish; teach him how to fish.*

The first thing that strikes you about this message is that it is powerful and simple. Not simplistic, but simple. If a message is powerful and simple, we remember it. It is "sticky." Good frames "stick."

Most people would agree that it is better to teach a poor man how to fish. This brings us to the second characteristic of a good frame. A good frame has a high level of common sense. A good frame is one that you agree with intuitively.

Take the following example. A politician could say that he is "tough on crime." It is a "sticky" message. It is also a message that we can all agree with. Of course you should be tough on crime. Even if you are convinced that people are not inherently criminal but become so – due to poverty or a lack of education – you can still agree with this frame. It is also close to impossible to argue the opposite view, namely that we should not be tough on crime.

A good frame activates a train of thought. It is "sticky," and people agree with it intuitively. So the next question is: who on earth still uses taxpayers' money to hand out fish to the poor? Who are this politicians and what type of people are they?

Take a look at the following video.

'I have a clear message for the people of this country. I am tough on crime. I have always been tough on crime. And I will be tough on crime in the future.'

A politician who claims that he is tough on crime is clearly suggesting that his opponents are not. He is suggesting that they are soft on crime.

This brings us to the third characteristic of a good frame. A good frame has a "villain" – someone who does not do what is intuitively right, who hands out fish or who is not tough on crime.