

IV

English Summary

Empowerment of Local Communities by Global Humanitarian Support

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1. The Great East Japan Earthquake: A natural disaster that struck the heart of an aging society

The Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011 resulted in colossal damage: nearly 20,000 people dead or missing, and 930,000 houses damaged or destroyed. Images of 10-meter-plus tsunami waves engulfing towns and farmland circulated the globe in a matter of minutes, causing enormous shock to the international community.

We would like to begin by attempting to summarize the characteristics of the Great East Japan Earthquake. Firstly, it was a natural disaster that directly hit an aging society: the elderly, or people aged 65 or over, accounted for more than 30 % of the population in many of the affected municipalities. For example, affected municipalities in Iwate Prefecture had the following elderly-population ratios: 34.7% in Kamaishi City, 32.1% in Otsuchi Town, 31.4% in Yamada Town, 30.6% in Ofunato City, and 34.2% in Rikuzentakata City. Such a natural disaster, in that it affected a region with such an aged population, was unprecedented in the world. Secondly, a major proportion of the damage was caused by tsunami waves, while direct damage from earthquake tremors was relatively light. Therefore, like many of the world's major tsunami disasters, contour lines more or less divided areas that received and did not receive damage. In the reconstruction process, communities are expected to have widely different needs depending on the severity of the tsunami damage in their area. Thirdly, it is still difficult, more than one year on, to project the health effects of the nuclear power plant accident triggered by the disaster, and the social impact of the resultant long-term evacuations. It is our duty to the global community to conduct scientific investigations into these matters over the long term.

2. International solidarity and support

Survivors of the Great East Japan Earthquake received overwhelming support from overseas. The world had supported Japan in the past, for instance on the occasions of the Great Kanto Earthquake (1923) and the Great Hanshin Earthquake (1995), however the international support extended to Japan in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake was unprecedented in its scale. Each listed item of relief goods or donated funds communicated the good will of the citizens in each of the numerous assisting countries.

Naturally, the same country can be a provider of international emergency assistance at times, and a recipient at others. We are immensely grateful for the sympathy and solidarity shown by the international community in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake. At the same time, in the future, Japan's international cooperation must be based on the premise that at times of disaster, Japan too might become an aid recipient. Just as individuals are connected with each other, countries are likewise connected with other countries in this globalized age. The future demands us to take a hard look at international cooperation and international

solidarity in the light of reciprocal, global relationships that transcend national boundaries. Whether or not Japan duly repays the international support received on the occasion of the Great East Japan Earthquake depends not on how much it gives to ODA, but on how it expresses its gratitude for the sympathy and solidarity shown by others.

By conducting a comprehensive study of the support administered by foreign government agencies, international organizations and international NGOs, this research survey aims to consider the future shape of international emergency aid in an age of transnational, global and reciprocal relationships, in order to utilize the lessons learned from the valuable experience of being the recipient of international emergency aid in the future.

3. Activities of Japan Platform

Japan Platform (JPF) decided to dispatch personnel to the affected regions in the immediate wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake, and conducted support activities with participating NGOs while also collecting donations and relief goods. JPF has a system in place that enables it to dispatch NGO personnel within 24 hours of the onset of natural disasters. This is important because rescue within the first three days can be a crucial for the successful rescue of survivors in the debris. The tremors and tsunami caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake disrupted roads, rails and communication traffics over a wide area. Gasoline was in short supply, access to the affected regions was severely hindered, and a serious nuclear power plant accident had also occurred. The swiftness of the dispatch

