

Fourteen months since the Tohoku Earthquake CIVIC FORCE Activity report

“The community hasn’t broken.”

In the disaster areas in Tohoku, cherry blossoms were in full bloom between the end of April and the beginning of May.

“There was no room for cherry-blossom viewing.” “I thought cherry blossoms didn’t bloom and the community deadly broke.” say disaster victims reflecting last year at this time. This year people in disaster areas say, “I felt relieved when cherry blossoms bloomed.” “Seeing cherry blossoms in full bloom allows me to think positively.” On the other hand, not a few people who lost their houses and jobs in Tsunami disaster worry about future saying “I’m very uneasy and at a loss. Too much to bear.”

The fourteenth monthly report introduces the present situation of group relocation which attracts a lot of interest of people in the disaster areas and new activities of the “NPO Partner Project” that Civic Force, an intermediary support organization is focusing on now.

Group relocation “led by the residents” is the key for recovery

How people in the community reach agreement

Livelihood support, infrastructure reconstruction in the disaster areas, removing debris, and response to the nuclear plant accident. While there are many problems to solve for recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake, various reconstruction measures by the central and prefecture’s governments, and municipalities are in progress.

People who lost their houses in the disaster and live in temporary houses are now paying the most attention to one of the projects to support disaster victims, the “Disaster Prevention Mass Relocation Promotion Project,” by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. In order to

relocate a residential area which has been or is likely to be affected by a disaster to a safety place, municipalities obtain a high land and develop the land to build houses with government subsidies. By the third supplementary budget passed last November and the Special Reconstruction Zone Act enacted in the same month, the upper limit of government subsidies was actually abolished. Those who can rebuild their houses at their own expense purchase land from the municipalities or borrow land and pay the rent. Those who can’t afford to can live in a public house for disaster victims.

“Where can I live after the temporary housing is removed?” “I wonder if I can lead the same life as before.” The government can’t make decision on the future of individual disaster victims who lost their houses and jobs. In order to reconstruct the community for the next generation and afterward, the agreement of the residents is indispensable. However, in the disaster areas, some want to be back where they lived to continue fishing again and others desire to move to high ground where tsunami does not reach. It is not easy to obtain agreement from residents with various opinions.

Initiative toward operation of projects

Under such circumstances, in some areas where Civic Force is continuing to support activities, residents get together voluntarily to think about the future of their own town. They are keeping discussing the future of the town while looking back the situation of the town.

Koizumi District in Motoyoshi-cho, Kesenum a City, Miyagi where



houses of 266 families of all 518 families were washed away or totally destroyed and houses of 42 families were half destroyed or flooded quickly decided to move to higher ground after the earthquake disaster. “Koizumi Chiku no Asu wo Kangaeru Kai” formed last April is taking initiative for new community development led by the residents and is engaged in activities such as setup of council for group relocation, questionnaire to the residents, arrangement with the government, request for help of specialists, holding workshops, etc.

In Osawa District, Karakuwa-cho in the same city, where 186 families live around a small fishing port, nearly eighty percent of the houses in the district were damaged in the disaster. Volunteers in the area established the “Osawa Chiku Disaster Prevention Mass Relocation Promotion Project, Kisei Domei-kai” in June and hold workshops concerning relocation to higher ground, submitted a petition to the government, negotiated with land owners, and submitted regular reports to the mayor.

Also, residents in Moune District in the same town took initiative in having discussion concerning relocation and relatively quickly submitted a petition to the city. In the end of April, Kesenuma City decided to start the Disaster Prevention Mass Relocation Promotion Project in these three districts and other two districts. After obtaining approval of Fukko Seibi Kyogikai (Reconstruction and development council) of the city in the middle of May, this project will be formally operated.

Phase IV of “NPO Partner Project” starts

In order to respond to ever-changing needs of the disaster areas in various ways, Civic Force continues to operate the “NPO Partner Project” since April 2011. We have launched 32 projects together with 26 organizations. At present, we support community development led by local people with mid- and long- term viewpoint.

We develop new projects in Phase IV and conduct programs for reconstruction of disaster areas and recovery of the community together with NPOs in disaster areas. As in past years, Civic Force

conducts hearings and surveys together with senior advisers before deciding which projects to support. We monitor and evaluate projects during the period and at the time of completion. We put details of Phase IV projects on the homepage as soon as determined.

