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JPF Kumamoto Tips



Tips for Assisting Survivors of Disasters

Lessons from CHS & 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake

JAPAN PLATFORM

Tips for Assisting Survivors of Disasters —Lessons from CHS & 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake—

Foreword: On the Publication of This Booklet

Six years have passed since the Kumamoto Earthquake. The 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake was an impetus for many people to get voluntarily involved in relief activities to help those who were affected, and since the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, we have seen many instances of collaborations among various persons in the communities affected by disasters.

While disaster relief and assistance for the survivors have become more and more active over the years, some of you may have felt troubled at times, thinking, "I want to help, but I don't know where to begin," or "I feel a bit at a loss when I provide relief and assistance." Others may have pondered in hindsight, "Was what I did the right thing to do at that time?"

This booklet intends to provide tips for people searching for answers to these questions. Based on the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS), the following pages provide readers with an easy-to-understand compilation of tips on how to assist those affected by disasters. The CHS contains nine commitments based on knowledge and reflections gathered from responders around the world, and this booklet introduces key points and examples* of aid implementation for each commitment.

At the end of the booklet, you will find interviews with people who had provided assistance in Kumamoto in various capacities while being affected by the earthquake themselves. You will also see suggestions from experts on disaster relief activities, as well as links to useful resources regarding aid provision.

In 2020, Kumamoto had been not only affected by the COVID-19 pandemic but was also struck by another natural disaster, this time flooding caused by torrential rain that was part of the July 2020 Kyushu Floods. Response to the floods took place while communities were still recovering from the earthquake. For the relief providers, this was a time of trial responding to the disaster during the new coronavirus pandemic. They had to shift their thinking drastically from their usual method of overcoming disasters by bringing many helpers and working together to a new one better fit for the times.

Floods and earthquakes occur in many parts of Japan every single year. It has been said that super disasters can hit Japan in the near future, such as the Nankai Megathrust Earthquake or a megaquake occurring directly under the Tokyo metropolitan area.

It is our sincere hope that as you refer to this booklet before and during your assistance activities as well as when you decide to end them, it will offer help to you in providing better support to those in need.

June 2022

Takeharu Takahashi
Secretary General, Japan Platform

*This booklet refers to examples of Japan Platform's (JPF) aid and relief activities within Japan and overseas.

Kumamoto Castle tower after the completion of restoration work

A Guide to CHS

What is the CHS (Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability)?

Sawako Matsuo

Secretary General, Japan Quality and Accountability Network (JQAN)

Bio: Ms. Matsuo joined the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC) after working for the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and a secondment to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). She is currently mainly in charge of organizational capacity building and human resource development among Japanese NGOs. Since the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, she has been working towards more widespread use of the Sphere Handbook and the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS), which are used in relief operations around the world. Ms. Matsuo is a board member of Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (HQAI), the independent certification body for the CHS.



Nine Points for High-Quality Assistance

Did you know that there is a set of standards on how assistance should be provided, compiled from past experiences of aid provision? The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) outlines Nine Commitments that humanitarian responders, both organizations and individuals, must meet to provide high-quality and effective assistance. Commitments can be described as promises we make when providing aid, and they have been put together to protect the dignity of survivors and to implement relief that does not diminish their capacity to live. Survivors and communities receiving support have the right to expect that high-quality support will be provided to them.

CHS is a standard for responders, and each commitment (or promise) is paired with a Quality Criterion, which describes the action that can fulfill this promise. Responders (who, again, include both organizations and individuals) can refer to the Key Actions, Organizational Responsibilities, and Guidance Notes laid out in CHS, and use Performance Indicators to measure the degree to which they have achieved the commitment and to improve and enhance their future responses.

By implementing the CHS, responders can better meet the needs of survivors and affected communities and win their trust and participation. Also, through the CHS becoming a common language among multiple aid organizations involved in the same response, it can help complement each other's activities and facilitate a smooth handover according to the phase of recovery.

Assistance Needed Around the World

Recently, due in part to the effects of climate change, natural disasters have become more frequent and more damaging in many parts of the world including Japan. In addition, an increasing number of people are forced to leave their homes and live as asylum seekers and refugees due to conflicts and persecution. News coverage of people and regions affected by disasters and conflicts, as well as calls for help, are instantly shared via the Internet, especially on social media. As a result, not only governments, international organizations such as the United Nations, NGOs, and other aid professionals, but also many ordinary people and businesses have become involved in responses.

It All Started with a Single Question – "Are We Doing Enough to Save Lives?"

In 1994, when ethnic conflict in Rwanda led to a genocide, more than 200 organizations came together to provide assistance to over 2 million refugees. But more than 80,000

people died in refugee camps from preventable infectious diseases such as cholera and dysentery.

Why did this had to happen even though professionals were providing assistance?

An evaluation conducted in 1996 highlighted many issues. Firstly, the response efforts were rather ad hoc. There was not a full assessment of the assistance the survivors and their communities really needed. Secondly, there was a lack of coordination. There was not sufficient understanding or supplementation of information among various responders. Finally, there was a lack of accountability. Some responders insisted on providing aid only in their own areas of expertise. All in all, it became clear that in some cases, even with the best of intentions, assistance did not and could not help the survivors and the affected communities overcome difficulties and regain their livelihoods.

To change this situation, there began a process to establish a set of ideals and principles that can be shared among all responders around the world, as well as indicators that define what should be achieved through assistance work.

Reasons for Failure as Identified in the Evaluation of Aid to Rwanda:

- Lack of accountability
- Insufficient understanding of needs
- Ad hoc response
- Lack of coordination among aid organizations
- Lack of unified indicators and standards

While international organizations and NGOs have developed multiple standards in their own sectors or geographical regions, the most widely used among not only international organizations and NGOs but also governments is The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response. The Sphere Handbook is a document that outlines minimum standards for major aid sectors based on the protection of the dignity of the people affected by crisis and their right to receive assistance.

The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) became part of this Sphere Handbook starting with the Handbook's 2018 edition as a single set of core standards. Consisting of Nine Commitments that set out the essential processes and organizational responsibilities in humanitarian aid, CHS's purpose is to achieve minimum standards and to ensure quality and accountability in response provision. Today, CHS is being used to prevent self-complacency among responders around the world and to support proactive recovery efforts among the survivors and affected communities rather than imposing "good intentions" from the outside.

CHS Allowing for More High-Quality Assistance

CHS is not only used for monitoring humanitarian aid. It has also introduced a certification system, in which the implementation of the Nine Commitments at the organizational level is verified by a third party and the results are disclosed to the public. As of December 2021, 40 organizations have disclosed the results of their efforts in some

certification system (including third-party certification and self-verification). There is also a trend for more funding to go to responders who are making efforts toward high-quality and effective response.

CHS is a standard that can be used anywhere in the world. We hope you will use the experiences of all responders introduced in this booklet as tips to make your own responses even better.

CHS was published in December 2014 as a direct result of initiative to seek greater coherence of humanitarian standards by the Sphere Project, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) International, People in Aid and the Groupe URD. It is now jointly copyrighted and managed by the CHS Alliance, Groupe URD, and Sphere.

*With the consent of the copyright holders, the Japanese version of this booklet uses official icons and Japanese translations of the CHS while also paraphrasing and supplementing CHS text wherever appropriate, according to our editorial policy. This English version of the booklet, therefore, also uses paraphrased and supplemented English texts wherever appropriate.

The Nine Commitments and Quality Criteria

- 
1 Communities and people affected by crisis receive assistance appropriate and relevant to their needs.
Quality Criterion: Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant.
- 
2 Communities and people affected by crisis have access to the humanitarian assistance they need at the right time.
Quality Criterion: Humanitarian response is effective and timely.
- 
3 Communities and people affected by crisis are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient and less at-risk as a result of humanitarian action.
Quality Criterion: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects.
- 
4 Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them.
Quality Criterion: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback.
- 
5 Communities and people affected by crisis have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints.
Quality Criterion: Complaints are welcomed and addressed.
- 
6 Communities and people affected by crisis receive coordinated, complementary assistance.
Quality Criterion: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary.
- 
7 Communities and people affected by crisis can expect delivery of improved assistance as organisations learn from experience and reflection.
Quality Criterion: Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve.
- 
8 Communities and people affected by crisis receive the assistance they require from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers. Quality Criterion: Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and
Quality Criterion: Staff are supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably.
- 
9 Communities and people affected by crisis can expect that the organisations assisting them are managing resources effectively, efficiently and ethically.
Quality Criterion: Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose.

How to Use This Booklet

Introduction of best practices
 Emergency Phase: When survivors are in evacuation shelters since immediately after the disaster
 Reconstruction Phase: When survivors are living in temporary housing

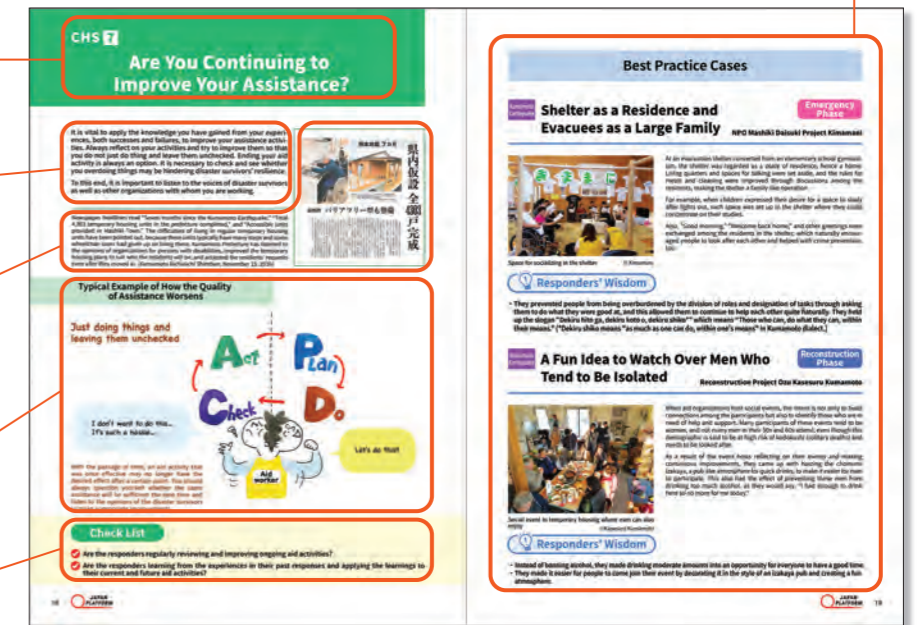
Key point of this Commitment

Reason for fulfilling this Commitment

Media coverage & articles

Typical situation when this Commitment is not fulfilled

Check list for responders



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Does the Assistance Meet People's Needs?

Disasters can affect anyone and everyone. But people's needs vary depending on who they are. After the Kumamoto Earthquake, it became a serious concern that people were dying from the so-called "disaster-related deaths," or indirect fatalities of disasters; people lost their lives due to the strains of life as evacuees. There were also those who suffered health problems or mental anguish during evacuation, and some even experienced their effects in their post-disaster lives.

Paying careful attention to the needs among diverse disaster survivors is the shortcut to protecting their lives, health, and dignity as well as to preventing further damage.

