



Eight months since the Tohoku Earthquake Civic Force activity report

Eight months have passed since the earthquake

Eight months have passed since the Tohoku Earthquake. Along with the start of the harsh Tohoku winter, numerous new issues are arising such as discussions of moving to higher ground and the psychological care of disaster victims. Meanwhile, people are also making steps towards recovery from the disaster, stating “We cannot be depressed forever” and “Let’s face the future.”

Tohoku’s recovery will still require many long months and years. While supporting disaster victims as they restore the area, Civic Force is also utilizing its experience in Tohoku to proceed with preparations for the next unpredictable disaster.

Cooperative partner projects which have entered a new phase

While new issues related to reconstruction are arising, the 8th Monthly Report will introduce cooperative partner projects which have entered a new phase. The cooperative partner projects have been implemented since April. Through cooperation with partner organizations that are able to respond to various needs in areas hit by the disaster using their specializations, the projects provide social services.

The eight projects of Phase I were implemented just after the disaster. The seven projects of Phase II utilized specialization and novelty to support reconstruction efforts while also aiming for the participation of the community of disaster victims themselves. Currently, the five projects of Phase III are aimed solely at supporting local organizations. Below, we report on the Phase III operations, which include a portion of Phase II projects which have been started anew.

— Phase II Operations —

■ Mori wa Umi no Koibito

The promotion of sustainable urban development revolving around the environment

Mori wa Umi no Koibito is an NPO engaged in environmental conservation and education and afforestation based in Karakuwa-cho in the city of

Kesen’numa. Treating forests and the sea as one entity, the group made “*mori wa umi no koibito*” (the forest is

the lover of the sea) it’s slogan. The group conducts environmental conservation activities such as planting deciduous broad-leaved trees and providing environmental education to children that live near river basins. Although these activities had expanded to cover the entire country, the Tohoku earthquake necessitated a temporary halt. However, in the midst of mass relocations to higher ground, Mori wa Umi no Koibito’s base, Karakuwa-cho in Mone District, was announced as one of the first disaster areas for mass relocations.

The group decided as a local NPO to create a symbolic model of post-earthquake reconstruction. As a cooperative project with Civic Force, Umi wa Mori no Koibito worked with Kyoto University and Tokyo Metropolitan University to conduct a field survey of Mone District and Mone Bay as basic research for natural experience learning. As a result, they found that the ecosystem of the nearby ocean was steadily recovering. The results of the survey were also announced at a social get-together for residents of Mone District and shared with local residents.

Currently, although plans are being drawn up for mass relocation centering on the local government, consensus is being built among residents while receiving advice from environmental and construction specialists. In addition to announcing the mass relocations, Mori wa Umi no Koibito is sharing information with the community and plans to work with the local government and propose environmentally sustainable urban development.

Makoto Hatakeyama, Vice Board Chairman of Umi wa Koibito, stated, “I myself am a disaster victim. All of my boats were swallowed by the tsunami and, while I managed to survive, lost my house as well. Under these circumstances, while providing support has been a burden, in terms of project planning and implementation and cooperation with Civic Force, I’ve really felt that our activities have been very broad both quantitatively and qualitatively



and more effective.

(The ocean near Karakuwa, whose ecosystem was confirmed to be recovering by the survey)

— Phase III Operations —

■ The Kesen’numa Reconstruction Association + Civic Force

“Watching over” the residents of the temporary housing developments

The Kesen’numa Reconstruction Association (KRA) prevents residents of the temporary housing developments from becoming isolated, strives to achieve community building which promotes independence, and watches over the temporary housing developments in the city of Kesen’numa. The staff of the KRA, victims of the disaster themselves, hold tea parties at the housing developments and assist in the operation of events planned by residents, share their experiences with the disaster and their hopes for the future, and assist in rebuilding the bonds between disaster victims and the creation of a new community.

Since the start of cooperative operations with Civic Force in October, the number of staff and the frequency of their visits have increased, with tea parties being held at 62 of the 87 temporary housing developments in Kesen’numa and a total of 2,364 people attending in October. Through temporary housing development residents’ involvement in operating their own events, step by step, a feeling of independent community formation has been felt. One example is the active assistance of men, who usually don’t participate in tea parties, in the preparations for *rakugo* parties and stewed potato parties.

At each of the tea parties and other events, residents’ conversations have become more and more optimistic. People who have brought homemade food and pickles say, “When is the next event?” in anticipation of the next tea party. People also volunteer to serve as teachers in whatever field they are experienced in, including handicrafts, karaoke and shogi. Many people also say they are truly happy to have had someone cordially listen to them talk about the earthquake and their sicknesses.