The progress of the projects which are underway as of May, 2012 are as follows:

— Phase II Projects —

(Projects with specialty and novelty in which local communities in the disaster areas participate)

■Moriwa Umi no Koibito×Civic Force

“We want more people to know about the recovery situation of the sea of Tohoku and a new type of community development.” With this wish in mind, “Moriwa Umi no Koibito” continued surveys of the sea together with specialists of sea life, civil engineering, etc. and held symposiums at Sendai, Kesenuma and Tokyo so far. This month the symposium entitled “Recovery of tidal flat” was held at the civic hall of Fukuoka Prefecture and a lot of people gathered. In addition, on June 3, a tree-planting ceremony is scheduled at “Hikobae no mori” in Ichinoseki-shi in Iwate.

— Phase III Projects —

(Community support, community development support projects toward local reconstruction with medium- and long-term viewpoint)

■Planning Committee of Kesenuma Oshima Run Festa×Civic Force

“Kesenuma Oshima Run Festa,” a marathon for reconstruction will be held on this May 27 at Oshima, an inhabited isolated island of Kesenuma, Miyagi. The number of application of runners reached its capacity, 1200 people by the beginning of May and a lot of people from the disaster areas



and other areas will visit to the island. The event will be held in less than a month. In Oshima, the fifth Planning Committee meeting was held in the beginning of May to make arrangement of the event on the day, booths for stalls, setting up the site, etc. The preparation is now in the final stage. Civic Force continuously supports the planning committee consisting of the islanders to make the event successful.

■Kesenuma Volunteer Network SeikeikaixCivic Force

Kesenuma Volunteer Network Seikeikai is continuing their activities, such as visiting to disaster victims in their own house and making accessories in order to avoid isolation from their community and to increase income. The organization had continuously engaged in attentive hearing by visiting disaster victims in their house from October to December last year. They are working on community development by providing opportunities for community gathering. For example, in the beginning of this May, a workshop was held for the participants as to improve their skill to make higher quality products.



■Kesenuma Future Plan/Osawa Team xCivic Force

In Osawa District, “Osawa Chiku Bosai Shudan Iten Sokusinkisei Domei-kai” is taking initiative in considering group relocation and reconstruction and planning of community development. Civic Force is working with “Kesenuma Future Plan/Osawa Team” which experts in town planning and students from Kobe University, Yokohama City University and Tohoku University of Art and Design, who have familiarity with town planning



and architecture and have some connection with Kesenuma. The workshop called Mirai Shukai (meetings for future) is held several times in a month. It was held on April 22, latest. The next meeting will be held on May 13 and June 3.

■Japan Forest Biomass NetworkxCivic Force

The framework completion ceremony of “Tenohira ni Taiyo no Ie,” the eco houses for recovery and coexistence to accommodate disaster victims from Fukushima was held in Tome City, Miyagi on April 29. More than seventy people participated in the ceremony, including the Mayor of Tome City, the chairperson of Mont bell, Civic Force and other related parties.

All wood building materials of “Tenohira ni Taiyo no Ie” are solid wood supplied from Fukushima. Wood pellet fuel is used for a stove or a boiler. Solar panels on the roof provide electricity and heat to supply hot water. It is one of a housing model of coexistence with nature and will be completed in July. For construction, local craft workers and suppliers are adopted on a priority basis to contribute to economic revitalization in the disaster areas.



The weekend recreation project “Tenohira touch (touch the palm)” ,the outdoor recreation event in a rich natural environment for children from Fukushima.

■Network OrangexCivic Force

In last November, Network Orange held “Tohoku Marche” with shop owners from Sanriku coast that was damaged by the disaster holding. Since then they continues holding workshops and training in cooperation with senior management consultants. Civic Force supports them for community developing along with their industrial recovery.

■Peace JamxCivic Force

In Kesenuma, Miyagi, Peace Jam encourage

mothers to get job opportunity. Civic Force supports them as to stabilize their business and cultivate leaders among mothers. In this May, A new plan of the products in collaboration with a confectionery company is under consideration.



Current situation of our trailers and container houses

In June 2011 after the Great East Japan Earthquake, Civic Force started the "operational multipurpose base provision project" that provides mobile living spaces for people who work for rehabilitation and reconstruction in the disaster areas. Civic Force provided house trailers and container houses to be used as a private space for support providers who got fatigued in the affected areas after the disaster, such as municipal employees, and as an alternative to a temporary house, a community center and a locker room of a sport facility.