Newspaper headlines read "Kumamoto City evacuation shelter finally providing boxed bento meals" and "Ensuring nutritional balance." Immediately after the disaster, bread and rice balls tend to be provided meal after meal. Kumamoto City improved the meals to meet the needs of evacuees and also checked on the evacuees' health conditions. [Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun, May 27, 2016]



Typical Example of How the Quality of Assistance Worsens

Large quantities of used clothes are sent as relief items.



Disaster survivors' needs are diverse. It works best when you are in constant communication with those involved in the response, you can confirm whether and what the affected community can receive, and then send the relief that they need.

Check List

- ✓ Are the responders assessing the needs among disaster survivors carefully, keeping in mind that survivors are diverse people with different needs depending on their gender, age, and whether they have disabilities or not?
- ✓ Are the responders taking sufficient care for the disaster survivors including not only meeting their needs but also avoiding secondary damage such as the deterioration of their physical and mental conditions?
- ✓ Are the responders in constant communication with the disaster survivors to make sure that the response they provide will not burden the survivors?

Best Practice Cases

Kumamoto Earthquake

Protecting Dignity and Lives by Considering Diversity and Zoning the Shelter

Emergency Phase

Japan Association for Refugees (JAR)



Cardboard beds and partitions arranged by household ©JAR

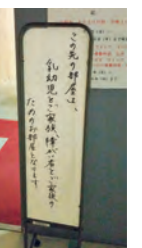
In consideration of the diversity among people living in the evacuation shelter, Japan Association for Refugees (JAR) divided the shelter into zones according to the attributes of evacuees – such as families with children, families with caregiving needs, elderly evacuees, etc. – and installed necessary facilities like cardboard beds (instead of sleeping on the floor on futons) and western-style toilets (instead of the squat toilets). In doing this, they discussed with those who would be directly affected by this move. They ended up securing spaces for families with infants and families with persons who have disabilities, while also placing gender-sensitive hygiene products and cards with the women's hotline information in the restrooms.

Also, to transition to the evacuee-led management of the shelter, JAR promoted the participation of evacuees in preparing and distributing meals and in improving the restrooms. Additionally, for the municipal government employees working in the shelters, they invited shelter managers from the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake so the employees could consult with them about any troubles they were facing in the operation of their shelters.

Responders' Wisdom

- They were aware that some evacuees may not have been getting the assistance they needed.
- When they did not know how exactly to approach something appropriately, they always consulted with experts or other aid providers who had the expertise and asked for their advice.
- They value the evacuee-led management of the shelter.

The sign reads "The room ahead is designated for families with infants and toddlers and families with persons who have disabilities," marking a zoned space in the shelter with consideration for diversity. ©JAR



Kumamoto Earthquake

Communities Taking Charge of Children's Mental Health Care

Emergency Phase

Médecins du Monde Japan (Mdm)



Oyako Café (parent-child café) ©Mdm

Médecins du Monde Japan (Mdm) provided safe play spaces for children to help them return to their daily lives through play in the aftermath of the disaster. Study sessions were held for parents and schoolteachers on how to interact with children according to the changes in their mental health and how to cope with their own stress as adults. These sessions helped the adults respond appropriately and smoothly to the changes that occur in children after a disaster.

Mdm called their event Oyako Café (or parent-child café), instead of using the term "mental health" in their publicity materials and used public facilities that were familiar to the parents and children before the disaster struck. Both of these measures made it easier for people to participate.

Responders' Wisdom

- Because they worked with local healthcare providers and volunteer groups, they could secure, with out delay, specialists who were familiar with the affected communities and could meet local needs.
- By working with those who had been playing a central role in the community, they had secured people to whom they could hand over the project when it came time for them to leave the community.

Is Assistance Delivered at a Bad Timing?

Assistance needs change from moment to moment. What was in short supply immediately after the disaster may be available in sufficient quantities a few days later when it is delivered as relief items or sold at local stores that have reopened for business. On the other hand, there are some needs that go unnoticed and remain lacking for a long period of time.

To deliver the right assistance at the right time, it is important to anticipate in advance the ever-changing needs after a disaster, as well as to confirm needs based on reliable sources of information after a disaster.

Newspaper headlines read “Economy class syndrome” and “More cases among the elderly and women: Earthquake-related deaths in cars, evacuation shelters, and facilities.” Evacuees are at higher risk for the economy class syndrome (deep vein thrombosis). At an early stage of evacuation, this shelter had installed cardboard cots and distributed medical socks, both hoped to be effective in preventing this disease. [Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun, April 21, 2016]



Typical Example of How the Quality of Assistance Worsens

Aid arriving too late



We've got enough water already.



When preparing relief supplies, be sure to confirm the quantity and timing of arrival. If items arrive at a bad timing, not only will they be wasted but will also place a heavy burden at the aid site.

Check List

- ✓ Are the responders providing timely assistance based on up-to-date information on changing situations and needs?
- ✓ Understanding the needs among some disaster survivors – such as children and non-Japanese speakers – will require expertise and experience, especially if they have difficulties signaling for help or have troubles they hesitate to express openly. Do the responders have such expertise and experience?

Best Practice Cases

Kumamoto Earthquake

Early Detection and Intervention of Diseases to Save Lives

Emergency Phase

Humanitarian Medical Assistance (HuMA)



Doctors and nurses checking lower limbs during traveling clinic ©HuMA

When disaster strikes, it is difficult to maintain good health and there is increased risk of chronic illnesses aggravating and infectious diseases spreading. To maintain disaster survivors' health, Humanitarian Medical Assistance (HuMA) doctors and nurses held traveling clinics for evacuees staying in their cars or at home, where aid is difficult to reach, in addition to densely populated evacuation shelters. They prescribed medication to those who had not been able to continue taking it for pre-existing conditions, such as high blood pressure, and to those suspected of having infectious diseases.

Also, the risk of economy class syndrome (deep vein thrombosis) had increased among people sleeping in their cars, which was a common form of evacuation after the Kumamoto Earthquake. So, HuMA made efforts to raise awareness of how this can be prevented through conducting ultrasound exams and distributing and teaching how to use compression stockings correctly.

Responders' Wisdom

- After the distribution of compression stockings, HuMA continued to visit evacuation shelters to conduct ultrasound and other tests. Patients suspected of having blood clots were referred to healthcare facilities for further tests, leading to early detection and treatment even during a disaster.

Kumamoto Earthquake

Anticipating Needs and Installing PCs in Evacuation Centers

Emergency Phase

BHN Association (BHN)



Equipment being used in evacuation shelter ©JPF

In an evacuation shelter, BHN set up two sets of ICT (information and communication technology) equipment – one for all disaster survivors and the other for the neighborhood association officers – that included computers, printers, Wi-Fi, ink, and paper to be used freely among the people staying there. Using the equipment, people collected information, prepared documents to be submitted to the local government, and made flyers for events in the evacuation shelters, all on their own while teaching each other. This had a positive effect on building up a sense of community starting in the evacuation shelter phase.

After the evacuation shelter closed, the equipment was promptly moved to a temporary housing complex meeting place to maintain the ICT environment. Computer training sessions and equipment maintenance were continued with local partners to build a sustainable support system for the disaster survivors.

Responders' Wisdom

- By cooperating with local aid providers with ICT expertise, long-term equipment maintenance and consultations for a wide range of use became possible.
- To find out in advance when evacuation shelters close, where temporary housing complexes will be, and when people will be moving in, communication with the local government was carefully maintained.

Does the Assistance Draw Out the Local Community's Strengths?

While promoting post-disaster reconstruction, it is very important for the disaster survivors themselves to make decisions about their post-disaster lives and communities. Responders from outside of the community should not decide anything on their behalf or impose ideas. Instead, they should be involved in a way that places the local people at the center and supports them in using their own strength.

Newspaper headline reads "Building on post-disaster reconstruction precedence: Workshop begins in Kumamoto City." With sufficient understanding of the features of the disaster as well as the local characteristics and resources, the strengths of the disaster survivors were drawn out. [Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun, June 27, 2017]



Typical Example of How the Quality of Assistance Worsens

It's our own community but it doesn't feel like it

It's so sudden, we can't just come up with opinions on a whim, it's so hard...

Resident workshop



Most of this doesn't apply to us, so this information isn't helpful in our case...

We've never been in a disaster, so we don't know what to say.

Thoroughly understand what kind of information the disaster survivors are requesting to overcome difficulties. Then, provide a plan that can lead to a concrete solution.

Check List

- ✓ Are the responders providing assistance that not only meets current needs among the disaster survivors but also strengthens their preparedness for future disasters?
- ✓ Are the responders, especially those from outside of the affected community, involved in a way that supports recovery and disaster preparedness efforts led by local governments and local organizations?
- ✓ Are the responders taking sufficient care to ensure that their involvement will not cause additional problems onto the lives of disaster survivors?

Best Practice Cases

Kumamoto Earthquake

Learning from Past Disasters About the Path to Recovery

Reconstruction Phase

Japan Platform (JPF)



Lecture-style training

©JPF

Japan Platform (JPF) hosted lecture-style training to share experiences and knowledge necessary in solving issues in post-disaster reconstruction. The instructors were leaders in post-disaster reconstruction efforts from the Great Hanshin-Awaji, Chuetsu, Great East Japan, and other past major earthquakes in Japan, and the training aimed to have NPOs, neighborhood associations, and others organizations engaged in reconstruction in Kumamoto Prefecture as well as local government officials be informed about the reconstruction process.

JPF also provided financial grants as part of an effort to improve management and project implementation capabilities and to develop human resources responsible for long-term reconstruction efforts. These grants were used to support observational visits to previously disaster-hit areas and for post-visit activities. The program helped develop human resources capable of dealing with possible future challenges and supported an uninterrupted transition from external assistance to local-led reconstruction.

Responders' Wisdom

- Lectures covered challenges to be anticipated during reconstruction, making it easier for the local leaders to plan their activities moving forward.
- Individualized consultation was provided for drafting project plans, places to visit for observations, and completing final report documents. Each organization received help on problem solving and was offered advice on other issues relevant to their activities.

Kumamoto Earthquake

Making Sure that Local People Can Decide the Community's Future

Reconstruction Phase

Peace Winds Japan (PWJ)



Liaison meeting with local governments, CSWs, and aid organizations

©PWJ

Peace Winds Japan (PWJ) proposed holding liaison meetings for all the temporary housing resident association presidents in a particular town, where they could share the problems faced by their residents and issues encountered in rebuilding livelihoods. In addition to serving as a forum for information sharing, having a single point of contact made it easier to communicate and coordinate, including being able to consolidate the community's requests to the local government.

To prepare for the rebuilding of livelihoods, PWJ also supported observational visits to past disaster areas, planning of trainings by specialists in areas like psychological support, and other events that the residents proactively planned and implemented to kickstart community building efforts.

Responders' Wisdom

- To make events reflect the opinions of the people living in temporary housing, resident association presidents were asked to lead in the planning.
- By having the entire resident association create an annual schedule, the events ended up adequately addressing the community's challenges.

Are the Local People's Voices Reflected in the Assistance?

Responders who come from outside the affected community do not know much about the community. On the other hand, disaster survivors have a lot of information that can only be obtained in the local community, such as "This kind of aid is not needed here but is needed elsewhere," or "They have many non-Japanese residents among the evacuees over there."

It is important for responders to listen carefully to the voices of survivors and encourage their participation in decision-making regarding aid provision. By doing so, the quality of assistance will be enhanced, and the survivors will be empowered.

