

connect

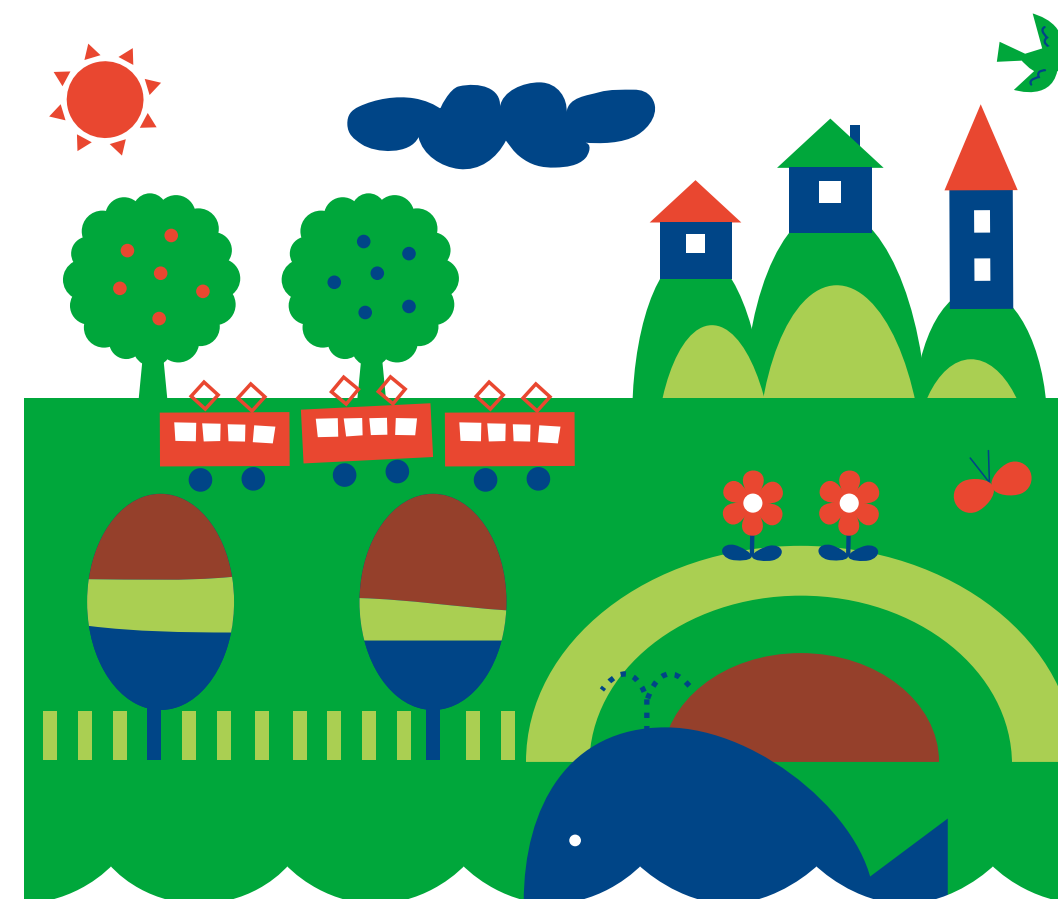
“Connect,”
the title of this report,
was proposed and voted for by
the members of the Children’s
Community Building Clubs.



Building Better Communities
Through the Participation of Children!

SOFT

Speaking Out From Tohoku



Speaking Out From Tohoku

~Building Better Communities Through the Participation of Children!~

by the Children’s Community Building Clubs



Save the Children
JAPAN

■ Save the Children ■

Save the Children, an international non-governmental organization (INGO), works in 120 countries to realize children's rights to survive, develop, be protected and participate. It provides emergency relief assistance to disaster-affected areas as well as support in the areas of education, nutrition improvement and public health.

In 2003, Save the Children Japan launched a programme in Japan called, "Speaking Out: Let's Talk Together," to enable children to take part in decisions that concerned them. It is based upon the idea that when it comes to children, children are often the ones who know best. In 2010, the programme, "Speaking Out Against Poverty: Keeping Hopes and Dreams from Being Stolen," was initiated to help tackle the issue of poverty in Japan, together with local, prefectural and national authorities. Soon after the March 11th earthquake and tsunami in 2011, Save the Children Japan launched its recovery assistance programme in Iwate, Fukushima, and Miyagi Prefectures. The "Speaking Out From Tohoku" (SOFT) programme was aimed at building better communities through the ideas and participation of children, and has been part of Save the Children's recovery programme ever since.



■ Speaking Out From Tohoku (SOFT) ■

SOFT stands for Speaking Out From Tohoku, and is a programme that literally means to convey messages from the people of Tohoku. The SOFT programme aims to build better communities by creating opportunities for children to speak out their thoughts and opinions, and to participate in the processes of reconstruction. Save the Children Japan started this programme in May 2011, building on from its experience in promoting child participation in its previous "Speaking Out" programmes.

Save the Children Japan provides opportunities for children, as members of their communities, to speak out and actively participate in the recovery plans and building processes being formulated by all levels of government. Examples of SOFT programmes are the Children's Community Building Clubs, Hear Our Voice ~ Children's Voices, and the Tohoku Children's Community Building Summits.

■ Children's Community Building Club ■

A survey conducted by Save the Children Japan in May and June of 2011 revealed that a large number of children in Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures wanted to consult with other children and do something for their communities.

In response to the findings of the survey, Save the Children Japan created the Children's Community Building Club project. The members of the clubs, from 5th graders to high school students, regularly meet together. They work together on the recovery of their communities by sharing their opinions with other community members and by talking to relevant authorities and experts. As of November 2012, Children's Community Building Clubs have been established in Yamada Town and Rikuzentakata City in Iwate Prefecture, and Ishinomaki City in Miyagi Prefecture.

* In the following population information, children refer to those 18 and under.

● Yamada Town, Iwate Prefecture

Club name: Keppare Yamada Toekomst (KYT)

Concept: Future and Tradition ~ A Community That Overflows With Love

"Keppare" means "Go for it!" in Japanese and "Toekomst" means "future" in Dutch. Yamada has had a long and close relationship with The Netherlands. We hope that we, the people of Yamada, will do our best in moving towards the future.

Town population: 17,013 people (incl. 2,412 children) as of October 2013

Yamada is well known for its oysters, scallops, and Matsutake and Shiitake mushrooms. The town also has a famous event called the Yamada Festival. Club members feel the town is a community that overflows with love.

To learn more, please see pp.6-7

● Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture

Club name: Kizuna ~ save the hope TAKATA

Concept: A community where people do not just live, but lead full and rich lives

People in Rikuzentakata value a sense of community. The club name "Kizuna" means "human bond" in Japanese. We want to cherish and further the bonds between people through our activities.

City population: 20,584 people (incl. 2,747 children) as of October 2013

There is a unique summer star festival in Rikuzentakata. The festival requires a lot of time and energy to prepare all the decorations and music. However, it is all worth it as the festival is such a fun event and attracts many people. Rikuzentakata also offers tasty and nutritious seafood and mountain vegetables.

To learn more, please see pp.8-9

● Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Prefecture

Club name: THE Rolling Stones: Now That's What We Call ROCK!

Concept: A community where the new and old rock 'n' roll together and life is pleasant for both children and adults

Ishinomaki can be broken into "ishi" + "maki" which means "stones" + "roll" in Japanese. So the town's name really does sound like Rolling Stones! We want to revitalize our community by our activities. Using all our efforts, like in Rock 'n' Roll music, we want to make people smile and cheer up!

