Participants experience harvesting seaweeds and farming scallops and oysters during the “Kesennuma Unnehmon (Delicacies) Tour” held at the end of February 2014 in Kesennuma City, Miyagi Prefecture. The event was jointly organized by the public and private sectors to provide an opportunity for people inside and outside the disaster areas to take part in reconstruction together. Many people gathered from across the nation for the event. Please see Page 2 for details.

In the summer of 2012, we launched the “Mid-to Long-term Reconstruction Plan,” which is based in Kesennuma City, Miyagi Prefecture, to support the reconstruction of disaster areas from a mid- to long-term perspective. The plan consists of five projects: revitalization of tourism, helicopter transport service for medical emergencies, renewable energy, town reconstruction, and youth support. These projects have supported the proactive activities of people who are working for the recovery of their community, by utilizing the existing networks inside and outside the areas.

In the “NPO Partner Projects” launched in April 2011, Civic Force has been widely responding to various needs that could not be addressed by emergency support through cooperation with groups that have expertise in disaster response and are engaged in relief activities. Last year, we also began supporting refugees from Fukushima Prefecture, where aid is often delayed.

This marks the 36th issue of our Monthly Report, which is being published on the 11th of each month following the Great East Japan Earthquake. We are so very grateful for your kind support, without which we could not have sustained our activities for so long. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you once again and to ask for your continued interest and support.

Three years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred on March 11, 2011.

In the disaster areas, however, it appears that there is still a long way to go before the communities will fully recover, with piles of problems remaining to be solved such as rebuilding of houses, land elevation, population outflow and psychological care for the victims. The longer the reconstruction takes, the rate at which one can put his life back in order will differ for each disaster victim. For a short time after the disaster, all the victims were at the same stage of recovery, living in school gyms or temporary housing for evacuees. However, after three years have passed, evacuees are taking different paths: some people have left town and begun new lives; some have remained and rebuilt their houses; and some have no choice but have to remain in temporary houses because they have no prospect for rebuilding. As a result, people’s needs are becoming more diversified and the reconstruction activities are becoming more complex.

We at Civic Force have conducted various aid activities since immediately after the disaster to respond to the changing needs as much as possible: emergency procurement and distribution of relief goods, ferry service operations to save outlying islands, installation and operation of handmade baths, lease of containers and mobilehouses, and dispatch of volunteer employees.

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A tour involving close interaction with the locals; “Kesennuma Unmehmon (Delicacies) Tour”

“Kesennuma Unmehmon Tour” was held on February 22 and 23 in Kesennuma City, Miyagi Prefecture. 30 people from across the nation participated in this event. The participants enjoyed the shark dissection show, visited the “Rias Arc Museum of Art” where the research and the documentation of the Great East Japan Earthquake are exhibited, and a cafe run by Mr. Ken Watanabe, a famous Japanese actor. They also experienced harvesting seaweed and enjoyed cuisine made from local ingredients.

The tour was organized by “Team Kesennuma”, an organization set up by both the public and private sectors, and is comprised of about 40 groups including the tourism association, the local town renovation community, and people involved in agriculture and fishery. The “Platform for the Creation of Ria Tourism”, an organization that Civic Force helped launch last year, is serving as the secretariat of “Team Kesennuma” in collaboration with the tourism division of the city. This is a trial tour featuring a close interaction with the locals not only by enjoying the local delicacies, but also providing participants with opportunities to take part in the process of reconstruction.

It is not an exaggeration to say that this tour is a culmination of the launch of the “Kesennuma Tourism Strategy Conference” and the “Platform for the Creation of Ria Tourism” which Civic Force has been involved in. It is also a fruit of the efforts of many people from inside and outside the affected areas. Mr. Kanji Hatakeyama, assistant manager of the tourism division in Kesennuma city office said, “The efforts have actually started producing some results through the support of many people. We must continue working on activities like this tour.”

Support for enhancing Sri Lanka’s disaster risk reduction capacity

Civic Force launched a Disaster risk reduction capacity-building project in Sri Lanka this February. Sri Lanka is one of the member countries of the Asia Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management, which we established in October 2012 in collaboration with disaster aid organizations from various Asian countries.

Specifically, Civic Force is working with CHA (Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies), a network organization of NGOs in Sri Lanka, to promote activities for disaster mitigation and preparedness. The project includes capacity building activities in communities in Sri Lanka, where disasters occur frequently, and construction of a cooperative framework involving the community, district and government levels through collaboration with various agencies and enterprises.

From Tohoku to France: Participation at an Event for Reconstruction

“Tohoku Marche™” has been held annually since November 2011 in Kesennuma City, Miyagi Prefecture, an area that was heavily affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake. The event was launched by the local NGO Network Orange in cooperation with Civic Force at a time when many producers who became victims after the earthquake were feeling anxious about their dire situations after losing their businesses. At the 3rd Marche in October 2013, a social entrepreneur contest took place in cooperation with L’OCCITANE, a famous French cosmetics manufacturer.