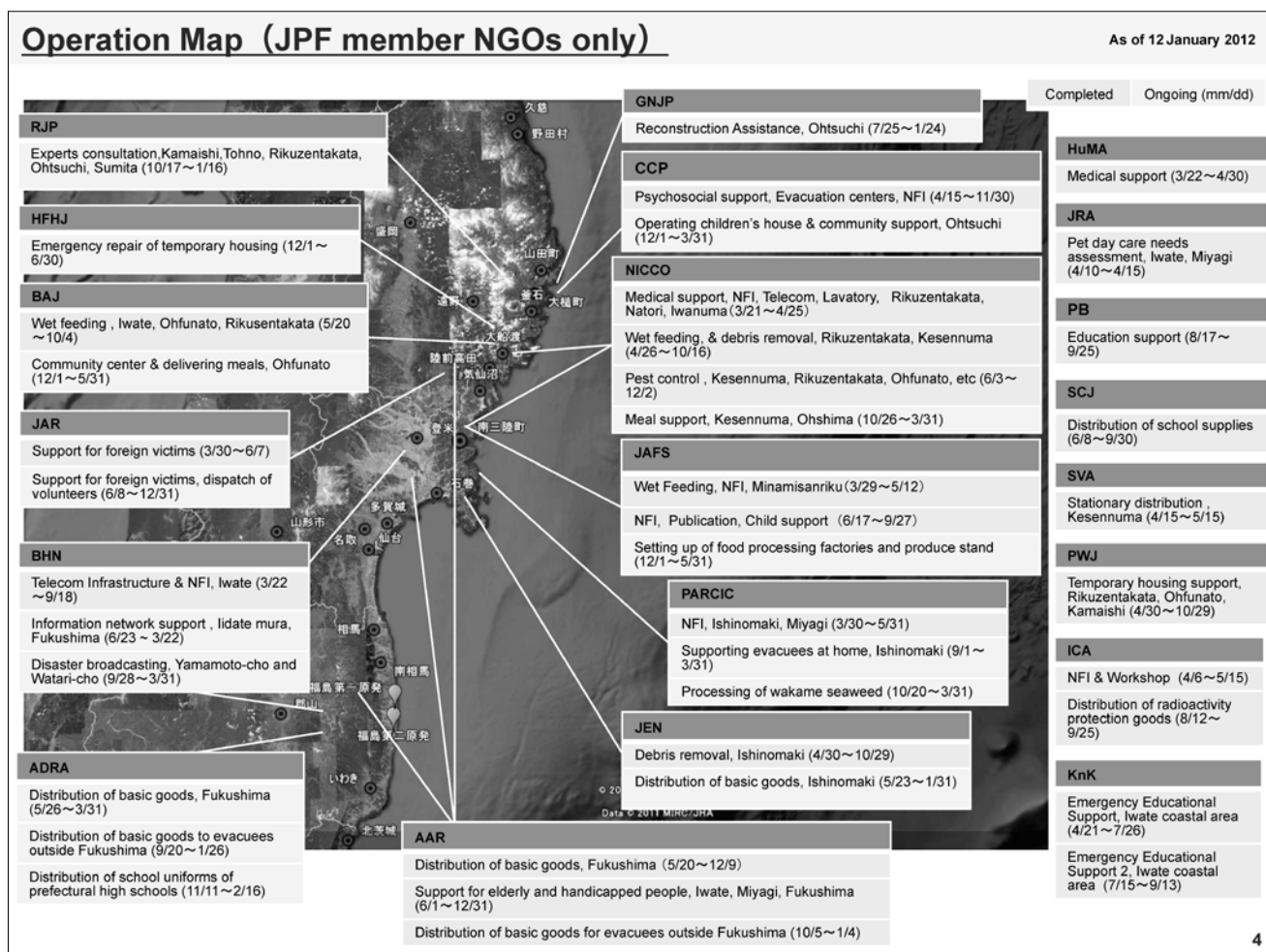


Figure 1

of five NGOs on the day of the disaster, and eight NGOs by the following day (of which, 4 NGOs were funded by JPF), under situations fraught with uncertainty and danger, was due to JPF's enhanced disaster response capacity, developed through experience in humanitarian assistance overseas. JPF calls the first three months (that is, up to June 11, 2011) following the onset of the disaster the "initial response period," and the subsequent period the "emergency response period," and it has conducted ongoing reconstruction support activities. (Fig. 1)