Newspaper headlines read "Community car sharing as transportation for shopping and medical appointments," "Takeda District in Kyotamba Town first to introduce this system in the Prefecture," and "Operated by resident volunteers." Aid organization listened to the residents' opinions and supported their operation, and now a mutual aid effort has taken root in the community. This has also led to the residents being able to enjoy interacting with each other. [Kyoto Shimbun, June 12, 2021]



Typical Example of How the Quality of Assistance Worsens

Lack of communication with survivors



When a disaster strikes, there are times when people have no choice but to dispose of familiar furniture and precious mementos. As a responder, stopping to take enough time to listen to the survivors and waiting for them to make decisions are also part of your assistance work.

Check List

- ✓ Are the responders letting disaster survivors know that they have the right to be proactively involved in the post-disaster reconstruction of their own livelihoods and of their community?
- ✓ Are the responders delivering necessary information to disaster survivors without delay?
- ✓ Are the responders asking the disaster survivors for their opinions on aid content and recovery plans, and encouraging them to participate in the decision-making process?

Best Practice Cases

Great East Japan Earthquake

Assisting Community Building with Cars as a Resource

Reconstruction Phase

Japan Car Sharing Association (JCSA)



Residents caring for and helping each other as they operate the service ©JCSA

Japan Car Sharing Association (JCSA) supported the community with a car sharing service in Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Prefecture, where people who lost their cars in the disaster (or the transportation insecure) could use shared vehicles (as a resource) to secure a means of transportation. The goals of this service were not limited to solving mobility issues through the sharing of resources, but also included the promotion of community building, disaster prevention, regional development, and cultural formation.

By having service users decide the rules and assign roles themselves, their community gradually became a place where people spontaneously helped each other, such as by assisting elderly residents on their outings. This has continued even after the residents moved out of temporary housing to the more permanent post-disaster public housing.

This system has now been adopted not only in disaster-hit communities but also in various other communities throughout Japan where residents experience mobility issues.

Responders' Wisdom

- Any issues the community faced were discussed and decided at the ochakko (a salon or gathering for chats over tea) where the service users gathered regularly, and the responders limited themselves to only providing operational support.
- In communities newly starting out the service, the barriers were lowered by referring them to how model communities have been operating the service.

Kumamoto Earthquake

Responders from Within the Prefecture Supporting Coordination Efforts in the Disaster-Affected Municipality

Reconstruction Phase

BULBY



Meeting facilitated by an aid organization supporting the local community ©BULBY

After the emergency phase passes, emergency activities among aid organizations that rushed to the disaster-affected community come to an end. In many cases, responders specializing in emergency relief withdraw from the area at this point. However, the assistance needs in the community do not disappear just because many responders leave.

In Mifune Town, the goal during this period was to provide the local community with a long-term and hands-on support throughout the reconstruction phase so that they could carry on reconstruction activities themselves. Aid organizations based within Kumamoto Prefecture that could operate elsewhere in the prefecture collaborated with each other to assist the Mifune residents, and this reduced the burden on the residents while reconstruction efforts were being fully handed over to the local community.

These aid providers supported the operations of the residents' activities by holding information-sharing meetings and meet-and-greet events, and planning visits to previously disaster-hit areas, all the while remaining in the background and encouraging the local people to take initiative. As a result, discussions between the local government and private/civic sectors became more active, and a full handover to the local community, which was now capable of taking charge of reconstruction, was complete.

Responders' Wisdom

- From the initial involvement to the withdrawal, the responders were committed to a more auxiliary position supporting the local community so that the residents would become the main players in the reconstruction process.
- By creating an environment that allowed the local people to fully express their opinions, people were able to connect with each other, build working relationships, and share information.

Are You Actively Accepting Complaints?

If there are improprieties within the aid organization or staff misconduct such as harassment against disaster survivors, and if nothing is done to address them, then there would be significant consequences. More than anything, bad influences must be removed immediately. Therefore, it is required of aid organizations to have a formal grievance and response mechanism in place.

The same must be done when staff members have complaints against the organization.

Efforts must be made not only in times of disaster, but also during non-disaster times.

Responders must take responsibility and begin during non-disaster times to create an environment where disaster survivors can safely voice their grievances.

At aid sites, there are cases where people affected by disasters are forced to do what they are not comfortable with, such as not being able to voice their discomfort or complaints, or responders taking advantage of their position to ask for something in return for the aid. United Nations, state governments, and aid organizations have compiled a report on sexual harassment and sexual exploitation by aid workers, which has garnered international attention. Now, this is available in Japanese.

●PSEAH (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Harassment) Implementation Quick Reference Handbook

●Video "No Excuse for Abuse: Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Action"

*QR codes for the above resources are in the "Useful Links" on p. 32.

Typical Example of How the Quality of Assistance Worsens

Problems left unattended



It is no doubt important to keep a record of the aid site as a record of your response. However, if you wish to record disaster survivors' faces or comments, you must obtain their consent by informing them in advance the name of your organization and how or why the records will be used. Also, let people know in advance that if anyone feels uneasy, there is a point of contact and a system for reporting their concerns safely and comfortably.

Check List

- ✓ Have the responders set up a mechanism to receive opinions and complaints from disaster survivors and thoroughly informed them of how the complaints mechanism works?
- ✓ Is the complaints mechanism easily accessible to disaster survivors and protective of their privacy?
- ✓ Are the responders responding promptly to complaints and reporting their resolution to the disaster survivors?
- ✓ Are the aid organizations taking the same measures for complaints from within the organization?

Best Practice Cases

Overseas Refugee Assistance

Active Reception of Complaints and Opinions is an Effective Way to Help Survivors Recover

Emergency Phase

Reconstruction Phase

World Vision Japan (WVJ)



Sewing machine training Mask making at a facility for women in a Rohingya refugee camp ©World Vision

In their assistance for those who have fled Myanmar and arrived in Bangladesh, World Vision Japan (WVJ) provides girls and women, who have experienced violence and other victimizations against them, a safe environment to be in while they receive physical and mental care as well as training in sewing, cooking, and other skills. The camp has a box in which people can freely place their complaints and suggestions, and posters have been put up encouraging people to express their opinions this way. With the opinions received, there is a mechanism in place within the organization to review and to respond to them.

The staff also picks up on problems and needs through everyday conversations and responds to them. For example, somebody mentioned, "Now that I could acquire the sewing skills, I'd like to continue practicing what I learned in my personal life, too." In response, the staff set up a system in which sewing machines could be used freely outside of training hours and incorporated this change into subsequent projects so that people could make clothing and other items for their own families.

Responders' Wisdom

- Even when people affected by crises feel that there are problems with the way assistance is provided to them, they tend to hold back and are unable to point them out. However, by creating a mechanism that allowed people to safely communicate their complaints and suggestions, responders were able to receive their opinions and learn about needs of which they were previously unaware.
- Because they had this mechanism set in place within the organization to respond to complaints and suggestions, they could respond appropriately and enhance the effectiveness of their assistance.



Suggestion & Complaints Box ©World Vision

Best Practice Case from abroad

There are organizations overseas who are using Commitment 5 not only to receive complaints and requests from people affected by crises and disasters but also to identify and improve problems among them. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) operates a learning center in a Syrian refugee camp that provides a physically and psychologically safe environment for children and adolescents, where the camp residents themselves serve as staff. Since there was a daily occurrence of staff violence against children and bullying and violence among children, the first step was to develop a means by which the children could safely express their complaints and requests. In fact, the NRC established multiple means such as a complaints box, a dedicated phone line and email address, an entry form, and an opportunity for the children to express their complaints directly to the project manager about once every two weeks.

As part of the subsequent efforts to improve these situations, the NRC implemented dialogue, action, feedback, and awareness-raising activities based on the complaints and requests expressed. In addition, to eliminate violence committed by staff, they also provided support that took into account their feelings as displaced persons. As a result, improvements were seen after these series of resolutions were implemented.

- 1) **Dialogue:** Exercises to help children relax so that they can express their feelings naturally, use of illustrated cards, etc.
- 2) **Action:** Consideration of the most appropriate response to complaints
- 3) **Feedback:** Collection of complaints and provision of feedback to staff and children
- 4) **Awareness-raising:** Activities conducted with staff, parents, and children

Pre-Resolution (Average incidence rate including suspected cases)	Post-Resolution (Average incidence rate including suspected cases)
Physical violence by teachers: 20%	Physical violence by teachers: 0%
Verbal violence by teachers: 22%	Verbal violence by teachers: 0%
Bullying and violence among children: 55%	Bullying and violence among children: 30%

Is There Coordination Among Aid Organizations to Avoid Duplication and Omission?

In past major disasters, there have been cases where aid organizations were concentrated in specific geographical areas that were reported in the media or there were duplications of the same kind of assistance.

In addition to exchanging information with other organizations that provide assistance, if there is a meeting or group that compiles information on aid provision, be sure to actively participate and coordinate with them.

Newspaper headline reads “Kumamoto Earthquake volunteer groups establish new organization for coordination.” The names and details of aid organizations that are available to respond were compiled and published weekly in a reliable local newspaper. This way, a mechanism was established for disaster survivors to apply for assistance with peace of mind. Also, by having a single point of contact for applications, assistance could be provided without duplication or omission. [Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun, September 7, 2017]



Typical Example of How the Quality of Assistance Worsens

Massive confusion without coordination



Share the status of relief activities among multiple aid organizations over multiple geographic areas. By responders being connected to each other, duplications and omissions in aid can be prevented. Sharing field- or sector-specific information, such as healthcare or aid for children, is also important to provide specialized assistance to those in need.

Check List

- ✓ Are disaster survivors feeling that assistance is lacking or duplicated?
- ✓ Are responders sharing enough information with each other about disaster survivors' needs and their own activities?
- ✓ Are responders coordinating and collaborating with each other to avoid duplications and omissions in assistance?

Best Practice Cases

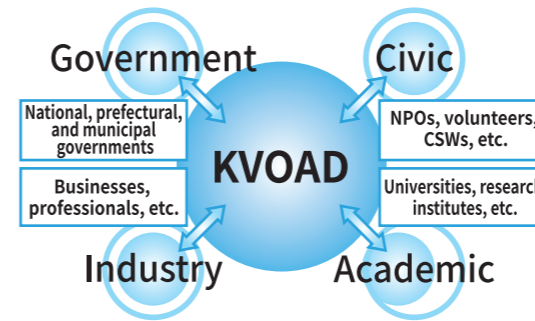
Kumamoto Earthquake

How Coordination Works for a Prefectural Intermediary Support Organization

Emergency Phase

Reconstruction Phase

Kumamoto Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (KVOAD)



KVOAD Network Collaboration Chart

©KVOAD

Responders' Wisdom

- They were an intermediary support organization for NPOs since prior to the disaster, so they focused on the specialty areas among aid groups in the prefecture and on collaborations with local governments, CSWs, and the media.
- Organizations from both within and outside of the prefecture gathered three days after the main earthquake, and the conference was quickly set up at the prefectural government building.

