

Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/USA)

Japan NGO Earthquake Relief & Recovery Fund *Three-Year Fund Update*

On March 14, 2011, JCIE launched the Japan NGO Earthquake Relief & Recovery Fund to aid Japanese organizations taking part in the immediate relief effort as well as those with a long-term focus on rebuilding communities. To date, it has raised more than \$1.7 million and has been distributed to 39 Japanese groups that have been doing innovative work in the disaster zone.

Our funding targeted areas that were overlooked by other organizations, including personnel costs, developing fundraising strategies, and other crucial expenses incurred by day-to-day operations. In this way, we hope to help strengthen the capacity of the nonprofit sector to contribute to the recovery over the long term.

Emergency Relief

Through the Center for Public Resource Development's Give One Initiative, \$304,000 was distributed to six of the key disaster relief organizations responding in the initial three months.

- **Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR Japan)**
 - **Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA)**
 - **Japan Platform**
 - **JEN**
 - **Nippon International Cooperation for Community Development (NICCO)**
 - **PeaceWinds Japan**
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Long-term Recovery

The following 12 organizations received multi-year grants for their efforts to promote economic revitalization, rebuild community ties, and support senior citizens.

AidTAKATA

Radio FM Rikuzentakata

Location: Rikuzentakata, Iwate Prefecture

Grant: ¥6,000,000 (approx. \$74,000)

The Japan NGO Earthquake Fund supports the operations of Radio FM Rikuzentakata, one of the region's only local radio station in the disaster zone. The station is an important source of local news and information for many disaster survivors living in temporary housing and its programming is designed to engage community members in the reconstruction process.

- AidTAKATA, the nonprofit that manages the 24-hour radio station, has hired 4 staff to independently produce 14 regular programs (roughly 76% of its content), which include coverage of local performances, an hour for elderly residents to share local myths, and a monthly call-in talk show with the Rikuzentakata mayor.
- AidTAKATA's live broadcasting of the city council debate has increased community participation in the recovery planning process and the city council members claim to have been stopped on the street by radio listeners interested in sharing their opinions with them on certain issues. One such issue was the city's ambitious effort to make the downtown area tsunami proof by leveling mountaintops and filling in low-lying areas to raise them 26-33 feet.
- JCIE staff witnessed the radio station's role in the community first-hand during a visit in May 2013. The station was featuring a program with a lawyer who provides advice on the legal issues people in the disaster zone have to cope with (rebuilding regulations, insurance settlements, land titles, etc.) when a small earthquake occurred. The announcers immediately interrupted the interview to reassure their listeners that there was no tsunami warning and to provide accurate updates on the magnitude and location of the epicenter, information that many listeners in temporary housing without TVs and Internet would not have gotten otherwise.



Discussion on how to keep the people of Rikuzentakata city healthy



Staff interviews a shop owner at a local shopping district known for its long ties with the community

Art Revival Connection TOHOKU (ARCT)

Arts Programs: Senior Citizen and Artists Learning Together

Location: Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture

Grant: ¥2,000,000 (approx. \$24,700)

With support from the fund, ARCT has organized art programs and performances at the senior citizens' facilities in Higashi-Matsushima, Miyagi Prefecture, a city where 63% of the land was inundated by the tsunami.

- ARCT concluded their activities in April but re-launched the organization in July to continue engaging the disaster-affected communities through art. In its initial stage, the organization produced a total of four 30-60 minute performances at a senior citizens' facility, engaging local artists, senior citizens, their families and facility staff in the production. Each program recorded a total of 30 to 140 participants.



- The performances created an opportunity for the artists to become more conscious of social issues surrounding elderly care and also benefited some facility staff members who have lost homes and loved ones in the disaster to feel a sense of community through the teamwork involved in organizing the plays.
- The newly re-launched ARCT has founded a culture project team that recently collaborated with a local kindergarten to produce a play. ARCT is also planning a roundtable discussion in March to discuss how the disaster has changed and affected the local culture.

Fuji Social Welfare Foundation

Kitchen Car Project

Location: Kamaishi, Iwate Prefecture

Grant: ¥5,000,000 (approx. \$65,000)

The Fuji Social Welfare Foundation launched a "Kitchen Car Project" that provides food trucks to local chefs in Kamaishi who have lost their restaurants. The project helps employ them, providing a path back to restaurant ownership for these chefs and ensuring that there is food readily available near temporary housing settlements and in devastated areas of town. To rent the trucks, chefs are asked to pay a low, subsidized fee of 25,000 yen per month (roughly \$250) and 5% of their sales, then they keep the remaining proceeds to build up their savings.



