

Rebuilding Community after the Great East Japan Earthquake

A Collection of Cases from the
NPO Capacity Development Project



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NPO Capacity Development Project

Foreword

After the Great East Japan Earthquake, World Vision Japan collected donations from people both in Japan and from overseas to support the relief and recovery of the affected population, and entrusted the Japan NPO Center (JNPOC) to create a project that would benefit local communities by developing the capacities of nonprofit organizations (NPOs) in the area. This was the genesis of the NPO Capacity Development Project. It began in the spring of 2012 and lasted until June 2014, and was carried out with the goal of developing organizational capacities and fostering leadership among NPOs in the Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures of the Tohoku region.

JNPOC has previously published a Project Evaluation Report in order to examine what was achieved and who benefited in which ways from the project. The report was the result of a six-month effort that started in late 2013, in which a series of interviews and questionnaires aimed at project participants and other stakeholders was conducted and analyzed, with a main focus on verifying the project's effectiveness in achieving its goals.

What you are reading now is the second product in this evaluation effort. Titled as "Rebuilding Community after the Great East Japan Earthquake -A collection of cases from the NPO Capacity Development Project" it is different in nature from a regular project report. It shines a spotlight on 8 project participants and their cases, as well as 3 NPO leaders who acted as mentors in the project, and tells the story of what changes the project provided for these people, their organizations, and their communities. It tries to convey not what they did during the project but what happened as a result of their participation in the project.

As you can see from the cases, everything is still work in progress. The region has now transitioned into a reconstruction phase after going through a rescue phase immediately after the disaster, followed by a long relief/recovery phase. People and organizations who have experienced these changes in their environment are now setting out in new directions involving issues from the "normal" phase (ie., issues that they faced before the disaster) which have resurfaced in new forms. We hope you will be able to see the new dimensions of the region, as well as the participants' personal experiences and renewed commitments, by reading these cases.

As in the Project Evaluation Report, JNPOC was able to compile this collection of cases thanks to the generous understanding and support of World Vision Japan. We wish to thank them very much. Also, we would like to convey our deep appreciation to those project participants and others from the participating organizations, as well as supporters and others who agreed to be interviewed for this publication.

September 2014
Japan NPO Center

The NPO Capacity Development Project

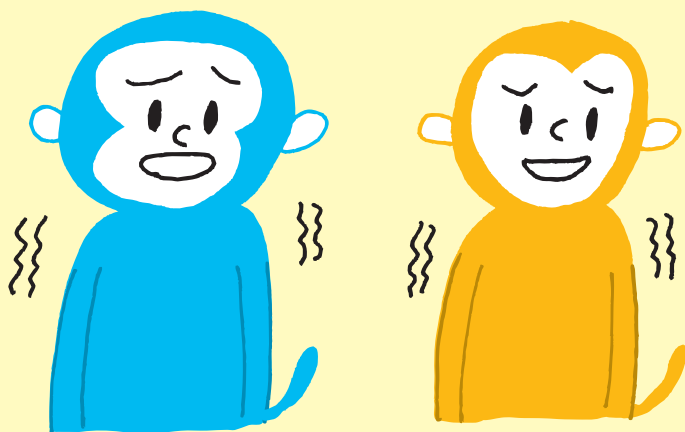
The two-year timeline

Note:
The program participants and staff members are represented through illustrated characters created by the Japan NPO Center (JNPOC).

This project was implemented to support NPOs in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures in the Tohoku region, which were affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake. Its aim was to help these NPOs strengthen their organizational capacities and foster leadership.

The following is the timeline of this project, which took place over two years between May 2012 and June 2014.

**March 11, 2011:
Great East Japan Earthquake**



The earthquake caused massive damage and affected many areas. It paralyzed public administrative agencies, making it difficult to assess the damage and conduct rescue operations. What occurred was a “complex disaster” resulting from an earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear explosion. This has complicated the tasks that each affected area faces, prolonging the process of reconstruction.

Let's work to rebuild
our community!

With the earthquake disaster, not only existing NPOs, but also new NPOs and other local organizations, have come together to rebuild their communities.



NPO Capacity Development Project Begins

Recognizing the urgent need to strengthen the capacities of NPOs in the affected regions and to develop their leadership, World Vision Japan, an international non-governmental organization (NGO), and JNPOC launched this project. The project's aim was to establish continuous and multifaceted support that would lead to self-initiated efforts by the people living in these regions.

May-August 2012

Group Training Sessions, “15 Management Capabilities to Improve NPO”

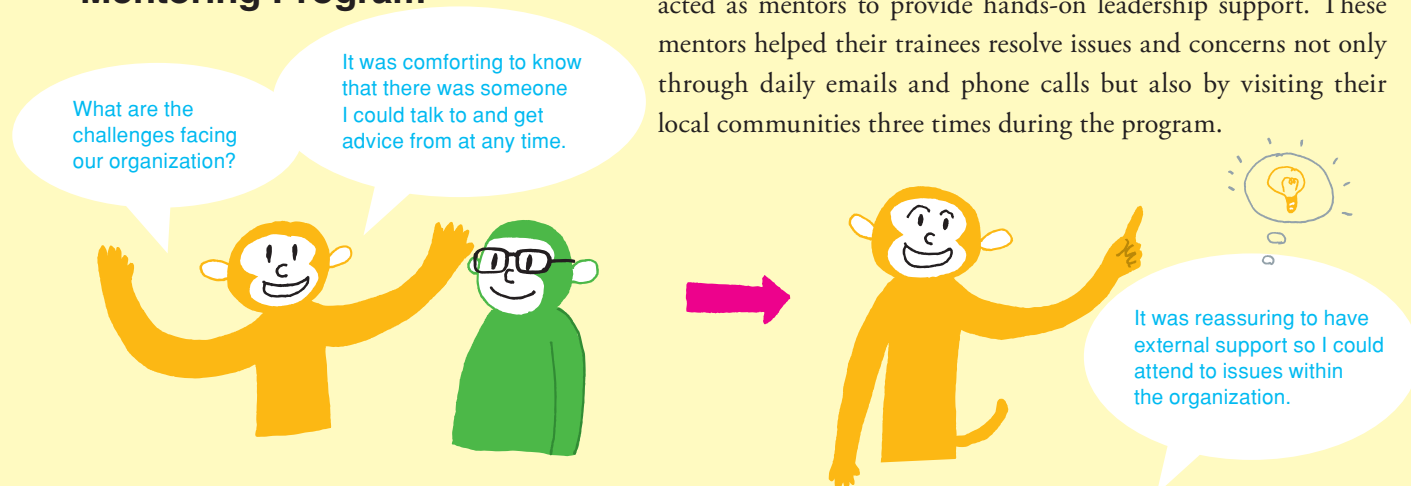
The training session covered management skills that are required of NPO leaders, dividing these skills into 15 themes under four categories: “Foundation,” “Projects,” “Organization,” and “Communication.” The contents of the seminars were later collected in a workbook entitled “15 Management Capabilities for NPO Leaders.”



September 2012-July 2013

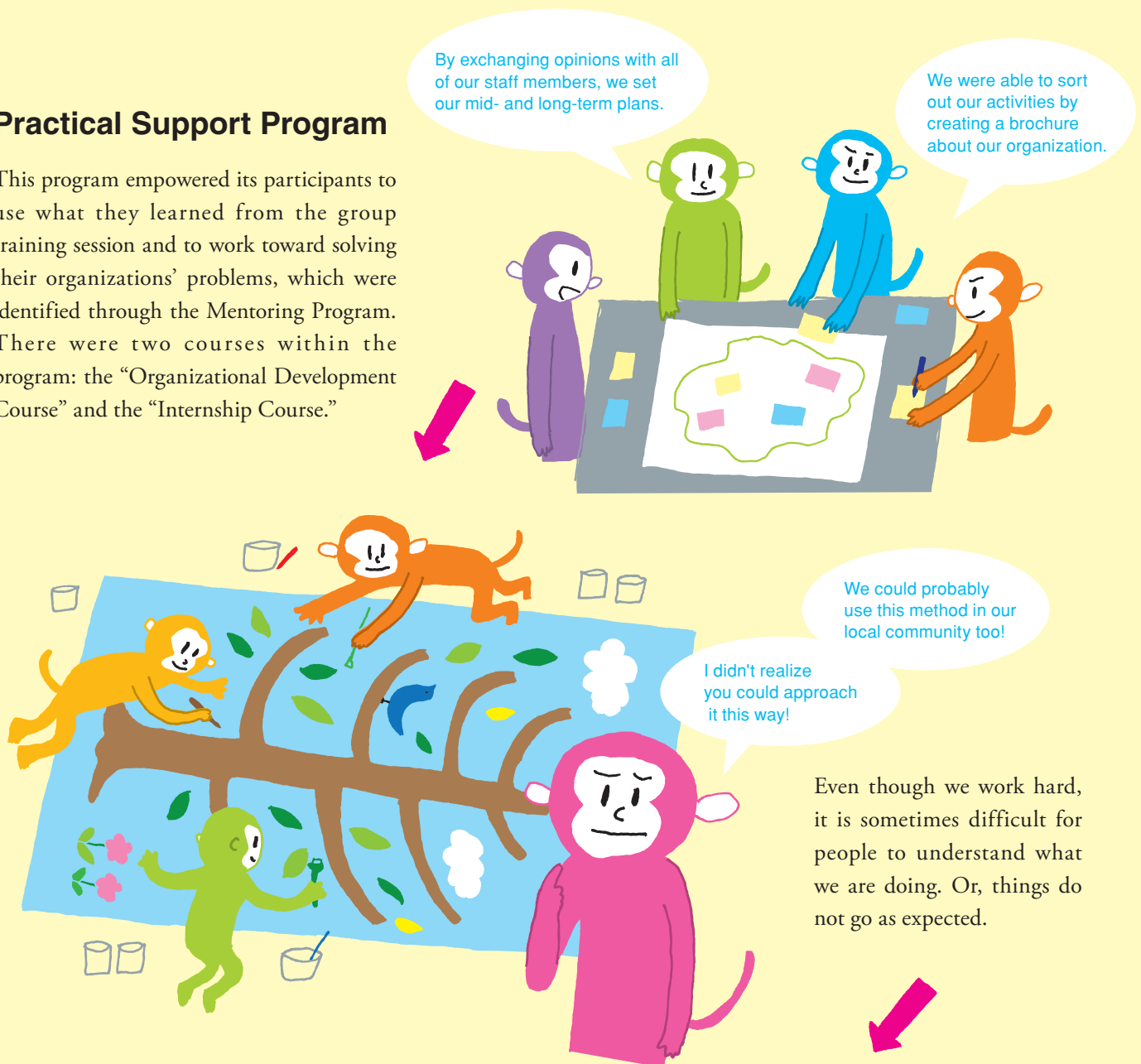
Mentoring Program

Staff members at NPO Support Centers across the nation who are at the CEO level and have a proven track record and expertise acted as mentors to provide hands-on leadership support. These mentors helped their trainees resolve issues and concerns not only through daily emails and phone calls but also by visiting their local communities three times during the program.



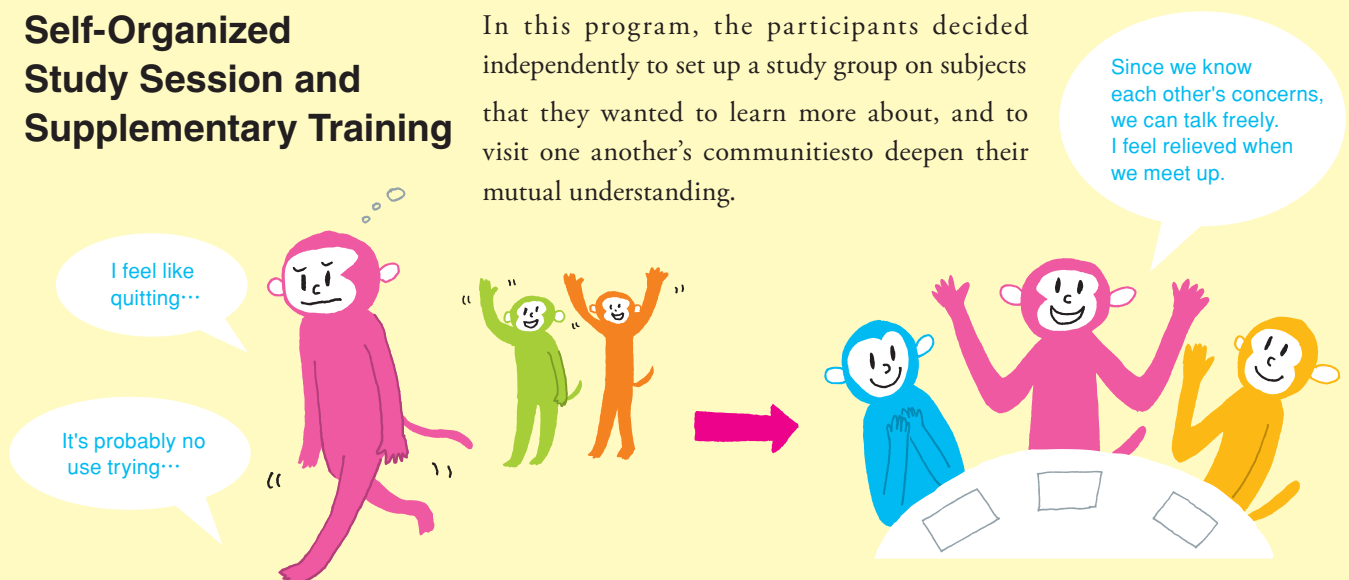
Practical Support Program

This program empowered its participants to use what they learned from the group training session and to work toward solving their organizations' problems, which were identified through the Mentoring Program. There were two courses within the program: the "Organizational Development Course" and the "Internship Course."



Self-Organized Study Session and Supplementary Training

In this program, the participants decided independently to set up a study group on subjects that they wanted to learn more about, and to visit one another's communities to deepen their mutual understanding.



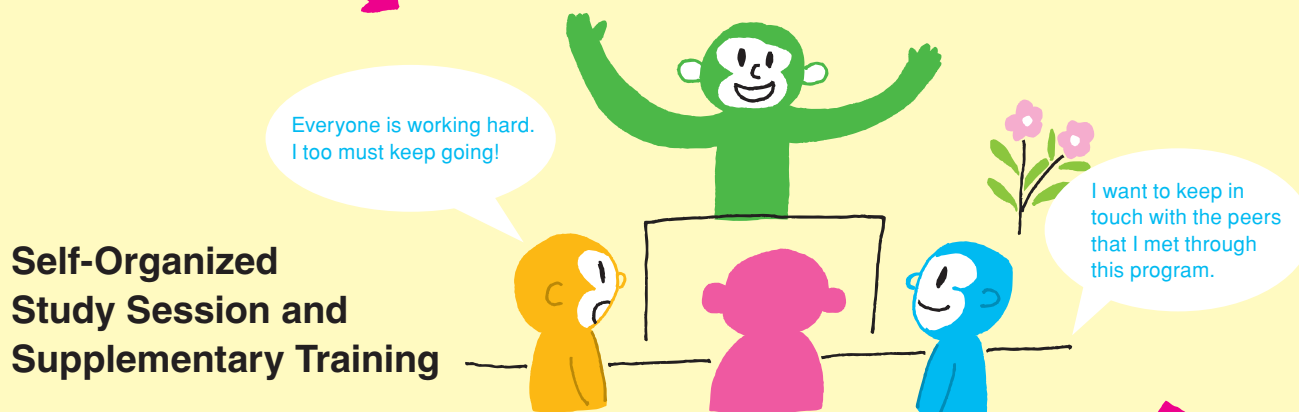
The NPO Capacity Development Project



October 2013

Grant Program for Strengthening Organizational Capacities

The Grant Program was implemented to help participants use the abilities they acquired to run their organizations and oversee their projects, and thereby improve their organizations' overall capacities.



Self-Organized Study Session and Supplementary Training



June 2014

Project Ends

*Throughout the text, we use the term NPO to denote non-profit organization.

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Turning “15 Management Capabilities” into Organizational Capabilities

Yasunobu Kawahara

Executive Director

@Rias NPO Center



Seminar at N-Con! – an organizational capacity development program for local NPO, which was organized based on JNPOC’s “15 Management Capabilities” (Photo by: @Rias)

@Rias NPO Support Center had been engaged in citizen-initiated activities with the aim of fostering community development, but everything changed with the earthquake disaster. The scope of its projects, the amount of financial resources, and the number of staff members increased dramatically, making it impossible for @Rias to handle all of its operations. By participating in the NPO Capacity Development Project, Mr. Kawahara re-examined his need to share the organization’s vision with his staff members, as well as @Rias’ roles within the region, and began restructuring the organization in a way that considers the future development of the community.



Personal Profile

Born in Kamaishi city, Mr. Yasunobu Kawahara went on to gain corporate experience in Tokyo, working in the accounting department and the general affairs department. He then returned to Kamaishi, and in 2004, while working for the city’s business cooperative unions, he took part in the founding of @Rias NPO Support Center, a specified non-profit corporation, and was appointed to the Board of Directors. Since September 2010, he has been its full-time Executive Director.

In April 2012, Mr. Kawahara was...

Kamaishi is known for its steel and fish, and the city once flourished thanks to Kamaishi Steelworks of Nippon Steel Corporation and the local fishing industry. The current population is a little less than 40,000. In its hey-day in the 1960s, its population was close to 100,000. However, since the late 1980s, when Kamaishi Steelworks was downsized, the city has been suffering from decreased employment as well as an aging and declining population.

@Rias NPO Support Center (hereafter “@Rias”) was founded in 2004. Its members sought to solve the region’s problems on their own in order to revitalize the once bustling shopping districts and invigorate the lives of the city’s residents. Local residents, public administration bodies, businesses, and NPO all came together with the wish to generate resources to realize this goal. This was their starting point. Since then, @Rias has engaged in various community development activities to rebuild “the life of the city.”

In 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake changed everything. Its effects on Kamaishi city were devastating; 1,041 people were dead or missing, and approximately 3,700 houses were destroyed or damaged. Because there had been few NPO in this region, @Rias became busy with tasks offering intermediary support. Moreover, as the range of its operations expanded, the number of employed staff increased, and information sharing within the organization became difficult. Thus, Mr. Kawahara began struggling with management issues. That was when he learned about the NPO Capacity Development Project and decided to participate, hoping to learn how best to fulfill his role as Executive Director and oversee an organization as the scale of its operations changes.