City population: 151,068 people (incl. 22,490 children) as of September 2013

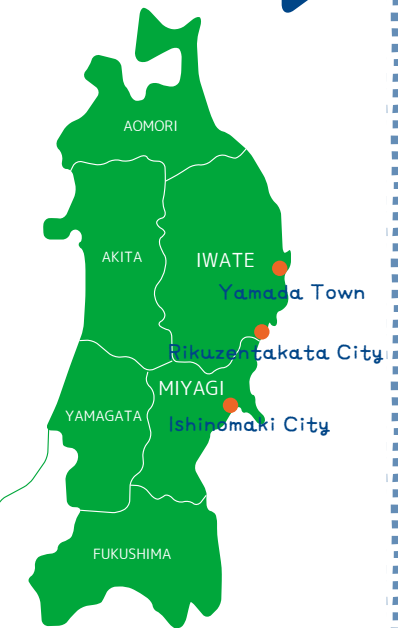
Ishinomaki is rich in nature and is surrounded by the sea, mountains and rivers. People here value their relationships with each other. "Ishi" also means "stone" and "maki" means "roll" in Japanese, so it's a city of Rock 'n' Roll.

To learn more, please see pp.10-11

■ Hear Our Voice ~Children's Voices~ ■

Save the Children Japan has been collecting children's voices through interviews and surveys. We then help make what children think about the recovery from the disaster, the community building processes and disaster risk reduction heard within the larger society. Save the Children Japan supports children's activities so as to advocate policies to local, prefectural and national authorities that reflect children's opinions.

To learn more, please see pp.14-17



Activities of Speaking Out From Tohoku in 2013



This November marks two and half years since the launch of the SOFT programme. In 2011, the members of the Children's Community Building Clubs each created a Dream Community Plan. In order to make their dreams come true, club members have since been working hard and developed networks with children and adults within their own communities, within local and national governments and the wider world. Let's review the activities of children who value cooperation, personal bonds and connections between people!



Yamada Town
Started drafting a children's proposal in response to the Compact City Plan that is being formulated by local government.



Rikuzentakata City
Started to plan an event where children exchange opinions with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Rikuzentakata City.



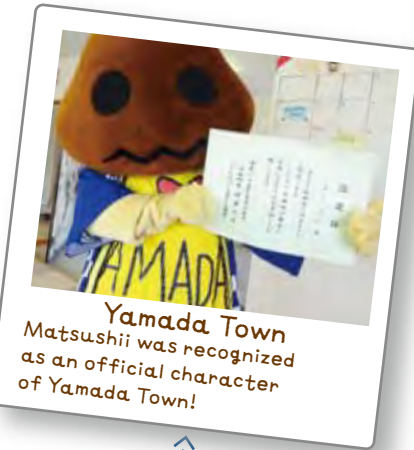
Ishinomaki City
Started to move forward in their plans for an Ishinomaki City Children's Center.



Ishinomaki City
Construction work for the Ishinomaki City Children's Center has started!



Rikuzentakata City
Children have aired the voices of children and adults within the community on radio!



Yamada Town
Matsushii was recognized as an official character of Yamada Town!



The 3rd Tohoku Children's Community Building Summit
~ A Town that Makes Progress with Us ~

New Year's Message 2013

Hear Our Voice ~ Disaster Risk Reduction ~ Meeting between Children from Fukushima and UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for DRR

Hear Our Voice ~ Disaster Risk Reduction ~ SCJ Workshop for the Fourth Session of the Global Platform for DRR

The 4th Tohoku Children's Community Building Summit
~ A Dream Town that We will Inherit ~

Hear Our Voice 8 ~ Survey on Child Participation ~ Voices from 100 children

Hear Our Voice ~ Disaster Risk Reduction ~ The Fourth Session of the Global Platform for DRR

Hear Our Voice ~ Disaster Risk Reduction ~ Debriefing Meeting of the Fourth Session of the Global Platform for DRR

The Tohoku Children's Community Building Summits Won Kids Design Award 2013!

Hear Our Voice ~ Disaster Risk Reduction ~ Meeting between Children from Rikuzentakata and UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for DRR

SOFT Interim Report 3 "Connect"



Children from Fukushima and UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for DRR



Children delivered the opinions of children from Tohoku during the Fourth Session of the Global Platform for DRR



Participants of the Children's Community Building Leaders Tour 2013



Children from Rikuzentakata and UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for DRR



Children handed out their proposal to the Mayor of Sendai City during the Fourth Session of the Global Platform for DRR

SOFT Interim Report

The Interim Report for the SOFT programme is published annually on Universal Children's Day, 20th of November.

Connect: SOFT Interim Report 3

"Connect" reports the activities of the SOFT programme from December 2012 to November 2013. For previous activities, please refer to "HOPE: SOFT Interim Report 1" and "Action: SOFT Interim Report 2."

We exchanged views about recovery and community building processes with the Mayor and the Chamber of Commerce in Yamada based on the results of interviews with local people in 2011. The Mayor said that he wanted to reflect upon the children's ideas and their Compact City Plan, a plan for revitalizing Yamada by developing a city center in the disaster-affected areas around Rikuchu Yamada Station. Therefore, in 2013, we worked hard on creating the **Dream Compact City Plan (DCCP)**. We asked for advice from specialists and people related to the Compact City Plan, and gathered opinions from children to complete the DCCP. We have since presented the plan to the Mayor and to people in the community. **Matsushii** is a character we designed in 2011. Matsushii has worked harder this year to boost the image of Yamada.

I'm Matsushii!



I'm Matsuko!
I'm here, too!

I was born from Yamada's speciality Matsutake and Shiitake mushrooms. I will keep working with the club members for Yamada! Please give me your encouragement when you see me.

matsushii



matsushii
new!

Flew out to Morioka and Hiroshima and attended events! Entered a character competition called "Yuru-Kyara Grand Prix 2013"!

matsushii
Authorized as an official character of Yamada!
I'll work harder!



matsushii
Joined a summer festival at a nursery and a fireworks festival in Yamada!



matsushii
My cookies and steamed cakes! Caregivers of the club members helped to make them! What will I be next?



matsushii
Check out our videos on our Matsushii KYT YouTube Channel!
<http://www.youtube.com/user/KYtmatsushii>

matsushii



Dream Compact City Plan Chronology Vol. 1

January

A briefing and discussion on the Compact City Plan by the Head of the Chamber of Commerce



Various new ideas for Yamada came out of these discussions!



March

Interviews with children in the community to collect more ideas and feedback



March

We created a mockup version of the DCCP! Five plans were chosen from numerous ideas!



Dream Compact City Plan Chronology Vol. 2

April

We presented the DCCP to the Mayor of Yamada. The mockup greatly helped the presentation!



May

A discussion about the DCCP with people in the community at the Fifth Area Meeting

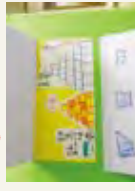


To be continued...

Dream Compact City Plan

Evacuation Tower

A tower with a market, a hotel and a storage area for emergency supplies. It helps people to evacuate in an emergency.



Underwater Tunnel

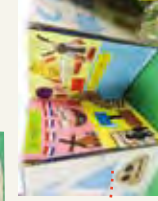
A place for sightseeing developed by utilizing one of Yamada's main attractions, the ocean.



Dream Compact City Plan

A train design based on the wishes for restarting Japan Railways and increasing its use.

Matsushii Train



History Museum

A museum to convey both the memories of the disaster and also the history of Yamada, its traditional festivals and historical exchanges with The Netherlands.



Matsushii House

A place that promotes communication between the people of Yamada and others in Japan and the wider world.



Voices of Children

We will speak our thoughts and be hands-on in our community building work!

Yamada's population was decreasing even before the disaster. For both the reconstruction and revitalization of Yamada, it is important to increase the population! Here are our ideas to create a better community that is comfortable for residents and also attractive for tourists.

Voices of Local Government

The club has several times given us suggestions towards the Compact City Plan and community building processes. Sometimes a recovery plan is developed in a conventional way because adults have various ties or connections. However, your ideas are all outside of our framework. Although some may be very difficult to realize, others are possible to realize with just a few additional changes. I would like to learn from such ideas. This is our town. Let's work on this together.

Hiroaki Numazaki, Manager
Reconstruction Promotion Section, Yamada Town

Voices of Staff

How can KYT contribute to the reconstruction and community building of Yamada? How can they increase the attractions of Yamada, and boost the image of the town in the eyes of the local children and adults? The ideas for the DCCP and Matsushii were always based on the wishes of KYT members: "We would like to revitalize Yamada." KYT and everybody in the town has to keep working so that many people become interested in visiting Yamada, and that their interest continues even after their visit. We are not only dreaming, but also realizing our Dream Community Plan. I will move forward with the club members.

