



CIVIC FORCE

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Students show great interest in their first bonito filleting event. In the special summer program of the "Dream Support Project," they went to study ocean life and swam in the sea of Kesennuma and learned about the mutual relationships among the forest, the sea and the village.

Protecting Your Life from Successive Natural Disasters

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It has been five and a half years from the Great East Japan Earthquake and more than five months from the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake. Not only earthquakes, but Japan also faces disasters caused by typhoons. This summer, multiple regions suffered severe damages from successive typhoons.

So, what can we do to minimize the damages as we cannot stop natural disasters? In the field of Psychology of Disaster, human beings are said to have the tendency to convince oneself that he/she "will not be affected even when others are." However, we must abandon our baseless beliefs on safety and always keep in mind the phrase, "What do I need to do if a disaster occurs here now?"

In addition, risks are higher if disaster prevention measures are prepared based on only one type of disaster. In the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, many deaths were caused by falling objects and/or being pinned under houses/buildings. Meanwhile, the two main dangers of the Great East Japan Earthquake were the tsunamis along the coast and the nuclear plant accident. Together with regional disasters, we need to prepare comprehensively for large-scale disasters that are extensive and cause disruption to the infrastructure for a long period of time.

This summer, Civic Force conducted a special, active learning program as part of the "Dream Support Project," one of the post-disaster support activities for the Great East Japan Earthquake. In the program, participants gained knowledge of the relationship of the forest and the sea, the importance of preventions against natural disasters, and the current state of reconstructions in the Tohoku region.

In this issue of the News Letter, we report to you on the special summer program as well as the current state of the disaster-affected areas and our support activities in Kumamoto.

Supporting Disaster-Affected Areas

The following articles describe the aid activities Civic Force continues to execute since March 11, 2011, in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake, as well as its emergency response activities for disasters that occur in various regions of Japan.

The Great East Japan Earthquake

Five-day and Four-night Special Program for Summer

As part of “Dream Support Project” , which offers supports to the students affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, we held a five-day and four night special program for the summer vacation from August 21 to 25. Students from Miyagi Prefecture took part in the program, which marked the 4th anniversary this year.

Wisdom from the Tohoku Fishermen—Linkage between Forests, Villages and Sea

The program took place in Kesenuma City, Miyagi Prefecture, known as the town of fishermen, and Ichinoseki City, Iwate Prefecture, a countryside area which enjoys its abundant green, where the participants spent fulfilling time through learning the linkage between the sea, villages, and forests. The program was coordinated by Makoto Hatakeyama, the vice president of “Mori wa Umi no Koibito” , a non-profit organization dedicated to environmental education, reforestation, and conservation of natural environment. About ten students of undergraduate and postgraduate from Kyoto University also joined the program and

On the first day, the participants learned about the activities of “Mori-umi” , the damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake, and the progress of reconstruction in the disaster-affected areas. They also had an experience of making a fire as a skill to survive at the time of disaster. On the next day, they went out to the sea by boat and pulled up the ropes hung from rafts to get oysters attached to the scallops and other creatures living nearby. Observing them through a microscope, Mr. Hatakeyama said, “Oysters, which grow by absorbing a large amount of sea water, eat plankton in the sea.” He explained about sea creatures and the ecosystem of the earth, and underlined that the human beings also belong to the ecological food chain.



a. and b. Kusunaki beach – located in the west of Karakuwa peninsula, which is registered as both the designated cultural property and the natural treasure
 c. The students jumping into the sea of Mouné
 d. Went to the upper reach of the river and the forest as part of the program to learn about what “Mori-umi” activities mean, the history of the effort to prevent the dam construction, and the relationship between those engaged in fishery and forestry
 e. On the fourth night, having fun with catching conger
 f. Visited temples and shrines to see and learn about regional culture and history
 g. Shigeatsu Hatakeyama, talking to the participants in front of the temporary housing built on the elevation and the tidal flat developed after the great earthquake.