In providing support on the occasion of the Great East Japan Earthquake, JPF took the experimental step of opening liaison offices in the affected localities for the first time in its history. On March 19, 2011, two secretariat personnel were dispatched to open the Tohoku office in Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture. Subsequently, another base was set up in Tono City, Iwate Prefecture, and staff members were also dispatched to other strategic points in Miyagi Prefecture, including Kesenuma City (the Council of Social Welfare Volunteer Center), Ishinomaki City (Ishinomaki Disaster Recovery Assistance Council), and Onagawa Town (the Council of Social Welfare Volunteer Center). Through these bases, the JPF secretariat provided financial assistance and operational support to participating NGOs, conducted matching for corporate support, and managed the Co-Existence Fund (Fig. 2). JPF also coordinates partnerships between various support givers, such as governments, the Self-Defense Forces, NPOs/NGOs and private sector.

JPF's activity during its "initial response period" can be highly evaluated for its contribution toward saving the lives and living circumstances of the affected people. This was a result of employing its superior logistics capacity and mobility,

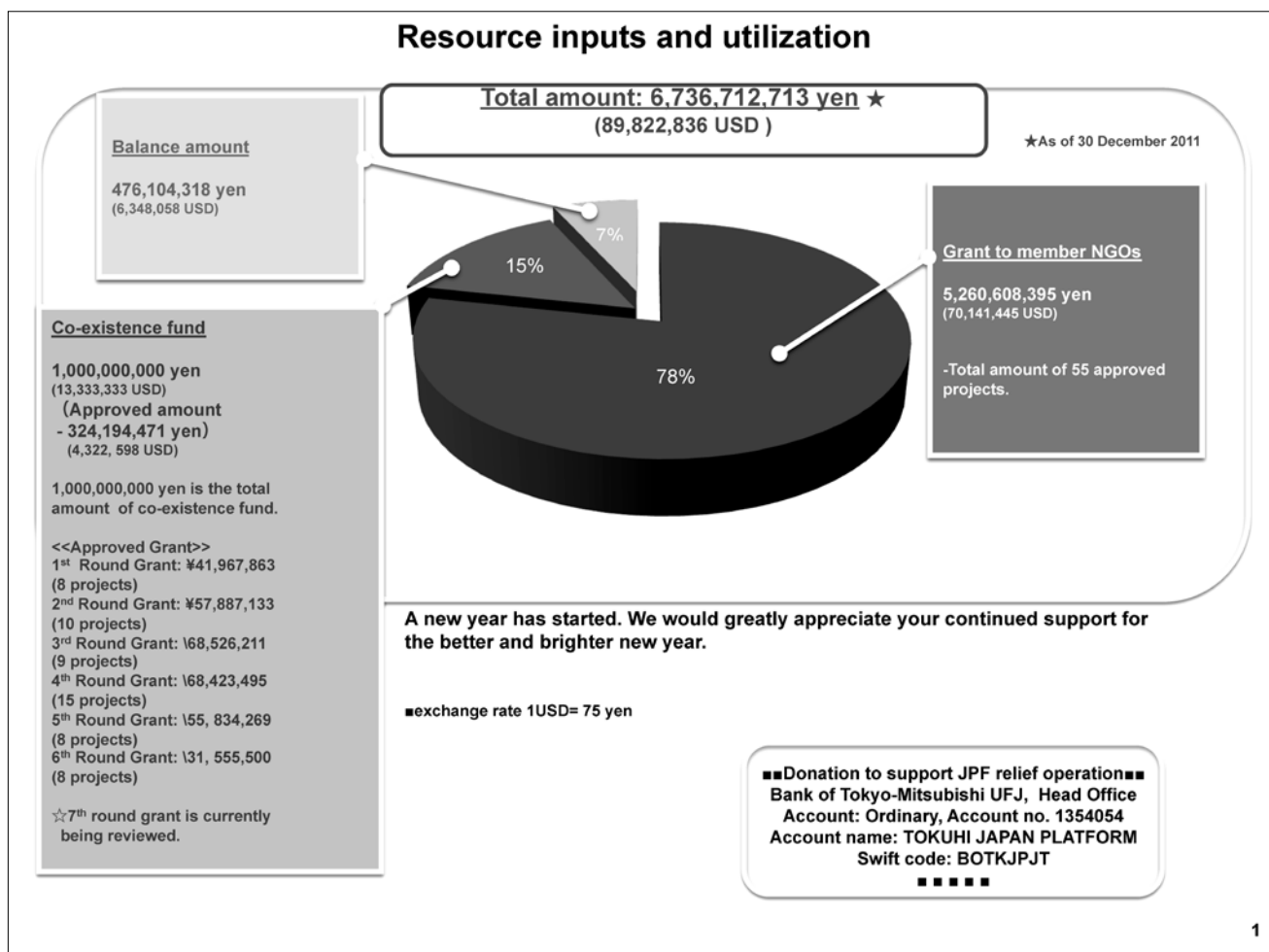


Figure 2

built on humanitarian aid experience overseas, to quickly deliver necessary emergency goods and services at a time when access to the affected regions was extremely difficult due to road, rail and communication networks being paralyzed by the unprecedented mega-disaster. JPF's facilitation and participation in coordination meetings, which functionally linked private support organizations with their public counterparts, thereby realizing large-scale and comprehensive distribution of household essentials ("starter packs") to people moving into temporary housing, also contributed significantly to kick-starting the process of rebuilding the lives of the affected people, as well as reconstruction in the affected regions.

The shortage of basic knowledge on matters, such as the Disaster Relief Act, was an issue due to the lack of experiences in Japan. As a result, support was occasionally based on inefficient cooperation and coordination with governmental organizations, which resulted in limited success in saving the lives and living circumstances of affected people who were not accommodated at evacuation shelters or purpose-built temporary housing. Although JPF was required to respond to needs that were changing daily, the needs of diverse types of affected people, and the needs of people vulnerable to disaster, the provision of customized support, at which private support organizations intrinsically excel, was by no means sufficient.