Kizuna ~save the hope TAKATA~

Concept A Community Where People Do Not Just Live, But Lead Full and Rich Lives

We in the Kizuna* Club gathered voices of children and adults in the community in 2012, and presented them to a large audience via opinion papers, newspapers and radio. Also in 2012, we built a sculpture called the Mini Tree of Light. In order to create a larger Tree of Light sculpture, we submitted an opinion paper in January 2013. Since February, we have planned and conducted a series of events called "Susume! Takatakko! Machizukuri Talk ★" (Let's Go! Children Community Building Dialog ★, or "Machi-talk", for short). These dialogs provide more opportunities for the children in Rikuzentakata to participate in community building activities by talking to other children and adults in the community, and conveying the results to the Mayor and other high level officials. In July we visited Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture, and learned that they have kept some remains from the disaster in 1995, such as half-burned trees or telephone poles. We asked local people from fifth graders to the elderly if we should also preserve some remains of the disaster in Rikuzentakata. Later we aired the results we collected on radio.

* 'Kizuna' means the bonds among people.

Let's go!

START Path of the Kizuna Club

Let's review our footsteps!



Jan
Kizuna Club wanted to create a Tree of Light sculpture in the Memorial Park in Rikuzentakata. Club members decided to create and present an opinion paper.



A fulfilling time!

We read the documents from Rikuzentakata City and Iwate Prefecture. We picked up some important keywords.



"Click!"
We submitted our opinion paper by e-mail!

Some of our ideas for the park to be easily accessible and community-friendly were adopted in the official plans for the park!



Yes! Great!

Jan-Mar
Sent the requests of the Kizuna Club on building a Memorial Park to local government.

Mar
We advertised the event on radio and in newspapers! Our letter appeared in a local newspaper!



March 9, 2013, Tokai Shimpō



We issued flyers with helpful advice from a local printing shop.

Jan-Jun
"Susume! Takatakko! Machizukuri Talk ★" (Machi-talk)
We gathered and transmitted the voices of children in the community!

Feb
We started the preparations for Machi-talk! We designed an event to promote child participation in the community building processes in Rikuzentakata.

I wish our town's festivals were restarted.

I think dangerous roads should be repaired soon.



Based on our ideas, we created a Rikuzentakata Sugoroku. (a Japanese board game)!

The first session of Machi-talk
We discussed among children about communities in Rikuzentakata.



Umm...

Apr
The second session of Machi-talk
We talked with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and President of Rikuzentakata City Council while playing the game we created.



Voices of Local Government

I have had less chance to communicate with children over the last 10 years since finishing my role in the Parents and Teachers Association. Therefore, it was meaningful for me to participate in the Machi-talk. I was very impressed with how children who have experienced hard times after the disaster have moved forward and engaged in various activities with gratitude towards the cooperation of supporters. I talked with the children about the recovery and community building processes of the city. I would like to make an effort to make their dreams come true.

Akihiko Ito, President Rikuzentakata City Council



"We learned our friends' opinions about reconstruction. Great!"

Jul
Children's Community Building Leaders Tour!
We visited Kobe and learned about their activities after the Kobe earthquake.

Jul-Sep
We learned from the experiences of Kobe and transmitted the voices of local people.

Jun
We presented the outcomes of the Machi-talks during a radio event in a temporary shopping street!



Yaaay!

Aug
We interviewed local people: "What do you think about preserving remains of the disaster in order keep the memories of the disaster alive?"



Sep
We aired the opinions of local people, the Mayor and club members over FM radio!



Voices of Staff

Two and a half years have passed since the disaster. Even though children in Rikuzentakata are busy studying or partaking in club activities at school, the Kizuna Club actively moves with its member's enthusiasm to participate in community building processes towards reconstruction. Through activities involving the community, the Kizuna Club has been obtaining much support from the government and people, saying "Children play an important role in our recovery processes." Recently the Kizuna Club welcomed new members. The members will engage in community building activities with various perspectives brought from different regions, schools and ages.

We will keep on working!



Interview with the Mayor in the Rikuzentakata City Office!

Exciting!



GOAL

We will increase the opportunities for children to participate in community building activities.

Voices of Children

THE Rolling Stones
 ~Now That's What We Call ROCK!~
 Concept A Community Where the New and the Old Rock 'n' Roll Together and Life Is Pleasant for Children and Adults

We started planning and designing the Ishinomaki City Children's Center in the autumn of 2011. In 2012, we compiled the basic ideas about the Children's Center and completed its plan. In 2013, we discussed the city ordinance regarding the center and worked towards the revitalization of the local shopping street where the center will be located. The center has been developed as "a place where high school students play a key role in planning and managing the revitalization of Ishinomaki. A place where everybody feels comfortable and where children can transmit their thoughts to people in society." We made this concept based on our wish that we children would also like to participate in the reconstruction and transmit our thoughts and voices to others. In the process of developing the center we have exchanged opinions with local people, have received numerous ideas and understood that many people supported our activities. Building a Children's Center itself is not our only goal. We aim to keep contributing to the reconstruction of Ishinomaki through promoting the local economy and by increasing the visitors to the Children's Center. That is the mission of our club.

This is the Children's Center!



10 ※The Ishinomaki City Children's Center will be donated to Ishinomaki City in December 2013. The Ishinomaki City will manage the center in cooperation with children and people in the community.

Pouring our thoughts into the ordinance on the Children's Center!

March 2013
 Developed a draft preamble for the ordinance.

June 2013
 Submitted a petition to the Mayor about our draft preamble on the ordinance.

September 2013
 The City Council of Ishinomaki approved our preamble!

November 2012
 Learning and thinking about the ordinance. The Child Care Support Section of the City helped us ♪

Preamble

Preamble to the ordinance on the Ishinomaki City Children's Center

Every child is an individual, therefore every child has his or her own rights as described in the Ishinomaki's ordinance on the rights of children. A child needs many things to grow up healthy. Children have expressed their thoughts as follows:

Children need a place to talk, interact and communicate with other people, especially among children. Given such a place, children will develop and value their ties with people across different generations and establish better bonds.

Children need a place to feel relaxed. Then children will feel easy in their mind and body and be refreshed. People in Ishinomaki will see lots of children smiling.

Children need a place for physical activities. Then children will enjoy playing and grow up healthy in both mind and body.

Children need a place to learn. Then children will teach each other, enjoy thinking and find joy in understanding new things.

Children need a place to freely send their messages to society. Then children will engage in various activities by themselves. Thinking about the future of their community will result in the revitalization of the local area. Furthermore, it will allow many people know about Ishinomaki.

Therefore, we would like to create a Children's Center where children play a central role in its management."

The City of Ishinomaki has established this ordinance because they think a Children's Center will help promote respect for the natural rights of children, and enhance their well-being and healthy growth.

Working on revitalizing the local shopping street!

Voices of Children
 We will send out the opinions of children and revitalize the community by engaging in club activities, valuing our exchanges and cooperation with local people.

<p>Feb.</p> <p>Learned about the recovery plan of the city center from the Earthquake Reconstruction Dept of Ishinomaki City!</p>	<p>Feb.</p> <p>Walked around and researched the shopping street.</p>	<p>Jul.</p> <p>Interviewed local people about the merits and challenges of the shopping street.</p>	<p>Sep.</p> <p>The 7th Area Meeting. We grew to know more and more about the shopping street!</p>	<p>Oct.</p> <p>Exchanged views on the recovery plan with the Earthquake Reconstruction Dept of Ishinomaki City!</p>
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Voices of Local Government

The Children's Center, created from children's thoughts, will finally be completed. The completion of the center is not our goal but our starting point. Here is a place for children all over the world, a hub for transmitting information about child participation, and a base for letting people know about Ishinomaki and our reconstruction. It is truly great to keep speaking out and working hard, then finally to make your dreams come true. At the same time, I want you to remember that there are many adults who have supported your thoughts and walked together with you in your activities. Please remember that fact even after you grow up, and listen to the voices of children so you can support them in turn.