a. Listening to local residents who have long been involved in “Mori-umi” movement
 b. Lecture by Mr. Miura, who has been working on the reconstruction at the local community after the disaster
 c. The students sitting in a circle reviewing what they learned during the five days
 d and e. The students visited to see the levee built after the disaster and understood the difficulty of the government’s reconstruction plan and community-driven reconstruction.
 f. Helping with the ecosystem research which the “Mori-umi” has been conducting with researchers



And also, Mr. Shigeatsu Hatakeyama, a fisherman and the director of “Mori wa Umi no Koibito” took the students to the mountain, saying “The rich sea has always been underpinned by luxuriant forests and bountiful rivers.” In the wake of red tides between the mid-60s and mid-70s, he initiated a project to plant broad-leaved trees in the headstream area of the Okawa River, which is flowing into Kesennuma Bay. Driving the students from the downstream to the upstream of the Okawa River and up to the peak of Mt. Murone, he told them about the linkage between the forests, the sea, the river which connected the forests and the sea, and the oysters living in the brackish-water area of the river, as well as the tree-planting activity. And then, they plant seedlings in the mountain, where many people have visited to join the tree-planting ceremony from across the country every year since its start in 1989.

Learn the Great East Japan Earthquake and “Present”

The program also offered the students an opportunity to learn the situation of reconstruction in the disaster-hit areas through hearing about the evacuation life immediately after the earthquakes and the community renovation after the disaster, and visiting a levee under construction along the

coast.

Mr. Miura, who has been working with Mr. Hatakeyama on revitalization of Kesennuma City, said, “Honestly, I had no interest in developing community at all before the disaster.” Being born and brought up in Kesennuma, he was visited by the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11 in his work place in the city. A temple in his neighborhood turned to a shelter for evacuees and he became the director of the Headquarters for Reconstruction. Since then, he has exerted himself as a NPO member to retrieve the local community by rebuilding the meeting hall which was washed away by the tsunami and so on. In the meantime, he has also been involved in the Oya Coast conservation campaign by collecting signatures from the local people against the ongoing levee construction project along the coast.

After he told the students the story which started at the aftermath of the disaster and ended at the ongoing efforts to recover the local community, he concluded with the message: “Although there are some things that can only be understood by the sufferers, we hope that what you have learned through your visit to the devastated area and heard about the experiences of affected people will be utilized for your future.”



“As a native of the disaster hit area”

“I learned the rich sea was nurtured by the clean forest”



Ms. Yasuko Konno

(sophomore at Tohoku Fukushi University, from Onagawa Town, Miyagi Prefecture)

Ms. Yasuko Konno

(sophomore at Tohoku Bunkyo University, from Oketani Town (former Minamisanriku Town), Miyagi Prefecture)

I participated in this program to study the relationship between the mountain and the sea and deepen my knowledge about it. In this program, I heard that the richness of seawater, which was carried from the mountain through rivers and villages, was developed by the clean forest, and learned it had a deep relationship with fishery, agriculture, forestry and our daily life. I was surprised to see the coastal levees which had different heights and shapes. It gave me a good opportunity to know the importance to see things from many different angles. I am glad that I had the chance to interact with the students from Kyoto University through going into the sea and climbing the mountain together. I want to have many experiences in the rest of my student life as well. In the future, I hope to be an emergency life-saving technician.

I took part in the program to understand the situation of reconstruction in Kesenuma, next to my hometown, Minamisanriku Town. I learned about the issue concerning the coastal levee and the relationship between the forest and the sea, which brought me to realize again the importance and the strength of the connection between people. By seeing and hearing the status of the restoration at first hand, I could see things from various viewpoints and deepen my thoughts. It was also a valuable experience for me to plant trees, to go fishing at night and to eat freshly-cut bonito. As a native of the disaster hit area, I will keep paying attention to information about the changing disaster hit area and involved in support activities.

[The Great East Japan Earthquake] What is “Dream Support Project” ?

“Dream Support Project” provides high school students in affected areas who are having difficulty to keep on attending their schools due to the earthquake worsening the economic condition, with monthly scholarship of 30,000yen for up to seven years until they start working (until the end of March 2019). It is also implementing educational programs to support young people who hope to contribute to the reconstruction of Tohoku.