What Mr. Kawahara worked on

■ Revitalizing the center city neighborhood

In 2003, volunteers from the junior chamber of the Shopping District Development Association were entrusted by Iwate prefecture to run the “Community Business Support Project.” As part of its business activities, and with the aim of engaging in a new form of community development, these volunteers established a business support center called “Minami Sanriku CB Support” in the shopping district of the Kamaishi Otsuchi area. In 2004, a board member, Mr. Junichi Kano, collaborated with his peers and local businesses to establish @Rias,

while running his confectionary shop. Their hope was to invigorate Kamaishi’s center city neighborhood and its shopping district by further expanding their activities as a nonprofit corporation within this district, which was still unfamiliar with the role that NPOs play within a community. In 2009, “Kamaishi Information Center Cadatte” and “Communication Center Cadatte” were established in the shopping district. These centers were frequented by many people; it was a place where visitors to Kamaishi could obtain information about sightseeing, and where local residents could learn more about their community, or rest and mingle with other residents. In addition, they cooperated with businesses in the shopping district on projects that would help revitalize the city, such as planning and running community events in the city center, and utilizing vacant retail space to organize club activities and farmers’ markets.

Mr. Kawahara used to work in the accounting department at a company in Tokyo. In 1993, he returned to Kamaishi and began working in his hometown. In 2004, he joined @Rias, and in 2010, he became a full-time staff member.

■ That Day, That Moment...

On March 11, 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred. Kamaishi, too, was transformed in a flash. At the time of the earthquake, @Rias was in the middle of conducting a community business seminar. Luckily, all participants and staff members were safe, but the two community centers mentioned above were destroyed completely.

Mr. Kawahara was able to confirm soon afterwards that his parents were safe, since his mother had been attending



Kamaishi city in March 2011 (Photo by: @Rias)

to his father, who was in the hospital at the time. While living in evacuation shelters, he started to help out at local hospitals, which had lost the ability to function at regular capacity and were transferring patients to hospitals in the interior parts of the region.

In late March, @Rias was able to rent a temporary office and storage space, and resumed its operations. In addition to transporting emergency relief supplies, @Rias assisted in the removal of debris, provided disaster-related information to local residents, and offered support at evacuation centers. They were swamped every day with tasks that required immediate attention.

■As an earthquake victim and a relief worker

In the midst of this hopeless situation, while members of @Rias had to start rebuilding their lives as earthquake victims, many volunteers as well as many people from organizations, businesses, and public administrative bodies in other regions gathered at @Rias. They became busy with tasks offering intermediary support, such as collecting information and coordinating projects. Seeing volunteers, as well as members of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and NPOs, come from other regions and provide relief work, Mr. Kawahara started to question whether it was all right for them, as people who were involved in community work in this region, to rely on external support. Mr. Kawahara sought ways in which they could work on their own to rebuild their hometown, Kamaishi.

■Dramatic expansion of operations

While being swamped with work, Mr. Kawahara realized that one of the immediate tasks was to provide employment opportunities to earthquake victims so they could continue to lead their lives in this town to the greatest extent possible. @Rias proposed this idea to the municipalities, and was entrusted with the “Emergency Job Creation Program” in February 2012. It employed about 100 individuals to participate in local community regeneration projects, run the reconstruction information center, arrange support and liaison officers for Kamaishi city temporary housing, and offer employment support for earthquake victims. As the organization’s operations expanded dramatically, the budget increased compared to what it had been before the earthquake. @Rias became a place of employment, and required Mr. Kawahara to run the organization as a manager. In addition, as other regional tasks started to accumulate, sharing information

among staff members became difficult.

Furthermore, since the Emergency Job Creation Program was entrusted for a limited period of time, Mr. Kawahara was also starting to worry about the future direction of the organization, including the need to find ways to continue its activities to support reconstruction efforts.

■Participating in the Group Training Session, “15 Management Capabilities to Improve NPO,” and the Mentoring Program

In May 2012, when the Group Training Session for the NPO Capacity Development Project started, Mr. Kawahara was overwhelmed with work, but it also offered him an opportunity to re-learn the basics of running an NPO. Since many of the participants from Iwate prefecture were relatively young, and he was older than them, he was worried that he might have trouble expressing himself well. But as the training session moved forward, he learned to actively share his opinions, and his involvement in the program changed.

In the Mentoring Program, Ms. Akemi Tezuka of the Fujisawa City Civic Activities Facilitation and Liaison Council became Mr. Kawahara’s mentor. He exchanged emails and phone calls with her several times a month. Based on her own experience, Ms. Tezuka gave him advice on his work and the management of his organization. They gradually developed a trusting relationship, as Mr. Kawahara says, “I could talk to her not only about the organization but also about my personal problems. Ms. Tezuka gave me great help and emotional support.”

While discussing the organization’s tasks, Mr. Kawahara realized he had been so busy since the earthquake that he had not had the time to think about the tasks themselves. In addition, since the number of staff members had increased, human relations became more complicated. While attending to these issues, Mr. Kawahara tended to fall behind in his own work. Accounting work had also increased since the earthquake, and it took up much of his time. Recalling Mr. Kawahara’s state at the time, Mr. Kano, the President of @Rias, says, “He was no longer the Director, but had become the Accounting Manager.” Mr. Kawahara was losing his perspective as the Director, and was unable to oversee the organization in its entirety.

When he started participating in the Mentoring Program, Mr. Kawahara was focused on figuring out a way to continue running the organization’s various projects and maintain its status as a nonprofit corporation. He was unable to come up with a vision for the organization’s future.

With the support he received through the Mentoring Program, he sorted out the organization's tasks and his roles one by one, and gradually learned to look at the organization as a whole and start establishing its vision.

■The importance of staff members understanding the organization's vision and mission

Mr. Kawahara had felt that local NPOs engaging in reconstruction assistance, including his own organization, tend to lack managing power and suffer from limited and over-tasked manpower. After the earthquake, the amount of funds needed to run the organization's projects increased dramatically. Mr. Kawahara also had other concerns; for example, his organization lacked a stable foundation to support the size of its operations, and funding from the private sector had been decreasing every year. "If we do not strengthen the managing power of the organization now, will its future operations be in jeopardy?" Indeed, seeing how some organizations had started to cease or pull out of their operations, and faced with dwindling funds, Mr. Kawahara thought that the ability of local NPOs to generate operating funds was being called into question.

The organization's continued activity was absolutely necessary for the reconstruction of the community and its future development. In order to help local NPO enhance their managing power and ensure their ability to maintain their activities, Mr. Kawahara wanted the staff members of @Rias and local organizations to be familiar with the "15 Management Capabilities" that he learned about at the NPO Capacity Development Project. In particular, he hoped that staff members, who were working simply because a job had been offered to them, would learn to attend to their tasks with an understanding of the organization's vision and mission.

Based on the "15 Management Capabilities," Mr. Kawahara set up a program called "N-Con!" to assist local NPOs in improving their managing power with funding from JNPOC's Grant Program for Strengthening Organizational Capacities. He asked his mentor, Ms. Tezuka, to act as an advisor. The program solicited participants not only from organizations operating within Kamaishi city, but also from those operating in the nearby regions. The aim of the program was to contribute to the future development of their communities by learning and working together to support the region.

Results and Changes

■Organizing N-Con!

Why Mr. Kawahara organized N-Con!

- To learn how to structure and think about NPOs by studying the "15 Management Capabilities for NPO Leaders."
- To help participants understand the meaning of working for an NPO by sharing what he learned.
- To expand the network of peers. Local NPOs are indispensable for future reconstruction!

Between January and June 2014, N-Con! conducted a total of five seminars on the "15 Management Capabilities." In organizing this program, Mr. Kawahara had his staff members attend to a series of tasks, from planning the program to adjusting the schedules of advisors and lecturers, creating program brochures, and preparing and running the seminars to writing up reports. He also asked the participating staff members to lead the seminars and keep a record of their content, thereby encouraging them to think creatively for themselves and improve their skills.

The seminars covered materials such as a basic overview of NPOs and background information about the establishment of NPO system in Japan. This seemed to encourage even staff members who had just started working for NPOs to develop an interest in their activities. Participants appeared to be satisfied with the program, as they commented: "I was gained something that I couldn't have learned in a classroom lecture," and "The seminars



Mr. Satoru Sasaki, a staff member, gives a presentation about "The ideal form of local communities" (Photo by: @Rias)

allowed me to think about new issues and make new discoveries, and gave me hints about how to take the next step.” In addition, many of the participants expressed an interest in learning more about accounting, since it was a familiar subject to them. Mr. Kawahara thus set up a “learning community” and organized regular study groups about accounting.

■N-Con! leads to the establishment of a learning community

In response to the interest expressed by the participants and staff members of N-Con!, Mr. Kawahara decided to set up an accounting study group that would meet every Monday. He hopes to continue his support by keeping this learning community active, and thereby helping its members become familiar with the material presented and make full use of their knowledge in their daily operations.

Mr. Kawahara feels that the project has yielded some positive results. He says, “I hope that learning together will help raise the level of local NPOs’ organizational capacities. As the Executive Director, I’m in the position of managing my organization, but there have been times when I was unable to perform well. This project has given me the opportunity to acquire further skills.”

Mr. Kawahara has also said that completing N-Con! allowed him to understand his organization’s situation: “I became aware of the need to differentiate between those who implement the projects from those who run them. I

began to see the organization as a whole and tried to give accurate instructions to those in charge of its operations.”

When N-Con! ended, Mr. Satoru Sasaki, a staff member who was responsible for its planning and operation, said, “The earthquake prompted me to return to my hometown, Kamaishi, but I didn’t know much about NPOs, so this training program allowed me to learn much about the subject. The experience of running this program will be of great use in the future as well.” Mr. Sasaki has also made suggestions to Mr. Kawahara about projects that he would like to take on next, showing a more active involvement with the organization.

In implementing this project, and seeing staff members beginning to work with an understanding of the organization’s missions, Mr. Kawahara says, “What is the purpose of our work? What are we aiming for? These are the things I’d like to communicate to my staff carefully as we continue our work.” It seems that in reaffirming his role within the organization and refreshing his attitude, Mr. Kawahara has gained the confidence to carry on with his work.

What’s ahead

It has been almost three and a half years since the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred. There is now less coverage about the disaster in the media, and the general public seems to be less concerned about the affected areas. It is said that in the aftermath of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 and the Chuetsu Earthquake in 2004, further support was needed after residents moved into the housing complex that had been built as part of the reconstruction effort. Even though time has passed, local residents continue to face many problems, and Mr. Kawahara believes that @Rias has an important role to play in supporting and standing by these residents. One of its future goals is to act as an intermediary support organization in the Kamaishi region, and eventually establish a civic activity center in Kamaishi city.

Mr. Kawahara feels strongly that he must see through @Rias’s future activities: “It is necessary to keep communicating about what is happening now in the affected areas, and we must take part in that task.”



Participants came up with project proposals and wrote them down while discussing them in a workshop format (Photo by: @Rias)

Ms. Sakae Chida (Caritas Kamaishi)

We organize tea get-togethers called “ochakko salon” in Kamaishi city’s temporary housing. We have co-organized events there with @Rias, and through the ochakko salon, we have been in contact with some of their staff members who provide support for residents in temporary housing. I attended all the training sessions that were offered through N-Con!. It gave me the chance to actually reflect on our goals and purposes, which I hadn’t thought about despite my involvement with an NPO. I also had the opportunity to learn together with people from other organizations and get to know them, which would not have happened without the program.

Mr. Akira Hayakawa (Board Chair, Youth Miyakko Base)

Our organization was founded in February 2013. We have been working to provide a place for local high school students to acquire education and experience.

At study groups, I was able to speak with Mr. Kawahara, who gave me thoughtful comments. When drawing up a project proposal, I was able to receive advice from Ms. Tezuka. Actually giving a presentation taught me many things. I hope to form these study groups within my organization, and expand them as well.



Ms. Akemi Tezuka

(Executive Director, Fujisawa City Civic Activities Facilitation and Liaison Council)

Helping Mr. Kawahara to change his mode of thinking from that of an employee to that of an agent of social change was harder than I had thought. However, as we proceeded with the training and considered this point by thinking of the actual tasks and activities involved, I began to notice a gradual change in his mindset.

Mr. Kawahara started to share information with the staff members in charge. These staff members were able to carry out their tasks while feeling supported by everyone involved, fostering an awareness of working as an organization. Now that Mr. Kawahara has learned to look at the organization as a whole, his staff members can engage in their work without worries.

What is
“civic activity”
for you?

One time, my mentor said to me, “You, too, are a fully-fledged civic activist.” Until then, I had never thought about civic activities, but since that time, I started to become aware.



Organizational Profile

@Rias NPO Support Center

URL: <http://rias-iwate.net>

Board Chair: Junichi Kano

Founded in 2003 (obtained Specified Nonprofit Corporation status in 2004)

The organization was founded to assist residents in Kamaishi city and nearby regions with living active and healthy lives. Its purpose is to implement projects that help to promote and support community development, as well as to contribute to the creation of a local community based on partnerships among residents, businesses, and public administrative bodies. Since right after the earthquake, the organization has worked to deliver goods to affected areas and provide disaster-related information to local residents. Currently, it is involved in projects commissioned by Kamaishi city in Iwate prefecture.

Fiscal year 2013

Personnel: 6 officers; 75 full-time paid staff members

Total revenue: 213,751,496 yen

Generational Change in Leadership Leads to Expanding Services

Akemi Tezuka

Executive Director

Fujisawa City Civic Activities Facilitation and Liaison Council

“We might have forcefully passed the torch to the next generation, but in the end, it was a good thing,” says Ms. Akemi Tezuka. Mr. Takehiko Hosoya, who has succeeded Ms. Tezuka’s position as the director, says, “Because Ms. Tezuka was working for the Japan NPO Center (JNPOC)’s projects and wasn’t around, I had no choice but to make up my mind to step up and take over her role.”

Ms. Tezuka became fully involved in JNPOC’s programs, joining the executive committee for the NPO Capacity Development Project, and becoming a mentor as well as an advisor for the Grant Program for Strengthening Organizational Capacities. She decided to use this occasion to restructure her organization and let the next generation take the lead.

In 2000, many municipalities across the nation were setting up NPO support centers, and there was a discussion about establishing one in Fujisawa city as well. In 2001, the city founded the “Fujisawa Civic Activities Facilitation Center” and entrusted Ms. Tezuka with its operation. She managed this organization as its director for ten years, despite the many twists and turns she encountered. Yet, recently, she started to feel that it was time to let the next generation take over her position so as to expand the range of civic activities in Fujisawa city. In addition, she was thinking that “second-generation NPO members¹ had to pass the torch to third-generation members.”

The Fujisawa City Civic Activities Facilitation and Liaison Council (henceforth “Liaison Council”) had three staff members who were instrumental in making the generational change possible. One of them was Mr. Hosoya, who was singled out to be the next Director. The second person was Ms. Hikari Sakurai, who is almost the same age as Mr. Hosoya. The third person was Ms. Yuko Miyamoto, who has been working for the Liaison Council four days a week since May 2013. Ms. Miyamoto says, “Ms. Tezuka allows us to take on various projects, and it’s been a challenging experience in a good way.” Together with Ms. Sakurai, she visited the @Rias NPO Support Center where Ms. Tezuka was acting as an advisor for the Grant Program for Strengthening Organizational Capacities. There, she was given the opportunity to speak about her work at the Liaison Council of Coordinating Volunteers. She says that reflecting on her own job and telling others about it gave her more confidence in the work she has done since then.

Ms. Tezuka says that working for the NPO Capacity Development Project and preparing her lectures on the “15 Management Capabilities” allowed her to systematically re-organize the materials that she had presented as a lecturer up to that point, and prompted her to participate in the “Mentoring Program” as well. Ms. Tezuka says that working for the Project also gave her the confidence to propose to the City Committee the need to strengthen the organizational capacities of NPOs,



Staff meeting, far right: Ms. Tezuka (Photo by: Liaison Council)

including taking external advice on management. Since 2014, Fujisawa city has rechanneled its financial support for organizations engaged in civic activities from subsidizing individual projects to subsidizing efforts that strengthen organizational capacities. Furthermore, Ms. Tezuka, who is proud of her accomplishments in finding and connecting various staff members in the region, thought of the need to envision NPO support in her local community as well. In March 2013, she created a brochure entitled “12 Experts Who Support NPOs.”² She says that her idea to create this brochure was also prompted by working for the NPO Capacity Development Project.

FN 1: “First-generation members” refers to the founding members who were involved in the drafting of the NPO law in the 1990s.

FN 2: “12 Experts Who Support NPOs” was revised in March 2014, and is now called “16 Experts Who Support NPOs.”

Organizational Profile

The Fujisawa City Civic Activities Facilitation and Liaison Council, an organization that fosters community development by supporting NPOs, engages in projects that assist other organizations involved with civic activities in Fujisawa city and its vicinity. It manages NPO support facilities (Fujisawa Civic Activities Facilitation Center and Shonandai Civic Activities Plaza), as well as the Fujisawa City Electronic Meeting Room. Its operations include organizing lectures and social gatherings that aid civic activities, supporting volunteer activities and various events in Fujisawa city, and overseeing projects that help the lives of senior citizens and the reconstruction of Tohoku region in the aftermath of the earthquake. It became a Certified Specified Nonprofit Corporation in February 2014.

Ms. Tezuka's Profile

Ms. Tezuka lives in Fujisawa city in Kanagawa prefecture. When the NPO Law came into effect, she decided to draw on her experience of more than 20 years of involvement in social, educational, and local community activities, and to take part in the founding of the Fujisawa City Civic Activities Facilitation and Liaison Council. Beginning in 2001, she served as the Director of the NPO Support Center in Fujisawa city, and left the position in April 2012. She now focuses on contemplating the role of NPO support while also engaging in various activities, such as facilitating the collection and distribution of information, providing support for NPO management, helping to launch community businesses and social businesses, and enhancing cooperation between NPOs and other sectors.

Toward Community Development Utilizing Regional Resources

Shuichi Daibo

Board Chair

Tachiagaru zo! Miyako-shi Taro



High school students in the prefecture receiving disaster prevention education (Photo by: NPO Taro)

Reconstruction of livelihood or regional rehabilitation? As membership declined, they considered disbandment, and the very existence of the organization was endangered. Just then, outside eyes helped them become aware of the region's assets, and they found a new direction, in which they could utilize regional characteristics to build community development by examining and broadcasting their experiences with the tsunami. They began to work alongside the local residents.



Personal Profile

Mr. Daibo was born in March, 1951, in Taro (formerly Taro-machi) in Miyako city, Iwate prefecture. He grew up listening to stories of the 1933 Sanriku Tsunami from elders seated around a fire in the mountains in the cold before dawn, where they evacuated at the sound of the tsunami drill siren at 3 AM on every March 3rd, the anniversary of that tsunami. In late March, 2011, he retired from his position as a radiologist and returned to his hometown in Taro, Miyako city, where he and his associates founded an organization.

In April 2012, Mr. Daibo was...

■What is needed to keep his NPO going?

The forefathers of Taro, who experienced the 1933 Sanriku Tsunami, built what was known as the greatest breakwater in Japan on the site of the tsunami damage, and the town was revitalized. Having the greatest breakwater in Japan, Taro advertised itself as the “town of tsunami disaster prevention.” With the devastating damage it received in the Great East Japan Earthquake, however, its pride as the “town of tsunami disaster prevention” was smashed to pieces.

