



CIVIC FORCE

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Photo shows region near Aso Ohashi Bridge, which collapsed during the Kumamoto Earthquake in April 2016. Students from Japan and South Korea visited the Takanodai district in Minami Aso Village, Kumamoto Prefecture, where the massive destruction caused by the large-scale slope failure still remains.



“It Is My Turn to Do What I Can”

“Someone helped me last time. So this time, I want to do what I can do in return.”

“I’d like to talk about disaster prevention and reconstruction efforts.”

“I want to learn about the current condition of the disaster-affected areas in Kumamoto Prefecture.”

— It has been six and a half years since the Great East Japan Earthquake, and more than a year since the Kumamoto Earthquake. Also, numerous natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and typhoons continue to devastate people’s lives all over the world.

This past summer, Civic Force organized the “Kyushu Reconstruction Support Volunteering Tour,” a training program, in which participants visited the Kumamoto Earthquake sites. Fifteen people including students who were affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and youths from South Korea, with thoughts of their own, went to the disaster-affected areas.

During the tour, the visitors met a photographer from Minami Aso Village who continues to take pictures of his hometown that had been completely destroyed by the quake, a student who shares the experience of the quake, entrepreneurs who work towards the recovery of agriculture and revitalization of Yamato Town, and a young man who has started a project to reconstruct the historical townscape of the castle town. Through interviews with such people with high aspirations, the participants learned about the different thoughts of each individual and the attractiveness of respective areas, in addition to the severe situation of the post-disaster period.

In this newsletter, we will report on the training program which combines “international exchange” and “reconstruction support” and on the voices of students who participated in it. We will also follow up on the progresses made by “NPO Partner Projects,” which are ongoing at sites in the Kyushu region and the Japan portion of the training program conducted for interns from ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management.

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Supporting Disaster Affected

The following articles describe the emergency response, aid activities, and reconstruction efforts that Civic Force continues to execute for disasters that occur in various regions of Japan.

Kumamoto x Tohoku (Northern Japan) x South Korea

Students from Japan and South Korea participated in Kyushu Reconstruction Support Volunteering Tour

More than a year has passed since the quake occurred in Kumamoto Prefecture in April 2016. The local economy has been struggling because of the stalled tourism. In order to overcome the situation, Civic Force organized the “Kyushu Reconstruction Support Volunteering Tour,” a one-week training program for students in Japan and from South Korea, which started on August 28. In the program, the young people from both nations paid visits to the disaster-affected sites and understood the current state of the reconstruction efforts made at various sites. They experienced and discovered the attractiveness of Kumamoto while interacting with each other. They aimed to increase the number of tourists by disseminating the results of their interviews.

(This is a joint project between the “Dream Support Project” of the Great East Japan Earthquake, an aid project of Civic Force, and the “NPO Partner Projects” of the Kumamoto Earthquake. We also cooperate with “A-PAD KOREA,” the group that works on establishing the disaster prevention network system in South Korea.)

“Reconstruction” and “Tourism” as Key Factors for Interviews

A total of 15 people, seven from Tohoku and eight from South Korea, participated in the interviews conducted in the first half of the program. They visited three disaster-affected areas – Kumamoto City, Minami Aso Village, and Yamato Town – and interviewed local companies and NPOs that work on reconstruction. Based on the information they gathered, the students split into three groups for the latter half of the program. Then each group selected a location and gathered information on reconstruction updates and tourist attractions of the respective sites. On the last day, alongside the photos they took, they presented what they saw and heard with future dissemination plans.

“Have Each Person Bring In 10,000 Tourists to Kumamoto”

This program seemed to have been a great opportunity for the students from Tohoku to discover Kumamoto not only as the site of the recent earthquake, but also as an attractive place they found while spending time in its rich natural environment. The South Korean students, who participated in the program as part of the welfare project of their specialized vocational school, set a goal to “have each person bring in 10,000 tourists to Kumamoto.” After returning to South Korea, they plan to edit and post photographs and video footage, and to publish a collection of essays by the end of the year. During the program period, they were seen discussing until late at night to create a quality report.



VOICE

“I Came to Kumamoto in Hope of Returning the Favor”

What did the young people from Tohoku and South Korea learn and feel in Kumamoto?