Kumamoto Earthquake

Resident-Led Support System That Does Not Rely Only on the Local Government

Reconstruction Phase

Minna no Volunteer Station (MVS)



Activity announcement flyer distributed to residents ©Minna no Volunteer Station

Responders' Wisdom

- Through different organizations coming together with their different areas of expertise, the burden on each group was reduced and long-term activities became possible.
- There is great need for assistance for residents moving to new housing during the reconstruction phase. They offered assistance for packing and unpacking, which cannot be taken up by professional movers, and this helped the disaster survivors ease into their new lives.
- By chatting with the disaster survivors while offering them the volunteer support they had asked, they were able to uncover issues that had not been previously identified. Whenever necessary, they shared these issues at meetings and connected the survivors to specialists for further assistance.

Are You Continuing to Improve Your Assistance?

It is vital to apply the knowledge you have gained from your experiences, both successes and failures, to improve your assistance activities. Always reflect on your activities and try to improve them so that you do not just do things and leave them unchecked. Ending your aid activity is always an option. It is necessary to check and see whether you overdoing things may be hindering disaster survivors' resilience.

To this end, it is important to listen to the voices of disaster survivors as well as other organizations with whom you are working.

Newspaper headlines read "Seven months since the Kumamoto Earthquake," "Total 4,303 temporary housing units in the prefecture completed," and "Accessible units provided in Mashiki Town." The difficulties of living in regular temporary housing units have been pointed out, because these units typically have many steps and some wheelchair users had given up on living there. Kumamoto Prefecture has listened to the opinions of organizations for persons with disabilities, improved the temporary housing plans to suit who the residents will be, and accepted the residents' requests even after they moved in. [Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun, November 15, 2016]



Typical Example of How the Quality of Assistance Worsens

Just doing things and leaving them unchecked



With the passage of time, an aid activity that was once effective may no longer have the desired effect after a certain point. You should always question yourself whether the same assistance will be sufficient the next time and listen to the opinions of the disaster survivors to make appropriate improvements.

Check List

- ✔ Are the responders regularly reviewing and improving ongoing aid activities?
- ✔ Are the responders learning from the experiences in their past responses and applying the learnings to their current and future aid activities?

Best Practice Cases

Kumamoto Earthquake

Shelter as a Residence and Evacuees as a Large Family

Emergency Phase

NPO Mashiki Daisuki Project Kimamani



Space for socializing in the shelter © Kimamani

At an evacuation shelter converted from an elementary school gymnasium, the shelter was regarded as a place of residence, hence a home. Living quarters and spaces for talking were set aside, and the rules for meals and cleaning were improved through discussions among the residents, making the shelter a family-like operation.

For example, when children expressed their desire for a space to study after lights out, such space was set up in the shelter where they could concentrate on their studies.

Also, "Good morning," "Welcome back home," and other greetings were exchanged among the residents in the shelter, which naturally encouraged people to look after each other and helped with crime prevention, too.

Responders' Wisdom

- They prevented people from being overburdened by the division of roles and designation of tasks through asking them to do what they were good at, and this allowed them to continue to help each other quite naturally. They held up the slogan "Dekiru hito ga, dekiru koto o, dekiru shiko*" which means "Those who can, do what they can, within their means." (*Dekiru shiko means "as much as one can do, within one's means" in Kumamoto dialect.)

Kumamoto Earthquake

A Fun Idea to Watch Over Men Who Tend to Be Isolated

Reconstruction Phase

Reconstruction Project Ozu Kasesuru Kumamoto



Social event in temporary housing where men can also enjoy ©Kasesuru Kumamoto

When aid organizations host social events, the intent is not only to build connections among the participants but also to identify those who are in need of help and support. Many participants of these events tend to be women, and not many men in their 50s and 60s attend, even though this demographic is said to be at high risk of kodokushi (solitary deaths) and needs to be looked after.

As a result of the event hosts reflecting on their events and making continuous improvements, they came up with hosting the choinomi izakaya, a pub-like atmosphere for quick drinks, to make it easier for men to participate. This also had the effect of preventing these men from drinking too much alcohol, as they would say, "I had enough to drink here so no more for me today."

Responders' Wisdom

- Instead of banning alcohol, they made drinking moderate amounts into an opportunity for everyone to have a good time.
- They made it easier for people to come join their event by decorating it in the style of an izakaya pub and creating a fun atmosphere.

Do You Have the Necessary Skills and Knowledge?

It is no exaggeration to say that the quality of assistance depends on the staff and volunteers. Aid organizations are responsible for all the staff and volunteers who work for and with them, whether paid or unpaid, in terms of giving them the necessary training as well as managing and supervising their work.

Also, staff and volunteers are expected to follow the rules and to maintain appropriate attitudes and behaviors.

Newspaper headlines read "Crisis in replacing tarps" and "Secondary victimization concerns with rainy season beginning." There is a rapid increase in the need for tarps to protect homes until damaged roofs can be repaired, but tarping work involves significant hazards. To ensure safety, you should leave the work to trained personnel. [Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun, June 11, 2017]

Typical Example of How the Quality of Assistance Worsens



No prior training

People at an evacuation shelter



Did they wash their hands?

I have an upset stomach...

Hot meal preparation volunteers



Is this ok?

I have no clue because we didn't get any training on hygiene management!

Our daily tasks can often be directly useful in assistance provision. Preparing meals for disaster survivors would be one such example. However, when cooking in an evacuation shelter where many people are gathered, you need to be careful about food poisoning and other food safety issues. Responders should familiarize themselves with this before starting their aid activity.

Check List

- ✔ Do the individual responders understand the purpose of the aid activities, the activity content, and the code of conduct they must observe as determined by the organization?
- ✔ Have the individual responders received training or other support from their organization to improve their abilities and knowledge necessary to perform the tasks?
- ✔ Have the disaster survivors evaluated the work of the responders as effective, including their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors?

Best Practice Cases

2019 Typhoon Hagibis

Acquiring Skills and Protecting Both Survivors and Responders

Emergency Phase

Peace Boat Disaster Relief (PBV)



Floorboard removal at a house preservation workshop ©PBV

Peace Boat Disaster Relief (PBV) conducts training for aid workers and volunteers during non-disaster times. As some relief and response activities involve dangerous work, PBV aims to ensure people's safety by providing them with the skills they need. They also share knowledge on how disaster survivors can be connected to appropriate compensations, including taking photos of property damages and understanding the Disaster Relief Act as well as non-disaster-specific public support systems.

In their post-flooding relief work, PBV held a workshop for neighborhood associations in flooded areas entitled "House Preservation Workshop for Everyone." They also donated materials and equipment necessary for removing walls and floors and established a mechanism that enables ongoing activities within the community.

When engaging in efforts to restore houses, PBV tries to communicate well with the survivors who had asked for help on their homes. They assess the conditions and provide assistance tailored to the risks, vulnerabilities, and needs.

Responders' Wisdom

- The organization itself has extensive experience and could dispatch people with sufficient knowledge to the aid site.
- With the general volunteers, they provided training and distributed manuals in advance to general volunteers before sending them to the aid site.

Kumamoto Earthquake

Listening as Assistance

Reconstruction Phase

Keicho Net Key Station



Listening Volunteer Training Course ©Keicho Net Key Station

Keicho Net Key Station implements aid projects aimed to deepen mutual understanding through listening to people's worries and anxieties. In times of disasters, staff who have honed their listening skills will listen to what the disaster survivors have to say so that they can safely vent their worries.

To develop human resources, the organization holds volunteer training courses during non-disaster times. People of all ages and backgrounds have taken the course and are involved in supporting disaster survivors. These supporters learn how to engage in discussions with each other while respecting everyone's opinions, and this improves the quality of assistance they can provide when disasters hit.

As an aid organization, Keicho Net Key Station participated in information sharing meetings held in each region and obtained information. They connected people to specialists and experts when issues were identified, thereby contributing to solving underlying problems.

Responders' Wisdom

- When collaborating with other organizations, they had these organizations take the listening training course so that the quality of assistance could be improved while also protecting the listeners' mental health.

Are Funds and Supplies Used Properly and Without Waste?

Aid organizations work for the benefit of the communities affected by disasters, and most of the funds for their activities come from donations and grants.

You are using precious fund and resources when you provide assistance, so the aid organization bears the responsibility to properly manage these funds and resources to fulfill your commitment to disaster survivors support organizations. No matter how busy you are, you must properly manage your funds and prevent frauds and lack of transparency in your accounting. It is also important to consider environmental impact when using local resources.



Newspaper headline reads “Meeting space in temporary housing complex to be reused: Mashiki Town to move the space to be used as coworking space.” Minna No ie, a meeting space that existed within a temporary housing complex, was built with timber from within Kumamoto Prefecture and had been carefully used by the residents as a warm and relaxing space. Upon closure of the complex, Kumamoto Prefecture proceeded with a reuse project, and the structure has now been moved and newly turned into a space for community development. [Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun, December 26, 2021]

Typical Example of How the Quality of Assistance Worsens

Financial management left on the back burner



Clerical tasks tend to take a backseat in relief activities, but the more time that passes, the more complicated the process becomes. You may be able to reduce the burden with small daily efforts. Responders should also receive assistance.

Check List

- ✓ Are accounting management system sufficiently in place within the aid organization to ensure proper use of funds and to prevent fraud?
- ✓ Are aid organizations prepared to take appropriate measures if accounting fraud is identified?
- ✓ Are the responders making sure that they are not engaged in activities that have a significant environmental impact on the disaster-affected community?

Best Practice Cases

Kumamoto Earthquake

Accounting Management of Grant Projects

Emergency Phase

Reconstruction Phase

Japan Platform (JPF)



JPF monitoring a grantee's project ©KVOAD

project planning, consultation during the project term, and how to write final reports.

JPF not only covered personnel expenses of persons in charge of managing the grant projects but also provided guidance to grantees – including consultations on bookkeeping and preparation of documentary evidence, whenever it was necessary – so that the grantees were able to properly manage their projects.

Additionally, JPF set up a system where grantees could consult with a certified public accountant familiar with NPO activities.

Responders' Wisdom

- Staff members who could advise on all aspects of the project provided assistance from beginning to end, including planning, monitoring, and the final project report.
- A specialist (=accountant) also accompanied the project team to the project site, creating an atmosphere where the grantees could easily ask questions.



Mr. Yoichi Mori, CPA with much NPO accounting experience

Q We are using a grant to implement a project. During the project term, we are busy with the day-to-day activities and tend to put off organizing receipts and statements, which can be a big burden when preparing a report at the end of the project. How can we solve this problem?

A When you try to compile all the documentary evidence (which are documents, such as receipts, that serve as evidence that a transaction or contract was duly executed with the consent of both parties) after you have finished your project activities, you may run into difficulties identifying which receipt was for what or have a hard time finding documents such as quotes or delivery slips that you need for reimbursement. Even when you are busy implementing your activities, you can lighten the burden by using little tricks to keep you organized.

of use, and amount, just as if a child keeps an allowance ledger. You can also attach sticky notes to the documentary evidence if that is easier. By taking a little bit of time to do this while you are implementing your activities, the final reporting work would become much easier.

For example, you can avoid losing documentary evidence simply by putting them in clear plastic sleeves or anything else in which you can put documents. It is a good idea to keep them separated by month, if possible.

Recently, there have been advancements in electronic payment procedures and more and more transactions have gone paperless. One tip would be to print out a copy of each transaction, if that helps you prevent omissions.

Delivery slips, statements, and waybills are also important documents that explain the contents of receipts. I recommend that you keep all documents pertaining to the transaction.