What can be evaluated positively about JPF's activity during its "emergency response period" was the fact that JPF was able to provide community support and livelihood support in a timely manner during the transitional period between the emergency relief and the reconstruction stages, based on its rich overseas experience. These forms of support contributed significantly toward the process of helping affected people put their lives back in order, as well as of reconstruction of the affected communities. By uninterruptedly maintaining cooperation and coordination with governments and other diverse support organizations from the "initial response period," JPF was able to provide support to areas that government response could not cover, provide functional enhancement support, and provide support to the wider affected population. As during the "initial response period," one issue was the shortage of more customized support, due to the focus on large-scale goods distribution; this resulted in shortcomings in responses to areas that fell through the net of government support, namely support toward affected people remaining in their own homes or living in *minashi kasetsu* (*lit.* "deemed temporary housing," which includes accommodation rented in lieu of purpose-built temporary housing). Revealed was the need to strengthen the system of cooperation and coordination with governmental organizations, disaster response NGO/NPO networks, the Red Cross, international organizations, overseas support organizations and the private sector, to enable JPF to better prepare itself to respond to future major disasters in Japan.

The Great East Japan Earthquake brought JPF its first experience of full-scale response to domestic disaster. While JPF was able to benefit from its rich experience of humanitarian assistance overseas, thereby contributing significantly to disaster victim support, it was not well versed in legislation pertaining to domestic disasters, resulting in an inability to cope sufficiently with areas calling for more customized support. One of the shortcomings made apparent by the Great East Japan Earthquake was the lack of coordination a mechanism, both from overseas and within Japan. As described above, JPF is duly aware of the need for support coordination, which is why it has conducted various activities to that end. On the whole, though, such activities have been limited in scope, and in practical terms, JPF could barely apply itself to the coordination of support from overseas,

and to the organization of cluster meetings and meetings between various support organizations.

