

JICA's WORLD

The Magazine of the Japan International Cooperation Agency | www.jica.go.jp/english | April 2014 Vol. 5 • No. 5



Disaster Response: Sharing Japan's Experience

International Cooperation to Increase

Disaster Response

The frequency of large-scale natural disasters has increased in recent years throughout the world. According to a United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) report, there were 373 disasters in 2010, a five-fold increase from 1975. The devastation of these disasters has been concentrated in developing countries, and the loss of livelihoods has made it more difficult for people to raise themselves out of poverty.

Japan is a “disaster-prone country” that has seen events ranging from earthquakes and volcanic eruptions to meteorological events including typhoons, rain-induced flooding, and snowstorms. As a result of these hardships, however, Japan is also a “disaster-response leading nation” that has developed advanced disaster-related technologies in partnerships among industry, academia, and government.

JICA has been involved in sharing these Japanese solutions with developing countries through construction projects, including coastal levees in the Maldives and breakwaters in the Philippines. More recently, JICA efforts have focused in particular on supporting the development of disaster-resistant communities based on the concept of “mainstreaming” disaster preparation. This means making preparedness and mitigation a core part of policies from the early stages of infrastructure construction and city planning. In the end, it is also a means of reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development.

This special feature introduces the international cooperation projects that JICA has undertaken around the world in the field of disaster readiness and response.





The Anilao River in Ormoc. Improvements to the river banks were carried out with Japanese support, and the city of Ormoc installed fences and streetlights.

Support for Typhoon-Stricken Leyte Island

The Philippines is among the most disaster-prone countries in the world. The biggest disaster risk is the floods caused by typhoons and tropical storms. In 1998, Japan launched a project to support the Philippines in implementing flood mitigation measures in the wake of Tropical Storm Thelma, which devastated the island of Leyte in November 1991. The casualties occurred in the central Leyte city of Ormoc,

which then had a population of around 120,000. Heavy rains caused rivers to overflow and engulf the streets, flooding the entire city. About 8,000 people died or went missing and around 14,000 residential buildings were damaged by flash floods and landslides. Most of the victims were poor laborers working for sugar cane plantations. With no land of their own, they lived in rudimentary housing near the rivers.

CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGES, DAMS, AND DIKES

Following the disaster, the city carried out restoration work, repairing damaged dikes and replacing destroyed bridges. The local government lacked fi-



Flooding in Ormoc in 1991 caused by Tropical Storm Thelma (above). The Pasig River on the outskirts of Manila, where work by Japan on the banks has reduced damage from flooding (right).



nancial resources to carry out crucial riverfront flood-prevention projects, though, leaving the residents vulnerable to flooding. Eventually, JICA arrived to provide assistance. With a vision of a flood-control project for Ormoc, JICA conducted a development survey in 1993. From 1997 to 2001, JICA constructed four new bridges and built three slit dams to reduce the danger of floating trees and landslides. JICA also widened the rivers, created an entire diking system, and provided other protective infrastructure to improve drainage of the city's two major rivers.

The bridge construction and widening of rivers required displacement and relocation of some of Ormoc's citizens. The city government acquired resettlement areas and provided compensation to those who were relocated. Japanese representatives also participated in consultation meetings to explain the project to the public.

"Land had to be reclaimed in order to widen the rivers, so we had to ask the people living there to move elsewhere. The residents were told that the project would make life safer for them, but they couldn't understand why they had to leave the place they called home," says Shuji Kaku of CTI Engineering International, the project's supervisor. City officials continued to emphasize the need to widen the rivers and the importance of flood-control measures. They explained that the work would help protect the community as well as the residents' own lives and property. After acquiring safer land, the city government offered it to the riverside residents at no charge. Once a livable environment equipped with electricity and running water was in place, the residents resettled there.

MAKOTO MIGITA STREET

The project elicited a warm response from the Philippine government and the city of Ormoc. As a gesture of appreciation, the Ormoc city council named a street after Makoto Migita, a Japanese engineer who had worked from the beginning of the project but died suddenly in March 1998, prior to its com-

pletion. Inaugurated in December 2000, the 10-meter-wide Makoto Migita Street is the main route to a resettlement site in the village of Lao, about six kilometers from the river. A monument honoring Migita's memory stands beside the street that bears his name.