- The project started with five food trucks in June 2011, and has since expanded to twelve. Of the 12 cars, 10 of them are now operated by restaurant owners from outside of Kamaishi who wish to return to the city because of family ties or a desire to help with the recovery process. This is an important development at a time when the population is declining and the city is threatened by an exodus of working age professionals to places with better economic prospects.
- The project has given employment to over 30 people, including staff members, kitchen car chefs, and chefs who have managed to graduate from the project and re-open their own restaurants.
- Kitchen Car Project has become a model for many of the NGOs based in neighboring cities and has been playing an advisory role for other groups looking to implement a similar project in their cities.
- The grant supported the purchase of portable canopies and vinyl walls that can be attached to the kitchen cars at night or on rainy, cold days. The funds were also used to launch an open-air plaza for docking food trucks and hosting community events and concerts. The plaza won the prestigious



Overhead view of the plaza

Japan's Good Design Award administered by the Japan Institute of Design Promotion (JDP) in 2013.

- In August 2013, six senior US Congressional staff visiting the disaster zone on a JCIE exchange met with Kamaishi Mayor Takenori Noda who cited the Kitchen Car Project as one of the leading examples of innovative recovery initiatives in the town. They were also guided around town by the project manager, Hiroyuki Mitsuzuka. Mr. Mitsuzuka is not only helping to run the Kitchen Car project but he is also a kitchen car operator who has been able to reopen his own Italian restaurant thanks to the project.
- One dream for those involved in the project is to use the Kitchen Car Project as a springboard to hold a "World Food Truck Festival" in Kamaishi to highlight the success of the city's recovery and allow food truck operators to share tips on innovative ways to contribute to their communities.



Fukushima Organic Agriculture Network (FOAN) "Rebuilding Fukushima Ties" Recovery Project

Location: Nihonmatsu, Fukushima Prefecture

Grant: ¥8,000,000 (approx. \$99,000)

The Fukushima Organic Agriculture Network (FOAN) is working with local farmers to rehabilitate the farmland that was contaminated by radiation and is creating a network of support groups to strengthen the local and displaced farming communities. FOAN is also working on distributing accurate information on Fukushima produce to relieve fears of consumers that the region's produce is still contaminated by radiation after the nuclear disaster.

- On March 2013, the organization opened a restaurant named "Fukushima Organ Dou Shimokitazawa" in Tokyo offering produce grown by the Fukushima farmers. The "Organ" is short for organic and also refers to the organ instrument with hopes that the restaurant will bring harmony between the customers and Fukushima farmers through personal exchanges and interactions. The restaurant also provides displaced Fukushima farmers who evacuated to Tokyo after the nuclear accident with a place to gather for a sense of community and to ease the stress of moving to a new home. The restaurant's grand opening was highlighted in *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, the Japanese equivalent of the *Wall Street Journal*.
- The organic farmers group for women launched by FOAN held its eighth meeting in February since its establishment to exchange farming strategies and explore the unique role of women farmers in distributing accurate information to mothers and wives who are worried about Fukushima produce contaminated by radiation.

- The Fukushima Organic Festa 2013, which was organized by FOAN in November 2013 gathered people from all over the nation to educate the participants on the process of radiation monitoring and the safety of the region’s produce. More than 50 local farmers showcased their produce and consumers had a chance to ask questions directly to the farmers.
- FOAN launched a monthly newsletter on January 2014 for their Tokyo consumers in an effort to disseminate accurate information on Fukushima’s produce and gain the trust of the consumers by including personal messages and stories from the farmers.



Farmers who participated in the Fukushima Organic Festa showing off their prized sweet potato



A gathering of Fukushima organic women farmers

Kamaishi Platform

Coastal Community Project: Support for Artisanal Oyster Farming

Location: Kamaishi, Iwate Prefecture

Grant: ¥5,000,000 (approx. \$61,700)

Kamaishi Platform has been working to help revive Kamaishi's oyster industry, which was devastated by the 40-foot tsunami waves that struck the town. The grant from the JCIE NGO Earthquake Fund supports an initiative to connect small artisanal oyster farmers in Kamaishi to Tokyo-based consumers and restaurants to revive the oyster industry. The customers can make contributions of \$100 to receive vouchers for annual allocations of oysters in return that can be redeemed at supporting restaurants over the coming 10 years.