After the town where he was born and raised suffered calamity, Mr. Daibo returned to Taro in April 2011 and founded Tachiagaru zo! Miyako-shi Taro(Rise Up! Taro, Miyako city - hereafter, NPO Taro) with his local former classmates, and they were since working to restore the town. The town restoration plan, however, was proposed by Miyako city, and a year after the disaster, Mr. Daibo's colleagues began to prioritize the reconstruction of livelihood over community development. Cooperation and participation in NPO Taro's activities declined. As the number of allies working with the organization diminished, Mr. Daibo had to consider disbanding it.

Moreover, Mr. Daibo himself had worked as a technician specializing in radiology until his retirement, so he had been acting all this time without much knowledge about NPO activities. There was also an unfortunate incident involving an NPO in Iwate prefecture, leaving the local residents with little trust in NPOs. Mr. Daibo worried about how he could gain sympathy for his civic activities and continue to work. That was when he heard about the NPO Capacity Development Project. He decided to participate, hoping to deepen his knowledge of NPO management so that he could keep working to restore his town.

What Mr. Daibo worked on

■His deeply rooted disaster prevention awareness

Since Mr. Daibo was a child, the Taro district has been holding tsunami evacuation drills at 3 AM every March 3 (the date and time of the 1933 tsunami). They evacuated to the mountains in the middle of the cold night, and while seated around a bonfire, the elders would tell the children about the circumstances at the time of the tsunami, teaching them the danger of tsunamis and the importance of evacuating. “It was very cold, but the

stories I heard in those days still linger in my body. I think this is the reason for my current activities,” Mr. Daibo says. The awareness of tsunami disaster prevention that took root during his childhood seems to be the driving force behind his activism.

■Reconstruction of livelihood or community development?

As the one-year anniversary of the earthquake passed, the organization managed to collect various residents' thoughts on subjects such as the location and height of the breakwater and the relocation of national highways, and they presented these opinions from around the region to the prefecture and the country. The opinions, however, went unheeded, as they ran up against the difficulties and barriers of the system. Meanwhile, unable to wait for the completion of the transfer of housing complexes to high ground, which would have taken years, people began to think about reconstructing their own lives independently, and the cracks in regional solidarity began to grow. Even friends who had been working together started to consider the reconstruction of their individual lives. They naturally began to prioritize their own livelihood over community development, and the number of people participating in activities declined. Opinions on funds usage also diverged, such as the question of how to use grants from the outside. The organization went so far as to discuss disbandment. As a result, in a 2011 general meeting, most of the members who had been working together for so long ended up withdrawing. Their feelings had drifted apart, as the strong desire to “work for the restoration of the town” gradually gave way to an attitude of “might as well leave it to whoever can do it.”

During this time period, the Capacity Development Project began. In the Group Training Session in the first half of the project, the training on “15 Management Capabilities to Improve NPOs” was a process of learning all over again for Mr. Daibo. Many of the project participants were young people, and he felt out of place. Afterwards, however, the Internship Program that he used during the mentoring period proved to be a great opportunity for his activities.

■Participation in the Internship Program

In November 2012, Miyako city set up a new energy industry (The Miyako City Blue Challenge Project) to utilize biomass in a town restoration project with both government and private sector participation. The

“private” groups in what this town development project referred to as the “public and private participation” were major private companies, and it was expected that this would lead to job creation. But when thinking about the restoration of Taro, which has a high number of elderly people, one theme to consider in town development was how to create a life worth living for the elderly. Mr. Daibo believed that it was necessary for Taro’s “public and private” sectors (“private” meaning citizens) to participate in the town development, and he wondered whether social business techniques could be included in the city’s energy project. To deal with this question, he used the Internship Program to learn about social business.

For his internship, he was placed with the “Egao Tsunagete” (Connecting Smiles) group in Yamanashi prefecture. This group was involved in “community, human, and time development,” with the goal of creating a network society of rural coexistence, starting with the field of agriculture. During the internship, Mr. Daibo was able to observe concrete examples while directly participating in activities, allowing him to understand the things he learned 15 Capabilities in conjunction with concrete reality.

■The need for “management”

After hearing about the management of the corporate farming project implemented by “Egao Tsunagete,” he understood that it is necessary to build a sustainable level of funding. Until then, he had been basing his activities on nothing but organization members’ desire to restore the town, and had never thought very deeply about revenue. He even assumed that there should be no compensation because the activities were being done by volunteers. He learned that in order to keep projects going and fulfill one’s goals, it is important to have a proper compensation system, and essential to have a firmly established



With the Egao Tsunagete staff (Photo by: NPO Taro)



The seawall created after the great tsunami of 1933 (Photo by: NPO Taro)

organizational capacity with a full supply of revenue. Moreover, relying on subsidies and grants means that people will come and go with the end of each project, leaving the organization unable to maintain a minimum level of basic strength. In sum, he gained a strong awareness of the fact that an independent organization must think about “management,” including means of revenue.

■What must an organization do?

Another major realization was the need to “utilize a brand.” It’s safe to say that this realization influenced the activities of Mr. Daibo’s organization.

In an exchange of opinions with “Egao Tsunagete” staff, Mr. Daibo was asked about NPO Taro’s SWOT (see note), which gave him an opportunity to analyze the current state of his organization and think about its future direction.

Taro has unique attractions such as a famous seawall, seaweed production, and the tourism resource Sano Rock. The opinion was raised that these things could serve as Taro’s brand, and by utilizing them, it would be possible to convey the charm of the town to others. This hint guided Mr. Daibo to wonder, “Could I bring back our claim to be the ‘tsunami disaster prevention town’?” It occurred to him that the role of NPO Taro should be to pass on the wisdom and labor of their forbears as a means of developing the community, precisely because Taro was the town of tsunami disaster prevention.

NPO Taro had been involved in various activities, including dealing with evacuation areas, receiving disaster prevention tours, handling visits from famous people, holding community development meetings, designing a Geopark, proposing ideas to the city, and taking an interest in energy projects. It was necessary, however, to consider what would be most important for “the development of Taro” when setting up activities. Through Mr.



The fact-finding and recordkeeping project (Photo by: NPO Taro)

Daibo's participation in the internship, a detailed image of NPO Taro's future goals was born. According to Mr. Daibo, these future objectives are to start up an agricultural project with "citizen participation," and to become the kind of town where elderly people can live meaningful lives. But in the short term, he thought it was necessary to create a record of Taro's tsunami damage, and to communicate its experiences and lessons both inside and outside the town.

(Note) A framework to evaluate an organization's internal environment and external environment. Dividing and classifying the Strengths and Weaknesses of an organization's internal environment, as well as the Opportunities and Threats in its external environment, it serves as a tool for thinking up strategies.

Results and Changes

■Organizational analysis and exchange of opinions at the internship site

Mr. Daibo was able to find a new direction in "restoring Taro by utilizing its claim as the 'town of tsunami disaster prevention'" thanks to his exchange of opinions with the



The "Recordkeeping Collection" prepared through the Grant Program for Strengthening Organizational Capacities

staff of "Egao Tsunagete" during his internship.

When questioned about NPO Taro's SWOT (see note), Mr. Daibo could not answer in the moment. He tried preparing his own SWOT worksheet as a homework assignment. The next day, he presented his results to the staff, and they offered various opinions and hints in response.

Upon analyzing the Taro region and his organization, he came to notice a number of distinguishing traits. The town of Taro has many things to be proud of. The staff of "Egao Tsunagete" shared opinions such as "Your work should be easy with this many unique attractions," and "The amount of value you can add depends on how hard you work." By listening to these views, Mr. Daibo realized, "Taro's specialty/brand is 'the town of tsunami prevention.' We can work to utilize that brand."

Before participating in the internship, he had been thinking about how to restore his afflicted town, and how to implement a community garden with citizen participation as part of the Smart Community and Blue Challenge Projects that the city had been working on as restoration projects. The theme of "utilizing brand power," however, emerged from the exchange of opinions as a new direction for NPO Taro. That is to say, the short-term goal of examining Taro's tsunami experience and communicating it both inside and outside the town was positioned as necessary work for NPO Taro.

■Efforts toward the creation of recordkeeping collection and dissemination

In order to complete the short-term goal that he decided on as an intern, Mr. Daibo made use of the Grant Program for Strengthening Organizational Capacities that started in October 2013. He set out to create a thorough record of Taro's experiences with the 2011 earthquake, so that these experiences could be conveyed to people both inside and outside the town, as well as to future generations, and assist in the prevention and mitigation of tsunamis around the world. Using records created in 2012 as a basis, he asked people in the region about that time and verified details such as evacuation routes. He believed that involving residents in the development process could contribute to the restoration of Taro, the reconstruction of livelihoods, and the independence of the residents. It would lead to a growing numbers of allies with similar feelings about the restoration of Taro, and would also help increase NPO Taro's organizational capacity.

"think that leaving a thoroughly inspected record of the

damage from this tsunami will allow us to mourn while also fulfilling our duty as a town that advocates tsunami disaster prevention,” said Mr. Daibo, explaining the meaning of creating a thorough record for posterity.

In this manner, activities that started with a volunteer spirit are progressing while gradually taking on a more organized form and gaining sympathy from local residents. The board of directors meets every month to confirm and decide on the management and direction of the organization, and they exchange information and determine the division of roles for projects.

As the self-declared “town of tsunami disaster prevention,” Taro’s restoration will also inform the rest of the country and the world about grappling with tsunami disaster prevention. NPO Taro is working to become an organization that can contribute to tsunami disaster prevention and mitigation.

What’s ahead

■ Regional development is connected to disaster prevention

Mr. Daibo felt that the power of community was fading and rural strength was waning, with even the town festivals disappearing. Through the work of examining Taro’s tsunami, he aimed to draw in people from the region

and gather allies who shared his feelings about the restoration of Taro. He believes that this will reinforce rural strength, which in turn will reinforce the power of disaster prevention.

Taro received heavy damage despite having billed itself as “the town of tsunami disaster prevention” to the point that it was mockingly known as Tsunami Taro. Mr. Daibo believes that this is precisely why examining and spreading its story will not only help with the restoration of the region, but also with the reduction of tsunami damage in other regions of Japan, especially those that are at risk of it, and throughout the world. He intends to continue the work of disseminating Taro’s experiences and the examination of them both inside and outside the town. He has proposed to be allowed the opportunity of presenting Taro’s experiences at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which will be held in Sendai in March 2015.

As a future development, Mr. Daibo also hopes to implement a civic house farm with citizen participation (tied to the city’s energy policy). This development of space will contribute to the rehabilitation of the community that was destroyed by the earthquake. He believes that it will also help solve the lack of movements for elderly people and add meaning to their lives.

SWOT Analysis of NPO Taro

[Strength]

S

- We have unique attractions (the seawall)
- Rich in marine produce (Mamine seaweed, sea urchins)
- We have scenic beauty (Sanriku Reconstruction National Park, Sano Rock)
- We have earthquake support and awareness (subsidies, financial aid, data collection)

Unie attractions!!!

Taro's brand!!

[Opportunity]

O

- Community re-development is at the starting line
- We can do significant work if we propose our ideas appropriately

Can a change of perspective put this land on the map?!

[Weakness]

W

- Depopulation is progressing
- There is a lack of successors
- The earthquake is destroying the community
- Financial aid and grants are weakening our spirit of independence

[Threat]

T

- Further population decline
- Cities, towns, and villages are losing their independence due to mergers
- Lowered motivation

Mr. Kojiro Kajiyama (Participant of "Record Keeping Collection", member)

There was a time when he considered disbanding the NPO, but he held on and kept going. I sympathize with and support Mr. Daibo's strong feelings and devotion to our hometown. I still don't believe that our hometown, Taro, can be reconstructed in its previous form. But we can create a blueprint for the development of a new Taro based on the facts that have been confirmed through this recordkeeping effort. I believe that this work is vital in order to leave a record of our experiences with the latest tsunami for the future. These activities will spread like "dandelion seeds" and sprout blossoms in many different places. We can convey the importance of disaster prevention, not only within Taro, but outside it as well. I leave this work to the future. Kotsuppare. (Do your best.)

Ms. Yoko Kanazawa (Volunteer, member)

As a reconstruction aid worker, I used to give tours of the levee, but I have more free time and emotional energy after quitting that job, so I have been participating in Taro's activities since last year. I would talk to the high school students and others who came for tours about the conditions of the evacuation and life in temporary housing.

It is important to convey not only words and images to the outside, but also records and examinations. We all have our own ideas and ways of thinking. I want people to listen to different experiences.

The people who escaped to evacuation zones helped one another. A great power is created when people combine their strengths. I think that escaping from "victim status" will be the next step. From now on, whether the town of Taro lives or dies will be our responsibility.



What is
"civic activity"
for you?

Activities in which we can progress on our own initiative and find meaning through participation. With the right consciousness, we should be able to take part in activities that are rewarding.



Organizational Profile

Tachiagaru zo! Taro, Miyako-shi

URL: <http://npoTarouu.web.fc2.com/>

Board Chair: Shuichi Daibo

Established 2011 (obtained Specified Nonprofit Corporation status in 2011)

Tachiagaru zo! Taro, Miyako-shi works toward independent reconstruction for victims who suffered catastrophic damage in the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and tsunami. It was founded to assist with community development that will do credit to Taro, the town of disaster prevention. It conducts educational drills and maintains evacuation centers based on its experience with severe tsunamis. It was established in July 2011 and acquired Specified Nonprofit Corporation in October 2011. Its goal is to contribute to the development of Taro, Miyako city, Iwate prefecture, into a place that is pleasant to live, with substantial medical, health, and welfare services, supplied with information and natural energy.

Fiscal year 2013

Personnel: 5 officers, 9 staff members (Paid part-time workers: 9)

Total revenue: 3,115,068 yen

Support for Young People and Community Development through GINGA

Ayako Yaegashi
President
Iwate GINGA-NET



In officer training, they planned the future of the organization (Photo by: Iwate GINGA-NET)

While continuing to explore new project spin-offs centered on the Iwate GINGA-NET Project, the organization has also been growing and building its foundations. After learning the basics of NPO management through the “15 Management Capabilities to Improve NPOs” training session, Ms. Yaegashi has increased the organizational membership tenfold, and her efforts to develop operations are ongoing.



Personal Profile

Ms. Yaegashi was born in Morioka city, Iwate prefecture, and graduated from the Iwate Prefectural University's School of Social Welfare. In the summer of 2011 she worked as a key staff member on the Iwate GINGA-NET Project, which sent student volunteers to the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake. In February 2012, she established Iwate GINGA-NET as a Specified Nonprofit Corporation, and has been working on developing human resources and building a student volunteer network. She is currently President of Iwate GINGA-NET and a member of the Iwate Prefectural University Disaster Education and Recovery Assistance.

In April 2012, Ms. Yaegashi was...

At the time of the 2007 Chuetsu offshore earthquake, many students from Iwate Prefectural University gave administrative support to the volunteer center in the affected area. After returning from volunteering, the students started planning an official student volunteer center, which was established in 2008. In the same year, Ms. Yaegashi entered the university's School of Social Welfare. From her first year, she was active in the student volunteer center, and by the winter she was in charge of a project.

At the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake, she was in her third year at the university, and head of the student volunteer center. In 2011, she participated in the Iwate GINGA-NET Project (hereafter, the GINGA Project) as a headquarters staff member. In the terrible circumstances after the disaster, she was pleased that many students from across Japan showed interest in Iwate and actually gave up a week to come and volunteer. The GINGA Project accepted students in summer and winter, and after that she felt that there was still an ongoing need for volunteers. To continue their work, they needed a way of receiving funding to support the organization's activities, and in February 2012, GINGA-NET was incorporated as a nonprofit organization. During this time, Ms. Yaegashi demonstrated her leadership and was known for always being the first to make suggestions. She asked her

colleagues to join as board members, and she became the organization's President. In March, she graduated from the university, and started working full-time in April. In no time at all, she had reached the positions of both head of organization and a full-time staff member. However, when she participated in the NPO Capacity Development Project in May, she was a complete beginner at NPO management who had never heard of anything related to the "15 Management Capabilities to Improve NPOs".

What Ms. Yaegashi worked on

■ Mobilized over 1000 student volunteers the summer after the disaster

There are already two reports that summarize the activities of the GINGA Project. One is the "Iwate GINGA-NET Project Activities Report" published in March 2012. It contains detailed information about their activities from the beginning of the project at the end of July to the end of August 2011.

One of the people behind the project is Mr. Katsuhiko Yamamoto, then associate professor at Iwate Prefectural University, who was the Executive Chairperson of the project. In the report, he writes that the words 'Iwate' and 'GINGA' were used in the name Iwate GINGA-NET because they wanted people to know that it was a product



Students socialize with residents in the assembly hall of temporary accommodation (Photo by: Iwate GINGA-NET)

of Iwate prefecture. The word “ginga” conjures up an image of Iwate, as it is used in the title of one of the works of Iwate-born author Kenji Miyazawa, “Gingatetsudo no Yoru” (Night on the Galactic Railroad), and Mr. Yamamoto’s hope was for many students to gather together like the stars in the sky.

The organization lived up to its name, and in the summer of 2011, 1,086 student volunteers from 146 schools across the country gathered in Sumita, Iwate prefecture, and from this base they were dispatched to volunteer in coastal areas of Otsuchi, Kamaishi, Ofunato, and Rikuzentakata.

After GINGA-NET’s incorporation as a Specified Nonprofit Corporation in 2012, the GINGA Project has continued with a cycle that coincides with student holidays in summer, winter, and spring. The sessions are called Summer Ginga, Winter Ginga, and Spring Ginga. Looking at the most recent 2013 fiscal year, 307 students from 47 universities participated in Summer Ginga 2013, 9 students from 6 universities in Winter Ginga 2014, and 57 students from 23 universities in Spring Ginga 2014. The average stay per student was one week. Since everyone sleeps huddled together in the gymnasium in Sumita, it was thought that one week would be the physical limit for a person, but given the change in circumstances in the affected areas, from 2014 the basic length of stay will be revised to two weeks so that students can better learn about the area. Ms. Yaegashi frequently travels between the coast and Morioka, where her office is based, spending about 60% of her time in Morioka and 40% along the coast.

Since it incorporated, the organization’s projects have diversified, and they are currently running weekend volunteer work camps as a community support project and a community support training workshop as a human resource development project (held in Kobe and Kochi in 2013), and managing the Iwate Student Community Cafe as a student network support project.

■ Exploring what is appropriate for student volunteers

What Ms. Yaegashi struggles with most as President is how to effectively match the students’ skills with each area’s particular problems. Utilizing the students’ passion to its fullest in the affected areas, while meeting the needs of disaster stricken areas in the countryside and being as useful as possible, is no easy feat. Ms. Yaegashi never misses an opportunity to make frequent visits to local areas to



Reports published by Iwate GINGA-NET (Photo by: Iwate GINGA-NET)

listen to people’s stories and engage in discussion with social welfare organizations. In particular, now that the emergency relief period has passed, there is a need for gathering nuggets of knowledge, rather than mobilizing large numbers of people for manual labor. The number of volunteers may be smaller today, but they can still take responsibility and show a patient, caring attitude. Even amongst the students whose initial attitude had clearly been “I want to know,” “I want to do what I can,” or “I want to help these people,” she is gradually starting to see an attitude of “let’s learn and think together.”