In July 2003, two years after the project's completion, Ormoc was once again battered by a major typhoon equal in scale to Tropical Storm Thelma. As in 1991, the city endured torrential rains. But this time, the slit dams protected the residents from floating trees and landslides, and the city streets were only submerged momentarily. Because of the newly constructed river embankments, there were no casualties.

The city had attained a sense of security, but it was not immune to major disasters. Ten years later, on November 8, 2013, the central Philippines was devastated by Typhoon Haiyan (locally called Typhoon Yolanda), the strongest storm recorded in history, with peak winds blowing at 313 kilometers per hour.

Leyte once again found itself in the path of the storm. In the city of Ormoc, 37 people died and 8 went missing—significantly lower numbers compared to the 1991 typhoon. The most severe destruction occurred in Tacloban, the largest city on Leyte's eastern coast. The powerful storm caused massive tidal waves five to six meters in height, inflicting catastrophic damage on the city. JICA once again set about providing needed support.



A couple living and selling vegetables along Makoto Migita Street. They say life is easier now that they do not have to worry about floods.

Members of the Japan Disaster Relief medical team providing treatment in the Philippines.



THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT CYCLE

The fundamental principles underlying JICA's disaster-mitigation and -recovery efforts are derived from the Disaster Management Cycle. In this approach, mitigation and preparedness, emergency response, and recovery are seamlessly intertwined, while efforts to improve resiliency help to control risk and reduce damage. The Disaster Management Cycle guided JICA's assistance in response to Typhoon Haiyan.

On November 10, 2013, the Japanese government received a request for assistance from the government of the Philippines and responded by dispatching a Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) medical team. The team began full-scale medical operations in Tacloban, later going beyond the city to run a mobile clinic in Basey and other towns on Leyte that were heavily damaged by the typhoon. Two more JDR teams were dispatched in rapid succession, on November 20 and 29, respectively. Japan also provided emergency relief goods worth up to ¥60 million (around \$600,000) to alleviate the difficulties of affected people in the towns of Basey and Guiuan in Samar Province, remote areas in Ormoc, and other areas near Tacloban. The goods included plastic sheets for shelters, sleeping pads, and other necessary commodities. JICA staff distributed these items directly to the people and local government units. A 1,200-member Japanese Self-Defense Force unit also dispatched teams to help transport victims of the disaster, emergency supplies, and JDR members.

On November 26, Japan sent in a group of experts consisting of representatives from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism; the Japan Water Agency; and JICA. Ultimately, a team of around 20 members was assembled to advise the Philippine government and help assess

the situation, provide inputs for the initial recovery activities conducted by the Philippine government, and develop plans for disaster mitigation and preparedness efforts. The team played a significant role in facilitating progress toward the recovery and restoration phase of the cycle.

In another storm-related accident, a barge ran aground on the eastern coast of the island of Panay, west of Cebu, spilling 860 kiloliters of oil into the sea. On December 4, a five-member team of oil spill removal experts from the Japan Coast Guard and JICA was dispatched to the Philippines to help deal with the spill.

After dispatching multiple teams that provided three successive rounds of assistance, Japanese officials facilitated a smooth transition from the emergency-response phase to the recovery phase of the cycle. The activities of the JDR teams ended in December, but it will take more time before life returns to normal for those affected by the disaster. The most important question is how to make this happen as soon as possible. The Japanese teams also collaborated with health-related agencies in the Philippines, international organizations, and medical teams from other countries to assess local needs and evaluate public health conditions.

The medical teams also worked with nurses from JICA's Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers and technical cooperation experts specializing in the medical field to provide comprehensive emergency-response services. Not only did this provide crucial support for the medical teams, it also provided a foundation for more collaborative efforts in the future.

RECOVERY BASED ON JAPAN'S EXPERIENCE

On January 14, 2014, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, a body com-

prising 44 Philippine government agencies and organizations involved in disaster prevention, announced that the typhoon caused 6,201 deaths and left 1,785 people missing. The storm significantly affected about 16 million people, including 4.1 million refugees, and destroyed 1.1 million buildings.