JPF's grant also covers the personnel cost for someone in charge of accounting. It is a good idea to split the workload for accounting, such as having someone who is good at organizing documents help you with that. By having another set of eyes on the work, you can doublecheck everything and ultimately be able to create an accurate report.

If you have a little more time, keep notebook or Excel spreadsheet of your payments, even if only the date, payee, purpose

It is often difficult to carry out NPO activities because everything is done by a small number of people. But I recommend that you use any small trick that would help you establish a good management system.

Key Points

- Come up with ways that can help you prevent loss of documents related to payments.
- Money management is as much about trust in your organization as it is about the aid activities themselves. Make sure you have someone on your side who is good at clerical work.
- Communicate with the grantor on a regular basis and consult with them as soon as possible about any problems you may have.

Utilizing Intermediary Support Organizations and Understanding Disaster Survivors' Needs: Towards Assistance that Connects While Eliminating Unevenness and Oversight

Tsutomu Higuchi, Kumamoto Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (KVOAD)

Mr. Tsutomu Higuchi was involved in providing intermediary support in Kumamoto Prefecture from the immediate aftermath of the Kumamoto Earthquake throughout the reconstruction phase. We asked him about what aid providers should be like.

Bio: Born in Hita City, Oita Prefecture, Mr. Higuchi graduated from university and had been working at a construction consultant firm on environmental assessment and design projects when he joined NPO Kumamoto in 2001. As the general manager of Kumamoto City Civic Activity Support Center for two years from 2012, he developed the infrastructure for civic activities and planned and put together coordination efforts between NPOs and other sectors.

Public-Private Partnership Model Built in Kumamoto

The day after the foreshock to the Kumamoto Earthquake on April 14, 2016, Japan NPO Center, a Tokyo-based nonprofit organization, contacted us and said, "Volunteers will come to Kumamoto in droves like you have never experienced, and we'd like for you to participate in intermediary support as a local organization." That late afternoon, I met up with Mr. Tetsuya Myojo [current Executive Director of Japan Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (JVOAD)], who had been working hard to prepare the launch of JVOAD. After being explained that "Collaboration with different organizations is a must in disaster relief," we started our activities on April 19.

The Hinokuni Kaigi, a conference that began as a forum for information sharing among concerned parties, was initially facilitated by JVOAD, and attended only by local governments and NPOs from outside Kumamoto Prefecture. I felt that collaboration with the local councils of social welfare (CSWs) was necessary, so I asked them to participate while I also approached environmental NPOs in the prefecture to see if they could offer any help. Although there was a little bit of hesitation among some who felt, "Why would we need to have meetings at this time of emergency?" the locals were willing to do anything that could be of any help, so the process of establishing a solid foundation for collaboration went relatively smoothly.

At its peak, there were nearly 300 organizations involved in the Hinokuni Kaigi. People reported on the situations that changed from day to day and moment to moment, and the information gathered at this conference was more voluminous and more quickly consolidated than that of the prefectural disaster headquarters. The Cabinet Office of Japan also began to participate, and the content of the conference was reported to local governments and other organizations on the same day, resulting in speedy information sharing. However, if the agenda covered a wide range of topics, the conference would sometimes go over five hours. So, we held separate meetings for governments, CSWs, and other targeted groups simultane-



Since February 2020, Hinokuni Kaigi amidst the COVID-19 pandemic went hybrid, conducted both in-person and online.

©KVOAD

ously, and tried to improve the efficiency of collaboration among all parties by summarizing confusing information to some extent before presenting things to the Hinokuni Kaigi.

The best way to provide information to responders from outside the prefecture was to connect them with those from within the prefecture. Hinokuni Kaigi was, therefore, positioned as a space where responders could obtain information on the activities of local governments and CSWs, as well as the status of the Disaster Volunteer Centers (DVCs). This experience made us realize the importance of the role of intermediary support, and we decided to finish what we started by launching as KVOAD in October 2016 and legally incorporating in April 2017, and we have been moving forward since.

Learnings from the July 2020 Kyushu Floods: How to Provide Smooth Intermediary Support

In July 2020, four years after the Kumamoto Earthquake, the Greater Hitoyoshi Kuma region of Kumamoto Prefecture was hit by torrential rain and subsequent flooding (as part of the July 2020 Kyushu Floods). This was a time when the new coronavirus was raging. Since disaster relief during the COVID-19 pandemic required thorough infection prevention measures, the system changed to local governments being in charge of managing evacuation shelters as a general rule and asking for private civic groups to take over when support was inadequate.

In 2017, we had signed a three-party "Agreement on Non-Disaster and Disaster Time Collaboration and Cooperation with NPOs and Other Volunteer Organizations" with the prefectural government and JVOAD. During the 2020 floods, government-led evacuation shelter operation was still at the core, but when the government requested help, we could ask specific organizations with high expertise among civic aid organizations to step in and offer their assistance. To eliminate any unevenness or oversight in aid provision, we felt the need to have intermediary support organizations that could respond to rapid social change.

Although a grand total of 40,000 people from various DVCs worked together within the prefecture, it is also true that they were forced to operate while short-staffed. This would put individuals and organizations in a position where they had to provide assistance even though they were disaster survivors themselves. So, KVOAD implemented the "Kumamoto/Kuma Reconstruction Project: Connecting through Side Jobs," where we had in mind those survivors whose livelihoods had been cut off by the disaster as well as the unemployed and needy students. This project allowed for people whose incomes had decreased due to the disaster and/or the coronavirus pandemic to engage in paid reconstruction work as a side job. We also provided information on grants for organizations that were continuing their relief activities then.

You never know where or when a disaster will strike. Based on our experience with flood relief during the pandemic, when we think about the super-extensive and super-large-scale disasters expected in the future like the Nankai Megathrust

Earthquake or a megaquake occurring directly under the Tokyo metropolitan area, we can assume that we may not be able to rely on a lot of assistance from the outside and must build a support system within the disaster-affected area. In this sense, we feel that local-led relief provision experiences can serve as useful cases to which people can refer.

Utilizing Information Sharing Meetings to Understand the Conditions in Disaster-Affected Communities

In Japan, there is a growing awareness of the importance of collaboration and information sharing in disaster-hit areas, and a system of collaboration is being established in communities starting in non-disaster times. If you make efforts to gather information on a regular basis and build relationships with local governments, CSWs, and other organizations in the community, then you will have many more opportunities to use your strengths and expertise in the event of a disaster. Likewise, if you have established good working relationships with each other, then it will be easier to collaborate with those involved in relief in the disaster-affected prefecture, and it will be easier to obtain information given out during an emergency.

If you must go into a disaster-affected community with which you have no previous connections, and if it is difficult to collaborate with any local entity, we recommend participating in information sharing meetings there. In the aftermath of the July 2020 floods, KVOAD held hybrid meetings using both in-person and online conferencing. Some participants were able to obtain effective clues that led to actual aid provision without having to visit the disaster-affected prefecture in person.

Furthermore, it is important to learn from the most recent cases in communities that experienced disasters. You must assess not only the systems in place at the time, the actions of the national and prefectural governments, and the moves among local municipal governments and the CSWs, but also the real conditions in the community in order to act accordingly. If you misunderstand any of these, then you may end up providing "excessive assistance" that does not help the community. It is important that you communicate information about your areas of expertise, fields of activity, past aid provision experiences, and passions as an organization starting in non-disaster times, because these will help you

establish good communications with others when you start providing relief. In terms of know-how accumulation, while personnel changes in local governments every few years, NPOs and individuals gain more and more experience with every response they undertake. This can lead to the individual and the NPO being able to implement more specialized response in the future.

What I Want to Convey to the Aid Providers

As time passes after the disaster, more and more organizations withdraw, and the number of outside supporters gradually decreases. If there are still needs in the community for their activities, it is the local aid providers who will take over. Therefore, please remember that one of your roles is to discuss in advance with the disaster survivors and other concerned parties when you will be withdrawing and what should be done after you leave. You should also make sure that necessary knowledge and skills are rooted in the local survivors and communities, and that your assistance helps survivors not only to survive the emergency but connects them to what they need to rebuild their lives.

Disaster survivors are not the only ones who are concerned about how long your assistance will last; those of us involved in intermediary support are just as concerned as well. In the case of a large-scale disaster, medium- to long-term aid lasting multiple years would be necessary. The best thing to do is to plan, in advance, how long you can respond, although we understand that many organizations may not have decided on that yet during the emergency phase. Therefore, if you work with a strong will to carry out your mission while you are in the disaster-affected community and collaborate with a local organization, then your activities will be better understood among the local people, and you can help provide more clues for the survivors to move forward.

Message to the Disaster Survivors Who Are Also Serving as Aid Providers

Many people will be engaged in relief and aid work in the disaster-hit communities while suffering from the disaster themselves. You will need a lot of resources including your own physical strength, staffing, and funds. In case you encounter these needs, please do not keep to yourself but call on those around you to collaborate with you. Know that like-minded people are nearby.



Hinokuni Kaigi at its inception in 2016, bringing together the Cabinet Office of Japan, Kumamoto Prefecture, and responders from within and outside the prefecture

©KVOAD

Welfare Challenges Emerging in the Community with the Disaster: Attending to Each Individual and Rebuilding Lives with the Power of Cooperation

Kenji Ikejiri, Chief, Facility & Organization Support Department, Facility & Organization Support Division, Kumamoto Prefectural Council of Social Welfare

When a large-scale disaster strikes, Councils of Social Welfare (CSWs) set up disaster survivor support organizations according to the phase of the disaster. What did the Kumamoto Earthquake and the July 2020 Kyushu Floods teach us about the role of the CSW?

Bio: Originally from Kumamoto Prefecture, Mr. Ikejiri experienced the Kumamoto Earthquake just after joining the Kumamoto Prefectural CSW in April 2016. At the time, he supported municipal CSWs as a part of the Community Welfare Division. After the Community Support Centers (CSCs) were set up, he worked at the Kumamoto Prefectural Support Office for CSCs operated by the Prefectural CSW, where he provided training to CSW staff and assisted disaster survivors through assessing their needs and helping them become more self-reliant.

Response After the Kumamoto Earthquake

The day after the Kumamoto Earthquake, Prefectural CSW staff with experience in disaster relief were dispatched to the municipal CSWs (at the city, town, and village level) in communities that were affected to help assess the situation and to set up Disaster Volunteer Centers (DVCs). At the Prefectural CSW, we also set up our own DVC and readied ourselves to support other DVCs.

The main roles of the DVC are to identify the needs of disaster survivors, coordinate with volunteers and aid organizations, and to help survivors rebuild their lives. Initially, when civic aid organizations from within and outside of the prefecture came to us with inquiries, we did not know what expertise these organizations had. So, we would go to information-sharing platforms such as the Hinokuni Kaigi, a conference for response providers, to obtain information on these organizations. At the CSW, our work must be publicly inclined and must serve the public interest in the community, and we have encountered difficult cases that challenged both. In such cases, we have asked Kumamoto Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (KVOAD), a networking nonprofit organization responsible for providing prefecture-wide intermediary support to disaster relief providers, to help us connect those in need with an aid provider.

In the subsequent recovery phase, support for temporary housing began. This was at a time when Community Support Centers (CSCs) were not fully institutionalized yet, but we were consulted by the prefectural government about a month after the disaster and immediately began coordinating with them on establishing CSCs. Four months later, CSCs were set up at both the prefectural and municipal levels.

