

# KNOWLEDGE NOTE 3-1

## CLUSTER 3: Emergency Response

Mobilizing and  
Coordinating Expert  
Teams, Nongovernmental  
Organizations, Nonprofit  
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### Mobilizing and Coordinating Expert Teams, Nongovernmental Organizations, Nonprofit Organizations, and Volunteers

**In response to the Great East Japan Earthquake (GEJE), domestic and international assistance initiatives were launched by a large number of public and private sectors organizations; and various emergency teams were mobilized through national and international networks. The GEJE reminded us that civil society organizations play an indispensable role in disaster management. These organizations have the advantage of flexibility and speed in reaching and caring for affected communities. However, there were no coordination mechanisms in place that functioned properly on the ground. Because of the complexity of disaster response operations and the large numbers of actors involved, coordination mechanisms must be established in advance during normal times.**

## FINDINGS

### MOBILIZING THE GOVERNMENT'S EXPERT TEAMS

Municipality and prefecture governments play a leading role in disaster response in Japan. However, because of the catastrophic consequences of the March 11 earthquake and tsunamis many of the local governments were unable to respond, so national agencies as well as prefectures and municipalities outside the affected region were quickly deployed (KN3-4). Organizations concerned had formed a variety of expert teams in light of the lessons learned from past disasters, in particular the Great Hanshin-Awaji (Kobe) Earthquake in 1995. The national government took action immediately by setting up a response office 4 minutes after the earthquake, and an Emergency Disaster Response Headquarters headed by the Prime Minister, within 30 minutes. Its mandate was to oversee and coordinate all response activities.

**Self-Defense Forces** The total number of personnel in operation reached some 107,000 with about 540 aircraft and nearly 60 vessels. SDF rescued approximately 19,000 disaster victims, or nearly 70 percent of those rescued in the GEJE event. The SDF provided transportation assistance to medical teams, patients and rescue units dispatched from various

TABLE 1: **Expert teams organized by the government**

<i>Ministry/agency</i>	<i>Expert teams</i>
Ministry of Defense	Self-Defense Forces
Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare	Disaster Medical Assistance Team
Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism	Technical Emergency Control Force, Coast Guard
Fire and Disaster Management Agency and prefectural fire departments	Emergency fire response teams
National Police Agency and prefectural police agencies	Interprefectural emergency rescue units

FIGURE 1: **The SDF in action**



Source: Ministry of Defense.

countries, and livelihood assistance to disaster victims by providing water, food, and other necessities. The SDF also responded to the nuclear accident, engaging mainly in pumping water for cooling used fuel pools, decontaminating personnel and vehicles, and monitoring amounts of airborne radiation (figure 1).

**Emergency fire response teams** Following its experience with the Kobe Earthquake, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency created fire response teams to mobilize firefighting departments across Japan. At the GEJE, the emergency teams dispatched more than 30,000 firefighters from 712 fire departments in 44 prefectures nationwide over a period of 88 days ending on June 6. In cooperation with local fire departments, the emergency teams had rescued 5,064 people as of June 30, 2011. Most fire department in devastated areas had lost their radio equipment or base of communications. In light of this experience, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency has decided to provide the teams with additional mobile communications equipment and a larger supply of fuel so that they can operate effectively even over a wide areas and for a longer period of time.

FIGURE 2: **An interprefectural emergency rescue unit in action**



Source: National Police Agency.

**Interprefectural emergency police rescue units** Interprefectural emergency rescue units are police units that have been set up in prefectures nationwide, based on the experience with the 1995 Kobe Earthquake. In response to the GEJE, these rescue units conducted such activities as search and rescue and securing emergency transportation routes. A total of 750,000 person-days were spent working on site, with as many as 4,800 personnel working per day (figure 2). A review of their operations during the GEJE revealed that the scale was so large that some units could not manage their operations on their own, while others had difficulty securing enough personnel. The Police Agency will enhance its response capacity by setting up emergency quick response teams and long-term response teams numbering 10,000 personnel.