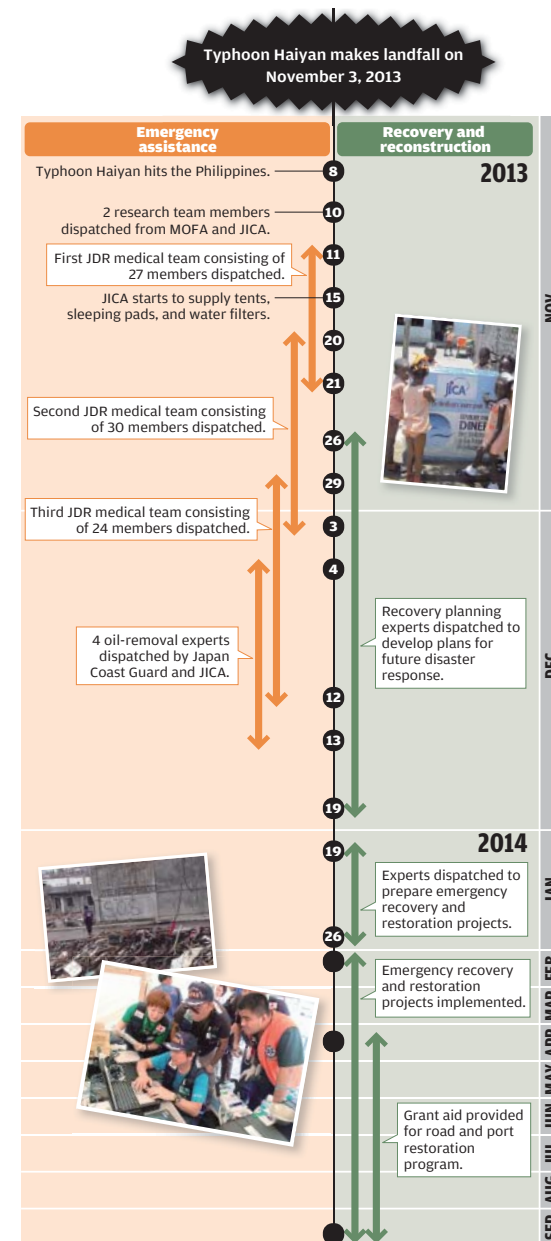
In addition to dispatching medical teams and other JDR personnel, the Japanese government provided ¥3 billion (about \$30 million) in emergency grant aid, which is mainly used for the relief operation provided by the UN and other international organizations, along with emergency relief supplies valued at ¥60 million (\$600,000). An additional ¥2 billion (\$20 million) in emergency assistance was provided in the form of an Asian Development Bank Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction grant, and approximately ¥150 million (\$1.5 million) in assistance was provided by Japan Platform, a nongovernmental organization.

With the arrival of the new year, JICA turned to mid-to-long-term recovery and restoration efforts. First, a team on building resiliency headed by a JICA senior advisor was dispatched from January 6 to 13 to recommend improved designs for school buildings. Then, in preparation for recovery and restoration projects in various areas, a JICA survey team visited the Philippines from January 19 to 26. The team focused on the eastern coast of Leyte and the southern coast of the island of Samar, two areas that suffered heavy casualties and damages from the storm surge. During their mission, team members began carefully planning a focused project to achieve rapid recovery and restoration in these areas and to help build communities that will be more resilient to disasters. The project officially started in early February.

In order to share Japan's recent reconstruction experience with the Philippines, JICA asked the city of Higashi Matsushima in Miyagi Prefecture, which endured the Great East Japan Earthquake and its aftermath, to present its relevant experiences. Two city employees and two private personnel from Higashi Matsushima, which is now carrying out its own recovery plan, joined the survey team. JICA's aim is to enable people in the typhoon-ravaged regions to learn from the more accessible experience of a rural community working to recover from disaster. As a leading nation in disaster management, Japan has much to offer to Philippine communities seeking to build a more resilient, secure future.



A debris-strewn street in Tacloban, November 12, 2013.





A member from Hyogo Prefecture's disaster-response education team gives a lesson to Turkish schoolchildren.

Japanese-Style Disaster Education in Turkey

Turkey, like Japan, is notoriously susceptible to earthquakes. The magnitude 7.4 Marmara earthquake that struck northwestern Turkey in August 1999, for example, claimed more than 17,000 lives.

The Turkish government has worked to prepare the country for earthquakes by making buildings and other structures quake-resistant. It also recognizes the importance of educating citizens to enable them to cope with disasters and prepare for future events. Materials have been prepared for this purpose, but they alone are not enough. Turkey also needs programs to educate its citizens in disaster readiness.