We interviewed the students from both countries who participated in the program.



“The difficulty and fun of creating together with people from overseas”

Joichiro Kikuchi
(college senior)

I participated in the entire program. I learned a lot and got to know the reality and the enormity of the disaster in Kumamoto that were not reported by media. During the group sessions with South Korean students, I sometimes felt the differences in the approach to doing things and the way of thinking. Therefore I felt it was both difficult and fun to create something with people who have different cultural backgrounds. I have learned that it is important to combine opinions from both sides while openly exchanging ideas, in order to bring the effort to a new direction.



“There are things that we can understand only by actually seeing, hearing, or touching them.”

Kaede Okada
(college senior)

The people I met, nature, and indigenous things in Kumamoto and Fukuoka ... they were so attractive because I actually saw, heard or touched them. The trip was filled with things that we may overlook on personal trips, such as life after the quake and the longstanding agriculture. Even though some time has passed since the quake, reconstruction is far from complete and there are facts that have not been told. I felt that all people should be aware of this situation.



“I wish to help as a supporter, not as a recipient”

Murakami Masato
(college junior)

In the program, I had opportunities to visit the sites of the Kumamoto Earthquake and the Torrential Rain in Kyushu and to experience volunteer activities. Through these experiences where I switched sides from receiving support to giving support, I became compelled to help people in disaster affected areas other than Tohoku as well. I interacted with local people in Kumamoto who treasure their hometown and exchanged ideas with students from South Korea about the good things of Kumamoto. That in turn made me look back to Iwate Prefecture where I'm from and treasure my own hometown.



“I learned the importance of telling and passing down the experience of the quake”

Sako Nagaoka
(college junior)

What gave me the deepest impression were the stories that were told by the students of the Agriculture Department of Tokai University, who were affected by the Kumamoto earthquake. As I heard about the painful experiences of the people of my generation, such as friends' deaths and the aftereffects of the disaster, I couldn't listen objectively - their experiences overlapped with my own experience. Then I heard about the students' story-telling tour, which they started in the hope that people would feel natural disasters closer by listening to real-life experiences, and I realized the importance of telling someone about your experience of suffering from disasters.



“Finally I was able to take a step forward”

Ayaka Konno
(college senior)

I had been wishing to visit Kumamoto for some time but hadn't been able to take a step forward. I finally made up my mind and joined the program. This experience broadened my perspective towards the recovery efforts of disaster affected areas. Both Tohoku and Kumamoto were hit by earthquakes but their respective situations are completely different due to differences in the environment and character of the locality. If I get another opportunity like this, I'd like to participate again.



“I came to Kumamoto in hope of returning the favor”

Kohei Azuma
(college junior)

Many people helped us when we were hit by the Great East Japan Earthquake. So I participated in this program in hope of showing my gratitude and returning the favor. It was painful to see that the sites in Kumamoto and Fukuoka were far from complete recovery. I intend to make use of what I learned from the Kumamoto Earthquake for the recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake.

“Catching Sight of
‘Regional Food Cycle’
in Farming Community”

Kim Min Jun



I learned in our group work about the life and the way of thinking of the farmers living in Yamato Town. There is a food cycle in the town, where the farm products – what are the gifts from the land, are used as the ingredients of the cuisines at the local restaurants. All stories I heard were significantly valuable. I met people whom I wanted to come to see again. After back to Korea, I would like not only to introduce the sight-seeing spots of Kumamoto Prefecture but also to create videos and essays focusing on the farmers.

“My Next Dream is
to Study in Japan”

Ma Won Gung



I interviewed the municipal office staff, students and restaurant owners in Minamiaso Village to study the tourism restoration from the earthquake damages. I was impressed by their words; “There is no use thinking about things before the earthquake. We have no other choice but to move forward.” It was my first time to visit Japan and I met people with pure heart, which made me feel that I wanted to talk much more with them. My next goal is to study Japanese and to go to university in Japan.