Kazuya Monma, Chief Investigator, Child-Care Support Section Welfare Division, Ishinomaki City

Voices of Staff

The club members always work proactively and cheerfully in order to make Ishinomaki happier and brighter. Every member expresses their opinions, discusses with each other seriously, and works to make ideas acceptable to all concerned. The members have furthered their relationships each time they meet, no matter how long each has been a member. They will continue to transmit the voices of children more and more using the Ishinomaki City Children's Center as their base. Let's keep our eyes on their activities!

Children's Community Building Leaders Tour in Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture

July 27-30, 2013 Participants: 37 children

The members of Children's Community Building Clubs in Yamada, Rikuzentakata and Ishinomaki visited Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture, to learn about its recovery processes from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 1995. Members from three regions furthered their exchanges and found new ideas for their future activities towards the reconstruction of their own communities.



Day 1: Orientation



Children from three regions gather again for the first time in three months!



Listening to stories about the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake from a storyteller



A fun time after dinner!

Day 2: Fieldwork ~ Research in Kobe Part 1



Researching community building works done by the whole community



Learning about various events for revitalizing a local shopping street



Speaking out on the radio!

Visiting a community radio station that began as an emergency FM radio in 1995

Day 3: Fieldwork ~ Research in Kobe Part 2



Characters were used to revitalize the community



Visiting a park and learning about its events



Interviewing people in a shopping street on local revitalizing activities

Day 4: Sharing the findings of our research in Kobe



Well done to all of us!

Voices of Children

- When we try to reconstruct something, we have to carefully consider if it is really necessary for the future. (13 years old, male, Ishinomaki)
- I was so happy because people in Kobe said that child participation was important and that it is necessary to think about society in 10 or 20 years time. Also, I was glad to see reconstruction was affected by the opinions of children. (15 years old, female, Rikuzentakata)



- Organizations Cooperating in Fieldwork
- Community Radio Station FMYY
- DESIGN AND CREATIVE CENTER KOBE
- Futatabi Koen (Park) / Construction Bureau, Kobe City
- Nagatajinjyamaeshotengai Shinkou Kumiai (Shopping District Promotion Association)
- Machi-Communication
- Shin Nagata Machizukuri KK / Kobe Nagata TMO
- Takatori Community Center

The 3rd Tohoku Children's Community Building Summit: A town that makes progress with us in Hanamaki, Iwate Prefecture

December 2, 2012

68 participants (10 to 18 year old children from 9 prefectures)

Forty-three members of the Children's Community Building Clubs and 25 children who have been active in their communities attended the Summit. They discussed "what they felt was positive" and "what they felt difficult," and expressed their opinions in various unique ways. The children compiled their thoughts about the meaning and challenges of child participation – when children speak out and participate in society. This Summit was a great opportunity for children to build networks between children in different regions.



Voices of Children

- The voices of children may be heard if we continue to transmit our thoughts to adults and society (14 years old, female, Saitama Prefecture)
- I acquired a variety of opinions from people in different generations. (16 years old, male, Aichi Prefecture)
- I want to bond more with our friends. (15 years old, female, Iwate Prefecture)

The 4th Tohoku Children's Community Building Summit: A dream town that we will inherit in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture

May 5, 2013 Children's Day (Japan)

224 participants (92 children and 132 adults from 14 prefectures)

The children presented their thoughts and opinions based on their activities in the Children's Community Building Clubs. Also participating in the Summit were policy makers including Diet members, local congress people, officials from local government, children and adults from the communities, and the members' caregivers. All the participants talked together, among children or between children and adults, in order to create better communities.



Voices of Children and Adults

- I listened to the real voices of children in my generation who had experienced the disaster. I'm happy to have talked with them directly. I will tell these experiences of the Summit to many people. (14 years old, male, Aichi Prefecture)
- The status of children will be established when the activities of the three regions are widely recognized and people start similar activities all over Japan. (Participant from the office of a Diet member, male, Miyagi Prefecture)

The Tohoku Children's Community Building Summits Won Kids Design Award 2013!



The Summits are acclaimed for the following qualities:

- The Summits offer an opportunity for children to take action towards the reconstruction of their communities, and their ideas and proposals are realized.
- The Summits provide an environment to help children and adults exchange their opinions as equals in a relaxed atmosphere.
- Children lead the planning and management of the Summits.

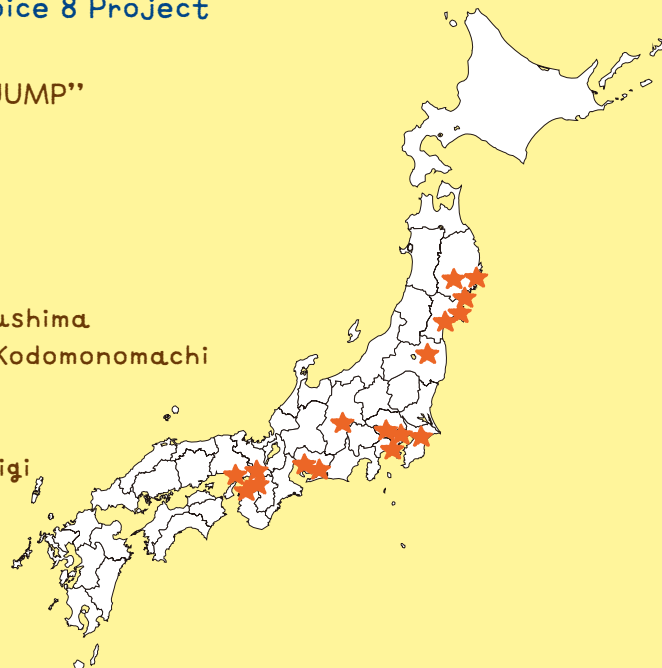
Hear Our Voice 8 ~Survey on Child Participation~

The SOFT programme has offered various opportunities in its Hear Our Voice projects for children to proactively take part in their communities. The children, including the members of the Children's Community Building Clubs, work together in their activities. The SOFT programme conducted a survey regarding child participation with about 100 children (4th graders in elementary school to high school students) in 17 organizations over 11 prefectures of Japan from October 2012 to March 2013. The children discussed "what they feel is positive," "if and how they have changed," "what they feel is negative," and "what they want from adults."

Organizations Cooperating in the Hear Our Voice 8 Project

(City, Prefecture / Organization)

- Oshu, Iwate / Mizusawa Junior Leaders Club "JUMP"
- Otsuchi, Iwate / Otsuchi Kodomo Gikai
- Kesenuma, Miyagi / Sokoage
- Sendai, Miyagi / Sendai Junior Leader "Zunda"
- Minamisanriku, Miyagi / Minamisanriku-cho Volunteer Circle BURANKO, World Vision Japan
- Fukushima, Fukushima / Free School Beans Fukushima
- Chiba, Sakura / Sakura Kodomo Station • NPO Kodomonomachi
- Wako, Saitama / Wako Kodomo Cafe
- Itabashi, Tokyo / Free School @ Narimasu
- Kawasaki, Kanagawa / Kawasaki-shi Kodomo Kaigi
- Chino, Nagano / Chino-shi Kodomo Kaigi
- Nagoya, Aichi / Kodomo NPO
- Nagoya, Aichi / Convention on the Rights of the Child Forum 2012 in Aichi
- Osaka and Kinki area / WITH
- Osaka, Osaka / Child Information and Research Center
- Matsubara, Osaka / Osaka Prefectural Matsubara High School
- Kobe, Hyogo / World Kids Community



Voices of Children

- ◎ I found many things that I've never thought about before through discussion with other people. We listened to other people's opinions and talked to each other. (13 years old, female, Saitama Prefecture)
- ◎ I understood myself more. (14 years old, male, Aichi Prefecture)
- ◎ I want to talk with more people. I want to talk with adults. I want them to know our thoughts and opinions. (17 years old, female, Miyagi Prefecture)
- ◎ I found something useful in today's discussion. (16 years old, female, Iwate Prefecture)

Voices of Adults

- ◎ I was surprised that children were able to communicate their feelings so well (Female, Kanagawa Prefecture)
- ◎ Children seemed to have a good time looking back on their recent activities. (Female, Chiba Prefecture)
- ◎ I was touched again and again by the voices of the children. I also felt happy to meet with the friendly and affable staff (of Save the Children Japan). (Female, Osaka Prefecture)

The report of this survey will be issued on the website of Save the Children Japan in January 2014. Please check it out!
<http://www.savechildren.or.jp/jpnem/jpn/pdf/SOFT-HOV8-2014.pdf> (Japanese)



Hear Our Voice ~ Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)~

Children have taken action towards improving disaster risk reduction in the world. Children transmitted their thoughts and opinions based on their own experiences to the world!