Crimes such as theft were a major concern since many houses had been left vacant after residents fled to evacuation centers away from home. According to the National Police Agency, the number of crimes committed in the disaster-affected areas in the year after the disaster had decreased significantly compared to the previous year, while the number of burglaries had risen (table 2). Many ATM machines were also destroyed. Police teams were deployed to ensure safety in the disaster-affected areas.

**Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT)** DMAT is a specialized team of medical doctors, nurses, and operational coordinators trained to conduct emergency operations during the critical period, normally within 48 hours, after a large-scale disaster or accident. DMAT was established in 1995 after the Kobe Earthquake, when it was learned that 500 more people could have been saved if medical support had been provided more promptly.

TABLE 2: **Crime in the disaster-affected areas**

	<i>Mar 2011 – Feb 2012</i>	<i>Mar 2010 – Feb 2011</i>	<i>Percent change</i>
Total Crimes	42,102	51,305	-18
Felonious	187	245	-24
Violent	1,804	2,008	-10
Larceny	31,894	38,484	-17
Burglary	5,729	5,690	0.7
Vehicle	9,992	12,440	-20
Non-burglary	16,173	20,354	-21
Intellectual, white collar	1,150	1,905	-40
Moral, sexual	375	404	-7
Others	6,692	8,259	-19

Source: National Police Agency.

In response to the GEJE, DMAT sent about 380 teams, 1,800 staff, from 47 prefectures for 12 days to provide support to hospitals and to rescue and transport patients. Because the tsunami damage was so extensive and local medical centers had been washed out by tsunamis, DMAT also had to provide care for people with chronic illnesses. Although DMAT's operations usually take place within 48 hours after a disaster, they had to operate for a much longer time.

**Technical Emergency Control Force (TEC-FORCE)** The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) established TEC-FORCE in 2008. The TEC-FORCE is a specialized group made up of ministry staff that helps disaster-affected municipalities to quickly assess damages, identify measures to prevent additional damage, and provide technical assistance for rehabilitation and emergency response activities. In response to the GEJE, more than 18,000 person-days of personnel were dispatched, together with disaster management equipment and machinery (figures 3 and 4). TEC-FORCE provided satellite communication vehicles, enabling them to connect to public lines and establish communications with other organizations concerned.

**The Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS)** JRCS has mobilized relief resources to the affected area from the onset of the disaster. JRCS is designated as one of the public relief organizations by the disaster response law and the biggest humanitarian organization in Japan. Within 24 hours from the disaster 55 medical teams (out of which 22 teams as DMAT) were dispatched and subsequently 935 teams, or 6,700 personnel, in total were deployed during 6 months, treating 87,445 persons, along with provision of psychosocial support to affected population.

FIGURE 3: **TEC-FORCE** activities in response to the GEJE



Source: MLIT.

FIGURE 4: **TEC-FORCE** equipment



Source: MLIT.

## MOBILIZATION OF JAPANESE NGOS AND NPOS

Domestic nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and nonprofit organizations (NPOs) have played a significant role in carrying out disaster management activities. As of January 20, 2012, there were 712 organizations participating in the Japan Civil Network for Disaster Relief in East Japan. There is no limitation either on the type of organization that can join the network, such as nonprofit, public-interest, or religious, or on budget size.

In a disaster, the role of NGOs and NPOs is to complement the government's role. Since in Japan the government is indeed the primary agent obligated to initiate action in response to a natural disaster, NGOs and NPOs are responsible for filling in where governmental

support is lacking. However, this by no means implies that NGOs and NPOs are government subcontractors; they have broad autonomy in deciding on their activities, and the relationship is one of equality, rather than the former being subordinate to the latter. Their roles and responsibilities are far-reaching, and they engage in a broad range of activities from awareness raising to fundraising, while also engaging directly in relief activities at the disaster sites.