To learn from the Great East Japan Earthquake and ready ourselves for future large-scale domestic disasters, we are required first and foremost to create a mechanism for cooperation and coordination, based on the experience of providing support on the occasion of the Great East Japan Earthquake. This may include exchanging memorandums and concluding agreements on major domestic disaster response with domestic disaster response NGOs, governmental organizations, the Japanese Red Cross, and UN organizations (mainly the WFP). It can also be said that although JPF's comparative advantage lies in its capacity to work in cooperation with overseas support organizations, this was not sufficiently achieved on the occasion of the Great East Japan Earthquake. As such, another important task would be to review, for instance, the inter-agency meetings with overseas support organizations, conducted in Tokyo shortly after the onset of the disaster, and work out future policies in partnership with the relevant organizations.

4. Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake from the perspectives of embassies

The purpose of surveying the views of various embassies in Japan regarding response to the Great East Japan Earthquake is twofold. One is to identify the diverse range of overseas support systems involved in the response to the Great East Japan Earthquake, as well as the contents of the material, humanitarian and monetary support received from overseas. Another is to initiate a study of possible future modes of international cooperation and disaster relief aid by recording the experience of having received numerous forms of support from overseas, and examine the possibility of creating a new disaster relief model based on Japan's experience as an industrialized nation that received support from all over the world following a major natural disaster.

A questionnaire survey was conducted between November 2011 and January 2012. Questionnaires were sent to 116 nations and organizations, of which 39 nations and one organization responded. From January 2012, an interview survey was conducted alongside the questionnaire survey, so some embassies were asked the questions contained in the questionnaire during the interviews.

The survey interviews were conducted between January and April 2012. The interviewees comprised 13 nations and one organization, namely, Afghanistan, Austria, Canada, India, the Philippines, Finland, Mexico, Oman, Sri Lanka, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in Japan, Thailand, Turkey, and the Delegation of the European Union to Japan, and the Republic of Korea. Each interview consisted mainly of three parts: firstly, the process leading up to each national government commencing administering aid to Japan (exchange between the home country and the embassy in Japan, and how details such as when, what and how to assist were decided); secondly, the actual contents of the support; and thirdly, the relationships with the affected communities and affected people from the time support was administered up to the present.

When asked about the Great East Japan Earthquake relief aid, many embassies replied that their "citizens showed such generous support because the country in need was none other than Japan." The remark was not a diplomatic statement acknowledging Japan's past assistance to developing countries; Rather, it was an expression of the frank public view in those countries that their nation, whether industrialized or developing, had extended support to Japan because Japan was the home of people with whom their companies or individual

citizens had had day-to-day, personal relationships. In other words, the worldwide support was most certainly the result of relationships fostered over years of interaction, activities and assistance by Japanese people in, or with people of, countries throughout the world. The relationships were probably not of the nature of stereotypical foreign diplomacy or international contribution, but friendships nurtured through working or living together as members of the businesses community, NPOs/NGOs, volunteer organizations or communities.

The present survey on assistance from overseas revealed the strength of transnational bonds between civil societies. To turn sympathy into solidarity, and solidarity into humane support, the present day calls for a support model that is an embodiment of solidarity put into practice in the global society. Applying the present research findings, widely sharing with the global society possible models of coexistence in the context of disaster relief aid, and putting such models into practice, constitute Japan Platform's duty and chosen course of action.

5. Cooperation across national borders and organizations

The extensiveness and severity of the damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake was unprecedented in Japan's recorded history. It put those in Japan working in the area of international disaster relief into the position of "aid recipient country" for the first time. The Japanese government and NGOs had long taken an active role in international disaster relief aid to conflict- and disaster-stricken areas around the world as external providers of humanitarian support. However, the Great East Japan Earthquake presented Japan with the fresh challenge of not only matching the diverse forms of support coming from numerous support givers with the affected people, but also doing so within the framework of its own social system.