Feb. 17, 2013 Meeting between Children from Fukushima and UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction

In cooperation with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), children and youth from Fukushima Prefecture had a discussion with Ms. Margareta Wahlström, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction.



Voice of Ms. Wahlström

Two years have passed since the disaster. I would like to listen to the voices of children like you and understand the impacts of the disaster in the long run.

Voices of Children and Youth

- ◎ I'm afraid to eat school lunch and swim in the pool at school. I feel sad that my younger brothers grow up without experiencing the joy of playing outside. (15 years old, female)
- ◎ We suffer from a shortage of doctors and nurses because of their evacuation. We have especially few pediatricians, obstetricians and gynecologists here, so children in our region cannot live without anxiety. I want this situation to be changed. (16 years old, female)
- ◎ The Japanese Constitution says, "All of the people are equal under the law." It is unfair that some children can participate in retreat programmes and others cannot. The health of more and more children should be protected because all lives are equal. (16 years old, female)
- ◎ I want all children to be able to participate in retreat programmes. Retreat programmes should be provided to all children at class, grade or school level in the whole of Fukushima. (15 years old, male)

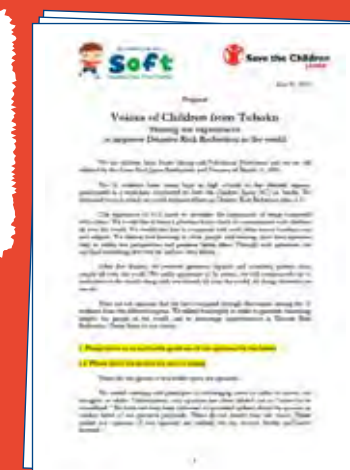
Mar. 31 - Apr. 1, 2013 SCJ Workshop for the Fourth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

Thirty-two children from Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures thought about and developed a proposal about DRR in the world at a workshop in Sendai.

"Proposal: Voices of Children from Tohoku ~ Sharing Our Experiences to Improve Disaster Risk Reduction in the World"

★Contents

- Please listen to us and make good use of our opinions for the future.
- Please remember and act upon the five requests from children.
- Let's reconsider DRR efforts together and realize them!
- Please share and pass on our experiences to posterity.



Voices of Children

- ◎ I felt renewed talking with children outside of my region. (14 years old, male, Miyagi Prefecture)
- ◎ I want adults to know that we are thinking about the disaster as much as adults are. (16 years old, male, Iwate Prefecture)
- ◎ I really felt we accomplished something when we finalized the proposal. (15 years old, female, Fukushima Prefecture)

Hear Our Voice ~ Disaster Risk Reduction ~

May 19 – 23, 2013 The Fourth Session of the Global Platform for DRR

Four child delegates were selected from the SCJ workshop attendees by a method developed by the children themselves. The four delegates visited Switzerland and attended a two-day pre-workshop with 14 children and youth from seven countries. They conveyed the thoughts and opinions of children from Tohoku with their friends from various countries at an event titled "Children and DRR: The Resilient Future We Want." They also communicated with adults from governments, international organizations and NGO affiliates while handing out their proposal.

Voices of Child Delegates

We have very strong thoughts and opinions on our proposal that was created for Japanese children, for our communities and for the future of the world. I will convey these opinions to as many people as possible during this wonderful opportunity.



Voices of Children

Until I took part in these activities, I didn't even want to communicate my thoughts to others. As far as possible I hid that I was from Fukushima. I was afraid of my opinions being rejected and I avoided directly facing the reality of the situation. However, I have realized the importance of stating my own opinions and also the great joy one can get from doing so. When I gave my speech at the Global Platform, the audience listened to me so intently. Being able to share this moment with them made me so happy. I thought I would cry. After my speech there were many people who wanted to shake my hand or take commemorative photographs. I could see that the people of the world are supporting me. This experience will support me forever and become a driving force in my life.

(16 years old, female)



Voices of Adults



I'm immensely proud that I was associated with such a wonderful group during the Global Platform. Without doubt, you won many friends and enthralled delegates. More than that though, you made key points to governments and shared really valuable insights. Having governments call for children's involvement in disaster risk reduction in the final session of the conference was a great result. Please keep up your good work in your communities, with your friends, parents and classmates, to make sure you and they can all live safer lives. I really hope you continue to work on disaster risk reduction and that I have the chance to work with you again in the future, perhaps in Japan at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015.

Tom Mitchell, Head of Programme, Climate Change, Environment and Forests
Overseas Development Institute

Hear Our Voice ~ Disaster Risk Reduction ~

Jul. 14, 2013 Debriefing Meeting of the Fourth Session of the Global Platform for DRR

Child Delegates presented their experiences of the Fourth Session of the Global Platform for DRR at a debriefing meeting in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture. Children who had participated in the SCJ workshop excitedly gathered to listen to the reports from their delegates!



Voice of a girl who participated in the SCJ workshop
I'm so happy to hear that the delegates conveyed their message so well to the world."
(16 years old, female, Fukushima Prefecture)

Voices of Adults

- Children play a great role in presenting opinions from the disaster areas in Tohoku, Japan, to the international society. I'm glad that the Fourth Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction provided children the opportunities to express their opinions on DRR." (Representative of UNISDR)
- I see that the children are thinking very seriously. I would like to consider building a system where we can discuss with such children together." (Deputy Director for the local preparation of the third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, General Affairs and Planning Bureau, City of Sendai)
- I found their attitude to strive towards reconstruction was great. As an adult, instead of letting the children work on reconstruction efforts by themselves, I want to move forward together with them through education." (High school teacher)

Oct. 29, 2013 Meeting between Children from Rikuzentakata and UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction

With the cooperation of UNISDR, children from Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture had a discussion with Ms. Margareta Wahlström, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction.



Voices of Children
I'm glad to meet with Ms. Wahlström again! I want to keep enhancing these relationships.
(16 years old, female)

Voices of Children

- (When the earthquakes struck,) I was in school and felt very anxious. I know it was difficult even for teachers to explain what was going on, but I wanted to hear at least a few words from them, such as, "It's all right." (16 years old, female)
- In places distant from the areas greatly affected by the disaster, people receive less information now. I want to ensure that the disaster does not fade from people's memory through creating places, like with this occasion today, where we can disseminate information about the disaster. (17 years old, female)
- When it comes to creating new evacuation plans based on these statistics, I think it is very important to take into account not only the sound knowledge of experts, but also the past experiences of people in disaster prone areas. (18 years old, male)
- There are many elderly people and people with disabilities who will be unable to protect themselves even with increased education about disaster risk reduction. I think it is necessary to discuss this topic with other people at a regional and community level. Then we can formulate plans to help those in the community who may be unable to help themselves during a disaster. (16 years old, female)
- The name itself, "disaster risk reduction" uses very formal language. Many people might think it difficult. Therefore, I think a good idea is to learn about this topic through fun activities. (17 years old, male)

In 2015, the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction will be organized by UNISDR in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture. At this conference, an international action plan to protect lives from disasters will be formulated as a successor framework building on the Hyogo Framework for Action. Children from Tohoku will continue to speak out their opinions based on their experiences and participate in DRR efforts!