To meet this need, the Turkish government proposed to offer disaster education at schools. It is essential to know how to act when an earthquake strikes. When people don't know how to respond, the situation only gets worse; with knowledge, the damage can be minimized. Tomoko Shaw, an expert who works in disaster management for the Japanese engineering and consulting firm OYO International Corp., points out that schools in Japan serve

as hubs for local communities and play a key role in disaster education. Japan, which places considerable emphasis on evacuation drills as part of the disaster-response training offered at schools, is among the world's leaders in this regard.

SCHOOLS AS THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

Aware of Japan's reputation for effective disaster education, the Turkish government sent a request for assistance in September 2008 to the government of Japan. JICA responded by developing a curriculum and a system for training teachers at elementary schools and creating a plan for disaster education in the schools.

In a technical cooperation project implemented from January 2011 to January 2014, JICA focused its efforts on eight provinces in the Marmara region and two neighboring provinces, an area of Turkey that was struck by the major 1999 earthquake and that continues to face the threat of seismic destruction. The objectives were to conduct disaster education as part of the regular curriculum, to improve the overall disaster-response system, and to achieve more effective risk management.

As part of the project, teachers from Turkey visited Japan in January 2013 to observe Japanese educational practices firsthand. They received hands-on training in Kobe, a city that endured the



horrific Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 and has been active in promoting a culture of safety and resilience in Japan since then.

The Turkish visitors were highly impressed with a program called *Iza! Kaeru Caravan!* designed to equip younger children and their parents with the skills and knowledge needed to cope with a disaster. The frog-themed program—*kaeru* means frog in Japanese—uses a nationwide toy-trading scheme created by the artist Hiroshi Fuji to engage children. Through games and other activities, children learn about firefighting, rescue techniques, and first aid.

The teachers from Turkey were struck by the children's enthusiasm for the program and by its effectiveness. They decided that a "Bear Caravan" would be more appealing to Turkish children and introduced a similar program in Turkey with that name on an experimental basis. The key point is to ensure that the learning is enjoyable. When they are having fun, children are more likely to retain the lessons learned.

INCORPORATING THE LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

For learning to be truly enjoyable, the teacher must also enjoy the experience. Tomoko Shaw and her colleagues spent their days off bringing together teachers, university professors and other experts, and members of local school boards to discuss ef-



Children learn about disaster prevention through relevant topics, such as this experiment on preventing flood erosion.

fective and entertaining methods for disaster-response training and to develop sample lessons.

In the summer of 2013 the team completed a set of lesson plans for disaster education. Those involved in compiling the plans now serve as instructors, visiting various areas in Turkey to train teachers in their use.

In the past, most public initiatives in Turkey have been implemented from the top down and have not tended to incorporate local views. Shaw says this project succeeded in developing the type of lessons the students need by ensuring that local educators, who want to do all they can to create a brighter future for their pupils, took part in preparing the plans.

This project was an effort at community building, with schools as the focal point and the goal of making Turkey better prepared for earthquakes. The idea is to enlist children in moves to make Turkey a safer place to live. Painful lessons drawn from Japan's history of earthquakes are now being used to teach Turkey's children how to cope in the event of a disaster.

Based on *Iza! Kaeru Caravan!* taught by Kobe NPO Plus Arts (left), the Turkish "Bear Caravan" uses an animal popular among Turkish children.

A wide range of activities are included in disaster-response training, like this demonstration in putting out fires.



Participants inspect earthquake-resistant renovations made to the Arakawa City Office as they hear how the design minimizes shaking.



Construction Techniques from Japan Help Save Lives

In Japan, where earthquakes are commonplace, people have developed a wide range of technologies for disaster risk reduction to use in the construction of buildings and other structures. Building codes in Japan were amended following a major earthquake off the coast of Miyagi Prefecture in 1978, leading to a revision of the Building Standards Act in 1981. The revised law imposed more stringent standards for earthquake-resistant buildings to protect lives in the event of a great earthquake.

The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995, which claimed some 6,000 lives, alerted Japan to the fact that buildings were still at risk. Ninety percent of the casualties were caused by collapsing buildings, with the physical destruction heavily concentrated among structures built in accordance with the old standards. That same year Japan enacted a new law promoting renovations to improve the quake resistance of standing structures. As a result, people all over Japan began renovating homes and buildings that had been built in or before 1981.