The early responders can be categorized into two groups: Japan-based (mainly Tokyo-based) NGOs specializing in international relief operations even before GEJE, and Japanese NGOs and NPOs based in different parts of Japan that address domestic needs. The Japan Platform, a platform for international emergency humanitarian aid organization, mobilized funding for relief operations within 3 hours after the earthquake. Seven registered organizations carried out initial needs assessments with JPY15 million in funding, 5 organizations provided support to education with JPY450 million, 2 organizations provided health care and hygiene promotion with JPY210 million, 8 organizations engaged in rehabilitation work, 12 organizations provided food and nonfood support with JPY3.12 billion. These organizations, experienced in providing emergency humanitarian aid overseas, were able to leverage international standards and expertise. They played a pivotal role in mobilizing experts in specialized fields.

The Japanese NGOs and NPOs had been mainly involved in domestic emergency relief activities. Organizations based and operating in the disaster-affected areas made long-term commitments to sustaining activities such as assessing people-centered needs, and facilitating a seamless transition from emergency to recovery support.

The JRCS has been pulling together JPY307 billion in donations as of January 19, 2012, and its counterpart, the Central Community Chest of Japan, Red Feather Campaign, had garnered JPY38.8 billion in donations as of October 2011. A Central Grant Disbursement Committee was set up to ensure a fair allocation of the funds collected by the JRCS and the other designated fundraising organizations, to the affected prefectures. Each prefecture has established a prefectural-level grant disbursement committee that sets criteria for eligible recipients as well as for the amounts to be distributed by the municipal authorities who are responsible for identifying individual beneficiaries and distributing the cash.

The Japan Platform, an organization that manages funding from various sources for international emergency humanitarian aid projects, had received JPY6.7 billion from private companies as of July 2011, the Japan Foundation received JPY2.4 billion, the Central Community Chest of Japan received JPY2 billion, and the Japan National Committees for UNICEF received JPY3.6 billion as of January 16. The line separating fundraising organizations from private companies has narrowed as private companies actively collect funds and work in parallel with emerging NGOs like Just Giving Japan, which uses the Internet to solicit donations.

Another important responsibility of NGOs and NPOs is coordination of relief efforts. A designated agency, in most cases a UN agency, would function as the cluster lead international relief operations. However, no central agency was assigned for overall coordination in Japan. The prefectural offices or the disaster response headquarters at the prefecture levels were the first bodies to be assigned to disaster response, but they did not function as a coordinating body for all NGO and NPO relief operations. The newly established

prefectural cooperation recovery centers functioned as networking hubs, and grew into a spontaneous coalition for coordination. The Tokyo-based NGO—the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC), which had already created a network of NGOs, functioned as a provider of pooled information.

The third role of NGOs and NPOs in disaster response is enrollment and management of volunteers. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare named the Japan National Council of Social Welfare, Tasukeai Japan, the 3.11 Reconstruction Aid Information Portal in cooperation with the Reconstruction Agency and Japan Civil Network, as the main contact points for people to apply for volunteering. Over 280,000 people joined in the disaster response as volunteers in the two months after the earthquake.