The other report related to the GINGA Project is a research report which used a grant from the social welfare promotion program of the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, entitled “A study of student volunteer activities in the Great East Japan Earthquake -through Iwate GINGA-NET’s social welfare support project-.” This is based on surveys conducted through July 2012 to March 2013, and was published in March 2013.

In this research report, Ms. Yaegashi suggests that “having under-confident students who walk around the area, interact with the residents, and discuss community issues is actually an opportunity for community building and empowerment.” The change in students’ attitudes, from wanting to help the people to wanting to learn from them in order to come up with solutions together, demonstrates possibilities for new types of support.

Furthermore, this report selects five potentially viable areas for students to provide “welfare support activities”: health, food, amusement, seasonal activities, and salon activities. For example, in terms of seasonal activities, in the case of New Year’s celebrations the report explains that “it is not possible to create the entire New Year’s atmosphere



Talking about visions and organizational frameworks (Photo by: Iwate GINGA-NET)

of New Year's food, family gatherings, making mochi, and so on with local residents and professional workers alone. In Winter Ginga 2012, the students' activities and sentiments worked assiduously to create a New Year's atmosphere."

As reconstruction progresses and needs change, the GINGA Project continues to follow its original structure, while considering what students should be doing in the regions and how projects can be effectively managed. In order to find these answers, the organization GINGA-NET also runs programs in Iwate to support and develop student networks and increase the support power of student communities.

■Participating in the NPO Capacity Development Project and conducting officer training

If we apply this search for solutions to project development centering on the GINGA Project as the principle focus, strengthening the management of GINGA-NET has become a supplementary focus over the past two years. Ms. Yaegashi learned about the basics of managing an NPO from the "15 Management Capabilities." The most helpful thing she learned from the group training was revenue analysis using the "capability to foresee," and especially the importance of membership fees and donations. In order to increase income from membership fees, GINGA-NET decided to require participants, along with the student staff, to become members. The result of this effort was that in 2013 there were 497 members, an increase of over 10 times the previous year's count of 48.

Over a period of three days in May 2013, using the framework of the NPO Capacity Development Project's

Organizational Development Course, they held an officer training course entitled "NPO Capacity Development Training Program for a Trusted NPO." The President, Vice President, and six members of the Board of Directors participated to discuss assessing the current situation, creating a vision, reviewing projects, and building organizational frameworks. The biggest benefit was the chance for officers to share their personal feelings and their visions for the future of their organization. As busy people, they had previously not had the opportunity to talk about these issues with their fellow officers, and this allowed them to fully realize the importance of communication between core members in the development of the organization.

Results and Changes

■Results of the officer training and further topics

The tangible results of the officer training were published by Iwate GINGA-NET as "A Message for the Future (management philosophy)." The organization's mission is "bringing up young people who can look to their local communities and take independent action to create a society based on mutual assistance." Their values are "young people and local regions: opening up a bridge to the future."

The organization also created visions (management philosophy mid-to long-term plan: 2013-2021) for 2016 and for 2021. The 2016 plan is to (1) visualize and widely disseminate what has been learned and understood from experiences, (2) develop project contents based on the affected area's state of reconstruction, (3) create a space to bring people together. The 2021 plan is to (1) increase the number of supporters of Iwate GINGA-NET (aim to acquire a total of 300 members), (2) develop and expand fields of activities, (3) build a human resources network across all of Iwate prefecture that will function to coordinate student volunteers.

Ms. Yaegashi thought it was good that the officers were able to verbalize and share their work on behalf of the future of their organization. Afterward, they had lively discussions via the mailing list. But unfortunately, these kinds of discussions among the officers did not last. Among the NPO management topics, developing appropriate governance capacity is an area that requires both hard and soft mechanisms, and Ms. Yaegashi reflects that there was a lack of asking and prodding on her part. Thinking of GINGA-NET's future development, officers

with close knowledge of and ties to challenges on the ground are needed, and perhaps it is time to take another look at the composition of officers.

■ Connecting individual growth to organizational development

Mr. Yamamoto, who has been guiding Ms. Yaegashi all this time, says he thinks that while she was strongly enthusiastic about the incorporation of GINGA-NET, she was a complete beginner at managing an NPO. He feels that the Japan NPO Center (JNPOC)'s training must have been very helpful. In addition to the complete course of group training, he observed that being able to communicate with fellow participants and share what they had learned was extremely stimulating. Mr. Yuji Asaishi, a board member of GINGA-NET and one of the GINGA Project's initial staff members who also participated in the Capacity Development Project as a staff member of "Child Empowerment Iwate," thinks that Ms. Yaegashi's passion for empowering young people could bolster the strength of the organization.

Ms. Miki Taguchi, who as a fellow board member now supports GINGA-NET from her position with a social welfare agency (Iwate Prefectural Council of Social Welfare), said that she wants to maintain and develop the multi-layered connections between students and local regions and successfully pass on the project that left a major impression directly after the disaster. As older students who have known Ms. Yaegashi since she entered

university and became involved with the student volunteer center, both Mr. Asaishi and Ms. Taguchi believe that Ms. Yaegashi has grown a lot since becoming President of GINGA-NET. She is aware of her weaknesses on the management side, and as President, she has a handle on areas for improvement within the organization. They expect her to be able to build a cooperative framework that also includes the revitalization of the board of directors.

What's ahead

The value of student volunteer activities was identified in the previously introduced research report on the GINGA Project published at the end of March 2013. The benefits include identifying future local needs by listening to and conversing with residents, and connecting local people's essential needs with solutions by finding appropriate means. The value statement of GINGA-NET consolidated during the officer training clearly mentions "young people and local areas: opening up a bridge to the future," but how can GINGA-NET connect outside students with local people, and what sort of problem solving will this usher in? As the shift from the disaster recovery to "normal" life continues and we start to see the everyday regional problems of Tohoku's agriculture and fishing, the main theme of GINGA-NET's activities from here on will be creating a path towards problem solving.

Meanwhile, with disaster experience from the Great Hanshin earthquake (1995), the Chuetsu earthquake (2004), and the Chuetsu offshore earthquake (2007), student volunteer centers in universities across the country are continuing to develop and experiment with disaster prevention and mitigation. With GINGA-NET's experience with the Great East Japan Earthquake, we can see measures that should be put into practice, such as incorporating student volunteering more systematically into the university curriculum. If the support capability of students increases due to this learning effect, then the success of activities in disaster stricken areas will also greatly increase.

Mr. Yamamoto imagines that Ms. Yaegashi and other students who have worked with the GINGA Project will become the next generation of NPO leaders, in the same way that the volunteer leaders who experienced the Great Hanshin Earthquake grew to be the leaders of today's NPO sector.



At the Officer Training (Photo by: Iwate GINGA-NET)

Ms. Miho Nakamura (Coordinator, Child Empowerment Iwate)

I went to the disaster-stricken areas of Iwate as a student staff member of GINGA. At GINGA, there were students from a variety of backgrounds and with many different interests. Thanks to this experience, from 2013 I have been providing close support to children within the prefecture as a staff member for Child Empowerment Iwate. I am extremely grateful to Ms. Yaegashi and the GINGA staff who continue to run the organization. We are still good friends.



Mr. Kazuhiko Sawaguchi (Sawaguchi Bread, Kamaishi city)

I ran a bakery in Kamaishi, but after the disaster I was living in temporary accommodations when GINGA came by. My strongest memory is of New Year's 2013. I was able to welcome in the new year together with seven students. Six or seven people also came with Spring GINGA 2013 to help me reopen my store where it stands now. Thinking back on my own student days, when volunteering was a foreign idea, I'm amazed that these students have come from all over to help us. I want to repay them somehow. Accepting students is one way of doing that.

Mr. Nobutoshi Kubo (Fisherman, Kamaishi city)

I got to know GINGA students during my first year in temporary accommodations. From 2013, they started helping me with harvesting wakame and sun-drying kombu (seaweed). I wanted people to help me, but fishermen start work early and there was only so much I could ask, so I came up with a schedule that offered a taster of the fishing industry. I wonder if the students will still be coming three or five years from now, or if they'll forget all about us. My association with GINGA is very important, and I want them to continue.

What is
"civic activity"
for you?

If I were to venture an opinion, I feel that its significance is in offering opportunities and places that can serve as "a point of entry" for many people.



Organizational Profile

Iwate GINGA-NET

URL: <http://www.iwateginga.net>

President: Ayako Yaegashi

Established 2012 (obtained Specified Nonprofit Corporation status in 2012)

After the Great East Japan Earthquake, the Iwate GINGA-NET Project mobilized student volunteers from all over the country and dispatched them to coastal areas of Iwate Prefecture. It was incorporated as a Specified Nonprofit Corporation the following year, in 2012. Along with continuing the GINGA-NET Project, it runs community support programs, human resource development programs, and student network support programs that motivate young people to be aware of the various challenges facing the areas in which they live and turn their attention to solutions. It aims to contribute to the development and promotion of youth volunteer activities, and thus cultivate the young people's ability to serve local communities by initiating youth-led activities.

Fiscal Year 2013

Total revenue: 14,671,980 yen

Personnel: 8 directors, staff (salaried: 1, other: 0)

Learning and Gaining Confidence through the Mobile Classroom

Hajime Sakamoto
President
Manabi no Mori



Mobile classroom at temporary housing complex
(photo by: courtesy of Manabi no Mori)



Using his experience and success with the cram school, Mr. Sakamoto organized and developed learning support services for disaster-affected children. Former students of his cram school returned as staff members and provided these children with hands-on support, which has contributed to rebuilding the larger educational environment of the region. Staff members experienced personal growth as they felt the significance of the services they provided and gained confidence from their work, which, in return, has created a sense of trust in the community.



Personal Profile

After graduating from college, Mr. Sakamoto started working a corporate job, which he left after a little under three years to return to southern Miyagi where he grew up. For the past twenty years, he has been running cram schools, which he has started himself. Since the disaster, Mr. Sakamoto has continued to offer learning support services, using his cram school as a driving force. He has also been involved in the operation of an elder care service NPO.

In April 2012, Mr. Sakamoto was...

Mr. Sakamoto has been running cram schools for elementary, middle, and high school students in the city of Kakuda in Miyagi. During the day, he is working at NPO Hotto-ai based in the town of Ogawara in Miyagi. This NPO provides various subsidized and independent projects for the elderly and the disabled. Even before the disaster, Mr. Sakamoto was concerned that the level of academic achievement among elementary and middle school students in Miyagi's inland rural communities trailed behind that of metropolitan Sendai.

Due to damage from the Great East Japan Earthquake, Kakuda School, which was one of the cram schools Mr. Sakamoto ran, had to be temporarily shut down. He reopened the school ten days after the disaster, and opened up the classrooms to be used by local elementary, middle, and high school students until their schools resumed in April. Voices of survivors in an emergency shelter in the town of Yamamoto, with which he was involved, reached Hotto-ai with requests for someone to look after their children's studies. This was the impetus for Mr. Sakamoto to begin providing services in Yamamoto. He witnessed the plight of the disaster-stricken community with his own eyes, and made the decision to stay in the area for the long term and provide caring support for the children of this community.

Mr. Sakamoto was soon joined by two young alumni of the cram school, Mr. Takumi Kida and Mr. Osamu Hosokawa who became staff members of his newly founded school in Yamamoto. The three of them decided that they need to "start by creating a place for children to belong." This is how the mobile classroom called Manabi no Mori began in the meeting room of the temporary housing complex.

Mr. Sakamoto hired two young staff members, but he was greatly concerned about how he might operate and manage the program so that they would have enough income. He had nobody to turn to and consult with, and was in a phase where he was not sure what to make of the direction he was heading, or whether it was the right direction at all.

What Mr. Sakamoto worked on

■I learned a lot about establishing an appropriate organizational structure as an incorporated association and on how exactly to do that tactfully

Manabi no Mori achieved General Incorporated Association status in December 2011. Group training sessions that were part of the Capacity Development Project began right around the time when more paid staff members were being hired and the scope of the program had started to expand. "I learned a lot about establishing appropriate organizational structures, about accounting and human resources, and about other things mandated by law for an incorporated association, and on how exactly to do those things tactfully. What I learned in those sessions laid a sound groundwork for running the organization, everything began to fall into place with respect to the things I'd been worried about," recalled Mr. Sakamoto of the effects the training sessions had on his organization. However, fundraising was still a struggle for Mr. Sakamoto, as had been pointed out during the training. He had been covering the costs of the mobile classroom at the temporary housing complex with a grant when Manabi no Mori was selected, for the first time, as a commissioned project by the Ministry of Education with a 9-million-yen budget over six months. Until the budget was released, he was having trouble making ends meet, even though he tried his hardest to manage the expenses. This was when the capacity building project's overnight training took place, and he spoke with Mr. Yoshihiro Yokota from the Ibaraki NPO Center Commons, who suggested Japan Finance Corporation's bridge loan. Indeed, Manabi no Mori later received this bridge loan.

■A chance to recognize and to actualize our role

At a cram school, students and teaching staff face each other and work towards an academic goal within the walls of the classroom environment. In this case, the staff members had simply believed in that what they were doing was necessary for the students, without having any idea how it might look from an outside perspective.

Right around the time, Mr. Sakamoto participated in the Mentoring Program that took place after the group training sessions, and met Mr. Yasuo Aomi of Ishikawa Citizen Activity Networking Center as his mentor. For the first on-site visit in October 2012. "At that time, they did not complement us on anything in particular, but the sheer fact that they came all the way over here to hear



Information Exchange Meeting of Miyagi-Based Participants in Kesenuma (Photo by: courtesy of Manabi no Mori)

about our activities was exciting enough for us. This feeling was shared by all the staff members, and I remember being left with this realization that we can and should feel proud of what we have been working on,” says Mr. Sakamoto as he recalls their visits.

■Participant-organized Information Exchange Meetings as a source of encouragement

As a result of having gone through Capacity Building Project’s group training sessions together, former participants decided to hold information exchange meetings to make the most of the networks they had established with other NPOs in the prefecture. For Miyagi-based NPOs, this happened through visiting each other’s offices or program sites and exchanging information, including two visits to Mr. Sakamoto’s Ogawara School. Group training sessions had been taking place twice a month, so all the participants had bonded with each other naturally, and you could see that they were all relieved to see each other again at the information exchange meetings. Mr. Sakamoto was no exception, and explained the sense of camaraderie he had with other participants. “We always see each other after spending some time apart, but I appreciate the fact that we have established a relationship where we don’t need to explain the background or the progress every time, and instead we can jump straight to telling each other what is happening at the moment in our organizations. I feel encouraged by seeing how others are proactively making progress in each of their organizations, and knowing that I can make the same kind of progress with my organization as well.”

Results and Changes

■Mobile classroom as an indispensable part of the community

There are two middle schools in the town of Yamamoto – Yamashita Middle School and Sakamoto Middle School – and they receive students from three and two elementary school districts respectively. It was in June 2011 that Manabi no Mori started providing learning support services in Yamamoto. This so-called “Mobile Classroom” took place every Friday in the meeting room of the temporary housing complex which was once the Sakamoto Middle School. This temporary housing complex was the first in Yamamoto to have residents move in, with 79 households moving in among the 300 households which survived the disaster in the Nakahama neighborhood of Yamamoto. In Nakahama, every structure except the elementary school, which stood 200 meters from the shore, had been washed away by the tsunami. Mr. Sakamoto and



Mobile Classroom at the Temporary Housing Complex (Photo by: courtesy of Manabi no Mori)

his staff had heard voices of concern from grandmothers who had grandchildren living in the temporary housing and from parents and guardians worried about their children. They watched over the children who attended the mobile classroom, and took great care in creating a learning environment for them. As a team of one full-time teacher and two or three part-time college student teachers, they adopted a flexible instructional style that met the needs of the children.

Starting in the spring of 2012, a mobile classroom has been meeting at the temporary housing complex in Asohara Uchide every Thursday, and at the temporary housing complex in Asohara Toden every Monday. The three sites have continued to this day.

“One of the staff members, Kida, was working create this learning space the best he could through trial and error. To be honest, we were not sure how our efforts would look from an outside point of view, but after having met Mr. Aomi and Ms. Nitta and hearing their responses, it finally dawned on us that what we are doing may actually be something worthwhile. I think this realization has fueled his motivation,” Mr. Sakamoto notes.

Mobile classrooms are mobile, in that they take place in the meeting room of each temporary housing complex. Unlike a regular cram school classroom, it was a difficult learning environment for the students to settle down, calm down, and study, so the students would come but end up engaging in chit-chat. Mr. Kida rearranged the seating arrangement every time, and made creative adjustments in how the teaching staff would face the students.

This resulted in less chatter, and even when the students were heard talking, it had something to do with what they were studying. Consequently, each student solved more problems, and more students finished before time was up. Most importantly, students’ school grades went up, and the staff saw that they were happier. “I think the Manabi no Mori style has finally sunk in at the mobile classroom. We can finally instruct our students the way we would at the cram school. Even if we don’t have a lot of staff, all of us are motivated to successfully run the mobile classroom. I believe we got better and stronger the more time we spent right here in the classroom.”

It has been three years since the first mobile classroom opened up. “It’s an indispensable part of our community now,” says both the students and their parents and guardians. Local school teachers place unfailing trust and hope in Manabi no Mori’s teaching staff, too.

■Positive circle of growth for the cram school, with staff members growing into capable site managers

Mr. Sakamoto speaks of the positive effects the mobile classroom has had on the cram school. “We were seeing an unending influx of students to the Kakuda School which I had been originally running. Business was looking up with this positive circle of growth. There are instances which make us realize that perhaps what we have been doing is right, and people are taking notice. For instance, a high school student said to one of the staff members, ‘I wish we had Manabi no Mori when I was in middle



Mr. Takumi Kida, who teaches Japanese, social studies, and middle school math (Photo by: courtesy of Manabi no Mori)

school,’ and we also get to hear about how the children trust, admire, and respect our staff members, too.”

Mr. Sakamoto had been focusing his time and efforts on starting up new sites and on fundraising, leaving everything after that – including running the mobile classrooms and applying the final touches? – to Mr. Hosokawa and Mr. Kida. “Both of them have handled all the tasks very well, doing what needs to get done at their own discretion and take responsibility for it. This includes negotiations with external parties when necessary. I only hear reports after everything is taken care of, unless there is a problem, in which case they let me know as soon as possible. But with all the day-to-day workings of the classrooms, I leave everything up to the two of them.” Mr. Sakamoto finds it invaluable that the staff members have grown into capable site managers. He also feels that he can now see tangible results in the community from offering the skills of himself and his staff in the business form of a cram school. Ideas he and his staff come up with now are based on an examination of what society needs and what the community lacks. “I think we’ve come to find that process gratifying. We know we’re the only ones doing what we do in our communities, and I believe we can consider ourselves pioneers.”