LEADING SEISMIC-ISOLATION TECHNOLOGY

In many developing countries that share Japan's susceptibility to earthquakes, less progress has been made in efforts to protect structures from destruction. Since 1977 JICA has operated a program for trainees from developing countries. Many have taken advantage of this opportunity. In 2013 the

program welcomed participants from 12 countries, including Algeria, Azerbaijan, El Salvador, Haiti, India, and Thailand.

For many of the trainees, the most impressive discovery is seismic-isolation technology. Japanese engineers have developed advanced seismic-isolation devices made of alternating layers of rubber and metal plating that are inserted into a building's foundation. Program lectures teach trainees the difference between an earthquake-resistant structure, one strong enough not to collapse when a quake shakes it, and a seismically isolated structure. The latter is equipped with devices that absorb or deflect the shaking, preventing it from impacting the structure in the first place. The technology can be hard to understand for many trainees at first, but it becomes clear when they go into the field to see seismic-isolation devices installed at a government facility in Arakawa, Tokyo.

Over the course of the five-week program, trainees travel all over Japan visiting locations and facilities concerned with disaster response. At the International Institute of Seismology and Earthquake Engineering, located in Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture, they learn about the mechanisms of earthquakes and tsunamis, as well as earthquake-resistance diagnostics. At the Hyogo Disaster Management Center, located in Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture, they learn about disaster-prevention efforts derived from the experience of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 1995.

The trainees return to their homelands with lessons learned about Japanese technology to protect buildings and other structures in the event of an earthquake, tsunami, or fire. Japan's knowledge is now being put to use in this way to save lives and property all around the world.



Trainees learn about fire prevention at the International Institute of Seismology and Earthquake Engineering in Tsukuba.



A seismic-isolation device attached to a pillar at the Arakawa City Office.

JICA volunteer Yoshihiro Ito (center) provides training in lashing a rope to a ladder to a building.



Bringing Japanese Firefighting Techniques to Colombia

As a member of the Tokyo Fire Department for almost 40 years, Yoshihiro Ito took part in rescue operations in building fires, after natural disasters, and at the scene of traffic accidents. Rising to the rank of captain, Ito gained considerable command experience and for many years oversaw the training of new firefighting staff. As a seasoned veteran, in the aftermath of the March 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake he was sent to the disaster-affected area, where he assisted with vehicle maintenance and procurement of food supplies. Following his retirement from the fire department, Ito has been working since January 2013 in the city of Medellin, Colombia, as a JICA senior overseas volunteer specializing in firefighting and disaster response.

In Medellin, which is surrounded by mountains, buildings and other structures are often built on or near steep slopes. In this steep terrain even small amounts of rain can cause dangerous landslides, sometimes resulting in loss of life.

Soon after arriving in Medellin, Ito realized that local firefighters were not employing optimal techniques for handling equipment and carrying out emergency procedures. Unlike in Japanese fire departments, where new recruits undergo about a year of training, newcomers in Medellin receive only two or three months of preparatory training

and get almost no follow-up training in the field. This was a situation that needed to change.

STAYING SAFE

Ito moved quickly to improve the Medellin firefighters' approaches. Rather than lecturing them on what they were doing wrong, he offered hands-on, practical instruction based on experiences from his career in Japan. These include using checklists to ensure effective management of firefighting equipment and conducting rescue operations in teams, to enable rapid, appropriate action. The Medellin firefighters showed an immediate interest in these lessons. Through trial and error, they adapted and actively incorporated them into their own techniques.

In his capacity as a senior overseas volunteer, Ito emphasizes safety above all else. The scene of a fire or disaster is always unpredictable, and emergency personnel must be prepared for anything. In Japan, he says, firefighters inspect each other's gear to make sure they have ropes and other vital equipment. When entering a building, they coordinate their moves to ensure no roof or wall will collapse behind them. The entire team focuses on ensuring all its members' safety. Thanks to Ito's volunteer efforts, these core principles of Japanese disaster response are being put to work in Colombia, too.



The first step in staying safe is proper equipment use.



Training in how to safely approach a building with a platform truck.

A Kobe-Inspired Disaster Training Center in Turkey

Increasing citizens' awareness of disaster reduction is an important issue in Turkey, which, like Japan, experiences frequent earthquakes. The Turkish people look to Japan as a leading nation in disaster mitigation and preparedness.