- Kamaishi Platform has been recognized with an award of excellence for their oyster initiative along with their other disaster recovery-related efforts as part of the annual “Community Revitalization Award” administered by 46 regional Japanese newspaper publishers and the Kyodo News.
- Kamaishi Platform’s focus on younger fishermen encourages them to take leadership and introduce innovative approaches to the industry without going through the traditional channels controlled by the fisheries association. One successful



example is the fishermen using part of the fund to purchase a sophisticated oyster-cleaning machine, eliminating the middlemen who clean the oysters for them and sell the oysters at a higher price to restaurants and other businesses. With the machine, the fishermen can sell directly to Tokyo restaurants, garnering higher prices for their products and creating a direct connection between the farmers and consumers.

- The first oysters harvested under this program have been successfully shipped to partnering restaurants in December 2013. So far, 5 restaurants in Tokyo have signed up to partner with Kamaishi Platform to support the oyster farmers.

Leading Aging Society Forum

Coordination Platform for Senior Citizens Health and Welfare

Location: Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture

Grant: ¥5,000,000 (approx. \$61,700)

Funding has been provided to support the forum's "Coordination Platform for Senior Citizens Health and Welfare," an initiative to survey the actual needs of seniors and ensure that none slip through the cracks as different agencies try to respond to their various needs. They have been targeting seniors who remained in their homes rather than moving to temporary housing due to their higher risk for isolation and seclusion.

- In the period of April 2012 to March 2013, they visited 13,137 Ishinomaki households and convinced the residents of 4,039 of them to fill out comprehensive surveys of their health conditions. This rare data has been compiled in a database to provide a unique picture on the current needs of local senior citizens. Some of their troubling findings include the following:
 - 36.6% of those surveyed had low income levels than before the disaster. Some of the residents reported that they were living off of their savings, others were having difficulty finding employment or were unable to pay for health fees, and some had cut down to two meals a day.
 - About 16% claimed to have problems sleeping. Some can no longer sleep without taking sleeping pills and others report sometimes having trouble sleeping even after taking the pills.
 - 24.6% of those surveyed leave their homes only 1-2 times a week. This is a troubling statistic given the phenomenon of “isolation deaths” that have occurred after similar disasters when senior citizens and others become shut off from the outside world, increasing the risk that a sudden deterioration in their health may go undetected by those who can help them.
 - 6% answered that they have lost hope to live and are better off dead. They gave reasons such as the futility of working hard when there may be another devastating earthquake in the future, the loss of family members, and the lack of support from their families.



- Two years after the disaster, 31% still required specialized support. Residents cited reasons such as sleep loss from missing their loved ones that died in the disaster, loneliness, financial insecurity, and uncertainty about the future.
- Building on this groundbreaking survey, Ishinomaki City has commissioned the Leading Aging Society Forum to start a support center for residents living in the city. The aim is to strengthen the community through making regular house calls on senior citizens and by coordinating among other local groups to provide a comprehensive range of activities that will help to prevent the residents from becoming isolated from their communities.
- The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan recognized the organization's efforts to sustain a healthy population in the disaster area by presenting it "The Smart Life Project" award for 2013.
- Japan's Reconstruction Agency awarded the Leading Aging Society Forum in 2013 for being an excellent model for recovery projects in helping to construct a "new Tohoku." There were 460 candidates for this award.
- The forum was highlighted by the *Asahi Shimbun* in January 2014, one of Japan's primary news outlets, for their innovative work in the disaster zone.

@Rias NPO Center

Community Bus Project

Location: Kamaishi, Iwate Prefecture

Grant: ¥5,500,000 (approx. \$71,000)

Much of the public transportation was destroyed in Kamaishi, Iwate, so a local nonprofit called @Rias NPO Center purchased and has been operating community buses to allow youth to take part in after-school activities, sports, and educational programs. The buses are also used to assist senior citizens who have no transportation. In the first year after the disaster, the buses provided a vital source of transportation in the town.