Flexible Response and Cooperation Towards Rebuilding Lives

When we found that households or individuals living in temporary housing were in need or suffering from physical or mental health issues, Livelihood Support Counselors from the CSC made home visits and continued to watch over these residents. In cases where there remained obstacles to rebuilding livelihoods, case review meetings were held to address these challenges on an individual basis as well. Sometimes it was difficult for the CSC to follow up on the residents after they moved out of temporary housing, in which case the CSC referred them to use the municipal CSW or long-term care insurance services.

Municipal governments also took initiative in offering various measures for the disaster survivors, such as allowing people to live with their pets in post-disaster public housing or to use wooden houses constructed as temporary housing as permanent residences. In this way, flexible responses based on local conditions and the disaster survivors' own voices provided a boost to the rebuilding of lives in the disaster-affected communities.

However, as more people moved out of temporary housing complexes, the community within the complex weakened. The

complexes, the community within the complex weakened. The need to watch over the remaining residents and to confirm their safety became even greater, so the CSC stepped up its efforts.

What Roles Should CSWs Play?

One day, those who worked as counselors at a municipal CSC, which was closing its doors soon, spoke of the importance of connecting disaster response to the work CSWs do during normal (non-disaster) times. They noted, "Individual home visits with residents must go on so that we can continue to protect their lives." CSW staff like them, who have gained experience in disaster-affected communities, must have surely been able to cultivate their abilities to promote community welfare.

When the July 2020 Kyushu Floods hit, DVCs and CSCs were established in municipalities within the prefecture that did not set up these centers after the Kumamoto Earthquake, so we responded by dispatching experienced staff to support these newly established DVCs and CSCs.

We find it important to strengthen cooperation with the civic sector starting in normal non-disaster times, through signing agreements with civic aid organizations on reconstruction assistance. This will allow for aid to be delivered in full cooperation between government and civic sectors in the event of a disaster. Also, there was a case in which the government did not share information with the CSC or with any other aid organization on the situations among residents who had evacuated to public-funded post-disaster rental accommodations. The reason given was that information regarding people in these accommodations are considered private and confidential. However, as a result, necessary assistance did not reach these residents. This incident made us strongly aware of the necessity to share personal information in situations where early action is needed.

Even if we want to reach out to people with welfare-related challenges in their lives, during non-disaster normal times, we cannot connect them to assistance if they do not wish to receive it. However, after a disaster, the CSW can get involved in some way via the CSC if the person is a disaster survivor. The number of people who need to be looked after increases dramatically after a disaster, and we can actually consider this to be a good opportunity to promote community welfare among those who had otherwise been left out.



A mixer gathering for residents of public-funded post-disaster rental accommodations hosted by the CSC and aid organizations.

©Kumamoto Prefectural Council of Social Welfare

Assistance Provision through the Voluntary Operation of Evacuation Shelters

Shizuyo Yoshimura, Mashiki Town

Shizuyo Yoshimura has been involved in community development for a long time, including the launch of a civic volunteer network. Being a survivor of the Kumamoto Earthquake herself, she worked tirelessly to manage the evacuation shelter where survivors could help each other while they lived there. Ms. Yoshimura shared with us the keys to building connections in aid provision.

Bio: Born in Mashiki Town in Kamimashiki County, Kumamoto Prefecture, Ms. Yoshimura evacuated to and lived in the Mashiki Chuo Elementary School gymnasium in her hometown of Mashiki for four months after the April 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake. During that time, she worked hard for the evacuees to voluntarily manage the evacuation shelter without relying only on the government and volunteers. Currently, she is working to make sure communities can proliferate when people move from temporary housing to post-disaster public housing.

Finding a Role and Taking Action

Mashiki is where I was born and raised. In 1990, I founded a civic volunteer network because I wanted to show my two daughters how I was cultivating the hometown spirit. In 1992, I formed the Mashiki Machi Okoshi Juku, a community development volunteer organization. River cleanup was one of our activities, and we had more and more participants each year, which served as reassurance for us that the members of the community had become more deeply connected with each other.

Then came April 2016. The Kumamoto Earthquake completely destroyed my house, and I had no choice but to leave my familiar home behind and go live in the evacuation shelter. The shelter was this messy and unkempt place with futons left on the floor even during the day when nobody was sleeping. I thought that if things continued this way, people would get sick, so I asked the evacuees around me if they would like to help me clean up. My perspective was that I was asking for a favor and that this was not forced, so those who were willing and able would take up what they could. Through these conversations with the fellow evacuees, I found myself with more and more acquaintances within the shelter. We were able to create a comfortable environment by doing what each person was good at, and we valued everyone's dignity while preventing isolation at the same time.

After a month, more and more people were commuting to work or school from the shelter, leaving the elderly to stay behind during the day. By doing light tasks such as opening and closing the curtains and cleaning up while enjoying talking to each other, the older evacuees were able to stay in good health without any decline in motor functions.

We also shared our wisdom to prevent crime at the shelter. We had heard that there were cases at other evacuation shelters where complete strangers from outside of the community had slipped in among the press and volunteer activities. For the disaster survivors, the shelter is their home, even if temporary. So, we made nametags for people living in the shelters and made sure that those in charge of reception would know which evacuee was home or out at any time. This way, when a stranger tried to enter, someone would notice and be able to stop and ask why they were here.



Ms. Yoshimura (middle) smiles at a disaster survivor who came to receive relief items in the aftermath of the July 2020 flood.

©Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbum

One day, a poster in child's handwriting was put up at the entrance of the shelter that read "Let's say Tadaima (I'm home) and Ittekkimasu (I'm leaving) to each other." The children must have been trying to improve life at the shelter in their own way. After this, more people were exchanging greetings in the shelter.

After four months of living together in a supportive environment, we could finally apply for temporary housing. I thought it was more important to continue our current community relationships than to have to build a new community from scratch in a new environment, so I requested that we be allowed to live in the same temporary housing complex. After negotiations with the municipal office, we did not get our wish. We moved out to different complexes, but the households that happened to be placed in the same complex were able to live next to each other.

Building Connections Continues

Once in the temporary housing complex, we realized it was dangerous for the children there because they were playing in the parking lot having no other place for them to play within the complex. So, we voluntarily built a plaza on site. Temporary housing complexes should all come with plazas for their residents. Later, after leaving the temporary housing and moving into my own house, I started activities to expand community ties through weaving, and this was done at a gathering place I built on my own premise.

Then, in July 2020, torrential rain hit Kyushu. I created a civic volunteer center with my community development friends of 30 years. This time as a relief provider, I went and stayed in Hito-yoshi City, Kumamoto Prefecture, which was severely damaged by the floods, and provided assistance there for three months. Based on these experiences, I would like to share with you the kinds of attitude that I find important for aid workers.

1. Working together with the disaster survivors

As we engage in relief work, we must understand the community's characteristics and the ways of thinking among the residents grounded in their local culture. We should keep in mind that we will create a system of assistance provision together with the disaster survivors.

2. Valuing connections

If you observe the survivors for a week or so, you will know each person's personality and behavior. If you can ask for help directly from the survivors who seem to be able to help and explain explicitly to the survivors why you are providing certain kinds of relief, then it will help you establish relationships. In addition, disseminating information online can be very helpful in creating connections with supporters who are physically far away.

By connecting survivors with people who support and work with them, we can nurture their own strength to move forward toward self-reliance.

On Being the Liaison for Assistance Because Needy People Were Right in Front of You

Reconstruction Project Ozu Kasesuru Kumamoto

In Ozu Town, Kumamoto Prefecture, more than 5,000 houses were damaged by the Kumamoto Earthquake, and more than 13,000 people, or one third of the town's population, had to evacuate from their homes. While aftershocks continued, young people in Ozu founded Kasesuru* Kumamoto. We interviewed three members about the group's activities back then.

Co-Representative: Mr. Satoshi Yoshida (Nishikino Post Office Postmaster); Secretary General: Mr. Takeshi Saito (Former Ozu Local Vitalization Cooperator); Member: Mr. Takumi Ijima (Ozu Town Council of Social Welfare Staff)
*In the Kumamoto dialect, kasesuru is a verb that means to join in and help. They gave this name to the organization hoping they would casually lend a helping hand.

How Did You Get Involved?

SY: Before the Kumamoto Earthquake, there was a prefectural program to support civic activities, and the leaders of the organizations that were selected from Ozu Town formed a group on a social networking service. Less than a month later, the earthquake happened. In that group, we asked ourselves if there was anything we could do, and we thought that intermediary support would work well for us.

TS: I'd moved from the Kanto Region as a member of the Local Vitalization Cooperators, and less than a year later the earthquake struck. Reconstruction was added to the work of the Cooperators, and that was how I got connected with Kasesuru. How we work in this group is that people who agree with a particular proposed activity become responsible for taking it on and carrying it out. So, we are an organization where we are all loosely connected through various relationships.

TI: Indeed, the hurdles for participation are very low here. I was invited to take part in an activity because I worked for the local Council of Social Welfare, and the CSW was involved in the operation of disaster volunteer centers and evacuation shelters. My first impression was that people here were doing what they could without stretching themselves too thin.

SY: For me, since we were also disaster survivors ourselves, I had to be able to protect myself and my family first as we continued our work as Kasesuru. We are the type of organization that can make decisions quickly because we can draw on everyone's skills and everyone can express their opinion freely.

What Are the Strengths of Kasesuru Kumamoto?

TS: I have gone around many municipalities and seen many people who aspire to vitalize their communities, but if the aspiration remains at the individual level, then it remains a small flame of a small lit candle. For our organization, it was as if we could light this big flame instead because people with different expertise belonging to different occupations came together.

SY: Being able to add welfare to our activity areas has broadened the scope of our activities for sure. Another thing to mention is that we had members from the municipal government, elected officials, and the CSW, so we got a lot of important information. Also, we knew there were many things that could not be done within our affiliated organizations, so we would decide to do those things through Kasesuru.

TI: In that sense, it was significant that we could provide assistance that could not have been done through the CSW. Actually, due to geographical constraints, some residents of the neighboring Minami Aso Village had to move into temporary housing in Ozu. Because the municipality-based Community Support Center system could not function adequately in this case, we also reached out to the temporary housing residents within Minami Aso Village and connected the

residents of the two municipalities through our activities.

TS: The other thing we could do was to candidly tell responders from outside the community about how the community really felt. I think it was necessary to have someone like us, who had the bird's eye view of things, to address issues that would have been difficult for Town Hall to say, like, "Have you considered what would happen to your aid when it comes time for people to move out of temporary housing?" or "Do you realize the local businesses will suffer if you give things away for free?" Hideki Kanada, who is the town Mayor now but a town council member then, worked with us at the time, and he would also say, "Aid that does not meet any identified needs would end up in mismatches. Aid workers need to work with their own organization and in cooperation with the government to discern activities."

SY: We wanted to reflect on our work starting from when the earthquake struck, so during fiscal year 2020, we created a document recording all our activities. This helped us sort through everything we have done as an organization and put them into perspective for ourselves once again. We have established ties in the community, so we would like to build on this by bringing in younger people and continuing to create unexpected positive changes in our community.

Messages for Those Who Will Be Involved in Intermediary Support in the Future

TI: As a welfare worker, I hear heart wrenching stories all the time. So, being able to creatively engage in disaster relief and reconstruction work was something I personally enjoyed. Also, I have now made business connections with the members.