As with major disaster situations in any other country, international aid teams, multiple UN humanitarian organizations, the Red Cross, NGOs/NPOs, volunteers and various other actors were on the ground following the Great East Japan Earthquake, providing transnational and trans-organizational assistance. International support by its very nature varies in terms of standard, language, content, quality and also provider, which may differ in scale and nature depending on whether the provider is an international organization, a country, or a private organization. This makes it difficult to make good use of incoming support unless there is a "system for receiving support," or in other words, a system for accepting support and matching or distributing the support appropriately to the localities or people in need. It was found that the key to achieving effective support lay in how the external support offers were accepted and then relayed to the affected people in accordance with the on-the-ground needs.

The importance of transnational and trans-organizational cooperation in the context of major disaster relief is expected to rise exponentially. This is because the current age is seeing a rise in worldwide cooperation between citizens, as individuals are assuming increasingly diverse positions, areas are increasing where responses by national or municipal governments no longer suffice, cooperation from diverse actors is increasingly required, and information can be transmitted around the world in an instant. An analysis of how the support from overseas was actually accepted revealed that an important key to transnational and trans-organizational cooperation lies in the coordination system, which determines how the external support is accepted and relayed. Crucial to building such a system are the modeling and institutionalizing of coordination, using international frameworks such as the cluster approach and the Sphere standard, and by taking into account

the functions of NGOs/NPOs at times of normalcy. Also necessary are the training of the personnel who will be in charge of coordination and the maintenance of mechanisms for dispatching reinforcement personnel. In addition, an intermediary specializing in receiving overseas support would also be necessary, if we are to learn from what made the acceptance of the rescue team from overseas successful.

In particular, expectation toward the role of NGOs like JPF, which are experienced in disaster response activities overseas and have close relationships with governments, is high, as cooperation and coordination with overseas organizations are increasingly considered necessary. An autonomous and continuous system will be achieved if intermediary organizations like JPF can coordinate between governments and NGOs/NPOs, or between overseas support organizations and governments or NGOs, and relay the external support to local organizations, while also supporting the operation of local organizations. Lastly, the lessons of cooperation and coordination drawn from the Great East Japan Earthquake must be shared internationally, so as to apply them to disasters in other countries or future disasters in Japan that call for overseas support.

6. Was experience of humanitarian support overseas duly applied to earthquake relief in Japan?

The Great Hanshin Earthquake (1995) and the Chuetsu Earthquake (2004) taught valuable lessons, which were applied to the Great East Japan Earthquake relief in the forms of swift rescue operations by the Self-Defense Forces and the allocation of temporary housing in a way that did not split up neighborhoods. In the 16 years between the 1995 Hanshin and the 2011 East Japan earthquakes, the world experienced numerous natural disasters. Counting just the major earthquakes and tsunamis resulting in 10,000 or more people dead or unaccounted for, such disasters were experienced by Turkey, India, Iran, the Indian Ocean littoral, Pakistan, Sichuan Province in China and Haiti. By learning from successful examples of support administered on these occasions, and by applying those lessons, many new guidelines were drafted and put into practice.

The areas struck by these natural disasters, which occurred worldwide, received help from Japan: the Japanese government dispatched the Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) international emergency rescue team and the Self-Defense Forces, while JPF and many other Japanese NGOs conducted emergency support activities. However, the question remains: have we successfully applied that knowledge and experience to support activities conducted for the Great East Japan Earthquake?

Since immediately after the earthquake, support was administered swiftly to the affected regions and regions adjoining them. Rescue operations by the Self-Defense Forces and Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) were likewise swift. Well-organized and uninterrupted support from municipalities across Japan made significant contributions.