- Now, although many Kamaishi residents have bought new cars, the buses are still being operated to help residents, ranging from schoolchildren to senior citizens who lack transportation and cannot carry on with their daily activities. For example, one bus is being used regularly to allow the local youth soccer team to practice and compete, and it has become closely identified with their activities.
- In addition its work on the community bus project, @Rias NPO Center has been carrying out a range of other activities to strengthen community ties. Among other efforts, in cooperation with the city hall, the organization's staff currently visit a total of 66 temporary housing settlements to check in on the residents' needs and to help them when they need assistance that is not easily available through regular bureaucratic channels.



SakuraNet

Pilot Project of Rural Senior Center

Location: Miyako, Iwate Prefecture

Grant: ¥4,350,000 (approx. \$54,000)

With JCIE NGO Fund support, SakuraNet led a coalition that rebuilt a community center, which serves primarily senior citizens in an isolated area outside of Miyako City, Iwate Prefecture. Reconstruction funds for senior centers are typically focused only on city centers, but this provides care closer to the hamlets where many of the region's seniors live. The construction was carried out by a group of 30 students from the Department of Architecture and Urban Design at Ritsumeikan University, in cooperation with the Miyako City Social Welfare Council. The facility was completed in December 2011 and is now being used by local groups to provide services for seniors and as a community center for local residents.

- The dome-shaped community center has proven to be so popular that a second one was constructed elsewhere in Miyako City based on the model of the original one. This facility is also being used to host concerts, recreational games, cooking classes, health examinations and discussion groups for community members. The facility also functions as a café where residents can gather to talk.
- In 2013, more than 15 volunteers gathered at the community center to identify and return family photos that were left behind after the disaster. In one day, volunteers were able to identify more than 40 photos to their rightful owners and residents were ecstatic when photos with great sentimental value were returned to them.



Sanaburi Foundation

Location: Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture

Grant: ¥10,000,000 (approx. \$125,600)

Sanaburi Foundation was launched in 2011 as the Tohoku region's first community foundation. It channels funds from inside and outside the region to community-based projects and, by doing this, strengthen the foundations of Tohoku's nonprofit sector. Support from the grant is going to build up its institutional base, improve its communications, and help it conduct outreach so it can become more sustainable.

- The foundation has channeled 880,238,977



Current staff at Sanaburi

yen (approximately \$8.8 million) to 371 projects in the disaster areas as of December 2013.

- The organization has hired 2 staff members since 2011 increasing the number of full-time staff to 13 and is currently looking to hire 3 more staff to help with the operations.
- Regular reports from the Sanaburi Foundation's grantees are made available online, showcasing its website as a platform for disseminating information. The website also highlights information on grant opportunities and upcoming public forums on Tohoku disaster recovery. These public relation efforts have led to further financing opportunities and new partnerships with Tokyo-based organizations.
- In Spring 2013, the Sanaburi Foundation launched a new short-term fund to raise donations for 5 non-profit groups with various focus areas. Donors were able to choose to support one non-profit group out of the five to donate for a minimum contribution of \$50. The fund raised close to \$22,000 from 135 donors. Some of the projects supported by the fund include initiatives to relieve stress of kindergarteners through dance, documenting progress on the region's recovery through the children's perspective, and supporting the financial independence of non-Japanese immigrant wives affected by the disaster.
- The Sanaburi Foundation co-organized a roundtable in September 2013 in Sendai on deriving lessons from the Tohoku disaster for the future of Japan. Representatives from NGOs, academia, business, and foundations who are involved with the recovery process in the disaster zones discussed how different sectors can collaborate with one another to better tackle the issues at hand including community building, tourism, education, and child care. A total of 202 people participated.
- The Sanaburi Foundation has been chosen as the secretariat by Japan's Small and Medium Enterprise Agency to collaborate with them on an initiative to provide financial support for promising businesses in Iwate, Miyagi, and the Fukushima prefectures. As of December 2013, it has reviewed 221 applications and has awarded a total of \$437,00,000 in grants to 165 entrepreneurs.



Participants at the September 2013 roundtable co-organized by Sanaburi

Sankaku Planning Iwate

Mederu Car ("Delivery Care") Project

Location: Morioka, Iwate Prefecture

Grant: ¥8,350,000 (approx. \$100,600)

When Sankaku Planning Iwate launched the Delivery Care project in August 2011, the organization operated in three cities in Iwate Prefecture with 10 staff members. For a small, 100-yen fee, the staff shop for basic necessities on behalf of senior citizens and other people with limited mobility in the temporary housing settlements. Their main aim is not merely purchasing daily necessities for homebound disaster survivors, but rather to engage these people in conversation and also to keep tabs on their physical and mental health.