However, the number of problems in the temporary housing developments is not small. Information on reconstruction plans is not reaching smaller temporary housing developments in the suburbs sufficiently and there is a need for detailed explanation to senior citizens who ten need to deal with the harsh Tohoku winter is also urgent. The Kesen’numa Reconstruction Association will continue to work towards faster disaster recovery, uncovering problems in the temporary housing developments through their daily activities and seeking solutions through active cooperation with the local government, partner organizations and the



residents of the developments themselves.

(A tea party at a temporary housing development)

■ The Architectural Institute of Japan + Koizumi Chiku Asu wo Kangaeru Kai+ Civic Force

Holding workshops to promote urban recovery

The Architectural Institute of Japan has continued to support Tohoku in cooperation with other architecture organizations since the earthquake. The organization has supported detailed urban recovery of Kesen’numa, a regional center, as a model city. A cooperative partner project with Civic Force, New Beginning Koizumi was established by residents of Motoyoshi-cho in the Koizumi District of Kesen’numa, an area devastated by the tsunami. New Beginning Koizumi conducts support activities that revolve around the mass relocations. Specifically, in addition to professors from Hokkaido University’s Department of Architecture such as Suguru Mori holding a total of six resident workshops from June through October on urban reconstruction, the organization is also drawing up reconstruction plans, including space planning, cooperating with the country and municipalities for support from professional viewpoints.

The workshops began with discussions between residents on the natural, cultural and human assets of Koizumi District they would like to leave for future generations and urban development concept creation. Based on those concepts, using concrete images of proposed relocation sites made using maps and models of Koizumi District, multiple debates were held on what sort of urban development was desired from the perspective of residents.

Specialists such as Professor Mori explained various issues to residents on themes including the mechanics of mass relocations, future prospects and land use planning, promoting understanding of urban development. Further, a lecture was held at the Koizumi Junior High School Culture Festival in October on the theme of “The Future of Koizumi” aimed at junior high school students, calling for the active participation of the next generation in urban development.

Professor Mori stated that, “When I first came to Koizumi, not only were residents’ ideas for the future not unified, few even had any opinions at that first workshop. However, with each workshop, the discussion grew livelier, with residents coming to seriously look at and actively debate the topic. A concrete image of Koizumi’s future is almost formed and it is my hope that it can serve as a model to other



areas hit by the disaster.” (Participants discussing the future of Koizumi District)

■ The Kesen’numa Volunteer Network Seikei-Kai + Civic Force

New community development through handicrafts

The Seikei-Kai is a volunteer group that was started by Kesen’numa volunteers after the earthquake and nine out of every ten of its staff are disaster victims. The group conducts many divergent activities such as material support for people evacuated from their homes, making rounds to prevent isolation, reconstruction activities and operating a child welfare facility on Sundays.

After the earthquake, many disaster victims had lost their homes and workplaces. While they desired a new base for their life, without acquaintances in their new areas and no community, the disaster victims are prone to isolation. Thus, through the creation of accessories, the Seikei-Kai started a project to support the development of new communities. Specifically, the Seikei-Kai staff periodically visit disaster victims and provide instruction on how to create various accessories. In addition to the majority of the profits from the sale of the accessories being returned to the makers and supporting them financially, these sales also help bolster self-esteem and emotional stability. The group also continues to visit the homes of accessory makers once a week, conducting quality control.

Accessory maker meetings are also held once a week at local public halls and the assembly areas of temporary housing developments where the makers can deepen their exchanges with each other and new members are recruited. In October, eight new disaster victims participated. One participant stated, “I recommended this project to a young friend of mine living in the same temporary housing development as me who was depressed, and now they’re really working hard. Everybody’s calling out to each other and I think this project was the start of our recovery.” Seikei-Kai Head of the Secretariat Yoko Hirata stated, “At first I was worried when we started out making plain good luck bracelets, but the disaster victims have worked really hard to make high quality items and sales have been higher than expected.” The accessories made are exhibited and sold at events around the country and have served as an opportunity for disaster victims to recover.



(A good luck bracelet made by a disaster victim)

■ Network Orange + Civic Force

Learning about small business and putting that knowledge to work at Tohoku Marché

Founded in Kesen’numa in 2007, in addition to the welfare projects Network Orange began with such as assisting persons with disabilities in participating in society and child day services, the organization conducts projects that promote people-friendly urban development. Since the earthquake, Network Orange has been working vigorously to assist in the reconstruction and revitalization of Kesen’numa on a citizen level.