◆Civic Force continues accepting donation for the scholarship students. “Online Donation” is available through the “donation/support” page on our Japanese website. You can also get a donation paid via our bank account listed below. Donation for “Dream Support Fund” is also possible at the stores of Lawson group across the nation.

Donation to the “Dream Support Project” (designated donation for Tohoku)
Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation
Aoyama Branch Account No.7086642
Public Interest Incorporated Association
Civic Force

*The donation to “Dream Support Project” will be used only for educational programs, but not for scholarships.

Moving From Shelters to Temporary Housings

Five and a half months have passed since the occurrence of the Kumamoto earthquake on April 14 and the temporary housings are being built in various locations. In Kumamoto Prefecture, 3,855 of 4,294 temporary housings which are planned to be constructed in 16 municipalities had been completed by September 29. While at most 180,000 people evacuated to the 855 shelters set up in Kumamoto immediately after the main quake, the number of evacuees has decreased to fewer than 500 as of the end of September. Many people left the shelters and returned to their own houses or started their lives in the new houses.

In Mashiki Town, one of the most damaged areas, 1,562 temporary housings are being built in 18 locations and 1,429 of them have already been completed as of the end of September. The number of the evacuees living in the “Unit Housing Village,” which is operated by the emergency relief team (Civic Force, A-PAD Japan and Peace Winds Japan), has decreased from 118 people of 46 households in mid-July at its peak to 27 people of 13 households by the end of September.

Continuing Operation of “Unit Housing Village”

We established the “Unit Housing Village” for the evacuees to stay at until they can move to such places as temporary housings or private housings used as temporary ones, and originally planned to

operate it until the end of August. However, many people still have no place to move to at the moment because their houses have not been repaired due to the construction companies too busy to work for them or they have trouble finding the temporary housings. Given these situations, we decided to continue the operation of the “Unit Housing Village” .

There are various reasons that people cannot move to the new places. One of these families said, “My child is still afraid of staying in the building due to the aftershocks, so I hesitate to go back to my house.” We try our best to meet the needs of these people by listening to their worries and anxieties.

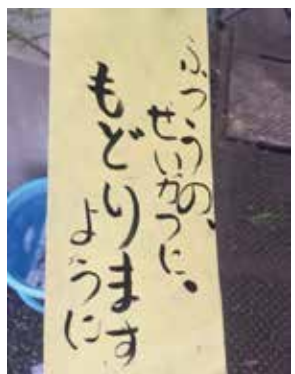
Together with Volunteers from across the Country

In the Unit Housing Village, we held events such as Tanabata (star) festival and summer festival this summer. We have also supported the livelihoods of evacuees with the volunteers from in and out of Kumamoto through dispatching pharmacists and volunteers who prepare meals outside and volunteers who prepare meals outside to the disaster hit areas. In the Village, the interaction among evacuees or volunteers has been seen and some ex-evacuees who already started their new lives have called on the evacuees with treat.

A seventy-something woman said, “We were able to live our lives sheltered from rain during the hard time immediately after the earthquake. We are very grateful for your support till now, although we are going to face the tough time to put our lives back in order.”



In the “Unit Housing Village,” which has been established and operated since June, we have conducted various supportive activities such as preparing meals outside, pottery market, event for children and so on with many volunteers from across the country.



“NPO Partner Projects” Start in Kumamoto

Civic Force has been implementing “NPO Partner Projects” since June 2016 to support regional recovery and reconstruction. Under this mechanism, which started in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake, we cooperate with NPOs active in affected areas and widely respond to needs that emergency reliefs could not meet. Currently, we are carrying out the first phase of the projects in Kumamoto with three NPOs.