■ Meeting a great mentor

Mr. Sakamoto and his staff have maintained a good relationship with the mentor, Mr. Aomi, ever since Mr. Aomi visited Manabi no Mori. After the mentoring period had officially ended, Mr. Sakamoto took the five staff members to visit Mr. Aomi in Kanazawa on an observational study tour. Having Mr. Aomi as a mentor made a great impact on Mr. Sakamoto and the young staff members and affected them tremendously.

One of the staff teachers, Mr. Kida, explains his impact and influence this way: “My first impression of him was that I could not read him, but I came to see him as a very pure-hearted adult, in a good way. It comes with the territory of this job to have to build rapport with and form relationships with children, and meeting Mr. Aomi made me realize that perhaps I need to work on being at the same eye level as the children and not try to impose my adult self onto them. I’d never met an adult like him before. Actually, Principal Sakamoto is a one of a kind himself. Perhaps they’re alike.”

He continues further: “I’d love for Mr. Aomi to see how we’ve changed. Ever since we visited Kanazawa last year, I think I’ve gained more clarity, even though I hadn’t been



Mr. Osamu Hosokawa, who teaches English (Photo by: courtesy of Manabi no Mori)

too conscious of the change. I just know that the students talk to me more often, and we even talk about issues outside of studying now.”

Mr. Sakamoto reflects on his staff members and the children who come to the mobile classrooms and sees a bright future ahead of them. “I’m certain that we will get to see a huge difference ten years from now thanks to the capacity building project.”

What’s ahead

Mr. Sakamoto speaks about what he sees as the next steps of his program. “Due to the emergency school counselor dispatch program (a Ministry of Education commissioned project) that started at Kakuda School in April 2014, students who used to be able to stay only in the school nurse’s office were now attending regular classes with other students. We need to devise a structure so that this trend can continue. Also, after we conduct needs assessments, we’d like to figure out how to create programs in our area of expertise within the larger framework of low-income family support programs. One more future plan for us is to make our in-school learning support programs better known to municipal governments. We need to find out ways to split our staff into day and evening programs, too. When our high school seniors go on to higher education in our local area, they tell us that they would like to help out Manabi no Mori. It is my hope that a cycle can be established where students who experienced growth here in our programs can come back and contribute to the growth of the next generation of children in the region.”

Ms. Masami Kobayashi (Parent of a student who attends the mobile classroom)

It all started when the mobile classroom opened and our oldest son began to participate in the second year of middle school. Our family of four only has two rooms in our temporary housing, so the conditions are not conducive to studying, and it has been a tremendous help just having studies looked after at the Manabi no Mori a couple of times a week.

Ms. Hosokawa, the staff teacher, is young and close to my son's age, so I think my son finds him easy to talk to. Since he's the oldest child, I had no experience with high school entrance exams and was at a loss about what to do, especially since the entrance exam system had just changed, so the advice he got from Mr. Hosokawa was immeasurably valuable. After he started participating in the mobile classroom, my son's study habits changed, and, most importantly, his grades have gone up. I think he has been well prepared mentally and emotionally for the entrance exams, too. Initially I thought that he would stop going after the first year, but it's been a blessing to see him continue to this day.

Mr. Toru Sakuma (Teacher, Sakamoto Middle School)

Our relationship began when Mr. Sakamoto approached us to offer learning support. Our school started late by about 2 weeks because of the earthquake, and the teachers were finding it hard to prepare properly for the start. As a school, we were making efforts to raise our academic standards, so we were eager to accept his offer. We began by learning support at the meeting room in the temporary housing complex, and then moving on to an after school study hall within our school, followed by Saturday seminars for our third-year students in the Sakamoto Community Center, and finally the winter learning support seminars. Whenever we're concerned about particular students, we drop by Manabi no Mori after school, ask how they are doing, and share information. Being able to hear about changes in our students, whatever they are, helps us in providing guidance counseling to the students.



What is
"civic activity"
for you?

In the past, it was something distant. Today, it has been incorporated into my daily life and work.



Organizational Profile

Manabi no Mori

URL: <http://www.s-1.jp>

President: Hajime Sakamoto

Founded in 2011 (obtained Incorporated Association status in 2011)

Manabi no Mori set up new classrooms immediately after the Great East Japan Earthquake, and at the same time it started providing learning support services in and around the town of Yamamoto, which had suffered damage from the earthquake and tsunami. Activities include the "mobile classroom," aimed at elementary and middle school students, which takes place in the meeting room of the temporary housing complex; after school learning support classrooms at Yamamoto Middle School and Sakamoto Middle School; and Saturday seminars, as well as courses during the school year, to prepare third year middle school students for their examinations. They also run a cram school aimed at elementary, middle, and high school students in the towns of Kakuda and Ogawara.

Fiscal Year 2013

Personnel: 3 Members of the Board of Directors, 22 Staff Members (7 paid full-time staff, 15 other)

Total revenue: 41,967, 044 yen

Creating Space for Children to Play Safely —From Passion to Organization

Shigeki Shibata
President
Nijiirō Crayons



Group Training Session at the Nijiirō Crayons office (Source: Nijiirō Crayons)

Faced with a challenge that arose under adverse circumstances, Mr. Shibata started with an idea of creating open spaces for children to play. Gradually, his idea is now becoming a reality. Through the Mentoring Program and Program for Strengthening Organizational Capacities, he has created a concrete structure and foundation to allow it to continue.



Personal Profile

Born in Ishinomaki city. After graduating from the Nihon University Graduate School of Art in 2002, he earned living as a painter. Runs Gokokkan School for Painting. Vice-chair of the Gokokkan Kendo Youth Group., Mr. Shibata won the top award at the 2005 Ishinomaki city Art Exhibition, which featured the work of 20 Czechoslovakian and Japanese artists. In 2006, he exhibited at the Kahoku Art Exhibition, where he won the Governor of Fukushima's Award, and in 2009 and 2010 he won the Nichiyo Award at the Nichiyo Art Exhibition. In 2011, Mr. Shibata was awarded the Miyagi Prefecture Recommended Emerging Artist Award.

In April 2012, Mr. Shibata was...

Born and raised in Ishinomaki, Mr. Shigeki Shibata graduated from the Nihon University Graduate School of Art in 2002, upon which he began his career as a painter. While running Gokkan School for Painting in his local community, he also focused his energies on youth development through kendo, which he had been involved in for many years, serving as vice-chair of the Gokkan Kendo Youth Group and promoting awareness. He continues to teach kendo to children about twice a week.

But then the Great East Japan Earthquake hit, and Mr. Shibata's home was completely destroyed by the tsunami. "The disaster made everything bad. I wanted to make things good again somehow. I quit art completely and decided to do something with kids. That was my challenge," Mr. Shibata says frankly, explaining why he began his current activities.

He began supporting children in the disaster areas. "At the time, something else was controlling our actions. Instead of doing things that could be sustainable or that might help stabilize the situation, we did things because we were confronted head on by the issues. I guess we weren't as concerned as we should have been. We acted on a personal level rather than as an organization, but then perceived the weaknesses and limits of this approach. Our priority was to act quickly, so I don't think that what we did was wrong. But we just didn't have strength as an organization. We didn't become aware of the problem until later," Mr. Shibata says as he reflects on the early days. He leapt at the chance to join the NPO Capacity Development Project because, he says, "I thought that something was missing. We didn't have a particular approach or way of thinking. Something (I don't know what) was worrying me."

What Mr. Shibata worked on

■ Taking action based on learning and awareness

A Group Training Session entitled "15 Management Capabilities to Improve NPOs" was held as the first stage of the Capacity Development Project. In Miyagi, the first meeting was held from June 2-3 in Tagajo city. The foundational course on the theme "The Capacity to See: The Shape of NPOs in Japan" likened an organization to a ship, and its activities to its cargo. Speaking frankly of his experiences at the time, Mr. Shibata says, "We were carrying a lot of cargo without having a proper ship. We

didn't even know what a ship was – what the basics of an organization were." We responded each day to what we were being confronted with despite not understanding so many things around us. Mr. Shibata arranged his schedule to find time to attend all six sessions of the training program. He posed questions to the lecturers and used the knowledge and information he gained to his advantage.

■ Experiencing the merits of the mentoring structure

After the Group Training Session came the Mentoring Program. Mr. Shibata's mentor was Keizo Yamashita from the Oita NPO Design Center. Mr. Yamashita visited the project area in Ishinomaki from Oita three times, but he and Mr. Shibata mostly communicated by email and telephone. For Mr. Shibata, however, email was somewhat burdensome. So many things can happen on the ground in a week, and though he thought to share each of these issues with Mr. Yamashita, it was quite difficult to do so. Mr. Shibata couldn't call his mentor because he only had time to do so in the middle of the night. There were many times when he wanted to talk to him but the timing did not work out. And yet when Mr. Yamashita visited, he went to see what was happening on the ground and listened to Mr. Shibata, who then shared everything that he had been unable to communicate until the visit. Mr. Shibata recalls being particularly relieved when Mr. Yamashita visited during the planning stages of the general assembly, when they had finished the incorporation process and completed one year of activities.

■ Things become clearer through the application process

Many victims of the disaster in Ishinomaki still live in temporary housing, and as of August 1, 2014 there are 6,158 households with 13,876 people living in 133 such facilities. Of these people, about 10% are children (preschool to junior high school age). There is still a severe lack of places for children to safely play. Over the next five years, it is expected that people will move from temporary housing areas to public housing as part of the recovery efforts, and there is a need to provide children with new spaces for play. This is why Nijiirō Crayons has applied the Grant Program for Strengthening Organizational Capacities, in the hope of continuing to create community-based spaces for children to play, and to transfer its management activities from temporary play areas into permanent play parks. Nijiirō Crayons thus developed the Ishinomaki Play Park Project to create a structure for

systematically and continuously managing Ishinomaki's play park projects – to clearly define the nature of the play parks that Nijihiro Crayons seeks to create.

■ Staff development through the support of a suitable adviser

Over the ten-month period covered by the Grant Program for Strengthening Organizational Capacities, the help of an adviser from an external organization was solicited to encourage even better results. Mr. Shibata requested an adviser from Boken Asobiba (Adventure Playground) Sendai – Miyagi Network. Mr. Akio Nemoto, one of the directors and “play leaders,” came onboard. Mr. Nemoto was also a member of the Capacity Building Project and had studied with Mr. Shibata during its first stage and exchanged information with him, so they shared an understanding of each other's work. The Grant Program became an opportunity for them to strengthen their co-operation and make use of organizational networks in both Miyagi and other prefectures. With the expenses of the adviser included in the budget, Mr. Shibata was at ease in asking Mr. Nemoto about various things, and was able to have suitable support.

Results and Changes

■ The emerging effects of sharing work and collaborating with others

Through the Ishinomaki Play Park Project, we have been able to accomplish many of the goals we had set in the

planning stages. If not for the project, Mr. Shibata says, “there was a strong possibility that it would have all have come to an end.”

Mr. Shibata and his staff also created a number of by-products during various parts of the process. One example was the management of a play park in collaboration with a local group. Held on the fourth Sunday of the month, the play area in Nakase Park was once managed by Mr. Toda, the president of the People's Council for the Children of Ishinomaki. He took care of just about everything, from the preparations to actual management on the day of the event. Since April, ISHINOMAKI 2.0 has taken charge of the design work for the play park leaflet, and Nijihiro Crayons does the printing and distributes the leaflets to the relevant bodies. There is a division of labor in place, where, for example, one staff member of Nijihiro Crayons brings copies of the leaflet to the Board of Education to publicize play parks in elementary schools. This also creates an opportunity for the staff and relevant bodies to become acquainted with each other, and school children that see the leaflets end up going to the park to play. Mr. Shibata observes that the staff members internalize this process of events, which leads them to feel happy about what they see and enjoy increased motivation. “We have young people working with us, and they really are a great help right now,” says Mr. Toda, whose workload has lightened now that he no longer has to do everything on his own. Opportunities for young people to feel connected to the local community have also grown as a result.

Nikoniko Play Park is held on the grounds of Ishinomaki



Adults and children enjoying spinning tops together (April 27, 2014, Nakase Play Park) (Photo by: Nijihiro Crayons)

Senshu University every second Sunday of the month. It originally started when students of the university who wanted to do something about the lack of places for children to play began using a space in the Minamizakai temporary housing area. When that became too small, the play park was moved to the university grounds. Students formed the Hidamari Student Club to run it. Nijiirō Crayons provides regular backup for the group regarding how to manage the play park as a regular activity, from advice on planning to post-event reviews. It also sends play leaders to the event to be with the children. Many of the student club members are first year students, and many of them hope to become teachers one day. Some even do volunteer work at Nijiirō Crayons. Positive relationships can be seen developing between the staff and the students, with the latter asking the staff for advice.

Other than Nijiirō Crayons, there are seven other groups in Ishinomaki that host play park events, so the idea is already alive. Because these parks are mainly run by staff members sent from other prefectures, however, there is a need to cultivate local staff for the job to ensure the project's continuity. Nijiirō Crayons hopes that more and more members of the local community take over this job of looking after the children.

•Play parks are held in six places in Ishinomaki city (Nakase, Kaisei, Ishinomaki Senshu University, Koganehama, Kitakami and Kamegamori) and these are run by 8 local groups (ISHINOMAKI 2.0, Kodomo Company, Urayama Play Park, TEDIC, People's

Council for the Children of Ishinomaki, Ishinomaki Children's Center, Yamazaki Seminar Group and Hidamari Student Club [Ishinomaki Senshu University], and Nijiirō Crayons), with the cooperation of five groups both in and outside Miyagi prefecture (Boken Asobiba [Adventure Playground], Sendai – Miyagi Network, Setagaya Play Parks, Kodomo/Wakamono Matching, TOKYO Play, and the Japan Adventure Playground Association).

■Effects of division of labor observed in internal workings of the groups

When Mr. Shibata began his efforts, he was completely swamped by everything and had no skills in the essential task of grant reporting, suffering sleepless nights preparing the various documents. Regarding the preparation of the report for the Capacity Development Project, however, Mr. Shibata says that he did not do it all himself and instead divided the task among several staff members. He seemed glad as he recounted, “I shared what the grantor was looking for with the staff in charge of the report – from the fundamentals to what has to be kept in check. They were understanding and told me, ‘It must have been so tough on you before!’”

Preparing materials for the Capacity Development Project was particularly burdensome, but as it had to be produced for the project secretariat, it was hoped that this would also be a positive experience for the groups. “We had to work out an implementation schedule. It was easy to confirm this progress internally. The interim report was also tough, but it made the activities that followed



Meeting to discuss the next play park event (photo by: Nijiirō Crayons)



Meeting after the Playpark event (Photo by: Nijiirō Crayons)



The Play Leader Development Program Manual, created together with Nijiro Crayons staff members

easier to do. Overall, preparing the initial materials was hard but the more we prepared, the easier it was to implement accordingly, so I think it went very well. I would like to apply the same system next time. Maybe that's how we should prepare our annual plan," Mr. Shibata says, demonstrating his understanding of the importance of preparing such documentation.

■ Marked development among staff through training and observation

Looking back on the Ishinomaki Play Park Project, Mr. Shibata recounts, "We were introduced to the teachers of the workshop and people in the organizations we observed, which gave us opportunities to learn. As a result, our staff learned many things, including the difference between risks and hazards, and how to be prepared to look after children. They are now able to use such knowledge to remain calm in their dealings with children in the parks, and I have observed them working hard to understand the children's feelings." It is also reassuring for the staff to have an experienced adviser at hand who they can consult if needed. Trust has been built between the staff and the advisers, as the latter provided each staff member with individualized attention in dealing with their worries.

There are currently five candidates for play leader being trained for the 2014 play parks. Hoping to "gain experience and increase knowledge about play parks even further over the next year, and encourage staff to gain experience and confidence as play leaders," Mr. Shibata and his staff prepared the Play Leader Development Program Manual. Mr. Shibata's adviser, Mr. Nemoto, says, "Through activities such as preparing this manual, they have been able to discuss within their organization what it is like to deal

with the children, and make concrete (and not just perfunctory) connections with other organizations that are essential to cooperate with in the future, and these sort of things are valuable resources for the future."

What's ahead

Based on the outcomes to date, Mr. Shibata plans to continue to run the Nakase Park and Senshu University play parks, which the organization has been doing since 2014. Furthermore, he says, "I'd like to promote play parks in the public housing areas that will be developed in the future. Towards this end, I'd like to create structures that will allow the community to run the play parks, with more of its residents and guardians actively participating and more locals joining efforts to create spaces for children to play. I also think that it is important to create opportunities for people to learn about the concept and social value of play parks in Ishinomaki. I'd like to become involved in the efforts of play park groups in Ishinomaki city, as well as both in and beyond Miyagi prefecture, in making proposals to the government regarding the need to create spaces for children to play. I would also like to be involved in the publicity efforts of various groups." Speaking in a calm yet firm tone, Mr. Shibata also looks beyond the topic of play parks to say, "The challenge is to create a nonprofit organization that can responsibly come to the forefront of society."



Meeting after the Training (Photo by: Nijiro Crayons)

Ms. Noriko Kimura (a guardian of a child using the play areas)

I lived near the temporary housing area, so I began going to the play space in the lounge when it was established. The young men and women volunteering there spent a lot of time playing with my mischievous little boy, who was only two at the time of the disaster. These days, now that he has come to understand what the days of the week are, he asks me, "There's Nijiro today, right?" – he can't wait for it, and he is the one who initiates conversation about it. At Nijiro, he can play with everyone, regardless of age, and it's really helpful that they look after the children. The staff members are very attentive, and I feel at ease there.

Ms. Mayumi Nishimura (freelance)

I was first asked to help produce the secretariat's manual. The role of the secretariat was weak because so many people had come and gone over time. Even if the person in charge had the know-how, it was not the right organizational knowledge for Nijiro. I suggested breaking up tasks instead of concentrating them together, and dividing the work, taking turns at presiding over the week's meeting, for example, and clarifying tasks other than the secretariat manual. In particular, someone was put in charge of accounting, and with that, things were reorganized.

With the introduction of three new staff members around the fall of 2013, everything became more exciting. Things are going well now, as the secretariat can deal with its own tasks, and there are people who can be consulted about matters, in addition to the person in charge and two people on the ground, who can consult with each other.



What is
"civic activity"
for you?

I believe that civic activity is what happens when people use their own hands to fill the gaping holes in people's lives (social problems).



Organizational Profile

Nijiro Crayons

URL: <http://nijiro-kureyon.jp/>

President: Shigeki Shibata

Founded in 2011 (obtained Specific Nonprofit Corporation status in 2012)

As the "Ishinomaki Children's Evacuation Center Club," it began activities to care for the minds of disaster-affected children after the earthquake. In 2012, the new name "Nijiro Crayon" was used when it was incorporated as a Specified Nonprofit Corporation. Through recreational activities that take place regularly once a week, Nijiro Crayon offers opportunities for children to play and learn in order to develop their, learning ability and sociability.