Turkey participated in Mitigation/Reconstruction from Earthquake Disaster, a country-focused training and dialogue program held by the JICA Kansai International Center from 2003 through 2008. Program participants learned the importance of education through visits to such facilities as the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution (DRI) in Kobe. This memorial museum and exhibition gallery provides information and training courses based on experiences and operations related to the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 1995.

The participants included a future governor of Bursa Province, which is home to Turkey's fourth largest city, Bursa. The province straddles the North Anatolian Fault, an active fault running through Turkey from east to west, which has caused numerous large earthquakes within the past three to four centuries. The last major movement on this active fault occurred in 1855, so it would not be surprising for a quake of magnitude 7 or greater to strike sometime soon. As the province houses a high concentration of automotive and other factories, the economic impact would affect the entire country.

In view of this situation, the government of Turkey opened the Disaster Training Center in July 2013, modeled on Kobe's DRI, in the city of Bursa as the country's first comprehensive facility for disaster-reduction education. Bursa Province covered the entire cost of the ¥750 million project. Masahiko Murata, director of the DRI Research Department, visited the newly opened facility in September 2013 to offer management advice and exchange opinions. He says: "With three floors above ground and one below, the building has ample space, and the content of the exhibition, which includes photographs and experiences of survivors of the 1999 Izmit and 2011 Van earthquakes that struck the country, is quite comprehensive." Following Bursa's lead, the government of Turkey plans to construct similar facilities in more than 10 cities throughout the country.

Overseas participants learning about disaster prevention at DRI (above). Interior of the Disaster Training Center in Bursa Province, Turkey (below).



Applying Lessons from Major Disasters in International Cooperation

Exchange with Foreign

The Niigata Chuetsu Earthquake (magnitude 6.8) struck on October 23, 2004. While the death toll was low compared to the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and the Great East Japan Earthquake, at just 68, the quake was devastating to the depopulated region nonetheless. The widespread landslides and other damage caused the equivalent of 20 years of population decline all at once, confronting the region's rural communities with the question of whether they could survive. Rather than posing a new problem, this disaster exposed and accelerated a latent, chronic problem. The question of how to deal with the issues facing these rural communities became the focus of recovery efforts.

JICA selected the Wakatochi district of Ojiya City in Niigata Prefecture as the model for recovering mountain areas. As part of this, JICA developed the Pre-Recovery Planning from Natural Disasters training

operation

Trainees at Niigata Disaster Site

ing program, launching it in 2007. In 2012, 14 government officials and researchers from eight countries, including China, the Philippines, Mexico, and Turkey, stayed overnight in the city for training and interacted with local residents. These exchanges generate the energy to go forward with recovery efforts.



Program participants visit homes in Ojiya, Niigata, which were rebuilt as part of earthquake recovery efforts.

City officials from Banda Aceh learn about waste disposal in Higashi Matsushima.



Sharing East Japan's Experiences with Aceh, Indonesia

Higashi Matsushima in Miyagi Prefecture, a city devastated by the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011, is participating in the Mutual Reconstruction Program together with Banda Aceh in Indonesia. The provincial capital was destroyed by the 2004 Sumatra-Andaman Earthquake in the Indian Ocean. In this JICA partnership program, two city officials from Aceh were dispatched to Higashi Matsushima to participate in Recovery OJT Training for one year from March 2013. While sharing Aceh's recovery and reconstruction experiences, the trainees learned about disaster debris disposal, general waste disposal, disaster prevention system construction, and the like. Upon returning home, the participants will implement recovery measures including sustainable town development, disaster risk reduction education, community and business assistance programs, and regional governance improvements.

After the two officials finished the training in February 2014, they released a report on the results. They praised Higashi Matsushima's debris disposal efforts, which have recycled more than 90% of debris. They aim to "progressively implement such measures in Aceh with the support of local residents." In the longer term, the officials plan to work on drafting effective and efficient legal systems, supporting private-sector garbage disposal-related industries, and introducing small-scale incineration plants on an experimental basis. Banda Aceh and Higashi Matsushima have concluded a cooperation agreement and will operate various exchange programs, including the dispatch of personnel, through March 2016.