As a project in cooperation with Civic Force, the organization held short courses and workshops conducted by small and medium business consultants in October for shop owners, members of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and 41 local high school students to provide a place for businesses devastated by the disaster to learn and practice. Participants introduced business concepts and exchanged opinions and learned about the basics of marketing and promotion. In order to practice their skills, the “First Tohoku Marché,” where participants can open stores and sell merchandise, is planned to be held on November 23. One of the participants, a female esthetician, stated, “For disaster victims, healing is what you need after life settles down a bit. In the future, I’d like to open my own shop, so I would like to open a shop at the Marché providing hand massages and nail art.” Before, many people weren’t able to move forward, stating that although they wanted to do something to help reconstruction, they didn’t know what they could do as a single citizen. Through this project, many have said that they could help others by doing what they wanted to do and that they wished to work towards the future while aiming to increase their sales.

Looking back over the program, Network Orange representative Onodera Miko stated, “At first I was worried that the participants wouldn’t accept the concept of ‘cycling learning and practicing.’ However, I was able to see participants ambitions grow as they presented their business plans and received feedback at the workshops.” There are plans to hold the Marché periodically, and, through the repetition of the cycle of learning and practicing, the quality of the businesses involved will improve. They are also aiming to revitalize the center of Kesen’numa, particularly hard-hit by the disaster, and to create a cityscape that is even more attractive than what existed before the earthquake.

(A short course aimed at opening



a store at the Marché)

Execution of donated funds and execution plans

As of October 31, we have received approximately ¥1.124 billion.

The following is a report of the executed account as of the end of September. The amounts are preliminary figures.

Project	Amount
Provision and delivery of emergency support goods	¥232,520,000
Construction of baths to improve daily living conditions	¥18,790,000
Operation of a car ferry to an outlying island	¥19,180,000
Cooperative projects with partners	¥121,440,000
Provision of multi-purpose, multi-operation bases	¥65,380,000
Reconstruction support projects	¥33,210,000
Tents for receiving volunteers	¥36,880,000
Shared miscellaneous project expenses*	¥45,610,000
Total :	¥573,040,000

*Includes costs associated with fundraising

In addition to the execution of donations being approved by the board of directors each time, an auditor confirms that reasonable decision making and accounting are occurring.

Announcement: We have begun our Monthly Supporter fund raising program

Civic Force will end designated donations for Tohoku Earthquake support at the end of December. We will make use of our experience with the Tohoku Earthquake to create an even broader mobile support network.

It is necessary to conduct energetic discussion and advance preparations not only with governments but also major domestic companies and NGOs with specialized expertise to be ready for the next disaster. From this most recent earthquake, we have again learned the large influence regular preparations can have on the speed, scale and quality of disaster relief. We ask for citizens to also assist us (and, like our namesake, become a civic force) in preparing outside of the times that disasters strike. We ask you to help us as a Monthly Supporter through monthly fixed donations, assisting us with the expenses needed to prepare for large-scale disasters.

It is impossible to predict when disasters, particularly earthquakes, are going to strike. We are asking for your cooperation so that we can prepare for

the next disaster and so that we can develop even more effective and efficient methods of providing relief no matter where in Japan the next earthquake hits.

*Please visit the Civic Force homepage (<http://www.civic-force.org>) and click on “Civic Force Online Donation” to donate within Japan (Japanese only) or visit our English page.

Announcement: Briefing session planned to be held in near future

Civic Force is planning on holding a briefing session on our activities after the Tohoku Earthquake. The day following the earthquake, we surveyed the disaster area by helicopter and later supplied and delivered emergency support materials and had carpenters construct hand-made baths. After the emergency support phase had passed in April, we conducted a wide variety of projects to improve the lives of disaster victims, such as creating cooperative partner projects with NPOs and providing assistance to an outlying island. Currently we are also promoting the recovery of industry while working closely with local residents.

At the briefing session, we will share unheard stories from just after the earthquake and deeper stories from Tohoku resident staff as well as information on the activities we have conducted so far and their results. We would also like to hold a dialogue with participants on what should be done next to support the people still living in the areas hit by the disaster. We will release details on our homepage.

You can view our monthly reports, released each month around the 11th, at <http://civic-force.org/english/monthly/>

We report the latest information about our activities and the current state of local areas on our homepage and through Twitter. We also deliver special videos through YouTube and English information through facebook.



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