Fiscal Year 2013

Personnel: 5 directors, 9 staff members (4 full-time, 5 other)

Total revenue: JPY 24,310,952

Implementing Hands-On Mentor Support in the Community

Yoshihiro Abe

Board Chair
Shiga NPO Center

Mr. Yoshihiro Abe, the Executive Chair of Shiga NPO Center, acted as a mentor for three participants from Iwate prefecture who attended the NPO Capacity Development Project. Mr. Abe had always felt that the challenge of organizational capacity development was not limited to NPOs in the regions affected by disasters, and that effectively attending to this task required sustained support in addition to various seminars and training sessions. In seeking ways to provide such support, he thought of setting up a hands-on mentoring program, which he himself had experienced, and decided to implement this program in his local community in Shiga prefecture.

Mr. Abe established a two-year program called the “NPO Youth Empowerment Project.” In the first stage, the program offers lectures and workshops that allow participants to gain basic knowledge about NPOs and how to manage them. In the second stage, it offers a small grant program to projects that will strengthen the foundations of NPOs. In the third stage, it oversees the implementation of the proposed projects and provides mentoring support. This program targets young staff members working for NPOs in Shiga with the hope of improving these organizations.

The goal was to raise 3 million yen for the two-year project through donations. Mr. Abe decided to start the program without relying on external institutional funding. At the same time, he looked for people to participate in the program, and eight individuals applied. The project commenced in June 2014 with two board members and six staff members from their respective NPOs. Organizations involved in social welfare, community development, and intermediary support for NPOs participated in the program. The board members of the Shiga NPO Center, including Mr. Abe, were scheduled to act as mentors.

Mr. Abe says that until about ten years ago, when NPO management was a more popular topic, there were many comprehensive seminars about NPOs in Shiga and nearby prefectures, but there are almost none today. He also says that while people in NPOs take great pains to implement their projects, they seem to lack an understanding of what NPOs are all about. We need to ask ourselves: “What exactly is an NPO in the first place?” and “What does it mean to be an organization that is supported by the community?” Ms. Yuko Nakano, the Executive Director of the Shiga NPO Center, also points out that although she herself was able to gain confidence in her work by attending the seminars at the Osaka NPO Center’s NPO “graduate school,” there is surprisingly little demand for seminars on NPO management, and little interest in developing effective organizations.

One of the program participants was Mr. Daisuke Furikado, who works at Popo-House, a specified nonprofit corporation which runs projects that support disabled children. While he hopes to specialize in children’s welfare and developmental disabilities,



Seminar at the recently-launched “NPO Youth Empowerment Project” (Photo by: Shiga NPO Center)

he is also interested in NPO management. When he spoke to the Vice Chief Director of his organization about his wish to be capable in both field work and management, the Director recommended that he attend the Shiga NPO Center’s program. He says that while he has been reading various materials to learn more about NPOs, the greatest appeal of this program is that it will help him gain practical skills through project planning and mentors’ advice.

Mr. Abe has redefined mentorship as: “A method of human resource development in which leaders act as ‘mentors’ and facilitate their trainees’ voluntary and self-guided development. This is achieved not through instructions or orders, but by providing on-site support as well as advice based on what they have noticed through their dialogues.” Seeing that the younger generation is not being trained to follow the work of dedicated senior NPO members, Mr. Abe has high hopes that the mentoring system will work effectively to help with the future development of his own program.

Organizational Profile

The Shiga NPO Center started its operations in May 2009 as an organization that provides support for civic activities, NPOs, and local communities in Shiga prefecture. In September 2011, it became a Specified Nonprofit Corporation with the following four pillars: provide support for civic activities and NPOs; provide support for communities; promote inter-sector collaboration; and conduct research activities to realize these goals. The fifth pillar, “provide disaster relief,” was added after the Center took part in emergency relief for the Great East Japan Earthquake. The organization believes that in order to overcome the challenges that communities face, it is necessary to revitalize NPOs that focus on civic activities, rebuild local communities, and establish cooperative partnerships between local residents and public administrative bodies.

Ms. Abe's Profile

Born in Shiga prefecture, Mr. Abe joined Shiga Prefectural Government in 1980. When the Omi Network Center for Voluntary Organizations was founded, he was temporarily assigned to work there to provide support for civic activities and NPOs. In March 2003, he left the government to dedicate himself to helping local community activities within the prefecture. Since July 2012, he has been involved in the management of various NPOs, including the Shiga NPO Center, of which he is the Executive Chair. He is also a guest associate professor at Shiga University’s Research Center for Cooperation with Society.

“NPOs are Fun!”

Development of an Independent Project

Manami Uchiyama

Director, Fukushima Civic Activity Support Center
Fukushima NPO Network Center



Ms. Uchiyama explaining the Donation Gift program (Photo by: Fukushima NPO Network Center)

Ms. Uchiyama wanted to create a more open atmosphere in her organization, and she was prompted to act on that thought by activities she participated in with the organization she visited during her internship, and by the ideas of the people she worked with there. Her vision broadened, and she gained confidence by experiencing the joy and potential of NPOs. She embarked on the challenge of reducing psychological distance between directors and staff through measures such as proposing projects to the Board of Directors.



Personal Profile

Born in Fukushima city, Fukushima prefecture. She has worked as a publisher and master of ceremonies. In September 2009, she joined the staff of the Fukushima Civic Activity Support Center, and in March 2010, she became a full-time staff member at the Fukushima NPO Network Center. In April 2011, she became Director of the Support Center. In July 2012, she became a board member of the Fukushima NPO Network Center.

In April 2012, Ms. Uchiyama was...

The Fukushima NPO Network Center is responsible for businesses such as the City Information System, the Civic Activity Support Center, and the prefecture's Regional Activity Organization Support Center. It has 5 locations within Fukushima prefecture. When she participated in the NPO Capacity Development Project, Ms. Uchiyama was serving as the director of one of these branches, the Fukushima Civic Activity Support Center, and she provided consultations for NPOs. She felt, however, that her own NPO suffered from a lack of expertise. In addition, she believed there was a problem with the organization's frequent reliance on government contract work for funding, resulting in a lack of revenue for necessary independent projects. There was also too much psychological distance between directors and staff. Ms. Uchiyama believed that this relationship needed improvement, and the human resource development of staff members was also an issue, so she participated in the NPO Capacity Development Project.

What Ms. Uchiyama worked on

■What does it mean to be a staff member?

Ms. Uchiyama says that by attending the group training on "15 Management Capabilities to Improve NPOs," in particular the "capability to make proposals" and the "capability to construct" sessions, she found a way to focus her perspective within her own organization.

As part of the lecture on the "capability to propose," there was an assignment to prepare a detailed project proposal. At the time, Ms. Uchiyama found that she was able to write a proposal based on her own work, but when told to write from the perspective of "the organization," she did not know what kind of plan to write about. The "capability to construct" lesson included an assignment to "imagine one of your own group's future activities, and write a newspaper article about that project." The other participants were writing detailed material, while everything Ms. Uchiyama wrote lacked realism, and she became aware that she had been working without any clear understanding of "the organization." What kinds of issues were there for the organization as a whole, beyond the duties she herself was responsible for? What kind of independent projects did the organization as a whole need? Looking back on the experience, Ms. Uchiyama says, "That was the first time I thought of the organization

in realistic terms."

The realizations she came to during the lesson period seem to have influenced her future decisions and prodded her to participate actively in projects.

■Discovery during the internship program: "the fun of NPOs"

Ms. Uchiyama started to think about her own role as part of the group, as well as the future state of the organization. In 2012, she was newly appointed to the position of director and decided that she wanted to learn about building relationships between the Board of Directors and staff, as well as creating mechanisms for the planning and management of independent projects. To that end, she hoped to serve an internship with the NPO Kochi Citizens' Council, the organization of Ms. Yoko Uchida, who had been her mentor during the NPO Capacity Development Project.

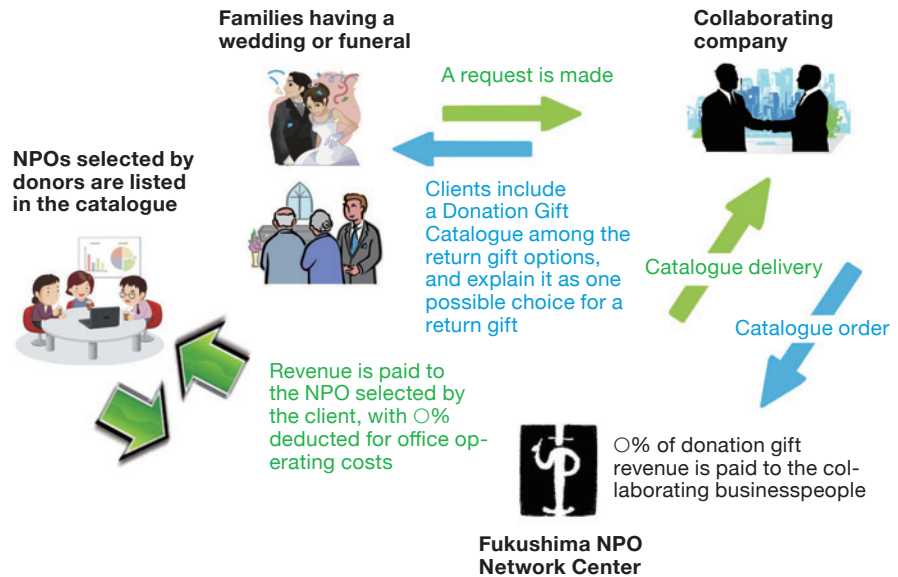
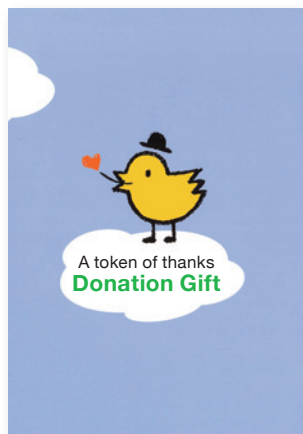
During her internship, she encountered examples such as the NPO Kochi Citizens' Council's fundraising activities, carried out with the cooperation of companies and the region, and she participated in a meeting for a project that included students from the city's elementary and middle schools. She experienced many stimulating things, such as how to fund a project with different kinds of people involved, and how to plan a project without restricting oneself to a particular frame of mind. She was able to observe detailed organizational management, including balancing different project types, the role of intermediary organizations, relationships between directors and staff, and human resource development.

More than anything, she was surprised by the joyful participation of the local people and the lively involvement of students. "NPO activities are fun!" With this feeling, Ms. Uchiyama cast aside her rigid ideas and realized the many possibilities of intermediary support activities. This was one of the greatest gains of Ms. Uchiyama's internship, and contributed to her later development.

■Proposing an independent project to the Board of Directors

When she returned from her internship, Ms. Uchiyama felt a strong desire to create a donation program as a project that would not rely on external funding. As soon as recruiting for the NPO Capacity Development Project's Grant Program for Strengthening Organizational Capacities began, Ms. Uchiyama sprang into action. She proposed "Donation Gifts" to the Board of Directors as a

What is the Donation Gift project...?



self-initiated independent project. She borrowed her idea from the “Gift from Heaven” program, which converts funeral offering return gifts into donations and is run by the Kochi Citizens’ Council, where Ms. Uchiyama had served her internship.

The project aims to promote ties between companies and the region, and it is implemented with the cooperation of local companies. This project will allow people to donate to a local NPO selected from a donation gift catalog as a return gift for a funeral or wedding. The amount donated to the organization would not be very large, but



Meeting to explain the Donation Gift program (Photo by: Fukushima NPO Network Center)

as an independent project with local NPOs and companies working together, it is a new experiment for the Fukushima NPO Network Center. At first, it took time for Ms. Uchiyama to make the directors understand why she wanted to do the project. Moreover, she had trouble convincing them to tackle the project as an organization instead of treating it as an individual plan, with the attitude that she should do it herself if she wanted to. “I was on the verge of giving up many times,” Ms. Uchiyama says, but she nevertheless continued to put pressure on the directors.

She involved the directors in the project by making them the selection committee responsible for choosing which organizations would receive donations. Meanwhile, she took a scrupulous approach to her proposal, visiting the collaborating companies over and over to provide explanations, and she was able to obtain the cooperation of people in the celebration and gift industries. The project has just begun, and the amount of donations it will yield in the future is unknown, but it has accomplished the two goals of securing donations through an independent project and creating a program to promote collaboration between local NPOs and companies. This was a great confidence booster for Ms. Uchiyama.

Her strong determination to cut through obstacles,

along with her extraordinary efforts, gradually brought about a change in consciousness among staff and directors alike. At the Fukushima Civic Activity Support Center, she became able to entrust work to the staff, and a system was constructed that allowed work to flow smoothly even when Ms. Uchiyama, the head of the center, was absent. Moreover, the organization itself slowly began to change, as a study group for staff interested in human resource development opened under the leadership of the directors.

■The role and responsibility of representing people on the ground and making proposals

After the earthquake, the number of long-term projects increased, and the Board of Directors felt it necessary to appoint directors from the younger generation. One of these was Ms. Uchiyama, who was chosen from among the staff. Ms. Uchiyama, who became a director in 2012, wondered how to bridge the psychological gap between directors and staff. Before serving as an intern, she was perplexed about how to speak to the Board of Directors and how to handle the distance she felt from the other directors. Through the NPO Capacity Development Project, however, she came to think of the organization's business as her own business, and was able to notice various organizational problems. She also gained an awareness of her own role within the organization, realizing that as a staff member who became a director, she could communicate with directors about conditions on the ground.

Although some of the other directors were resistant to change, she had a strong belief that "nothing will change if I don't speak up," so she began to state her own opinions before the Board, and the other directors gradually began to listen to her. The managing director, Mr. Kyoji Hoshino, says of Ms. Uchiyama that "she has the makings of a future executive." She has made her presence felt within the organization.

This series of events has boosted her confidence. Perhaps that is why, even when she was having trouble gaining the directors' understanding for her "Donation Gift" program, she managed to keep going and never gave up.

Results and Changes

■Another form of intermediary support?

It was the internship in Kochi that sparked Ms. Uchiyama's change in perspective. These were the specifics of her experience in that internship.

The Fukushima City Civic Activity Support Center

mostly worked on government contracts, and thus the degree of freedom for projects was not high. Perhaps for this reason, Ms. Uchiyama says, "Our response to the NPOs that consulted us was limited to making referrals to meet their needs."

At the Kochi Civic Activity Support Center, managed by the NPO Kochi Citizens' Council, many plans are carried out by neighborhood associations and companies working together. The different people involved in the project met on equal footing to state their opinions, and the support staff participated along with them in a mediating role. For Ms. Uchiyama, this was a refreshing sight. They also issued announcements with easily understood information about events that took place during the long vacation for schoolchildren. Ms. Uchiyama says she had thought that such a project "should be left to one of the organizations that supports children." But she realized that this had merely been her own assumption, and it was also possible for an intermediary support organization to contact and publish announcements together with organizations that support children. In short, by throwing away her own boundaries and assumptions, she gained a wider sense of the potential of intermediary support.

■NPOs are fun!

During that period, Ms. Uchiyama also attended meetings of the "Kotsu Machizukuri Bukai" and "Tosakko Town," which are run by the Kochi Civic Activity Support Center. At the Kotsu Machizukuri Bukai, local people and industries gathered to make plans such as "let's use the public transportation system to go drinking!" and "creating ways for children to use the public transportation system during summer vacation." At the meeting Ms. Uchiyama attended, they were planning day trip tours that parents and children could enjoy via public



A meeting focused on the college students of Tosakko Town (Photo by: Fukushima NPO Network Center)



Kotsu Machizukuri Bukai visiting companies
(Photo by: Fukushima NPO Network Center)

transportation. The local people were enjoying themselves as they designed the program, and a coordinator from the company that had collaborated on the plans from the beginning was also present. “I felt that the inclusion of so many different people gave breadth to the plans, awakened participants’ sense of involvement, and strengthened bonds among the group,” says Ms. Uchiyama.

The people being sent around on behalf of “Tosakko Town” were students. Many students were actively participating in the project, and students were taking care of business such as visiting companies. “It must have taken courage for Tosakko Town to entrust full responsibility to those students. Not to mention, their lack of experience means that time will be lost due to poor planning skills.” When Ms. Uchiyama said this to the current managing director, Ms. Uchida, she responded, “But the students are having fun and seem proud of themselves, don’t they? It’s very important for them to see how well they can hold up and lead themselves without interference from adults. There are also things that we can discover through the students’ youthful perspective and sincere feelings, so we all learn together.” Besides, not everything is left to the students. Adults watch over the situation and offer guidance to make the work easier, so there are hints at appropriate times. Now this was the way to help people grow! It prompted Ms. Uchiyama to think about human resource development as well.

■ Adding fun to their own ways of doing and viewing work

Ms. Uchiyama says that after seeing how much the people involved in NPO activities were enjoying themselves during her internship and realizing that NPOs could be fun, she found herself thinking, “The first thing I have to do is have fun myself.”

When she returned to Fukushima, she wanted to forge

real connections between companies and NPOs in the prefecture, and make it possible for everyone to build things together and feel involved with one another. More than anything, she had a strong desire to create an organization in which the staff could have a good time. In fact, the staff and visitors who saw Ms. Uchiyama when she came back to Fukushima unanimously agreed that “she looked as if a weight had been lifted from her shoulders.”

The Donation Gift project that she implemented afterwards was notable not only for being a innovative independent donation program, but also for being an application of the ideas and feelings that Ms. Uchiyama gained during her internship.

What’s ahead

The internship gave Ms. Uchiyama a clear view of her own group’s strengths and weaknesses and what to do about the weaknesses, and it increased her determination to deal with her organization’s new challenges. By fighting for the Donation Gift project within the organization, she came to understand what the directors and staff were thinking, and what kinds of things they wanted. This seems to have enabled her to gain a handle on teamwork and communication with people around her. Moreover, the exchanges between companies and local NPOs inspired them to not only think more deeply about their own wishes, but also about how much they needed the skill of involving other people.

There are still various problems within the organization, such as differences in levels of enthusiasm, but Ms. Uchiyama hopes that if people in the organization tackle these problems while respecting one another and enjoying themselves, their accomplishments will be great, and their bonds will grow stronger.



Interview visit during the Internship (Photo by: Fukushima NPO Network Center)

Mr. Kyoji Hoshino (Board Chair, Fukushima NPO Network Center)

Ms. Uchiyama appears to have created horizontal relationships and broadened her vision through her active participation in this training. Her positive attitude has made an impression on the staff. People have begun to propose new endeavors, and support for these new movements has grown among the officers as well.

The “Donation Gift” project that Ms. Uchiyama recently implemented brought in outside associates and led to the creation of a “system” for building a regional network. We had hardly done any independent projects until now, but I believe that intermediary support organizations must gradually change to include independent projects instead of just government contract work.