SY: Taking stock of your skills and making connections with people starting in non-disaster times will help you when disaster strikes. I say this as someone who could not be farther away from doing volunteer work myself. When the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake struck, I lived in Tokyo but could not fathom volunteering then. But I was able to get myself moving this time because the disaster happened in this town, and the people I got to know through the post office, where I work, were the ones in need. If you can think about what you can do for those in need who are right in front of your own eyes, then I believe the axis for your own actions would naturally emerge.



"Meeting For All" where members gather to solve problems
©Kasesuru Kumamoto

Disaster Relief Under the Impact of the New Coronavirus Pandemic

Megumi Kuwana, Associate Professor, Faculty of International Studies, Kindai University

Bio: Born in Osaka Prefecture. After completing postgraduate studies in the UK, Dr. Kuwana worked for several humanitarian aid NGOs as a staff member where she engaged in reconstruction work after conflicts and natural disasters. Currently, she is involved in post-conflict and post-disaster international cooperation as a board member and advisor of NGOs. Dr. Kuwana has been on university faculty since 2010, having served as lecturer at Ochanomizu University and associate professor at Ritsumeikan University before coming to Kindai University in 2015 where she works now. Her research areas include humanitarian aid, peacebuilding, international cooperation, and development sociology.



Localization Put to Practice in Kumamoto's Flood Relief

The global COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a major change in disaster relief. The dual crises of natural disaster and infectious disease are forcing complex and challenging responses around the world. In Japan, the July 2020 Kyushu Floods caused by torrential rain in the region was the first major opportunity for responders to explore the very nature of disaster relief under the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. In fact, the flood relief work in Kumamoto at that time turned out to be a trailblazing effort in that effect.

A United Nations University policy research paper (2021) on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on humanitarian crisis focused on aid access and noted the following characteristics: 1) restrictions on movement within the country, 2) aid and relief restricted to immediate crisis response, 3) bans on large group gatherings, and 4) self-imposed precautionary restrictions on activities among aid workers. These and other numerous restrictions have resulted in a major shift in the relationship between local organizations and their supporters from outside of the affected communities. Many studies have shown that local actors' leadership has strengthened, and localization progressed at aid sites around the world during the pandemic.

In JPF's Emergency Response to July 2020 Floods, all 13 organizations that implemented activities worked in partnership with local organizations. JPF member organizations used their connections with organizations they had known through the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake and the 2019 Typhoon Hagibis relief efforts as a starting point for their activities, as well as nationwide networks in their areas of expertise. All in all, these were relationships that had been established prior to this disaster. On the other hand, organizations that were unable to utilize their pre-disaster connections tended to have difficulty in their aid provision. Organizations that did implement activities used ICT to host meetings and to coordinate support from distant locations, but it would take longer than usual to start aid implementation when remote communication was all they had. This made it increasingly difficult to respond flexibly to the changing needs on the ground, so strategies were also being developed to have external responders enter the disaster sites in person while taking countermeasures against the spread of COVID-19.

In the types of collaborations described above, it can be said that people explored how best to provide assistance while minimizing external responders' direct implementation, maximizing what could be left to the local community, and giving maximum consideration to prevent the spread of an infectious disease. KVOAD, which was established after the Kumamoto Earthquake, played a central role as a bridge between local organizations and external supporters through hosting coordination meetings. In line with the prefectural government's policy, KVOAD clearly stated that external responders could only provide assistance when requested by the city, town, or municipal councils of social welfare, thereby increasing the initiative of local organizations. On the other hand, this meant that if the local municipal government or the council of social welfare does not have the accurate understanding of needs among their residents, then there is risk that

aid will not reach those in need. Indeed, this proves how necessary it is to establish a system that takes diverse local needs into consideration.

New Shape of Collaboration Centered on Intermediary Organizations

As we have experienced these challenges in aid provision during the new coronavirus pandemic, we will likely need to explore new forms of collaboration in disaster relief, where those from both outside and inside the affected communities work together while local organizations take a more central role, and where we can respond to diverse local situations. What is needed in this process is a network approach, which allows for all involved to connect to heterogeneous elements at different levels of response provision. It will be difficult for people to feel comfortable collaborating with others if the only connections with each other are those that have been hastily established. So, the key will be to create connections between the disaster- and non-disaster-time activities and to build relationships that are not bound by geographic region, sector, or public-private distinctions.

Intermediary organizations can play a major role in facilitating the promotion of these connections and relationships. When intermediary organizations across Japan, JPF with its experience in overseas assistance work, JVOAD with its relationships with national organizations, corporations, and governments in disaster response, and others can engage in dialogue beginning in non-disaster times through leadership trainings and strategy meetings, then we can create more multilayered relationships across sectors where local, national, and global efforts intersect each other.

Dialogue through collaboration has the potential power to have people exchange values with each other and transform their own to solve problems beyond the insider vs. outsider or in- vs. out-of-prefecture dichotomous frameworks. However, this is easier said than done as the intermingling of insiders and outsiders is not so easy. Rather, it is said that many forms of resilience require constant failure. Going through a shared process of conflict and struggle can be the opportunity people need to get rid of the boundaries between each other and to integrate their activities. I believe that the challenges to collaboration revealed by the new coronavirus pandemic have provided us with the opportunity to open ourselves up to new possibilities for collaborations in the future.



Information was shared among diverse organizations via online conferences in the response to the July 2020 floods.
©KVOAD

Being Considerate of Regional Characteristics While Providing Support from the Outside

Maki Saito, Domestic Division, Japan Platform (JPF)

Bio:A Tokyo native, Ms. Saito started going to Tohoku as a volunteer while working for a private company after the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011. She joined JPF in 2014 hoping to spend more of her time on disaster response and also feeling those who provide aid also need more support. In her work for survivors of the Great East Japan Earthquake, she worked particularly on issues arising from the nuclear power plant accident. With the Kumamoto Earthquake, she was involved in the response from immediately after the earthquake and worked on programming to strengthen the power and capacity of local communities.



Lessons from Assistance Provision Overseas and for Great East Japan Earthquake Survivors

JPF was established in 2000 as a mechanism for NGOs, the business community, and the government to work together under an equal partnership to provide emergency humanitarian assistance overseas. JPF has been providing assistance through our member NGOs to survivors of natural disasters as well as to refugees and internally displaced persons due to conflicts with donations from various sectors.

In the case of the Great East Japan Earthquake, which was the first time that JPF was dispatched domestically, we began providing assistance three hours after the disaster occurred on March 11, 2011. Because the damages were extensive and widespread and the support for survivors long-term, we established the Living Together Fund to provide grants to non-member organizations that were providing aid to survivors, and we were able to support projects that propelled local-led recovery efforts in a variety of fields.

This experience taught us what was important for us as external supporters. We learned that our role is to draw strength from the people who live there in the community, to help them build a system that will enable them to build on their own experiences in the event of another disaster, and to plan for withdrawal from the disaster zone from the very beginning of any aid effort.

Our Goal in the Kumamoto Earthquake Response

As a response to the Kumamoto Earthquake, we launched relief efforts by our member NGOs immediately after the main earthquake on April 16, 2016. At the same time, we conducted research to explore what types of support would draw out the power of the local community during the reconstruction phase. As a result, we decided that our goal is to develop local human resources who are able to connect and coordinate various parties involved in reconstruction and to identify local issues and take measures to address them. As described in more detail below, we conducted a training program from February to November 2017, and gave grants to local intermediary organizations between June 2017 and May 2022.

1) Training Program: Human Resource Development to Support Local-Led Livelihood Reconstruction

This program was made up of two parts: classroom training and observation training. The former was intended to connect the reconstruction experiences of communities that had gone through earlier disasters to Kumamoto so that we could draw out the strength of people working in local relief efforts. We welcomed people to Kumamoto who had overcome challenges in their relief activities in various fields after the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, 2004 Chuetsu Earthquake, and the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. For the latter, participants visited the previously disaster-affected areas and listened to the stories of local people. Participants commented positively that learning in advance about the issues that arise in the recovery process enabled them to take concrete actions early on, and that visiting previously disaster-hit communities gave them a concrete image of reconstruction and potential issues faced by these communities.

2) Grantmaking for Intermediary Support Organizations: Capacity Development to Support Human Resources

If we wanted to make sure that there are no oversights and unevenness in aid provision at the community-based level, it was necessary to develop appropriate human resources and organizations who could provide intermediary support and connect and coordinate various parties involved in response efforts in each municipality. To this end, we implemented a five-year, three-term grant program for intermediary support organizations at the city, town, and village level.

We set the objective of this program as "Making the region resilient to disasters and various social challenges." We set a goal for each of the grant terms. For the first term, it was to build connections. For the second term, we wanted the grantees to devise their own solutions to the problems that had emerged. And for the third and final term, the goal was for each grantee to reflect on their own activities since the earthquake occurred and to compile the lessons learned* so that they could establish a system where, should another disaster strike, they could build on their experiences and share them with others.

JPF provided hands-on support to the grantees from the project planning stage to the preparation of the final report. We worked flexibly as we valued the local responders' free thinking and allowed for changes made to the initial plan for the sake of achieving better results. The grant covered not only direct activity expenses but indirect expenses as well. This was based on the idea that stability in activity implementation is only possible when staffing and other indirect expenses are covered and when the administrative operations of the grantees' secretariat are sufficiently supported.

JPF's response to the Kumamoto Earthquake contributed to information sharing among various stakeholders, delivery of concrete assistance to disaster survivors, and to the goal of providing life-saving support to the entire community. In addition, when the July 2020 Kyushu Floods occurred, relief activities within Kumamoto Prefecture were led by aid groups that had accumulated experiences and expanded their cooperation in the Kumamoto Earthquake response. In that sense, I believe we were able to achieve, to a certain extent, the development of a system and human resources capable of building strong communities that can prepare for disasters to come. We would like to think that our activities helped lead the community to "Build Back Better" as stated in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which has been adopted at the 2015 United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.



Reporting session in Tokyo on the outcomes of the community capacity building project ©JPF

*The lessons learned from disaster relief in the Kumamoto municipalities have been compiled into four booklets (See QR code in Useful Links on p.32).

Disaster Relief in Italy

Ryo Matsumaru, Professor, Department of Regional Development Studies, Faculty of Global and Regional Studies, Toyo University

Bio:Born in Ichikawa City, Chiba Prefecture, Dr. Matsumaru graduated from university in 1986 with a degree in civil engineering and has worked as a development consultant for over two decades on disaster prevention projects in Japan and overseas. He has extensive experience in developing countries in developing flood control, urban drainage, disaster prevention, and post-disaster reconstruction plans as well as capacity building among government officials. He has been at Toyo University since 2013 where he has seminars on disaster prevention. Dr. Matsumaru has supported JPF since immediately after the Kumamoto Earthquake, engaging in monitoring, advising, and capacity building of organizations working in Kumamoto.