- Recently the organization has expanded its outreach to incorporate two additional regions in Iwate, including one of the hardest hit cities, Rikuzentakata. Simultaneously, the number of staff has doubled, and it now employs 20 women, all of whom lost jobs of homes themselves.
- The Sankaku Planning staff has been making approximately 570 home visits per month, operating in 5 cities and providing services within an area spanning over 200km.
- As more clients have openly consulted the staff on their mental, social, or physical problems and as staff responds to cases of illnesses or abuse suffered by their customers during their deliveries, Sankaku, in collaboration with the government and NPO groups, has started a hotline for women to call as well as a health center for women to walk in to talk about their mental and physical well-being.



Sankaku Planning staff go shopping for those who have difficulty leaving their homes

Takagi Fund for Citizen Science

Providing Training and Encouraging Collaboration among Grassroots Groups Monitoring Radiation to Promote Healthy Communities

Location: Fukushima Prefecture and elsewhere

Grant: ¥9,600,000 (approx. \$113,000)

The Takagi Fund received a grant to educate and promote collaboration among mothers' groups, neighborhood associations, and other grassroots organizations that are dealing with radioactive contamination following the accident at the nuclear power plant in Fukushima. Their goal is to help communities make informed decisions that will help them lead healthy and secure lives.

- Recently, the Takagi Fund convened a 2-day conference in Tokyo where 24 researchers shared their findings related to the Fukushima nuclear accident in order to inform the public and illustrate the range of initiatives that were launched after the disaster. Close to 130 people participated in this event.



World in Asia (WiA)

Building a Platform for Social Entrepreneurship to Promote Recovery

Location: Tokyo, Japan

Grant: ¥6,000,000 (approx. \$76,850)

WiA was created shortly after the 3.11 disaster to coach social entrepreneurs on ways to strengthen the institutional capacity of their organizations and serve their constituents more effectively. The JCIE NGO Earthquake Fund is supporting WiA's efforts to expand its social entrepreneurship training programs for groups in the disaster zone.

- WiA has targeted 9 social businesses in Tohoku and helped them forge a total of 25 different partnerships with other organizations. To date, WiA estimates that these 9 groups have provided social services to a total of 8,898 people, including senior citizens, unemployed women, people with disability, and children living in poverty in the disaster zone.
- WiA staff have acted as consultants and mentors for the entrepreneurs to help them strategize and assess the impact of their work as these businesses struggle with being short-staffed and finding qualified individuals to work for them in the disaster areas.
- WiA has been highlighted in 7 media outlets, including NHK, one of Japan's leading broadcasters.
- One organization receiving assistance from WiA is the Social Enterprise Education and Language School (SEELS, Inc). Entrepreneur Cesar Santoyo has founded a training program for Filipino migrant women who were among the disaster victims to become English language teachers and English language school owners. There have been 51 participants in this program and the organization has opened 4 English language schools. To date, more than 55 students have signed up at these schools, ranging from kindergarteners to adults.



*** Some of the grantees involved in strengthening community ties were designated as BTMU Americas Community Recovery Awardees

MetLife Alico Employees' Children Support Program

With special donations from MetLife Alico Japan employees, a special one-year program was launched to help children and their families cope with the recovery process.

- Academy Camp Executive Committee
- Ai Chikara (Power of Love): Great East Japan Earthquake Reconstruction Support Group
- Asuiku (Education for Tomorrow)
- ATOPICCO Network for Children of the Earth
- BeSUPPORT
- Children & Youth Community Matching
- Children's Garden
- House for a Brighter Future of Fukushima Children
- Ishinomaki Koyo Youth Mini Basketball Club



- Kamaishi Higashi Junior High School
- Kirara Kai (Children of the Stars Group)
- Kodomo to Noasobi-wo-tanoshimu kai (Enjoying the Outdoors with Children)
- Marutto Nishi-Nihon (Western Japan Evacuee Coordination Group)
- Miyagi Warasukko Project (Miyagi Child Laughter Project)
- Niko-niko Support (Smile Support)
- Ogawara Youth Swimming Club
- P@CT (3/11 Recovery Assistance Team)
- Peace Jam
- Rainbow Project for Playing With Art
- Sukiurakai (LoveUrayasu)
- Tohoku University of Art & Design: Tohoku Reconstruction Association