## **SUPPORT IN FUKUSHIMA**

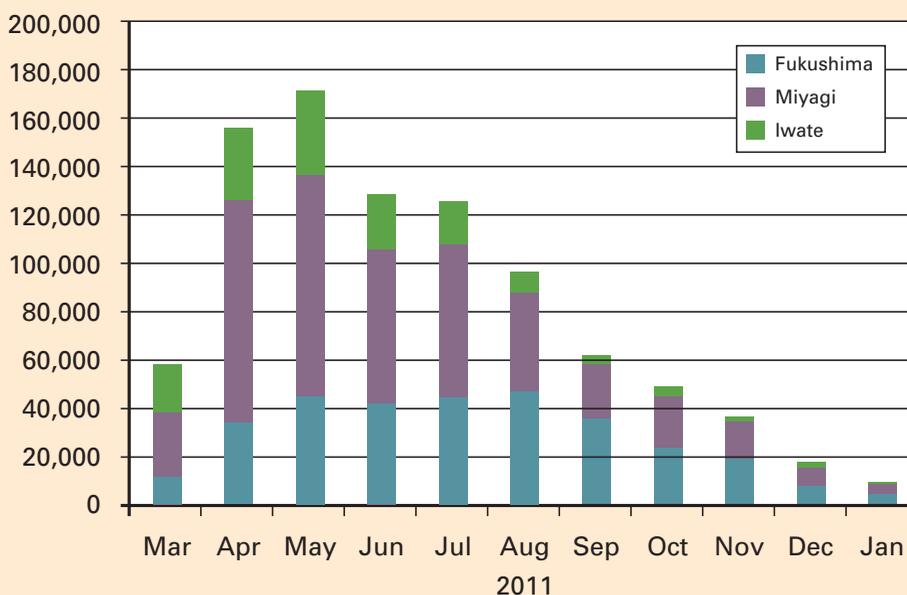
Apart from the national budget, Fukushima prefecture received JPY7.2 billion in donations, which were used for activities such as school reconstruction, support for children, and improvement of temporary shelters. JPY1.3 billion was received and used to provide for disaster orphans. In collaboration with the governmental funds, the Japan Platform supported 8 projects in Fukushima, funding 5 organizations with JPY1.8 billion. Apart from the Japan Platform there are several other organizations working separately on relief activities. However, the number of NGOs working in Fukushima is much smaller than in the Miyagi and Iwate prefectures. According to JANIC, between March and June 2011, the number of NGOs working in the Fukushima Prefecture was 17, whereas in Miyagi it was 40 and in Iwate it was 33. The contrast is made clearer by the number of projects provided by NGOs: In the Miyagi prefecture there were 292 projects, 179 in Iwate, and 60 in Fukushima. In the early stages, those concentrated on delivering emergency kits including food and nonfood items. Following emergency activities, these organizations faced difficulties in supporting rehabilitation program, which is completely new and unknown operation for them. The experiences and lessons learned in Fukushima should be passed on and shared with the broader international aid community. The Japanese NGO community should conduct timely and objective evaluations and studies of their 3.11 operations.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

The Japan National Council of Social Welfare set up volunteer centers in the affected municipalities. The social welfare councils in municipalities nationwide sent more than 30,000 person-days of staff to operate the volunteer centers.

As of January 2012 more than 900,000 person-days have been used in doing volunteer work through the volunteer centers in the 3 prefectures of Tohoku (figure 5). Considering that more than 1 million volunteers were mobilized in the first month after the Kobe Earthquake in 1995, the number of volunteers mobilized during GEJE was relatively small. Some reasons for this are that the affected areas were far from large cities, and were rural coastal communities dispersed over a wide area, making it difficult for the volunteers to gain access.

FIGURE 5: **Number of volunteers**



## INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

As of November 1, 2011, 163 countries and regions and 43 international organizations had offered aid and relief. Emergency assistance squads, medical teams, and reconstruction teams had been dispatched from 24 countries and regions along with expert teams from 5 international organizations. In regards to material and monetary support, the Japanese government accepted relief supplies and donations totaling over JPY17.5 billion, from 126 countries and regions. By May 17, 43 overseas NGOs from 16 countries had arrived in Japan. The scale of assistance has been larger than for the Kobe Earthquake in 1995, when 67 countries and regions provided aid and relief; and the U.K., Switzerland, and France dispatched emergency teams.

The JRCs received financial support from 95 sister Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies from all over the world, which amounted some 700 million USD, plus additional 400 million USD from the State of Kuwait and EURO 10 million from the European Commission's ECHO. According to a survey conducted by the Brookings Institute, Japan received US\$720 million from other countries, which accounts for almost half of the global humanitarian disaster funding in 2011 and some 0.4 percent of the planned reconstruction budget of the Japanese Government.