Japanese and Korean Students Volunteered at the Site Suffered by the Northern Kyushu Torrential Rain

On August 30, as part of the training program, Japanese and Korean students volunteered in Asakura City, Fukuoka Prefecture, which suffered from the northern Kyushu torrential rain in July this year. They worked hard to clean up, remove rubble, and shovel out mud at/from the damaged houses in collaboration with 50 other volunteers under the coordination of Kyushu Christ Disaster Relief Center, which cooperated with the disaster volunteer center of the area.



“More Time
Needed to Return
Their Daily Lives
to Normal”

Tomohiro
KIMURA



I joined the summer program of Dream Support Project last year. This time was my second participation. The most impressive activity in the eight-day program, all of which I joined, was a voluntary work in Asakura City. It was my first time to participate in the volunteer work in disaster affected area. I learned that a lot of labor was required to clean up at a damaged house, even if it was just one. As there would be a long way to rebuild their daily lives, I wanted to do something I could do for the affected people.

Northern
Kyushu
Torrential
Rain

NPO Partner Projects - Emergency Aid Activities to Reconstruction

Although four months have passed since the torrential rain hit the northern Kyushu in July 2017, over 1,200 people have been still forced to live in the temporary housings and other evacuation places. Civic Force has supported rehabilitation and reconstruction of the affected area through the NPO Partner Projects, which help the local people actively reconstruct the disaster area.

NEW Dispatching Nurses

Kyushu Christ Disaster Relief Center (Nursing Department)



As of November 2017, 28 shelters in Asakura City, Fukuoka Prefecture, were integrated to the one evacuation place and are also in the process of being closed. As more people get stressed by relocation and long-lasting lives in the temporary housings, the support has been required for the affected people living in the temporary housings as well as in their own houses.

In September, we started dispatching the nurses of the nursing department in Kyushu Christ Disaster Relief Center as part of the NPO Partner Projects. They have a nursing support experience at the time of large-scale disasters, such as the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, the Great East Japan Earthquake, and the Kumamoto Earthquake. They passed their experiences and skills onto the staff members of Asakura City Office and the local people, which aim to help the local people implement the self-support on their initiative.

NEW Community Support

Hichiku Volunteer Center

With the closure of the Hita City Disaster Volunteer Center in Oita Prefecture in September, a local network organization, the Hichiku Volunteer Center, has taken the lead in finding out the needs of the affected people and coordinating the volunteers. Hichiku is a generic term for the areas - Hizen, Higo, Chikuzen and Chikugo, and the volunteer center has the base in Otsuru area. In addition to funding for its operation, Civic Force has assisted the center by lending a trailer house which supplements the office function.



Kumamoto
Earthquake

Container Set Up in Minami Aso Village - Relaxing Space for the Locals and Visitors



The container, set up at the vacant land which used to be a bamboo grove, has a large window and green exterior, paying attention not to ruin the scenery. "This is a space for everyone to drop in," says Mr. Nagano.



In the middle of September, we lent a container free of charge to the general incorporated association, Kyushu Manabiya. It has been trying to reconstruct Minami Aso Village, which was attacked by the Kumamoto Earthquake. The container, provided by a Korean company, is 20 feet long (approximately six meters long, on ISO standard). It is planned to be used as a community space for the local people, a meeting room for the support organizations, and a place to disseminate the attractive aspects of the community.

Mr. Ryoichi Nagano, the representative of the Kyushu Manabisha, says, "I'd like to make this container a space where the local people and visitors feel free to stop. The progress of reconstruction in Minami Aso Village is slow. Also we have concerns over its population outflow, aging of the population, and its vacant lands. To tackle these situations, we will make efforts for this project to become a role model of effective land utilization."

Aiming to Create Town Comfortable for Everyone to Live in - NPO Partner Projects -

NPO Partner Projects that support the restoration and reconstruction of the areas which suffered from the Kumamoto earthquake, are now implementing three programs. In addition to the training program for Japanese and Korean students, which is reported on page two to four, we are supporting community activities to develop a comfortable town for everybody to live in.

Arts and Sports for Everyone (ASE)

ASE aims to promote communications and to prevent isolation of residents living in temporary housings through playing Boccia, which is one of the universal sports that everybody can play regardless of age and disability. ASE has rented Boccia equipment to temporary housings and organizes Boccia events.