Two out of 24 groups won the first and second places for their sociality and originality. The two groups won a place to attend a week-long workshop in France from March 1st. In France, the group had an observation tour to Provence in southern France, a town famous for marché. They also visited various places such as a traditional flea market, an antique market, and a leather processing studio. They also attended an exhibition held from March 4 to 15 at Maison de la culture du Japon à Paris (Japanese Culture Center) where they took the rostrum with Reinold Geiger, CEO of L’OCCITANE to talk about the situation caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake, and their activities for reconstruction.

Mr. Kimio Kumagai of Kanedai Co., Ltd., who won second place at the contest, spoke at the podium: “Although business aimed at reconstruction has to be done in a new and different way compared to before the disaster, what matters most is how many friends and colleagues you can share your ambition with. In order to live up to the support from many people, I hope my business will lead to positive results.” Ms. Shimizu and Ms. Kida of Hodoru (which means “warm up” in Tohoku dialect) also sold Japanese style accessories made from kimono fabrics at the sales event held at L’OCCITANE’s factory. They say, “We were worried if our products would be well-received by the French people but we were relieved that they liked accessories with bright colors as well as the book covers made to fit the size of French books.”

Farm seeds distributed to support typhoon-affected areas in Central Philippines

Since Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines last November, Civic Force has been continuously engaged in relief activities in Leyte Island and other areas where the damage was extensive, through cooperation with our partner organization CDRC (Citizens’ Disaster Response Center) and its regional center in Leyte, LCDE (Leyte Center for Development).

We dispatched new staff members on February 19 and delivered rice seeds, vegetable seeds and farming tools to a total of 806 farming households in three villages (Tabangohay, Salvacion Farm, Langit) in Alangalang Municipality, Northern Leyte, so that the farmers who lost their tools can restart farming activities.
Civic Force was established in 2009, two years before the Great East Japan Earthquake struck in 2011. Our organization was founded for the purpose of providing quick and effective support to disaster victims through collaboration among NPOs, private companies, and central/local governments in times of disasters such as earthquakes. Thanks to the “power of solidarity,” we were able to provide large-scale relief activities when the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred.

In cooperation with local governments, NPOs, and private companies; we have been providing various aid activities that meet the needs of those affected by the disaster. Devastated Tohoku region, however, still has several difficulties to overcome, so requests for our continuous and tireless support keep coming in. In particular, the impact of the nuclear accident in Fukushima is prolonging the stay of former residents at evacuation locations, and each person is facing various challenges. Some chose to stay in devastated areas and others decided to move out of the prefecture. The issues being faced in Fukushima, such as relocation and decontamination, should not just concern residents of Fukushima, but should be tackled by all Japanese.

Civic Force, based in Miyagi Prefecture, mainly helped to rebuild local communities and to provide back up for reconstruction activities. For Fukushima residents, we implemented various aid activities, such as providing mental-health care for disaster victims, sheltering stranded dogs, assisting relocation services, and so on. Going forward, we will work to maximize our experiences and networks in further strengthening our aid activities in Fukushima Prefecture, where reconstruction tends to show slow progress.

To be specific, we will continue to assist relocation, and in addition, we have already started assisting local youths to take initial steps in becoming the “power” of reconstruction. We have also started a project to increase the number of youths living outside of Fukushima Prefecture and desire to help the local people.

Reconstruction activities in the affected areas, including Fukushima, are still in their early stages. We ask for your undivided support to help people who never lose hope and do their best to conquer various difficulties.

**What We Will Do in Tohoku**

Civic Force has been running several “Mid-to Long-Term Reconstruction Projects” since the summer of 2012, in order to tackle the challenges that were identified in the disaster areas during the aid projects we conducted for roughly one and a half years following the disaster. The progress of each project is reported below.

**Mid- to Long-Term Reconstruction Projects**

- **Tourism Revitalization Project**
  - Enhancing cooperation between the public and private sectors to make Kesennuma “an attractive city for tourists”
  - Civic Force has been supporting the development of strategies for the “Revitalization of Tourism,” which is one of the most important challenges for the reconstruction of Kesennuma city. Miyagi prefecture. In July 2013, we participated in the foundation of the “Platform for the Creation of Ria Coast Tourism,” a general incorporated association.

- **Wings for Life Project**
  - Supporting helicopter transport service for emergency medical purposes
  - Even before the disaster, the lack of medical services had been a problem in the coastal areas devastated by the earthquake. We started a helicopter service to provide better access to advanced medical institutions. The service was launched in October, 2013 to transport patients by request.

- **Green Circle Project**
  - Developing a sustainable forest industry and effective utilization of woody biomass
  - This program aims to promote a sustainable society by utilizing woody biomass. Together with local companies and other NPOs, Civic Force is supporting the training of individuals engaged in forestry, management of lumber yards, and trial use of community currency.

**Brief Report on Our NPO Partner Projects**

We have been supporting projects that are run by the disaster victims for the reconstruction of their local communities. Since April 2011, Civic Force has supported 37 organizations and 40 projects. As of March 2014, we are supporting four projects.