Voices of Children ~ Looking Back on Our Activities~

accept others.

experience no walls between girls and boys.

feel it is like a family.

think freely



Yamada

feel like our feelings come out of our mouths.

voice different opinions freely.

listen to other's opinions.

express opinions from the perspective of a child.

have honest debates.



Rikuzentakata

develop myself.

change myself.

become stronger.

make my heart grow up.

At the Children's Community Building Clubs, I...

make my dreams come true.

gather children's dreams.

tell my dreams and listen to other's.

interact with people and communities.

think about the recovery.

work for our communities.

create communities.

feel a new future.

cooperate with the government.

experience new things.

live a meaningful life.

act like myself.

attend at my own pace.

go automatically.

go voluntarily, unlike school.

Ishinomaki

think everybody feels relaxed here.

think it is important like my own home.

think it is important second only to friends.



Yamada

The following comments were written and edited by child volunteers who have participated in the Children's Community Building Clubs for over a year.

I have more amusing experiences than before I joined the Children's Community Building Club. I rarely spoke in front of people before, but I have changed. I played the role of MC. I think it's difficult to make our voices heard to the people in the community or adults in general. I want to be trusted by adults. The club members work hard to think about the recovery of the community by ourselves, therefore I want adults to trust us as much as possible. If not, why have we kept working? I want to create a better community.

(11 years old, female, membership: 18 months)

Before I joined in the KYT, I had not given voice to my own ideas and just followed the majority opinions of other people. I was terribly afraid of expressing my own thoughts. However, after I participated in the KYT and experienced the club's activities, I have changed. Now I'm able to express many opinions without fear. I'm also able to find good points in other's opinions (This idea was new for me! From a different angle, this idea includes such a wonderful point!) Besides, we all have good relationships and enjoy our activities.

(14 years old, female, membership: 16 months)

Iwate Prefecture hasn't recovered yet even two and a half years after the disaster. People are working hard on the reconstruction, but sadly the national government does not turn their eyes to the recovery processes while they go abroad to sell nuclear power plants or work hard winning the Olympics in 2020. I want the government to work hard for the affected areas. I have been participating in the Children's Community Building Club. Before joining the club, I had thought my ideas would never come true. However, our ideas have been realized. A character we created for the revitalization of our community became an official character of Yamada Town, and then took part in a famous competition of characters. Our dream was not just a dream. Now I have my own dream and believe in it.

(13 years old, male, membership: 27 months)

This year was very important for me because I went abroad and talked with children from various countries. This year was also important for the KYT. We welcomed many new members this year. Some of them play core membership roles in our club now. I grew up a lot in this year. I also found bad aspects of myself. I want to contribute to the KYT and its next steps because this is my last year as a member. I will successfully finalize our activities in this year.

(16 years old, male, membership: 27 months)

Rikuzentakata

I have participated in these activities and met various people over these two years. Although not everything went well, I gained much knowledge and experienced many things. I want to talk about these things. People gradually forget about the disaster. And they do not have a high awareness of disaster risk reduction efforts, not only to prepare against earthquakes but also other natural hazards. More lives will be saved if everybody well considers disaster risk reduction. I'm just a 1st grader at high school, but I will do my best, and meet and talk with many people to make change possible!

(16 years old, female, membership: 27 months)

I'm glad and happy to have worked with people in the community, in my hometown where I will live from now on. I was able to talk with many people as our network grew. I'm full of gratitude towards the people who have supported our club. Each of us has numerous thoughts and opinions regarding the current and future community. I want more opportunities offered to children to speak out on the endless community building processes. I will communicate the voices and thoughts of children to you all. Please listen to our voices. Let's create our future together!

(17 years old, female, membership: 29 months)

The Children's Community Building Leaders Tour was very impressive to me. I enjoyed working on its field tour and recording at a radio station for the first time. The Children's Community Building Club brought me many opportunities to experience such things. It is a place where I can develop myself. I grew up a bit by talking with many people and learning lots of things. Now I can easily talk to people even the first time I meet them. I want to keep learning many things. We, the club members, will communicate the voices of children and work to realize their thoughts and opinions. We want to keep working by making use of the perspectives of children!

(13 years old, male, membership: 27 months)

The Children's Community Building Club, for me, is the place where I can send out my opinions. I missed attending the club several times because I'm not so good at continuing one thing. However, now I participate in the club activities more often because I want to convey my opinions to other people. I have been changed by these activities. Rikuzentakata City is now moving forward towards reconstruction, but I think the voices of children are not reflected much in the recovery process. I want adults to implement children's opinions more.

(13 years old, female, membership: 16 months)

I can speak in front of people now. Before joining the Children's Community Building Club, I wasn't good at expressing what I really wanted to say. I blushed and mumbled often. However, in the club, nobody rejects my opinions. Now I feel more relaxed when I speak my own thoughts.

(12 years old, female, membership: 15 months)

Ishinomaki

I enjoy speaking out about my opinions and listening to the opinions of other people such as club members, adults in the community, and children and adults living in different areas. Although some of the club members hesitate to voice their opinions, I want them to have more confidence. I decided that I would tell the members that we don't need to feel ashamed in voicing our opinions. Also, I will take actions to move things forward smoothly. I'm not sure how much I have acted upon my decision, but I want to keep trying and doing my best.

(17 years old, female, membership: 27 months)

I found joy in speaking out through the club activities. I was afraid to express my own opinions previously, but I have changed. I think I have changed because no one denies each other's opinions here. The club has a rule to value "participation," "confidentiality," and "respect," so nobody's voice is denied and everyone's opinion is valued. Therefore, I can speak my opinions with joy and without fear. I would like adults to listen to the opinions of children more. If adults did so, adults and children would have a chance to exchange different opinions more. We may be able create better things with such varied perspectives.

(14 years old, female, membership: 27 months)

By joining in and continuing the club activities, I have changed in several aspects. Now I am speaking in front of people and communicating my own opinions clearly to others. I'm glad that I participated in these activities. Now I can frankly speak my opinions to others in discussions like area meetings. Also, I can conduct presentations well without being nervous. The Children's Community Building Club has become a precious place for me.

(14 years old, male, membership: 27 months)

When I first became a member of the club, I didn't come up with ideas by myself. So I listened to the opinions of other members. However, the more I attended the club activities, the more I found I could express my own opinions because nobody denies each other's opinions in the club. I was also getting to know about the efforts and good points of other members. Now I feel it is fun to have discussions. So, I would like to ask adults to give us opportunities to talk with them. Please give us a chance. Please try to listen to the opinions of children and not deny us our voice.

(15 years old, female, membership: 24 months)

The Children's Community Building Club is like a school for me. However, it's not like a normal school. There are no barriers between girls and boys or juniors and seniors, and I can say what I want to say. Maybe it's because of the club rules to value "participation," "confidentiality," and "respect." I grew to love talking with others and speaking in front of people. In the future, I will be a college student and have to leave this club. But I will keep working for the club activities in a different way and provide support to make the club an equally enjoyable place for new members.

(16 years old, male, membership: 27 months)

Voices of Children ~ Looking Back on Our Activities~

Round Table Talk among the Members of the Children's Community Building Clubs
Volunteer members from the three clubs had a round-table talk on October 6, 2013.
Let's take a glance at their meeting♪

K: There are several different types of children.

H: I want adults to throw away their stereotypes about children such as: children have no knowledge, children are hurt by the disaster, children always fool around, and so forth. Maybe there are such children, but not all children are like this.

H: I started to participate in the Children's Community Building Club activities from attending an area meeting. Children had a group discussion with adults. I found that adults also have a variety of thoughts and opinions. At the next meeting of the club, we had a discussion with no adults. "When we discuss only between children, such opinions came out," I thought.

F: Were the opinions different from when children have a discussion with adults?

H: Yes. I thought, "These opinions are based exactly upon our own thoughts unlike when our opinions are being influenced by adults."

K: Most children want to express their opinions, but **each alone has little power.** Maybe that is why we gather?