Ms. Uchiyama, who came to understand the fun side of NPOs through the training she received, has been making new proposals, so her workload has increased. I'm afraid that she may be carrying an excessive burden. I believe that we must consider building a system with support from the headquarters of the organization to prevent responsibilities from falling only on the shoulders of people who put themselves forward.

Mr. Takao Otsuki (Director, Hidamari House)

I always come to the Center for consultations. In the past, I used to speak directly to the director, but now I can find out almost everything from talking to Ms. Uchiyama.

Before, Ms. Uchiyama seemed like office staff, but she's become the kind of person I can truly rely on. Her knowledge has expanded, and the amount of information I receive in response to my questions has increased. Furthermore, she became very energetic after her return from Kochi, and I sensed that she had gained the ability to speak with confidence.

In the future, I hope that Ms. Uchiyama will continue to educate the other staff members as the leader of this place. I also hope that she will act as a mediator between citizens and NPOs, and contribute to the revitalization of NPOs in this region.



What is
“civic activity”
for you?

“Smiles and energy.”
I want to support not only activities, but also the ideas behind them and the people who are working with such enthusiasm.



Organizational Profile

Fukushima NPO Network Center

URL: <http://f-npo.jp/>

Board Chair: Kyoji Hoshino

Established 1999 (obtained Specified Nonprofit Corporation status in 2000)

Fukushima NPO Network Center performs intermediary support on behalf of NPOs/ civic activity organizations in Fukushima prefecture, especially the northern regions. It bolsters the “energy” and “courage” of civic activity organizations that grapple with local social problems and issues. Its main activities are information gathering and communication; support and consultation regarding management and exchange; holding training and courses; surveys, research, and policy proposals; and the promotion of community development.

Fiscal year 2013

Personnel: 15 officers, staff (Paid part-time workers: 12, others: 19)

Total revenue: 197,877,095 yen

Becoming an Organization that Helps People Grow

Yoko Uchida

Executive Director

NPO Kochi Citizens' Council

Kochi prefecture is located about 1,000 km away from the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake. Yet even now, three years later, Ms. Uchida's heart still goes out to those in the Tohoku region, despite the distance. It was on October 22, 2012 that Ms. Uchida first visited the affected areas to work as a mentor for three organizations in Iwate prefecture. While riding the Tohoku Shinkansen, or bullet train, Ms. Uchida was filled with hopes and worries; she wondered what kind of a support she could give as a mentor to the staff members as well as their organizations and activities. However, she says that as soon as she arrived at Morioka Station, she felt as though this was going to be "her new place."

Two years have passed since then. Ms. Uchida continues to manage the NPO Kochi Citizens' Council, valuing the importance of helping people grow and connect with one another.

On March 18, 2011, the Japan NPO Center (JNPOC) established the "Japan Earthquake Local NPO Support Fund." On March 23, the NPO Kochi Citizens' Council made a contribution to this fund with donations that had been collected in the local shopping district and on street corners. The ability to act fast and respond to any situation is the Citizen Council's strength. The staff members were reminded of this by an intern from outside the organization. The NPO Kochi Citizens' Council has an established reputation for its distinctive identity as an organization that offers intermediary support to Kochi city and its vicinity, engaging in activities in cooperation with various stakeholders. However, it is rare for staff members to come into contact with other organizations. On this occasion, the NPO Kochi Citizens' Council accepted Ms. Manami Uchiyama from the Fukushima NPO Network Center to work as an intern at the Council for one week. She had requested placement as an intern with an organization that operated as a support center outside the Tohoku region. Ms. Masae Yada, who has worked for years as a staff member at the Citizens' Council, has said that after Ms. Uchiyama left to return to Fukushima, she professed to Ms. Uchida, "We're actually lucky as an organization, aren't we?" She says that she realized why they are able to act swiftly and respond flexibly to any situation; it is because of the mutual understanding between board members and staff members, as well as among the staff members themselves.

The distance is such that it is not easy to get to Tohoku from Kochi. However, having heard from Ms. Uchiyama about conditions in the affected areas, Mr. Akihito Ozaki, one of the staff members of the Citizens' Council, thought that he would very much like to visit the region. Using his vacation time, he went to Tohoku and stopped by the Fukushima NPO Network Center as well. Later, one of the board members of the NPO Kochi Citizens' Council heard this story and suggested, "It is wonderful that a staff member voluntarily went to the affected areas and



At the office, from left: Ms. Uchida, Ms. Yada, Mr. Ozaki (Photo by: NPO Kochi Citizens' Council)

established a network. Let's set up a system to subsidize the transportation costs for trips like this one as part of job training." This system is now in the process of being established.

Thanks to Ms. Uchida frequenting Tohoku, staff members have become familiar with the region. In addition, after working with the intern, many of them can now see their own organization from an objective perspective. This experience has allowed both the staff members and the board of directors to recharge their will to continue their work in Kochi city.

Organizational Profile

The NPO Kochi Citizens' Council is a nonprofit citizens' group that supports volunteer and civic activities.

As well as managing "Kochi Civic-Activities Support Center," which was established by Kochi city in April 1999, it engages in various activities that support individuals and organizations that want to: utilize an area of expertise for the good of the community; get involved in volunteer work; gather a group of people to participate in public work; and make some contribution to society.

Ms. Uchida's Profile

Ms. Uchida worked for a consumer group before engaging in environmental issues. She acted as the Administrative Director for NPO Kochi Citizens' Council between April 2001 and June 2006. In addition to running Kochi Civic-Activities Support Center, she has worked on many projects, such as: setting up job training for municipality staff; establishing programs that connect businesses and NPO; helping people make the first step to participate in volunteer activities; and holding school lectures concerning environmental issues. Currently, she is involved in projects that deal with an aging society, revitalization of depopulated communities, and research activities that study ways to increase energy efficiency in our homes and lives.

Achieving Independence for Activities that Support Children and Community

Naomi Onami
President
Oguni kara no Egao



Ms. Onami receiving in-kind donation (Photo by: Oguni kara no Egao)

With the nuclear accident, the daily lives that people had taken for granted disappeared. As a mother, Ms. Onami was worried and distressed about radiation, but she overcame her circumstances and started working with a group of parents and guardians with the help of support organizations outside Fukushima prefecture. By attending training sessions and meeting many people, she established the organization's mission and its membership system. She was also able to set up an administrative structure with several staff members. Together, they began working as an organization, planning projects and raising funds to implement them.



Personal Profile

Ms. Onami was born in Kanagawa prefecture. She now lives with her husband and their two children in the Oguni district of Date city in Fukushima prefecture. Before the earthquake, she worked as an administrative staff member at a medical facility. In June 2011, she founded the organization Oguni kara no Egao (Heartfelt Smile from Oguni) with parents and guardians within her community.

In April 2012, Ms. Onami was...

Due to the radioactive contamination from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident, the Oguni district of Date city in Fukushima prefecture was designated as a “hot spot.” Before the Great East Japan Earthquake, Ms. Naomi Onami lived a productive life with her family in this place of natural beauty. However, that life disappeared after the earthquake.

Since the immediate aftermath of the nuclear disaster, Ms. Onami was fighting against the fear of radiation with her fellow parents and guardians in the community. With the help of organizations outside the prefecture, they set up a recreation camp called “Children of Fukushima Summer Camp” in order to protect their children from radiation. They wanted their children to spend as much time as possible in an area with a lower level of radiation. Their earnest wish was heard, and most of the children in the community attended the camp, which continues to take place with the continuous support of organizations outside the prefecture.

This summer camp also became the impetus for founding the organization “Oguni kara no Egao(Heartfelt Smile from Oguni)” in June 2011, with local parents and guardians as its core members. Since then, it has set up “Salons” where parents and guardians can share their inner thoughts and feelings. The organization works to communicate the problems that these victims face to appropriate administrative bodies. However, these activities had been conducted with external support from

organizations outside the prefecture, from planning, management, fundraising, and accounting, to administrative tasks. When a little more than a year passed after the earthquake disaster, Ms. Onami was starting to realize that she knew nothing about NPOs, and that she wanted to learn how to secure the necessary human resources not only for running the camps and salons, but also for performing administrative tasks.

While she was busy with her everyday life and her work at the organization, Ms. Onami attended the NPO Capacity Development Project, filled with worries and wondering whether participating in this project was really going to help her make the next step.

What Ms. Onami worked on

■ Learning about the “15 Management Capabilities” led to acquiring knowledge and basic skills for NPO

When she first started attending the NPO Capacity Development Project, Ms. Onami had listed the following as her goals: “Improve decision-making skills; establish relationships with other organizations; and learn how to run and manage an organization.” She also says, “I was worried because I didn’t know anything about NPOs, and thought this was a good opportunity to learn more.” In continuing to work face-to-face with local parents and guardians, who are concerned about radiation and troubled by its related problems, the basic skills that Ms. Onami acquired by learning the “15 Management

Organizations Progress through Different Phases

	I 2011	→ II 2012	→ III 2013	→ IV 2014	→
Organization's Progress	Parents and guardians came together to set up the organization after the earthquake.	Participated in JNPOC's NPO Capacity Development Project.	Started a new project with the grant from the NPO Capacity Development Project.	Established the organization's membership system and its three pillars.	
What followed	We knew nothing about NPOs. Received strong support from organizations outside the prefecture.	Learned about NPOs. Felt the need to set up the organization's operational structure.	Drew up an official proposal for a new project while fully incorporating parents'and guardians'voices.	Started work on expanding membership and support, and reviewing new projects with staff members.	

Capabilities to Improve NPOs” have helped to effectively shape the foundations of her organization and its future activities. Ms. Onami has made much use of the workbook “15 Management Capabilities for NPO Leaders,” which was created by the NPO Capacity Development Project. She has also utilized the workbook in staff training and as a guidebook for staff members tasked with implementing the subsidized project.

■ **Applied to Practical Support Program: Organizational Development Course; the application was not accepted, but the process offered an important experience**

In the winter of 2012, Ms. Onami applied to the “Practical Support Program: Organizational Development Course,” which was part of the NPO Capacity Development Project. She wrote her application on themes related to solidifying the organizational base and enhancing the skills of her staff members. It was her first opportunity to create an application while receiving suggestions and advice from various people. The aim of this program was to help its participants improve their skills by instructing them to keep revising or adding more details until their application reached a certain level of quality. Ms. Onami’s application was not accepted in the first round; she was going to review and revise it, but in the end, she decided not to proceed with the application process. Mr. Yoshihiko Itoyama, Vice Chairperson of the Board of Directors at Okayama NPO Center, who acted as Ms. Onami’s mentor, says, “I imagine this process gave her a chance to understand how her application as well as its content was read and understood by various people. I think it also prompted her to fully consider the intent and purpose of the funds provided.” He points out that it was this experience that helped Ms. Onami with her other applications, and led to acceptance by the “Grant Program for Strengthening Organizational Capacities.”

■ **Resolving problems and acquiring expertise to run a nonprofit through exchanges with mentors**

In the autumn of 2013, after her application to the Grant Program for Strengthening Organizational Capacities, which was part of the NPO Capacity Development Project, was accepted, Ms. Onami was in the process of implementing the proposed project. The advice and information she got from Mr. Itoyama were valuable during the entire process.

In the summer of 2013, two years after she started her



Staff working to distribute the food (Photo by: Oguni kara no Egao)

organization, Ms. Onami felt that her work had reached an impasse. “Aren’t we a burden to those organizations that support us?” “Should we close down our organization?” She was filled with worries about the present and the future. At this time, she consulted her mentor, Mr. Itoyama, as well as the administrative staff members of the project, who showed her different ways of seeing and thinking about things. For example, she learned from Mr. Itoyama about “Food Bank.” Since she had heard local parents and guardians talk about wanting to secure vegetables and other foods that were safe for their children, she immediately became interested in this idea, and felt the need to implement it as one of her organization’s activities. She then collected further information from Food Bank Okayama, a specified nonprofit corporation of which Mr. Itoyama was also a member. As she met and received encouragement from the people at the organizations in Okayama that had offered continuous support, Ms. Onami resolved: “In order to respond to the many people who have stood by us, Oguni kara no Egao should now continue working independently without receiving help from external organizations!” This resolution led her to apply to the Grant Program for Strengthening Organizational Capacities, and to create a new project, the “Food Safety Project,” which became one of the pillars of the organization. Mr. Takumi Sato, one of its staff members, points out how Ms. Onami changed in the process: “With the Food Safety Project, Ms. Onami took the lead and negotiated with other organizations. In proceeding with this project, I could see how she was thinking and making decisions independently. I started to feel more strongly that I could count on her leadership, and that I too must work harder!”



Organization' website

■Meeting and consulting with members in Fukushima provided wisdom and energy to engage in daily activities

Referring to what she gained by participating in the NPO Capacity Development Project, Ms. Onami listed: “Networking within Fukushima prefecture; networking within the three prefectures (Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima prefectures); and peers with whom I can sympathize and consult.” After the earthquake disaster, her organization engaged in activities mainly by relying on their affiliation with parents and guardians in the community as well as with support organizations outside the prefecture. Because of this, there were few opportunities to meet and coordinate with NPOs in Fukushima prefecture. However,

since approximately 20 organizations from the prefecture participated in the NPO Capacity Development Project, Ms. Onami got to know them through the training sessions and social activities. For example, when planning lectures at her organization, Oguni kara no Egao, she was able to consult with participating members from the “Fukushima NPO Network Center” and “Civic Services and Activities Partners,” which are NPO intermediary support organizations within Fukushima prefecture. She received advice and help on issues related to PR and project implementation. In addition, on the subject of providing support for children, Ms. Onami worked in cooperation with the group “Coconet Moms.” By exchanging information about recreation camps and by holding independent study groups with members in Fukushima, they were able to talk about and share their worries and problems. The opportunity of meeting these peers seems to have provided her with great encouragement in continuing the organization’s work.

Results and Changes

■PR strategies: creating a website and organizing lectures

In order to send out information about the organization as well as its intent, the Food Safety Project includes PR activities, such as holding lectures and creating and managing the organization’s website. In implementing



Approximately 30 people attended the lecture on the Food Safety Project

these activities, the organization utilized the booklet “Communication Know-How,” which was developed jointly by Dentsu and the NPO PR Skills Improvement Committee. It gives tips on how to express an organization’s purpose and goals, and how to create designs that are easy to read and understand. Ms. Onami and Mr. Takumi Sato read this booklet thoroughly, since they were the only people in charge of the organization’s PR activities. After reviewing and solidifying the contents of the website with staff members, they met with a web design company. The website went through many revisions before arriving at its current form.

In addition, many discussions took place within the organization concerning leaflets about the lectures. The leaflets were finalized after going through many revisions and incorporating comments from local residents and NPO staff. Thanks to all this creativity, Oguni kara no Egao was able to secure approximately 30 people, including those from the local community, to attend the lecture on June 15, 2014.

■ Staff discussions about establishing a membership system

In spring 2014, Oguni kara no Egao established a membership system to maintain its operations. During this process, it was helpful to refer to the “15 Management Capabilities” which were presented during the group training session, particularly, “4: Ability to Establish” and “5: Ability to See Through.” Everyone in the organization came together to create a structure that would allow them to continue working without relying on subsidies alone, but rather, with revenue from membership fees and project fees. The staff members asked questions such as: “What kind of people will get involved in the organization’s future activities?” and “Since the activities we undertake in the summer are different from those in the winter, how should we communicate the content to our members so we can ensure that they will stay with us throughout the year?” This staff discussion would not have been possible without having gained a basic understanding of NPO.

What’s ahead

In the future, Oguni kara no Egao plans to increase the number of people sympathetic to their activities, and find those who would support and work with them wholeheartedly. In addition to securing more Regular Members

Membership Information

■ Support Members

Support Members are those who do not wish to utilize our services but who would like to support our organization.

Annual Fee: 3,000 yen per membership

■ Organization Members

Organization Members are those who can provide support as a business, organization, or group.

Annual Fee: 5,000 yen per membership

■ Regular Members

Regular Members receive a monthly supply of vegetables. They can also attend our workshops and salons at a discounted price.

Annual Fee 3,000 yen per membership +
Monthly Fee 1,000 yen

who utilize their services, the organization is looking for individual members and cooperative organizations that agree with their main objectives and wish to form a partnership. In doing so, they eventually hope to become a nonprofit corporation. With regard to their activities, Oguni kara no Egao wants to become involved in the manufacturing of processed foods using vegetables that they obtain for their members to ensure that they do not go to waste. In addition, the camp that they organize is starting to shift from “a place of recreation” to “a place of education through hands-on experience.” This is because the content of the camp and the number of days that participants can spend at the camp are gradually changing, as children and their parents or guardians begin to return to their regular lives. Oguni kara no Egao will continue to enrich its three pillars, “Kids Camp,” “Salon,” and “Food Safety Project.”

Ms. Rie Suzuki (Director, General Incorporated Association, Aichikara)

Since the earthquake, we have continuously supported Oguni kara no Egao, and worked together in running the recreation programs. In the first year, the organization appeared to be feeling its way through as it engaged in NPO activities. However, by attending various training sessions, such as the one on the “15 Management Capabilities,” Ms. Onami seems to have gained the basic skills to run a NPO and the perspective to establish an organizational structure. Because of these abilities that she acquired, she managed to draw up and submit an application to the Grant Program for Strengthening Organizational Capacities on her own. Getting her application accepted enabled her to launch the Food Safety Project. If we designate each year since the earthquake as ki sho ten ketsu, or “introduction,” “development,” “turn,” and “conclusion,” I feel that the years in which she was involved with the NPO Capacity Development Project were the years of “turn” and “conclusion.”

Mr. Mitsuo Sato

(Date City Office, Department of Citizens' Assistance, Radiation Countermeasures Division)

I helped with distributing questionnaires when Ms. Onami was considering the possibility of extending her organization's Food Safety Project to residents of Date city who had evacuated to regions outside Fukushima prefecture. I have known Ms. Onami since before the earthquake, but by working together on this occasion, I had the chance to see her active and dynamic personality, and I feel that I have made a new discovery. Compared to its inception, the organization has more peers and members, and I can see that the quality of the leaflets for their lectures has improved as well. I hope that they will further expand the range of their activities.

Mr. Jun Sato (Board of Education, General Affairs Division, Date city)

I have worked with Oguni kara no Egao since right after the earthquake, offering assistance to its activities, including its recreational camps. The voices of the people directly involved provided important information in setting up a support system. At the beginning, staff members of support organizations from outside Fukushima prefecture came to work with us, but these days, Ms. Onami herself comes to our office. I feel that her group now has an organizational body and that it has improved its capacities.

What is
“civic activity”
for you?

“The most important civic activity for me is to create a community that can eliminate, even if only a little, the worries of children, as well as their parents and guardians living in Fukushima.”