Strengthening Partnerships for National Resiliency

Eduardo D. Del Rosario

Administrator, Philippine Office of Civil Defense

Executive Director, National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council

Empowering Communities to Reduce Risk

The task of building a safer, disaster-resilient, and climate-change-adaptive Philippines is still in progress. We have come a long way as a nation, learning many lessons through challenges and triumphs—although we are still in the process of understanding some of them, based on our experiences. In the course of rising anew from numerous disasters, we have moved from a reactive to a more proactive stance in disaster risk reduction and management, improving the ways we do things on the strategic and tactical levels. This is a colossal undertaking, and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), with the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) as its implementing arm, is taking the lead in this effort to build Philippine resilience.

The growing intensity and frequency of natural hazards has become a major concern, especially given our country's rapidly changing leadership landscape. Leadership in times of disaster is a bulwark of security for all Filipinos living in harm's way. But this highlights the fact that while leadership bears a significant portion of this responsibility, it must be shared with the other stakeholders and local leaders to be effective, efficient, and synergistic.

Our endeavors in this area inevitably face various limitations. But one key realization brought about by the OCD's partnership with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is that limitations can be surmounted through the assistance of willing and able partners.

One of the main thrusts of the NDRRMC is community empowerment. This thrust is greatly aided by the complementary Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction and Management component of JICA's Capacity Enhancement Project. Assessment of tools and training methods, applied to participants from dif-

ferent government offices and communities, has paved the way for the adoption of best practices and strategies. This expedites the achievement of our collective goals.

Capacity-building Is the Key

OCD's collaboration with JICA can be characterized as a relationship of harmonious dynamism where we are able to adapt and accommodate each other's needs, views, and suggestions. Since we are all working toward the same end, we complement each other's efforts.

JICA has been lauded by its partners for bringing in corps of experts to assist counterparts with their development activities. The dynamic JICA strategy of supporting capacity-building exercises has greatly helped us at OCD to improve the services we provide to clients.

Given the challenges that OCD faces as the prime mover of disaster risk reduction and management in the Philippines, JICA's *kaizen* philosophy of continuous improvement is very apt for us. We need to ensure that all civil defense staff in the country are capable of serving the people with sufficient know-how, professional and technical skills, and the most up-to-date procedures.

We commend our partner JICA for its assistance in honing the capability of the Philippines' disaster managers not only in the OCD, but also in

local governments across the archipelago. It is our hope that JICA will continue working tirelessly in our partnership, bringing fresh inspiration and energy to keep up the good work. In this way, the OCD-JICA partnership will grow ever stronger, leading to new and significant achievements in the field of disaster risk reduction and management and paving the way in building safer, more disaster-resilient communities in the Philippines.



New Inexpensive Test Kit to Fight Disease in Zambia



The new test kit will be a valuable tool in African healthcare efforts.

Early discovery and treatment is essential in preventing the spread of infectious diseases, but many cases go undiagnosed in developing countries due to the high cost of testing. A particular threat is tuberculosis, which causes 1.4 million deaths a year and infects one in three people in Zambia. Sub-Saharan Africa sees an estimated 50,000 annual deaths from the spread of human African trypanosomiasis (HAT), also known as sleeping sickness.

Responding to a request from the government of Zambia, JICA worked with the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) to develop an inexpensive testing kit that quickly and accurately screens for tuberculosis and HAT.

Professor Yasuhiko Suzuki of Hokkaido University's Research Center for Zoonosis Control was chief advisor to the project. The new kit uses gene amplification technology to detect the tuberculosis bacteria and the parasite responsible for HAT in phlegm or blood samples taken from patients. This innovative kit reduces waiting time for results from days to around an hour and has improved test accuracy, which previously varied widely, to nearly 100%.

The use of an experimental testing chemical developed by Hokkaido University has successfully lowered testing costs from ¥1,000–¥2,500 to only ¥100. Lower cost will allow a greater number of people to be tested. Hopes are high that this will lead to earlier diagnosis and treatment, greatly reducing the spread of these diseases.



Japanese Athletes Sent to Developing Nations



Participants watch a presentation at the JOCV study session for athletes.

Nearly every country in the world, 204 nations, participated in the 2012 London Olympics. But 80 of them, mostly developing nations in Africa, have never won a medal of any kind. This is because the quality of a nation's sports environment stands in proportion to the nation's wealth.