F: Is it difficult to speak out your thoughts and opinions by yourself?

Y: Not difficult. But it becomes easier to speak out by cooperating with friends. I can speak out just by myself, but it's less powerful. You may be mistaken for a murmur.

YM: On the day of our school athletic festival, an old man, maybe somebody's grandpa came to see it. He said "No pain, no gain." I really understood his words.

F: What was the meaning?

YS: Learning from our faults?

JK: Learning from our own experiences.

F: Do you think adults in general don't value children as individuals?

K: Well, they value us.

H: But they do not let us contribute to society.

K: What would happen if we held a demonstration saying, "We want to contribute to society"?

F: What do you want to write in the Constitution for Children (suggested by K earlier in the meeting)?

K: At first, maybe, **"Children have the right to contribute to society."**

JN: First my big bro applied for the Children's Community Building Leader's Tour. Along the way, my parents decided to let me also join the tour. Before the tour I had largely stayed in my house. My family had said that I should go out, but I didn't. After participating in the tour, however, **I started to leave the house more often.**

F: You are getting used to going out?

H: It was really terrible before. I couldn't go out at all. I was very afraid about what to do if an earthquake hit, a tsunami struck, or something else happened to my family while I'm not at home. I was staying at home and addicted to the Internet. I never went out, even when my family asked, "Will you join us to go out?" I always said, "Never." However, one day my mum forced me into participating in the area meeting of the Children's Community Building Club in Yamada because she had promised to bring me. It was the beginning.

I quit staying at home.

M: It's always, "Adults, rather than children." Everything in school is decided by the opinions of adults. But in the Children's Community Building Clubs, children decide things. So I'm glad to participate in the club and enjoy its activities.

F: Will you tell me more?

M: In school, adults decide and children act along with the adults' decisions. In the club,

children decide everything and adults help children.

From Yamada Town: **H** (14 years old, female), **K** (16 years old, male), **YM** (13 years old, male) / From Rikuzentakata City: **YS** (12 years old, female) / From Ishinomaki City: **JK** (16 years old, male), **JN** (14 years old, male), **M** (14 years old, female), **Y** (17 years old, female) / **F** (facilitator)

Voices of Adults ~ Looking Back on the Children's Activities~

Yamada

Sometimes I'm invited to the activities of the Children's Community Building Club in Yamada. I attend these events as much as I can because every time I feel the growth of the children and I see in them unlimited possibilities that encourage us all. At first, the children looked shy doing presentations, however recently they have been conducting them very well. Their ideas on reconstruction became more realistic as time went on. I would like to value the dreams of children, especially in times like these. The future of Yamada is up to you.



Shinitsu Sato, Mayor
Yamada Town

A big hug with Matsushii! This photo symbolizes the relationship between the Children's Community Building Club in Yamada (KYT) and me. In the club, the children are proactive. I think they are empowered by keeping the rules and discipline they have proactively developed by themselves regardless of their age or gender. It is also because of the staff from Save the Children Japan who gently supports the club's activities and embraces the free ideas of children. I would like KYT members to work continuously to energize adults with Matsushii who has now become an official character of Yamada Town.



Koei Abe, President
Yamada Town Society
of Commerce and Industry

I have seen the activities of the Children's Community Building Club in Yamada since I offered them a meeting space for their first area meeting in 2011. Recently, I have strongly felt the growth of students who participate in the club's activities, for example their attitude towards reconstruction and their rich knowledge. It might be difficult to decide on how to reflect the proposals from students in some communities, however, they are worth addressing as challenges for the future. I hope these students keep participating and achieving in club activities with the staff of Save the Children Japan for the sake of the community and for their own growth.



Shigeo Sekikawa, Principal
Yamada High School

The first time I met with the children of the Children's Community Building Club in Yamada (KYT) they hid their faces, kept their eyes lowered and didn't display the attitude to communicate their thoughts and opinions. But now the children clearly express their will to convey their voices. It is one of my biggest pleasures to see the children gradually growing up and watching them improve upon their proposals every meeting. Although we still stand at the start line on the long way towards reconstruction, I look forward to the new Yamada that will be created including the ideas of KYT members.



Kozue Sotodate
Caregiver

Rikuzentakata

I feel it very encouraging that children have earnestly thought about the reconstruction and community building processes of our Rikuzentakata City as members of the community. I am also encouraged that the children have presented ideas and results from their discussions to the City, and have widened their appeals to be heard not only within the City, but also out in Tohoku, Japan and the whole world. The City has started construction work to develop tsunami barriers in the Takatamasubara area, to build residences on higher land and construct public housing for those affected by the disaster.



We are at the start of a long path towards reconstruction. However, Rikuzentakata City will definitely recover. I would like you to participate in the recovery processes. Let us create a new Rikuzentakata City together.

Futoshi Toba, Mayor
Rikuzentakata City

The Children's Community Building Club in Rikuzentakata (Kizuna Club) went to Kobe and learned about the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and the recovery processes. Then the club members reported what they had learned to the Mayor and also taped a radio program to air aimed towards community members. When we consider community building processes, it will be very important that each member of Kizuna Club speak out his or her learned experience and thoughts in their own voice and words via radio. Let's transmit opinions from children's perspectives and give adults some different points of views. I would like the members of Kizuna Club to have a dialogue with the Mayor on radio.



Hiromi Abe, Radio Personality
Rikuzentakata Disaster FM

"Community building? Does he do such things?" I don't know why he participates in the activities of the Children's Community Building Club in Rikuzentakata. It's good, of course! I was surprised when I found out that my son was so enthusiastic. Although it may be not proper, I somehow envy my son. He engages in community building activities! The flexible and free ideas and perspectives of children might be more wonderful than those of stubborn middle age men. I look forward to see the communities where children's ideas are still reflected in various ways after 20 or 30 years. I want to say at that time, "It's thanks to the children of the Children's Community Building Club."



Tadayoshi Sato
Caregiver

During this year, the Children's Community Building Club in Rikuzentakata has widened their field of activity to realize "a community where people do not just live, but lead full and rich lives." The club members transmitted and furthered their lessons learned from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. They also steadily kept making efforts to listen to the various voices of their communities. They brushed up their proactive abilities in planning, framing and transmitting their ideas through their activities. The club members have communicated the strong will of children towards reconstruction and their wishes and hopes on future community building with more and more people.



Kikumi Miura, Supervisor
Rikuzentakata City Board of Education

Voices of Adults ~ Looking Back on the Children's Activities ~

Ishinomaki

I feel very encouraged that children, who will shoulder the future, think about the reconstruction of Ishinomaki City and the community building processes as citizens along with adults in the communities. The Ishinomaki City Children's Center, which will be realized by the actions of children, will be a symbol of the reconstruction of our city. Ishinomaki City is the city to have an "Ordinance on the Rights of the Child."



Ishinomaki City promotes and values the rights of children. I would like you to continuously communicate the voices of children. Let us move forward together towards the recovery of Ishinomaki City.

Hiroshi Kameyama, Mayor
Ishinomaki City

As the Ishinomaki City Children's Center has gradually been constructed, the children have progressively developed their abilities. I was encouraged to see the children thinking seriously about the future of Ishinomaki and communicating with various people of differing ages, regions and personal values. Through their experiences, the children developed their abilities in furthering their thoughts in discussion, speaking out their thoughts with confidence, and moving forward proactively. I would like the children to utilize their abilities for a new Ishinomaki.



Takayuki Wako
Supervisor for Social Education
Lifelong Learning Division
Ishinomaki Board of Education

I was impressed with the children who gradually developed self-confidence in every meeting. A child who had looked quiet, the next time I saw them was confidently presenting in front of people and even drew laughter from the audience. Each child has grown up. And their growth became an upward spiral, involving people in the region and led the growth in the community itself. Children have a power to change communities.



They shared their aims and thoughts with the people, and they made the people recognize that community building is not someone else's issue, but an issue for each of them.