Organizational Profile

Oguni kara no Egao
URL: <http://www.ogunikara.org/>
President: Naomi Onami
Founded in 2011

Oguni kara no Egao is a private organization that was founded with the sole aim to protect children after the accident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Most of the group's core founders were parents and guardians living in the Oguni district of Ryozen-machi in Date city in Fukushima prefecture. Part of this district was designated as one of the “specific zones with recommended evacuation orders.” To protect children from being exposed to radiation, the organization established a network of parents and guardians, and began working with other volunteer organizations to create a support system that is sustainable and expandable. Its current activities include running the Food Safety Project, helping children participate in Kids' Camps, and organizing Salons.

Fiscal year 2013
Total revenue: 12,254,497 yen
Personnel: 1 board member, 7 staff members (paid part-time:5, others: 2)

Integrating Philosophy and Management in Child and Youth Support —Results of the Crash Course Retreat

Keiko Nanaumi
Executive Director
Beans Fukushima



Scene from the Retreat (Photo by: Beans Fukushima)

Ms. Keiko Nanaumi became Executive director of Beans Fukushima after the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, and attempted to integrate the identities of the 'activist side' and 'business side' of the organization via staff retreat. Beans has risen another notch with her “make or break” attitude, and continues to showcase itself as a model at the local level in the field of children and youth support.



Personal Profile

Ms. Keiko Nanaumi was born in Chichibu city, Saitama Prefecture, and completed a Master's Program in clinical psychology at Shukutoku University's Graduate School of Social Sciences, Division of Social Welfare. Her connection with Beans Fukushima began in 2007 as a contracted staff member, and in 2008 she became a full-time staff member. In 2011, she served as a board member of the organization, and in 2012, she became managing director.

In April 2012, Ms. Nanaumi was...

Beans Fukushima (hereafter Beans) began in 1999 as a free school. Gradually, the scope of their activities widened to include parents groups, counseling, and youth employment support, and the organization grew into one that offered comprehensive support for young people. Ms. Nanaumi began working as a contracted clinical psychologist for the Fukushima Youth Support Station (hereafter Support Station) run by Beans in 2007 and became a full-time employee the following year. She was a board member for two years starting in 2009, and she served as general manager of Support Station for two years starting in 2010. She gained experience in these different posts and mastered the way Beans managed their business and activities. During this time, she discovered the existence of two cultures within the organization that were sometimes at odds with each other. One was the culture of activism that focused on fostering a feeling of fellowship between parents whose children had stopped attending school. The other was the culture of belief in results as an NPO that focused on resolving problems in the local area. While Ms. Nanaumi was worrying about her position in the gap between these two cultures, the Tohoku disaster struck. In order for the executive director at the time to give undivided attention to disaster response work, Ms. Nanaumi took over the role.

As the scale of the organization expanded and their operations diversified, no compromise was reached between the two cultures, internal communication was insufficient, and many of the staff did not think of managing the organization as their own responsibility. Ms. Nanaumi diagnosed these organizational problems and used participation in the NPO Capacity Development Project as an opportunity to try rebuilding the organization.

What Ms. Nanaumi worked on

■ Community Space Peanuts

Amongst the young generation trying to set up NPOs related to children and youth in Fukushima and Tohoku in the early 2000s, there was a group that seized the opportunities created by training and discussions on the theme of young people's "place to belong" and dedicated themselves to these studies.

They not only delved into the field, but also looked for solutions to problems of regional activism by reading the works on NPOs by Sendai's Mr. Tetsuo Kato

and studying the social entrepreneurs who were starting to become popular at the time. In the midst of this was Mr. Ryo Suzuki, who became involved with Beans in 2002. At the time, there was a place in Koriyama called Community Space Peanuts where these activists gathered. From 2008-9, Ms. Nanaumi frequently attended Peanuts events and activities. It was a place where she could talk with people of a similar generation and mindset, which she could not find within the Beans office, and could discuss and grapple with her day-to-day worries.

From the various debates and interactions at Peanuts, Ms. Nanaumi realized that she was not an activist like Ms. Chiyo Wakatsuki, the founder and board chair of Beans, who was from the first generation of members who had been compelled as parents to set up free schools. She was also different from the second generation, who as students had strong feelings about the problems of children's rights and social exclusion, who had been through training on the subject of "places to belong," and who had a selfless way of working that blurred the boundary between work and private life. While still viewing this second generation as role models, Ms. Nanaumi graduated from Peanuts with the conclusion that she should do things her own way. This was around 2010.

■ The two cultures of Beans Fukushima

In a sense, the two opposing cultures that developed within Beans during the organization's growth process represents a textbook example of an NPO that began as social movement but now moves toward sustainable operations. Beans Fukushima began with the free schools movement, then moved into providing psychological support in counseling sessions for parents of children and young people who were "hikikomori" or truant from school. In 2007 in Fukushima and 2008 in Koriyama, they began running the Support Station as a project commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare, and expanded into support programs for job hunting and education, and counseling for young people. This expansion in operations boosted Beans' external reputation. In the area of child and youth support, they practiced the philosophy of being "child-centric," and at the same time gained recognition as a locally-oriented organization that offered comprehensive services. However, internally this growth has intensified the opposition between the cultures.

Opposition and Conflict between the Two Cultures of Beans Fukushima

Activism culture	Business culture
Starting point was activism by parents of children who were “hikikomori” or truanting. Strong feeling of fellowship.	The NPO is something that began with a mission and fights against world problems in order to achieve results.
Basis for decision making is vague. If someone is in trouble, go help.	Decision making as an organization. This should be based on the organization’s mission and plan.
Do what we want to do. Motivation for action is passion.	Do what has been decided within the organization’s system. Motivation for action is “work consciousness” and “producing results.”
Important to debate and come to a conclusion that everyone accepts.	Important to regularly look back on work and evaluate activities.

■ Disaster and confusion

Then, in 2011, the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami and the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster occurred. In the shaken Fukushima area, Beans set up the Utsukushima Fukushima Child Future Support Project around the theme of “re-building the community with children at the center.” At the request of the Ministry for Health, Labour, and Welfare, they took on the job of the The Great East Japan Disaster Central Child Support Center Fukushima Branch (currently the Fukushima Child Support Center), and undertook the psychological care of children and support of evacuees in areas stricken by the disaster. This may have been a necessary development for an organization that had been a focal point of expertise in supporting children and young people in the Fukushima area.

■ Ms. Nanaumi as managing director, and participation in the NPO Capacity Development Project

In order to fully focus on the disaster response project, the then managing director Mr. Hiroyuki Chubachi switched to running the department of support for children suffering from the disaster, and Ms. Nanaumi took on the position of managing director. Immediately after that, she participated in the NPO Capacity Development Project. While receiving training on the 15 Management Capabilities to Improve NPOs, she gained a general grasp of management duties such as accounting, human resources, and general affairs. The main highlight for her and for Beans that came from participating in the

project was the staff retreat, which utilized the project’s Organizational Development Course. The purpose of this retreat was to tackle the opposition between the two cultures head on. While a results orientation had permeated the organization, Ms. Nanaumi wanted to put a stop to the weakening of passion and solidarity. Rather than “running the organization as a business,” she wanted to get back to “doing things because we want to.” In order to accomplish this, she even appointed staff who were against “turning back the pendulum” to plan the retreat together. She also used the retreat as an opportunity to unify the vertical hierarchy of staff that had developed as a result of the business orientation, and to revitalize internal communication and undertake team building in order to encourage members to see the management of the organization as something that personally concerned all of the staff. Ms. Nanaumi felt that this might be her



Group discussion at the staff retreat (Photo by: Beans Fukushima)

last resort, and that “if this staff retreat was unsuccessful, then the two cultures of Beans would probably never compromise.”

■ Implementation of the staff retreat

In April 2013, Ms. Nanaumi ran a staff retreat over two days based around the themes of “team building for better communication, Beans’ promise for better communication.” Based on pictures and charts of the organization’s activities that had first made at a staff retreat three years ago, she had the staff draw new images of the current situation. After that, Ms. Wakatsuki shared her experiences of the early development of Beans, and the staff brought up their own topics and shared their own feelings. In the end, working groups (WGs) were created where they could follow-up the results of the discussions. After the retreat they reflected on four points: Did staff create relationships of mutual trust? Was the organization’s vision effectively shared? Did the retreat become an opportunity for transforming Beans into a unified organization? Would another opportunity to confirm a shared organizational vision be necessary in the next year and onwards?

Results and Changes

■ Results of the training camp

Mr. Jun Ishikawa, who had been involved in preparing for the staff retreat as part of the “opposition faction,” said that personally he was not at all satisfied with the retreat. As a believer in the results orientation, he harbored strong doubts about what it had actually achieved, despite incurring the costs and using labor expended to get all staff members to attend.

However, Ms. Nanaumi’s “make or break” attitude had brought the internal divisions of the organization out into the bright light of day, which will serve to unify the organization and act as a catalyst to move forward. Mr. Ishikawa led the decision making WG formed as a follow-up to the retreat, which contributes to the construction of a framework for organizational management while reflecting the opinions of the staff. These post-retreat initiatives have encouraged openness between the different sections, and they are gradually improving internal communication. In 2013, they successfully committed Beans’ vision, mission and guiding principles as an organization to writing. In a way, this was the integration of the two cultures. The passion of the activism side was articulated with a results-oriented approach, and the organization created a

backbone that would support the conduct of the staff.

Ms. Nanaumi believes that the two cultures are currently in the process of uniting. She still doesn’t know what this union will look like, but she thinks that by coming to a compromise, Beans will be able to utilize the good points of each side. While internally the evaluation mind-set continues to permeate the organization, this is not only useful when reporting on projects to financial supporters, but also in looking back at the roots of the organization, evaluating Beans’ position and destination with regard to external needs, and creating strategies for what to do next. Furthermore, whether or not it is a direct result of these changes, Ms. Wakatsuki says that since last year the organization has been regaining involvement in parents’ groups for the free schools. For some time, the number of parents who come to these free schools with the intention of simply leaving their children in their care had been increasing. These days, however, Ms. Wakatsuki has begun to see parents who become interested in Beans’ activities and management, and remain in the meetings even after their children have graduated. By confessing her feelings and worries and sharing them with her staff, Ms. Nanaumi has openly communicated the staff’s lack of confidence with members and the participants in the parents’ meetings. Ms. Atsuko Yamashita is both a member and a participant in the parents’ meetings who observes these open spaces. She has come to feel much closer to Beans by she listening to the frank words of the staff and seeing how flexibly they react to the needs of members and parents. Ms. Wakatsuki says that “there was a change in me too.” She said that over the past 1-2 years, while talking with Ms. Nanaumi and the younger staff members, she has been able to arrange and integrate thoughts that had been vague until that point and create opportunities to communicate externally in forms such as lectures. She strongly feels that through the process of articulating the organization’s ideals into formal statements of vision, mission, and guiding principles, her own thoughts have also been solidified.

Mr. Suzuki, now vice chair, says, “The disaster was an opportunity for us to understand that a trusted NPO with a strong, locally rooted influence is a necessity.” Eventually, the external organizations who came in to offer disaster support will withdraw. That wave is already in motion. When this happens, local organizations dedicated to supporting children and young people will have to extend their hands to the people left behind in the reconstruction. Fortunately, other external support besides the NPO



“Where We Are” drawn at the staff retreat (Photo by: Beans Fukushima)

Capacity Development Project is now available for Beans, and they are utilizing it not only for the business side of operations, but also for strengthening organizational capacities.

The region has large challenges ahead, and as an NPO working in the area for the long term, it is important to keep a balance between government contracts and independent projects and maintain a proper distance from government agendas. On the one hand, Beans has a strong vision, while on the other hand, they are aiming for top-notch operations and making efforts to ensure decent wages for the staff. There are still many areas where Beans is fumbling, but it seems that over the past 1-2 years, they have been laying the foundations to grow into a strong organization.

What's ahead

The field of child and youth support began with personal activism as represented by the free schools, but when compared to issues concerning the elderly, children, and the disabled, it has been a difficult area to position as a focus of policymaking. According to Mr. Yosaku Sato of the Cooperative Network for Culture and Learning, who has long been involved with child and youth support

in Tokyo, the result is that currently, while there may be some well-known leaders, the next generation has yet to step up into the leadership level.

In the mid-2000s, policies directed at young people as a whole were finally created, and support projects were started by the government. Still, the problems of hierarchical government administration remained, and the areas of labor, psychology, health, and social education all worked separately from each other. Given that the Independent Support for Needy Persons Act will be implemented next year, it is expected that more unified policies will be implemented in the future. In that sense, we are currently in a period of transition.

In the midst of this, Mr. Sato talks about the National Conference on “Hikikomori” Support and Exchange that will be held in Fukushima in 2015, and is looking to use the problems appearing in Fukushima as a symbol of the problems facing youth support across the whole country. Beans will of course play a major part in this. Beans has expertise, idealism, and an activist viewpoint, and they will continue to develop as a core regional organization. They have both an awareness of the issues and the ability to do something about them. They are able to work with external agendas without giving in to them. People in the field have high expectations for them.

Ms. Yukari Ouchi (Beans Fukushima Free School Parents Group)

When I'm talking about it with other parents, they often ask me what an NPO is. Beans' activities are still not widely known. At the Beans parents' meetings, there are many mothers who worry over having a child who refuses to attend school, and I tell them that it'll be okay. Beans helped me a lot in the beginning. I want to spread the word about Beans, the organization that Ms. Wakatsuki, Ms. Nanaumi, and all the staff are working so hard for.



Ms. Masako Fujiwara (Professor, Fukushima College)

Since 2012, I have been involved with Beans as a board member. It has grown into an organization known throughout Fukushima, and after the disaster even the government relied on it. Beans has cultivated an image as a strongly cohesive organization rich in mobility and flexibility, and within it I think that Ms. Nanaumi is growing into a skilled organizational manager who is very adept at solving many organizational jigsaw puzzles.

Mr. Taiki Iwasaki (Board Chair, Costar)

I met Mr. Suzuki in 2008 when he was setting up the Koriyama Youth Support Station. At the time, I was running the Fukushima NPO Network, and I found a kindred spirit in Mr. Suzuki. We created a gathering space for young people called Community Space Peanuts on the second floor of the office and held study groups. Mr. Suzuki brought Ms. Nanaumi along. Ms. Nanaumi is the type to immediately take on board new knowledge and become enriched by it. I think she's the type of person that Beans needs.

What is
"civic activity"
for you?

People can create an environment in which they can live comfortably with the people around them, based on a cherished set of values.



Organizational Profile

Beans Fukushima

URL: <http://www.k5.dion.ne.jp/~beans-f/>

Board Chair: Chiyo Wakatsuki

Established 1999 (obtained Specified Nonprofit Corporation status in 2003)

The "Free School Research Group" composed of Fukushima students and the "Fukushima Group on School Non-Attendance" composed of the caretakers of children who refuse to attend school met in 1999 and established the "Free School Beans Fukushima." It was incorporated as a Specified Nonprofit Corporation in 2003. They continue to run projects such as free schools, counseling, education and job hunting support, socialization, and parents' groups in order to create a society where children and young people who are "hikikomori," refusing to attend school, living in poverty, or evacuated due to the disaster can live in their own way without feeling isolated.

Fiscal Year 2013

Total revenue: 173,921,560 JPY

Personnel: 6 Officers

Staff: 53 (Full-time: 35, Other: 18)

Case1 @Rias NPO support center

Written by: Eriko Iwabuchi (project staff)

Interviewees: Junichi Kano, Yasunobu Kawahara, Satoru Sasaki (@Rias NPO support center) / Akemi Tezuka (Fujisawa City Civic Activities Facilitation and Liaison Council) / Sakae Chida (Caritas Kamaishi) / Akira Hayakawa (Youth Miyakko Base)

Case2 Tachiagaru zo! Miyako-shi Taro

Written by: Tomoko Uchiyama (project staff)

Interviewees: Shuichi Daibou, Eriko Tateishi, Shoji Shinya, Kohjiro Kajiyama, Yoko Kanazawa (Tachiagaru zo! Miyako-shi Taro)

Case3 Iwate GINGA-NET

Written by: Katsuji Imata (project staff)

Interviewees: Ayako Yaegashi, Yuji Asaishi, Miki Taguchi (Iwate GINGA-NET) / Katsuhiko Yamamoto (Nihon Fukushi University) / Miho Nakamura (Empowerment through Participation and Challenge) / Kazuhiko Sawaguchi / Noritoshi Kubo

Case4 Manabi no Mori

Written by: Yukari Aoki (project staff)

Interviewees: Hajime Sakamoto, Osamu Hosokawa, Takumi Kida (Manabi no Mori) / Masami Kobayashi / Toru Sakuma (Sakamoto middle school) / Kenichi Takahashi (Yamashita middle school)

Case5 Nijiito Crayons

Written by: Yukari Aoki (project staff)

Interviewees: Shigeki Shibata, Natsumi Hotta, Narumi Tokuda (Nijiito Crayon) / Mayumi Nishimura / Noriko Kimura / Yasuo Yamazaki (Ishinomaki Senshu University) / Yuya Toda (People's Council for the Children of Ishinomaki)

Case6 Fukushima NPO Network Center

Written by: Tomoko Uchiyama (project staff)

Interviewees: Kyoji Hoshino, Kazuko Sato, Manami Uchiyama, Chizuko Sakurai, Yasuko Saito, Tomiko Endo, Sadahiko Handa (Fukushima NPO Network Center) / Takao Ohtsuki (Hidamari-House) / Yoshie Endo (Shimin Koken Support no kai) / Yoko Uchida (NPO Kochi Citizens' Council) / Yoshihiko Itoyama (Okayama NPO Center)

Case7**Oguni kara no Egao**

Written by: Chie Endo (project staff)

Interviewees: Naomi Ohnami, Tasuku Sato, Shinobu Sato, Akiko Kai (Ogunikara no Egao) / Rie Suzuki aichikara) / Yoshiaki Kanno (Member of a Date city council) / Mitsuo Sato (Date city office) /Jun Sato(Date City, Board of Education) / Yoshihiko Itoyama (Okayama NPO Center)

Case8**Beans Fukushima**

Written by: Katsuji Imata (project staff)

Interviewees: Chiyo Wakatsuki, Ryo Suzuki, Keiko Nanaumi, Jun Ishikawa (Beans Fukushima) / Atsuko Yamashita / Yukari Ouchi / Masako Fujiwara (Fukushima College) / Taiki Iwasaki (NPO Coster) / Yosaku Sato (NPO Cooperative Network of Culture and Learning)

Column1**Fujisawa City Civic Activities Facilitation and Liaison Council**

Written by:Eriko Nitta (project staff)

Interviewees:Akemi Tezuka, Takehiko Hosoya, Hikaru Sakurai, Yuko Miyamoto (Fujisawa City Civic Activities Facilitation and Liaison Council)

Column2**Shiga NPO center**

Written by: Katsuji Imata (project staff)

Interviewees: Yoshihiro Abe, Yuko Nakano (Shiga NPO Center) / Daisuke Furikado (NPO Popo House)

Column3**NPO Kochi Citizens' Council**

Written by: Eriko Nitta (project staff)

Interviewees: Ayumi Higashimori, Yoko Uchida, Masae Yada (NPO Kochi Citizens' Council)

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