- **Platform for Creation of Ria Coast Tourism**
  - Embodiment of the strategy of tourism in Kesennuma City, the organization leads pilot projects.
- **Network Orange**
  - The organization encourages evacuees from Fukushima Prefecture to relocate to Hiroshima Prefecture and supports them to sustain their community in the new environment.
- **Kesennuma Future Plan Osawa Team**
  - Specialists in the fields of urban design and architecture support group relocation and reconstruction projects.

**What We are Doing in Tohoku**

- **Dream Support Project**
  - Supporting local youths through scholarships and locally-developed educational programs
  - Many high school students face financial difficulties as a result of the earthquake. To ensure that they can continue with their education through to university, this project provides JPY 30,000 scholarships per month for such students. Educational programs and meetings for scholarship students have been held.

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**Here are some reports on what we are doing in the Tohoku region as of March 11, 2014.**

**Mid- to Long-Term Reconstruction Projects**

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We appreciate your donations to Civic Force. The amount of donations for the earthquake reached 1.31 billion yen as of the end of February 2014. Since March 2012, we have spent 15% of the total amount of donations on expenditures. We will provide a tentative report on how your donation has been spent during this time. Financial contributions are screened by members of the board. You can also view the financial statement for Fiscal Year 2013 and the project report on our website:
http://www.civic-force.org/about/

Where Your Money Goes

Emergency-relief, reconstruction support $556,614
Procurement and delivery of emergency relief supplies $233,356
Installation of handmade baths $18,800
Car ferry operations to outlying islands $20,000
NPO partner project (1st& 2nd phase) $1,616,900
Provision of multi-purpose mobile bases $72,100
Tents for volunteers $36,900
Survey projects on reconstruction $14,000
Aid activities for reconstruction $444,400
Funds project $95,800
Dispatch of employee volunteers $2,600
NPO partner project (3rd phase ~ ) $170,900
Wings for Life Project (Mid-to Long-term reconstruction)$190,400
Tourism Revitalization Project (Mid-to Long-term reconstruction) $33,100
Green Circle Project (Mid-to Long-term reconstruction) $16,700
Community Revitalization Project (Mid-to Long-term reconstruction) $14,200

Expenditure for supporting local activities* $114,100
Total $1,115,100

*including publication and fundraising costs
*The figures are rounded off to one decimal place.

Additionally, we also co-implement the "Dream Support Project" with Lawson, Inc., individual supporters and organizations. We have raised 588 million yen, of which 332 million yen has already been used for scholarship money and expenditures for the project.

A Message from the Disaster Area

Three years have passed since Civic Force began activities to support reconstruction in the affected areas of northeastern Japan. This section showcases the people who live in the affected areas and continue positive efforts towards recovery. For this issue, we interviewed Junko Yagi, Representative of “Community Space Umineko”, a general incorporated association.

——— I am from Onagawa Town and I was a nursery teacher at a day-care center before the disaster. During the first month after the disaster, I struggled to secure food and find my family. By April, I was able to confirm their safety, so I started to babysit infants at the evacuation center because I wanted to make use of my childcare license. I also started to be involved in delivery of goods and in soup kitchens at evacuation centers and temporary housing areas.

After day-care centers and schools resumed, I decided to make Japanese sandals from T-shirts sent as relief goods to help build a community for the elderly. I gathered 10 “grandmas” in their 60s to 80s who were living in temporary housings and they began producing the sandals. Our sandals were sold out. I took photos of each person who bought the sandals and showed them to the ladies. They were very pleased and the success helped create a more positive mindset amongst themselves.

We do face difficulties such as defects caused by increase in production and shortfall in supply caused by internet retailing. It made me very happy when the ladies said, in a heartfelt way, that sandal-making helped them a lot at that time. We discussed a lot over making sandals as to the color combinations or size variations depending on the thicknesses of the fabrics and helped each other regardless of age. I believe we naturally developed close bonds with one another through this experience.

“Conference of the International Society of Volunteer Studies in Japan” held on March 1st

“The Fifteenth Annual Conference of the International Society of Volunteer Studies in Japan” sponsored by the executive committee of the Conference was held on March 1st at Waseda Hoshien Student Christian Center in Tokyo. The aim of the conference was to review the current condition of the affected areas and think about the future of Japan. Participants discussed about practicing and reconsidering the future trend of the “New Commons”, which is a concept that means open to the public and is a manifestation of the public’s involvement. Held in Tokyo for the first time in five years, Mr. Kensuke Onishi, Chairperson of Civic Force, served as the chairperson of this conference as well. In addition, staff members of Civic Force took part in the organizing team and contributed their knowledge in planning and implementing reconstruction aid that cannot be executed by governmental agencies alone.

“KAZASHITE BOKIN” (Scan to Donate) Begins

On March 5, 2014, SoftBank launched “KAZASHITE BOKIN”, a new online donating system that enables users to make donations when paying their mobile phone fees. Donations can easily be made by installing the relevant application (app) to a smartphone and scanning the codes on target logos or brochures. Civic Force is one of the fundraising organizations registered on KAZASHITE BOKIN. You can donate from 100 yen and it will be withdrawn with your monthly mobile phone fees. We encourage you to try this new system.

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