Support for Evacuees

The NGO Collaboration Center



“The NGO Collaboration Center for HANSHIN QUAKE Rehabilitation,” which was originally set up after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake (1995), continues to provide operational support at the disaster volunteer center in Nishihara Village in Kumamoto Prefecture. This organization remains active in cleaning up collapsed houses

cooperating with the local people and with experts on construction and civil engineering as well as serving as a coordinator to dispatch volunteers who can set up foot baths at evacuation centers.

Since June, as part of the mid- to long-term reconstruction plan of the region, this center has been promoting collective relocation and formation of new communities at relocated destinations by supporting the regular meetings organized by “Wakaba Meeting,” a locally formed group.

In addition, the center issues a free magazine called “DOGYAN” for local residents to provide information on precautions to be taken during evacuation life and on rediscovering attractive elements of the local area. From August, detailed support has been offered to meet individual needs such as installing handrails in temporary housings in cooperation with health specialists and physical therapists.

Support for Women

“Kumamoto Children / Women Support Net”

“Kumamoto Children/Women Support Net,” a network organization to develop support activities specializing in children and child care, holds an “Information Exchange Meeting” on a monthly basis for supporting groups that provide consultation for mothers raising children; specialize in mental health; etc. to share information with each other.

Also, as monthly projects that started in June, the network carries out the “Hug Project,” which aims to give trauma care for children affected by the earthquake and the “Classroom in the Forest Project,” which allows affected children to engage with nature, while having the chance to participate in physical activities.



By supporting this network, the NPO Partner Projects will help those who struggle to turn their severe experiences in Kumamoto into the power to live in the future.

Community Development

Tsujunkyo Bridge Aid Project Team

“Tsujunkyo Bridge,” a stone-built single-arch bridge, which is rarely found in other parts of Japan, is the symbol of Yamato Town, Kamimashiki County, Kumamoto Prefecture. This bridge, which has been in use for agricultural water supply since the Edo Period, is also known as a national important cultural property and is visited by many tourists each year. But the joint of the stone tubes was damaged by the earthquake in April and now water cannot be released. This has put a great impact on agriculture and tourism of the town.

So, young local farmers gathered and established the “Tsujunkyo Bridge Aid Project Team.” They are trying to raise funds for restoration by enhancing regional solidarity and disseminating the current state of the disaster-affected areas.

“Otaue Matsuri” , a rice planting festival conducted in June, attracted nearly 1,000 people and the “Mountain Day” event on August 11 was also covered by several news media. The team also continues the matching project for volunteers who are supporting agriculture by cutting grass near the bridge and restoring damaged fields.



Creating an Emergency Preparedness

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.

Emergency Preparedness Mechanism

Fukuroi City Moves its Emergency Supply Storage

Civic Force keeps relief supplies for emergency disasters at the emergency supply storage (free of charge) of Fukuroi City, a city in Shizuoka Prefecture, with which we have a disaster assistance agreement. At the timing of the relocation of the storage in September, two of our staff members checked and reorganized the supplies we store there.

For the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake, we delivered equipment such as emergency evacuation tents and temporary shower rooms immediately after each disaster with the cooperation of the staff members of the Disaster Prevention Section of Fukuroi City.



Under the agreement with Fukuroi City, we store tents, tanks, fuel, drums, generators, pallets, and other relief supplies in the emergency supply storage for use in case of disasters.

Emergency Preparedness Mechanism

Support Us with Single-click Donations

You can make social contributions in one click a day.

■「gooddo」
<http://bit.ly/17Xr7N3>

■PSC Click Fund
• For Tohoku
<http://www.psc-inc.co.jp/clickdonation/index.html>
• For Kumamoto
<http://www.psc-inc.co.jp/clickdonation/kumamoto.html>

A-PAD

Medical Support in Village of Flood Disaster

At the end of July, flood disasters occurred one after another in India, Bangladesh and Nepal from uninterrupted rainfalls influenced by the monsoon. A-PAD Bangladesh started relief activities for disaster victims from August 5 and continues to provide medical support by teams of doctors and nurses while distributing relief supplies such as medicines, water, and food in a village of Manikganj District, central Bangladesh.

Emergency Preparedness Mechanism

Start Your Support with Only 33 Yen per Day

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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