The U.S. dispatched approximately 16,000 military personnel under "Operation Tomodachi (Friends)." They provided a variety of assistance, including search and rescue efforts, the transport of supplies and people, and the recovery and reconstruction of the devastated

areas. At the peak of the action, approximately 140 aircraft and 15 vessels took part in the operation along with the Japanese SDF.

## COORDINATION

There was no functioning coordinating mechanism among the various government organizations, civil society, and the private sector, to help avoid duplication and confusion in relief and response activities. Coordination was required at all levels and all phases. On the ground, these organizations must coordinate with community-based organizations, and with each other, to assess victims' needs and to carry out activities smoothly and effectively. The SDF and NGOs did coordinate emergency food distribution to the evacuation shelters.

Coordination with municipal governments is crucial, since the municipalities have the primary responsibility for disaster management. Since the municipal governments have quite limited experience in working with CSOs, linkages between the municipalities and CSOs could not be easily established. Municipalities can provide support to evacuees in transition shelters, but not in their homes. This function was instead carried out by CSOs. Coordination was also lacking between the private sector and local governments outside the affected areas; and the overall coordination of international assistance was a challenge.

Coordination is required at all phases of recovery since victims' needs change as recovery progresses. While water and foods delivery are key at the emergency phase, needs become more diverse including sustaining livelihoods, education, and improving the living conditions at evacuation shelters or in transition housing.

Good practices could be found at specific sectors at some sites. Ishinomaki Red Cross Hospital coordinated all medical teams from JRCS and other agencies at the 330 evacuation centers throughout the Ishinomaki city. The hospital organized survey teams to gather medical and non medical conditions, including water and sanitation over a one month. These formed the basis for planning and implementing response activities by various organizations including local governments.

## LESSONS

- National networks should be used to mobilize experts, including search and rescue teams, medical teams, and engineers. Organizations should prepare these teams during normal times, such as compiling rosters and conducting training.
- The teams came from outside need to independently engage in activities in the disaster field without support, often for long-term. Communication and transport equipment, fuel, food and water should be stocked.
- At megadisaster, like GEJE, expert teams are expected to engage in activities for longer terms than frequent disasters that require response activities for a few days. Since enormous number of various public facilities are damaged, expert teams are required to develop capacities for long-term activities, one month or more.

- Since enormous numbers of different types of organizations are involved in disaster management, coordination mechanisms are essential. There was no functional coordination mechanism in the GEJE. This is why megadisasters overstretch capacities of local governments, and damage government staff and facilities at devastated areas. In developing countries, UN cluster systems serve as coordinating mechanisms. Considering the difficulties faced by the local governments in the GEJE, similar mechanisms should be established in the central government or under some umbrella organization of civil society organizations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

**Prepare response teams.** Specialized agencies, such as the police, fire departments, public works, and hospitals should prepare during normal times for the mobilization of response teams. The following activities are required:

- Clarify the chain of command
- Designate a secretariat function
- Prepare a roster of emergency team members
- Conduct emergency drills
- Keep the necessary equipment in stock

**Develop capacity.** Expert teams are required to develop capacities for working independently for long-term. Stan-by or rotating teams, communication and transportation should be arranged.

**Establish coordinating mechanism.** Various types of organizations from inside and outside the country engaged in response and recovery activities. Government agencies often have problems coordinating the enormous numbers of organizations carrying out a broad range of activities. Megadisasters stretch the capacities of local governments; and local government staff and facilities suffer. Once disaster happens specific teams came from outside the devastated areas and start coordination among all organizations. The following actions are required:

- **Preparedness:** establishing face-to-face relationships during normal times facilitates coordination in times of disaster.
- **Networking:** information, experts and private sector personnel should be networked to share information, to effectively collaborate each other, and to mobilize diversified resources.
- **Consideration of vulnerable groups:** special care is required for vulnerable groups, such as the disabled, the elderly, and children. These groups are easily marginalized (KN3-6).

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