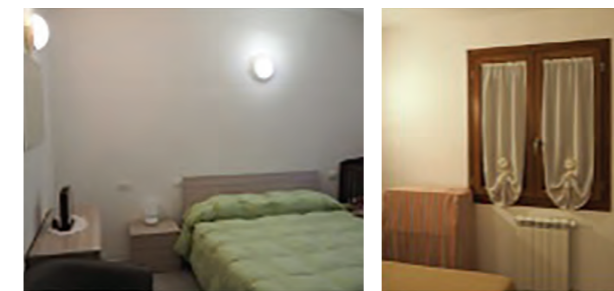
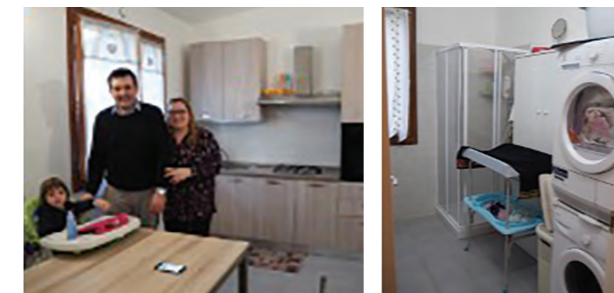
Hot Meals at Evacuation Shelters

With large-scale disasters, evacuees will be living in the evacuation shelters over the long term. In the Kumamoto Earthquake, it took about 7 months for all shelters to close. There are various challenges regarding life in a shelter, but one thing that should be improved is meals.

Meals are something that everyone needs every day. Immediately after the disaster, people are thankful to be able to eat at all. However, when they are served only rice balls, bread, and catered boxed bento meals day after day during their prolonged stay in the shelter, evacuees are not only deprived of the enjoyment of food but may also develop health problems, making it essential that high-quality meals are provided to them. Even if it is just one hot meal a day, it will be a time of relief for the evacuees.

When we look at how other countries have dealt with this, we see how hot meals are served in some countries from the very early phase of evacuation right after the disaster. For instance, in Italy, emergency food trucks are ready to dispatch to various locations and to have volunteers in charge of cooking (who have gone through training by the national government) prepare meals inside these trucks. When the city of Camerino in central Italy was hit by an earthquake in 2016, food trucks arrived there on the same day and served pasta and other hot meals. Similar examples can be seen in Albania (where an earthquake struck in November 2019), where hot meals are served as a means to provide a sense of relief to the survivors.

With the current conditions found in Japan, it is difficult for evacuation shelters to prepare their own hot meals because using heat to cook food would be hard for many shelters. But providing hot meals by using food trucks may be something that aid-providing organizations can take up.



Inside temporary housing for small families

All photos©Toyo University

Making Constructed Temporary Housing Better

Temporary housing, where people who have lost their homes in a disaster spend their temporary period of residence, should be something that gives the disaster survivors hope for recovery and reconstruction of their lives and communities. Although there has been a recent increase in the number of wooden homes constructed as temporary housing and the quality of the housing is also gradually improving, there are still many problems in terms of living conditions. Some of these issues include electrical home appliances not being supplied to the residents which makes it difficult to start living in these housing immediately, the long distance to parking lots, limited public transportation surrounding temporary housing complexes, and grocery and other shopping being inconvenient. Furthermore, the limited two-year tenancy period may lead to anxiety for disaster survivors that they could lose housing again.

In the aforementioned city of Camerino in Italy, there is no fixed tenancy period and a wider range of high-quality temporary housing was provided to disaster survivors than in Japan. It probably had something to do with the reconstruction of the old city center, a historic district, being expected to take decades. Still, the temporary housing there already came not only with major home appliances but also beds and dishes, and disaster survivors were able to start living immediately after moving in. In front of each temporary housing was a small yard where residents could have plants and keep pets. Parking spaces were also right in front of the housing for the convenience of the residents.

Quality of temporary housing and the accessibility of parking spaces may be beyond the control of the civic sector. But it may help lead to improvements when disaster hits if the civic sector had discussions with the local government and other parties during non-disaster times. It may also be helpful for disaster survivors, who are putting up with difficult living conditions, if those who are providing assistance to them could keep in mind that these are the issues they have had to endure.



A small yard and parking space provided in front of each temporary housing

Temporary housing comes in three sizes: 40 sq. meters for 1-2 persons, 60 sq. meters for 3-4 persons, and 80 sq. meters for 4+ persons.

The new coronavirus pandemic has had a major impact on disaster relief efforts. When an infectious disease is spreading, if evacuation shelters are overcrowded or if there is confusion in field operations, then further spread cannot be prevented. Therefore, new trainings and guidelines focusing on infectious disease control have been developed since the spread of COVID-19. Also, more municipalities throughout Japan have been working together with civic organizations to operate evacuation shelters more efficiently.

When assistance comes from outside of the disaster-affected community, it becomes increasingly important to ensure cooperation between the government and responders and to make sure infection control measures are in place to prevent further spread in the community as well as among responders. To be able to start activities promptly when a disaster strikes, relief workers must take care of their own health by routinely taking body temperatures and undergoing necessary tests before arriving in the affected community.

We have highlighted some websites that offer tips on how you can maximize your efforts not only in times of disaster but also during non-disaster times.

Disasters Preparations During Non-Disaster Times

◆ Cabinet Office Disaster Prevention Site “Minna De Bousai No Page”

<https://www.bousai.go.jp/kyoiku/minna/index.html>

【Disaster Management in Japan, Cabinet Office】

Introduces useful info and know-how for citizens, schools, businesses, neighborhood associations, fire brigades, flood prevention troops, voluntary disaster prevention groups, volunteers, and NPOs regarding disaster prevention efforts.



◆ Red Cross Disaster Prevention Seminars

<https://www.jrc.or.jp/saigai/about/seminar/>

【Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS)】

Introduces JRCS's training programs on preparing for disasters that anyone could experience through videos and pamphlets.



◆ Prepare and Learn: Training Program

<https://pbv.or.jp/seminar/>

【Peace Boat Disaster Relief (PBV)】

Introduces PBV's training programs on disaster prevention, preparation and knowledge needed for participating in disaster relief volunteer activities, and evacuation center management.



General Disaster Information

◆ Disaster Relief Coordination Guidelines

<https://jvoad.jp/guideline/>

【Japan Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (JVOAD)】

Compiles guidelines on responses and programs published by government and civic sectors, listed by categories such as coordination, infectious diseases, general activities, and vulnerable populations. "Relief Coordination for Disaster Survivors" and "Coordination by Sector" are essential readings that can help us eliminate oversights and unevenness in responses and effectively deliver necessary aid no matter where in Japan disaster strikes.



◆ Know-How Compilations <https://jvoad.jp/knowhow>

【JVOAD】
Compiles know-how among aid organizations and businesses, acquired and cultivated through past disaster relief efforts. Introduces info on disaster preparedness, disaster relief basics, and case studies.



◆ Useful Sites <https://jvoad.jp/site/>

【JVOAD】

Compiles websites that can serve as references when you are unsure about disaster relief. Also has useful info for those who wish to volunteer.



Activities in Infectious Disease Disasters

◆ Cautions for Entering Disaster-Affected Communities During COVID-19 Spread, 2nd Ver (June 30, 2021)

<https://www.japanplatform.org/info/2021/07/011440.html>

【PDF version】

https://www.japanplatform.org/info/pdf/JPF_covid19_rule.pdf?v=202107

【Japan Platform (JPF)】

Code of conduct formulated by JPF Domestic Disaster Working Group (JPF and member NGOs) for implementing disaster relief activities in disaster-stricken areas in Japan. Introduces compliance issues when providing response during infectious disease spread. Contents updated as needed.



International Standards

◆ The Sphere Handbook 2018: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response

https://jqan.info/sphere_handbook_2018/

【Japan Quality and Accountability Network (JQAN)】

The handbook compiles the humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response, based on reflection and discussion among NGOs and humanitarian responders. Revised every few years and put in practice around the world. Offers both minimum and technical standards for saving lives while improving the quality of aid and accountability in disaster relief. Available for download in both English and Japanese from JQAN's webpage.



◆ Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)

<https://jqan.info/documents/chs/>

【JQAN】

■ Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)

Outlines the Nine Commitments that organizations and individuals providing humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and efficiency of their response. Also includes specific descriptions of key actions as well as organizational responsibilities for improving quality.



■ CHS Guidance Notes and Indicators

This document is useful in examining challenges faced when implementing the Nine Commitments in aid activities, measuring outcomes, and promoting learning and improvement. Both CHS and Guidance notes are available for download in Japanese and English.

◆ PSEAH (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Harassment) Implementation Quick Reference Handbook, Japanese Version

<https://www.japanplatform.org/info/2021/05/241850.html>

■ Video “No Excuse for Abuse: Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Action” with Japanese subtitles

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNkYV2UQvME>

【JPF】

Not only of concern in overseas aid but also with disaster relief in Japan, this issue needs to be more widely known domestically. The handbook is designed to help all aid organizations operating in Japan and abroad learn how to maintain a policy on harassment and to practice it every day.



Kumamoto Earthquake Response Documents

◆ Panasonic-KVOAD Pro Bono Project

<https://www.kvoad.com/>

【Kumamoto Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (KVOAD)】

Panasonic NPO Support Pro Bono Project, a collaboration between a business and an NPO, extracted key words (e.g. hot meal distribution, mental health care, tarps) from a year and a half's worth of minutes from the Hinokuni Kaigi, a regularly-held conference for response providers, since right after the earthquake. Key words are organized chronologically, analyzed, and created into a database, which shows how the keywords on the conference agenda changed with the passage of time, providing valuable hints in anticipating needs through the different post-disaster phases.



■ KVOAD Website "Panasonic-KVOAD Pro Bono Project"

(See right side on computer, bottom on smartphones)

• **Final Report: Project Summary**

• **List of issues raised in each Kumamoto Earthquake-related conference proceedings: Keyword-searchable Excel spreadsheet**

• **Panasonic pro bono website: Panasonic Group's corporate citizenship activity**

“Passing On the Footprints and Know-How from Kumamoto Earthquake Relief Efforts: A project to organize and analyze records for KVOAD”

◆ Documenting the Kumamoto Earthquake Response

<https://www.japanplatform.org/programs/kyushu-disaster2016/documents.html>

【JPF】

Booklet compiling training programs for NPOs, neighborhood associations, other aid groups, and government officials engaged in disaster reconstruction activities. Contains knowledge and experiences provided by lecturers who were involved in reconstruction efforts after large disasters in Japan such as the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, the Niigata Chuetsu Earthquake, and the Great East Japan Earthquake, along with specific case studies.



◆ Four Booklets Compiling Lessons Learned from Disaster Relief in the Kumamoto Municipalities

<https://www.japanplatform.org/programs/kyushu-disaster2016/documents2021.html>

【JPF】

For three terms, JPF provided grants to local intermediary support organizations at the municipal level (city, town, village) that connected disaster survivors, aid groups, and governments as part of the project to build community power and capacity in the disaster-hit areas. Intermediary support groups in four municipalities (Ozu Town, Kumamoto City, Mashiki Town, and Mifune Town) reflect on their own activities from the beginning of the disaster and have put their findings together. Booklets provide concrete examples of how various actors in each municipality connected with each other to deliver seamless support to the survivors.



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Tips for Assisting Survivors of Disasters

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*Kumamon: Kumamoto Prefecture's PR character created in March 2011 for the opening of the Kyushu Shinkansen bullet train. Assigned titles include Kumamoto Prefecture Sales Manager and Kumamoto Prefecture Happiness Manager.

Kumamon Official Website

<https://kumamon-official.jp/default.html>



がんばるけん！

くまもとけん！

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