Sports are important for more than just medals. In combination with robust physical education in schools, healthy athletic programs can inspire a country's people to be healthier as well. This makes shortages of experienced athletes to guide exercise an important health issue to address.

Momentum is building for Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) to send more

Japanese athletes to developing countries to help develop PE programs and provide athletic training. Cumulatively, over 3,000 JICA volunteers have given instruction in judo, swimming, baseball, and other sports, and around 100 such volunteers are currently active overseas. JICA plans to boost significantly the number of athletic volunteers by the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.

To this end, a JOCV study session was held in Tokyo on February 25 for individuals active in sport. According to the JOCV head office, "Having men and women take part in sports together helps to reduce gender inequality. Sports can also build character by teaching people to follow rules." With sports as another channel for sharing Japanese experience with people around the world, JICA intends to further contribute to social development.



Empowering Africa's Woman Entrepreneurs



Kali (left) shares her experience with the audience. The event was also a valuable networking opportunity.

As countries move from developing to developed status, they depend heavily on entrepreneurs to energize their economies. They also need women to play central roles in development and growth. A February 3 event titled "Empowerment of Women Through Entrepreneurship," cohosted by JICA and the city of Yokohama, promoted those goals.

Three African woman entrepreneurs shared their success stories in the panel discussion, part of the "Growing Together with the Rising Women of Africa" symposium. They noted the challenges they faced—lack of financing and gender discrimination among them—and the benefits they have brought to their countries.

Fikirte Addis Tedla of Ethiopia, owner of a fashion company, spoke of her "healthy relationship" with workers and subcontractors, including good pay and consideration of their work-life balance. Ellen Otaru Okoedion of Tanzania runs a corporate PR firm—a male-dominated industry she found hard to enter at first. Education was the key to boosting her earning power, giving her the ability to finance her own business. Finally, Bongive Kali of South Africa talked about her efforts in the poultry industry, which won her the 2008 South African Female Farmer of the Year award.

JICA President Akihiko Tanaka gave the opening remarks, followed by keynotes by Yokohama Mayor Fumiko Hayashi and US Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy. The event painted a picture of an energetic Africa whose women will help to drive development in the future.

Voices

F R O M T H E F I E L D

Chantal Boni

Program Officer, JICA Côte d'Ivoire Office

PHOTO: MASATAKA OTSUKA



Chantal Boni has worked in JICA's Côte d'Ivoire Office since December 1998. Just a year after she joined JICA, in December 1999, a coup d'état touched off a tumultuous period in Ivorian history, including the First Ivorian Civil War in 2002-7.

This turmoil "considerably reduced the activities of not only JICA but also its partners in the country," states Boni. JICA's Japanese staff left the country from 2004 to 2010 due to political uncertainty, leaving the office in the hands of the national staff members. But it did not put all activities on hold. "We were continuously in contact with the Japanese staff," Boni notes. "During this period, the training programs continued, although reduced in number." During the hottest period of the crisis, the Ivorian staff closed the office for a few weeks, but on the whole things went surprisingly smoothly.

Boni has a strong international background, having studied in several European countries before working in the private sector and with the African Development Bank. She now handles training programs in the education, health, and environment sectors. In 2013 she shared the JICA President Award with two colleagues for her efforts in maintaining the JICA presence in Côte d'Ivoire.

She is now focusing on a project that will help put her country back on its feet. "The accent is not on construction and rehabilitation, but on capacity building. Human resource development is an important point of JICA policy and a key to development. The Côte d'Ivoire government is in charge of duplicating this project in all regions of the country." As Boni notes, this is just what her country needs after its years of crisis.

JICA^{WORLD}

is published by JICA

Publisher:

Noriko Suzuki
Office of Media and
Public Relations

Comments:

jicagap-opinion@jica.go.jp

Nibancho Center Bldg
5-25, Niban-cho
Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 102-8012 JAPAN

Tel: +81-3-5226-6660

Fax: +81-3-5226-6396

www.jica.go.jp/english/

Cover: An *ukiyo-e* print from the Edo period (1603-1868) shows townspeople suffering in a flood. (AFLO)

Photos on pages 2-3:

Akio Iizuka, Shinichi Kuno, Koji Sato, Maki Tsukamoto, and Getty Images.



The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is the world's largest bilateral development organization, operating in some 150 countries to help some of the globe's most vulnerable people.