Hiromi Araki, President
baby smile Ishinomaki

The Ishinomaki City Children's Center, which the children have poured so much effort into, will soon be realized. The Children's Center was constructed based on the valuable experiences of the Children's Community Building Club in Ishinomaki and the voices of many supporters. I'm sure the Children's Center will be a wonderful place and will contribute towards the reconstruction of Ishinomaki. I thank all the people who taught my daughter important things for her life, such as the joy and difficulties of creating things, and the fact that people respect a person when he or she respects them first.



Hisae Hasebe
Caregiver

Many adults perhaps didn't imagine that right after the disaster children would become such a powerful and proactive driver for considering community building. Let me introduce some words from children in their various activities: "We are the ones who should think about the community," "Don't call us the children in the affected areas forever," and "I wish we can develop a Children's Constitution." These words show us how the children have developed their views on the current social systems and future world by working for the reconstruction of the community. They learned openly and fruitfully. The Children's Community Building Clubs have achieved many things. However, it seems this is not because the clubs have first-class members. One big reason is the existence of the adults who support the children. They are the staff from Save the Children Japan. They have gradually changed their way of supporting children. In the early stage, the adults took plenty of time and stood by the children, however recently, the adults no longer need to wait. Children speak out proactively. The adults now do not just listen to the opinions of children unconditionally. The adults communicate their own thoughts as an individual when they think differently from the children. It is a dialogue between human beings. It is the power of the children that produces the achievements of the clubs and has changed the adults who have supported the children. The voices of the children were small at the beginning, however, they met with friends, had discussions, formed ideas in the context of community building processes, and even started transmitting their voices to the world. The inner resilience of the children was unveiled by encountering the Children's Community Building Clubs. They are empowering their communities. Every time I see the club members I think, "Children are amazing!"



Yoshie Abe
Assistant Professor
School of Culture, Media and
Society, Waseda University

References

For more information please check the past reports and videos of the SOFT programme. We hope you will join us in supporting the children of Tohoku by introducing their activities with the following materials. Let's speak out from Tohoku together!

SOFT Interim Report 1: HOPE

May - November 2011
The report introduces the "Dream Community Plans" by the Children's Community Building Clubs and the voices of children collected by the "Hear Our Voice" project.
http://www.savechildren.or.jp/jpnem/eng/pdf/spotlight/201206_01-hope.pdf



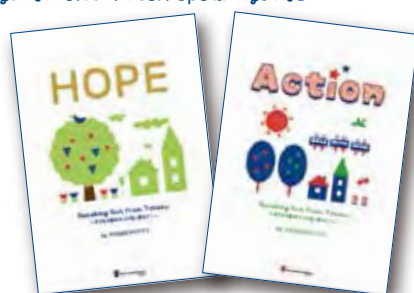
SOFT Interim Report 2: Action

December 2011 - November 2012
The report introduces the efforts of the Children's Community Building Clubs to realize their "Dream Community Plans" and the opinion papers and proposals created by children in the "Hear Our Voice" project.
http://www.savechildren.or.jp/jpnem/eng/pdf/spotlight/action_eng_201304.pdf

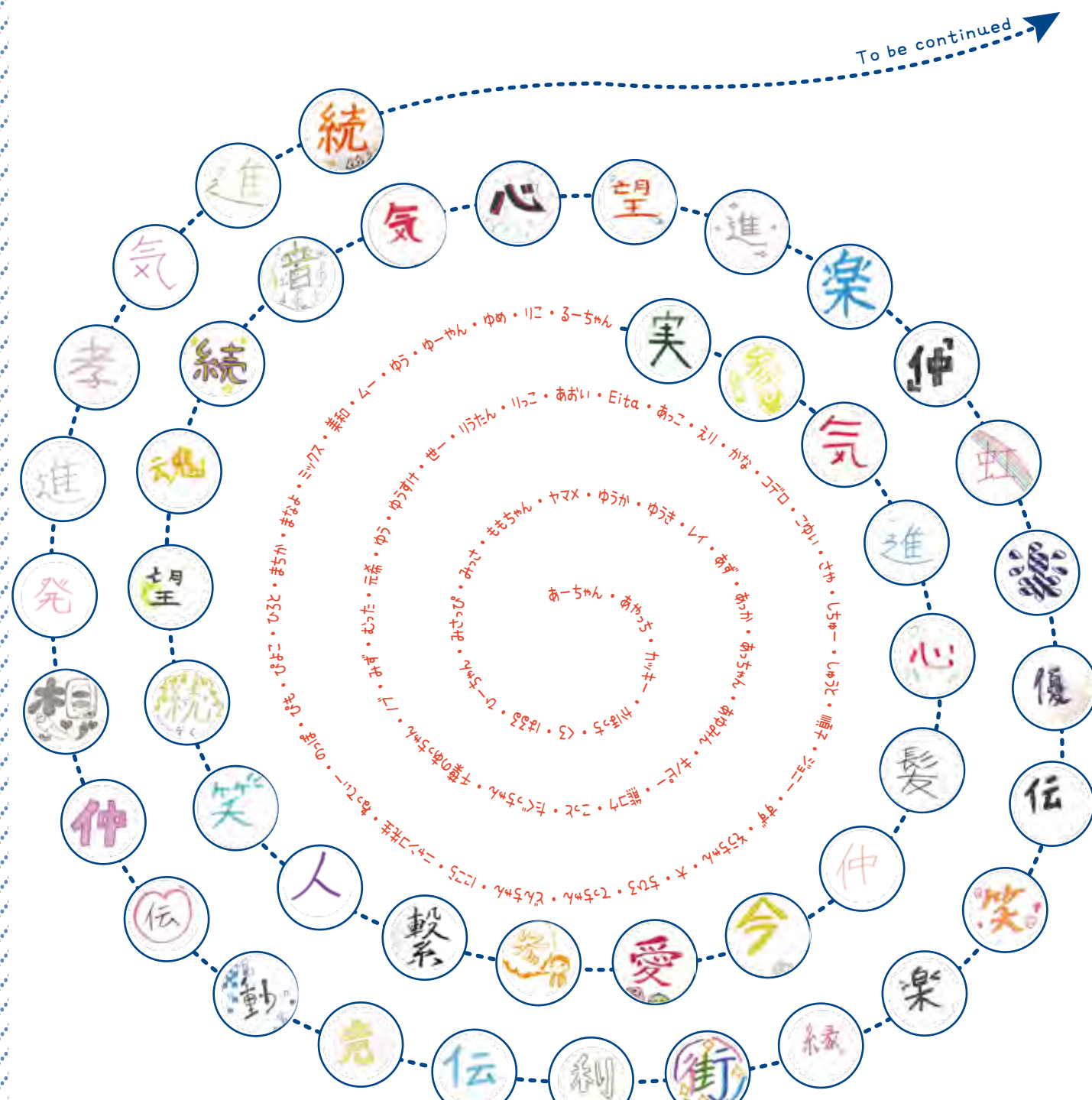


Speaking Out Channel

This YouTube channel was opened on November 20, Universal Children's Day, in 2010. It was created to hold up-to-date information on the activities of the Speaking Out programmes and to transmit the voices of children. Please check out the videos of activities by the children of Tohoku!
<http://www.youtube.com/user/SpeakingOutCh>



* The use for profit-making business or to threaten public order or morals is prohibited.



The members of the Children's Community Building Clubs picked one Kanji character that most appropriately represents their passion for future activities.

SOFT Interim Report 3

Directed & Produced by the members of the Children's Community Building Clubs in Yamada Town, Rikuzentakata City and Ishinomaki City, Save the Children Japan
Illustration & Design by Nana Takahashi
Supported by the community members of Yamada Town, Rikuzentakata City and Ishinomaki City
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Contact

Save the Children Japan, Head Office
Yamada Building 4th Floor, 2-8-4 Uchikanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 010-0047
Tel: 03-6859-0070 Fax: 03-6859-0069
E-mail: soft@savechildren.or.jp
<http://www.savechildren.or.jp/jpnem/eng/creating-child-friendly-communities>
<http://www.youtube.com/user/SpeakingOutCh>

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