In November, ASE organized the events where the people can experience Boccia, in UD Sports Festival held at the East Community Center of Kumamoto City, and in an in-house sports event of AISIN Kyushu Co., Ltd., a company based in Kumamoto Prefecture.



Boccia experience offered in in-house sports event of AISIN Kyushu Co., Ltd.

Tokyo 2020 Partnership Program Disabled Sports Forum & Universal Sports Experience Event

Fewer than 1,000 days are left until Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic in 2020. All over Japan a variety of events have been organized to liven up the Olympic and Paralympic under the eight themes such as sports, culture and arts. Disabled Sports Forum & Universal Sports Experience Event in Kumamoto, held on November 26 at Prefectural University of Kumamoto, is recognized as Tokyo 2020 Partnership Program.

◆Please refer to the following website for details.

<http://www.civic-force.org/news/news-1849.php>

Nishihara Village Reborn Network

Second Large Round-Table Talk under Planning

Nishihara Village Reborn Network supports the rehabilitation in collaboration with the municipal office and three communities affected by the Kumamoto earthquake. The network has been disseminating the information regarding their communities to the public through workshops for support groups and local residents held once to four times a month as well as through photo exhibitions at a communication facility in the village. As the large round-table talk held in August was well accepted, the network is now planning to organize the second large round-table talk. A study tour in Niigata Prefecture is scheduled for December, where they will learn about the rehabilitation of the local community after the earthquake.



Workshop to learn attractive points of local communities

LGBT-JAPAN

Delivering Presentation at Various Places



LGBT-JAPAN has conducted the researches on LGBT* who suffered from the Kumamoto earthquake and provided cares for their mental health. LGBT-JAPAN has been giving lectures at various places. In July LGBT-JAPAN was invited to an NPO strategy meeting to make a presentation about the considerations to LGBT in the management of refuge facilities. Although this cooperative project with LGBT-JAPAN finished in September, the disaster response collaboration with them has remained alive.

※LGBT : Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender

Emergency Preparedness Mechanism

We are taking various measures to strengthen our emergency preparedness mechanism. This page introduces the support given by our partners, such as magazines that published articles about activities conducted by Civic Force.

Expanding to Asia

Interns of ASEAN Learn from Disasters Occurred in Japan

The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management, the AHA Centre, plays a role in coordinating emergency aid activities when disasters occur in Asia. Interns from AHA Centre visited Japan and participated in the AHA Center Executive Program, the ACE Program, for 10 days from October 22, 2017.

Organized in 2014 by Civic Force and the Asia Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management, A-PAD, the program in Japan completed its fourth session this year. Prior to coming to Japan, the eighteen participants from nine ASEAN member states who hold titles as “Rescue and Safety Officers” attended a six-month program in Indonesia. In Japan, they visited corporate-/government-related facilities in the Tokyo metropolitan area and learned about what Japan has experienced in disasters and how the government has been supporting ASEAN.

This program provides the opportunity to learn about the significance of cooperating and giving support beyond borders and sectors and to discuss the possibilities of mutual cooperation. It also contributes to educating disaster prevention leaders of ASEAN member states and expanding disaster preparedness networks.



Emergency Preparedness Mechanism

17 Companies and 5 NPOs Establish “SEMA” to Prepare for Emergency

At the end of August 2017, we formed the Social Emergency Management Alliance, SEMA, with 17 private companies including Yahoo Co., and five NPOs, all of which give support in disaster situations. This is a system expected to send relief supplies to affected areas immediately after disasters occur in Japan. We are waiting for more companies and NPOs to join us.



Emergency Preparedness Mechanism

Start Your Support with Only 33 Yen per Day

In order to be prepared for future disasters, we need your support. Become a monthly supporter and you can donate a fixed amount each month (in 1,000 yen units) and help prepare for future large-scale disasters. Payments can be made through bank transfers to Civic Force:

•Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation:
Aoyama Branch Account No. 6953964

•Japan Postal Bank:
Account No. 00140-6-361805
Account holder's name of the above banks is “Civic Force”

•Credit card:
Please check the “Donate Now!” section of the Civic Force website below
<https://bokinchan2.com/civicforce/donation/bokin/page1.ph>





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