In the meantime, prompted in large by the failure of humanitarian support administered during Rwandan Civil War in Central Africa in the 1990s, the international community established various emergency humanitarian aid organizations, and developed standards and assessment methods for emergency support. The Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response were laid out by the Sphere Project, inaugurated in 1997 by among others the International Red Cross and Red Crescent, and international NGOs. Also in 1997, not only international NGOs but also UN organizations and aid organizations in several countries

participated in the establishment of a network organization named the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP). Full members include international NGOs, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent, UN organizations such as the WHO and UNICEF, aid organizations in industrialized countries such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and members of the academic community such as universities and research institutes. The network aims to approach humanitarian action from both the practice and research angles, and places emphasis on activity assessment and training.

However, the international standards under disaster conditions, established by such international networks, could not be maintained on the occasion of the Great East Japan Earthquake. Because a disaster forces large numbers of people to live communally in evacuation centers or shelters or camps, a pressing and critical need, perhaps more so than medical need, is to resolve issues concerning hygiene and the environment, ranging from securing a place to live to securing food, water, toilet facilities and managing rubbish disposal. According to the Sphere Project, toilets are an important issue in maintaining hygiene under disaster conditions. The Project requires one toilet for every 50 persons in a shelter. In clinics and hospitals, it requires one toilet per every 20 outpatients, and one toilet per 10 inpatients. In schools, toilets for girls must be twice the number of those for boys.

In Japan, residents of many of the shelters set up in the wake of the 1995 Hanshin Earthquake still had to put up with odoriferous toilets and insufficient supply of domestic water two weeks after the quake. Survivors of the Great East Japan Earthquake were no better off regarding the situation of drinking water supply and sanitation. Many communities suffered from shortages of drinking and domestic water supplies for extended periods. Similar shortcomings were observed in post-disaster food security and nutrition. Rice balls or bread constituted the main meals at many of the shelters, even more than two months after the Great East Japan Earthquake.

International minimum standards already exist and are applied to disaster-affected locations and refugee camps in developing countries. In such countries, if for instance 500 people are sheltered in a school, support activities start with the calculation of how many liters of water must then be fetched every day. Of course, the situation in Japan differs widely from that in developing countries. But the reality of the situation at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake was that everybody had their hands full trying to meet immediate needs, without recourse to minimum standards in disaster response, or rapid assessment.

7. Rebuilding a society to enable coexistence of different generations

Emergency humanitarian support activities, conducted in many parts of the world, were cooperative endeavors involving the teamwork of outsiders and locals who would never have met without the tragic disaster. Similarly, the Great East Japan Earthquake generated many instances of teamwork by local people and outsiders who hailed not only from all over Japan but from all corners of the earth.

JPF has been involved in humanitarian support activities overseas, for instance in East Timor, which after the conflict became the 21st century's first new sovereign state, and Aceh in Sumatra, Indonesia after it was devastated by the tsunami. Common to all sites was the presence of children, who were seen as symbols of reconstruction of society. Communities and governments invariably placed great expectations on children, who represented hope for the future in

affected localities, and looked warmly upon new births.

Regions affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake are in an advanced state of population aging. For this very reason, we argue for a post-disaster reconstruction where children native to the affected regions take center stage. We are apprehensive that overemphasis on disaster-proofing towns and cities, or on rebuilding industries, might inadvertently make such towns and cities unattractive to young people and children. We look forward to a reconstruction of a society in which generations young and old can coexist.

The Great East Japan Earthquake also reaffirmed the basic principle that issues of the community should be addressed by the community itself. Not only do situations vary widely between Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima Prefectures, but the process of reconstruction will also be vastly different between districts within the same municipality, depending on the severity of the damage sustained. On the other hand, the Great East Japan Earthquake also demonstrated that methods, hints and ideas for addressing the issues can be found not only within Japan but all over the world. We must give back the valuable experience gained overseas, including experience gained in developing countries, in the form of help toward the reconstruction of the affected communities. We must also apply the experience gained from the Great East Japan Earthquake, including both successes and failures, to the practice of international cooperation.

It is hoped that the valuable experience of receiving assistance from the world in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake will lead to the establishment of a new, mutual mode of international cooperation.

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