More than six months have passed since we started the project. As the conditions of the affected areas change, the uses of the house trailers and container houses are also changing to meet new needs.

For example, Kesennuma High School and Kesennuma Koyo High School respectively use a house trailer lent



to an alumni organization of Yacht Club of Kesennuma High School as a clubhouse of Yacht Club since February 2112.

Civic Force received a letter and a photo from members of Yacht Club of Kesennuma High School in March. The letter was full of joy, saying "We used to spend three hours round trip going to a yacht harbor for practice, but thanks to the house trailer, we can practice as long as before the disaster," "We can change clothes and have a

meeting without constraint."

One house trailer located in front of a dock "Ace Port" in Kesennuma is used as an office of a local NPO called the "Regional Regrowth Project." The group started a car sharing project in May 2011 as a partner group of Civic Force's NPO Partner Project. In the project, vehicles are lent to affected people who lost their cars. Staff worked in vehicles and temporary houses before the house trailer came.

They said, "We can work more comfortably and efficiently in a warm space thanks for the trailer."



Other details of trailer/container house, please visit the site below.

<http://www.civic-force.org/activity/emergency/higashinihon/shelter/>

Prepare for the next disaster

An investigation committee of experts established by the Cabinet Office, "Investigation Committee on great earthquake model of Nankai Trough" reported new assumption of a great earthquake along the Nankai Trough in the end of this March. A level 7 earthquake possibly occurs in 153 municipalities of 10 prefectures, 23 times larger area than the previous assumption.

Based on this report, Civic Force visited Kamishima of Mie in the end of April upon request of a local broadcast station and toured the island with the town mayor of Kamishima. In light of the experience of supporting an inhabited isolated island, Oshima in Kesennuma, Miyagi, we had discussion on preparation for a disaster such as evacuation to higher land giving first priority to protect lives, stock of supplies for one week as a minimum assuming the delay of help from outside for an isolated island, necessity of discussion with government considering the possibility of full evacuation from the island.

Information on change in use of “designated donation” to support Tohoku

From March 2012, we changed the use of fund donated to Civic Force. All the “designated fund” to support our activities for the Great East Japan Earthquake donated until the end of February were spend on operational costs of the designated activities. However, we use 15% of the donations for operating expenses since March 1. Operating expenses mean expenses for key activities of Civic Force including operation of Civic Force Toyo office and ordinary activities to prepare future disaster.

One year has passed since the earthquake disaster. In order to enhance activities to prepare future disaster as well as support for the Great East Japan Earthquake, we changed the use of donations. Thank you for your continued understanding and support.

Method to make donation

We accept donations by transfer from banks, Japan Post Bank, or credit cards. Since February 10, 2012, you can also use Pay-easy, convenience stores, Edy and Suica to make donation. For further information, please visit our website.

<http://www.civic-force.org/contribution/>

Request for monthly supporters

Regular preparation has a huge influence on the speed and quality of support when a disaster strikes. Civic force experienced this during the Tohoku Earthquake and is now preparing for the next large scale disaster. Intensive discussion and preparation with domestic businesses, governments, and specialist NGOs will be necessary in the future.

Civic Force’s activities are truly supported by the “Civic Force (the power of the people),” and your help has been necessary for the activities we have

been able to conduct so far and will also be needed for our preparations for the next disaster. We ask that you participate in our activities, necessary for preparing for the next large scale disaster, as our monthly supporter, contributing an amount start form ¥1,000 each month.

Disasters, particularly earthquakes, can occur anywhere at any time. Please join us to prepare for the next earthquake in Japan so that we can provide more effective and efficient support. We accept financial support for our activities at the accounts listed below.

■Bank: Sumitomo Mitsui Bank, Aoyama Branch, savings account no. 6953964

(三井住友銀行青山支店普通 6953964)

■JP Bank:00140-6-361805

(The account holder for both of the above is “コウエキン ヤダンホウジン シビックフォース” (Civic Force))

■Credit card: Please check the “Donate Now!” section on the Civic Force homepage.

Request for supporting member company

Civic Force is seeking corporations that support us to prepare large-scale quick supporting activities when a big disaster occurs. Please participate in emergency drills and other activities and support Civic Force as a supporting member with 50 thousand contributions each. For further information, please visit our website.

<http://www.civic-force.org/about/membership/>

*You can view our monthly reports, released around the 11th of each month, at

<http://civic-force.org/news/monthly/>



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