

**Save the Children Japan**

**The Great East Japan Earthquake  
Emergency Response  
and  
Recovery Program**

# **The Five Years**

**for the Children  
with the Children**



**Save the Children**  
**JAPAN**

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# Greeting from the CEO

It has been five years since the unprecedented Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami.

Save the Children Japan (SCJ) have been working to realize every child's right to survival, development, protection and participation. With the aim to protect children's lives, to help them and their parents recover, and to ensure children's opportunities to learn, play and grow safely, we launched the Great East Japan Earthquake Emergency Response and Recovery Program immediately after 3.11. We have also been aiming to make children one of the major stakeholders to inspire breakthroughs in recovery and disaster risk reduction activities, and also that the voices of children are reflected in reconstruction efforts.

This report is put together in order to inform concerned parties of our achievements from March 2011 to December 2015, and to record our experience and knowledge gained from the Great East Japan Earthquake Emergency Response and Recovery Program to ensure better programs in the future. Since 3.11, emergency response and recovery efforts have been carefully examined from various aspects and revised accordingly. However, child rights are still not fully reflected in our domestic framework of emergency response and recovery efforts. Hopefully, what we have learned from our experience of five years will be used effectively to ensure child rights in case of disasters to come.

The Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami made us refocus on certain violations of child rights, which have been an issue in this country from before the disaster. The issues of child poverty and child abuse in disaster-affected areas became apparent to us as we provided the emergency response and recovery program. Taking advantage of the partnerships we have nurtured through our programs, we continue to tackle these issues facing children in the Tohoku region and all of Japan.

We would like to give a special thanks to the government officials, community members, schools, gakudo afterschool programs, childcare professionals, individuals and corporations who have supported us as well as the children who have been our equal partners in the implementation of this program.

March 11, 2016

Kunio Senga  
Chief Executive Officer  
Save the Children Japan

# Summary of the Great East Japan Earthquake Emergency Response and Recovery Program

## <Program Target Areas>

Iwate Prefecture: Miyako City, Yamada Town, Otsuchi Town, Kamaishi City, Ofunato City, Rikuzentakata City

Miyagi Prefecture: Ishinomaki City, Higashimatsushima City, Shichigahama City, Natori City

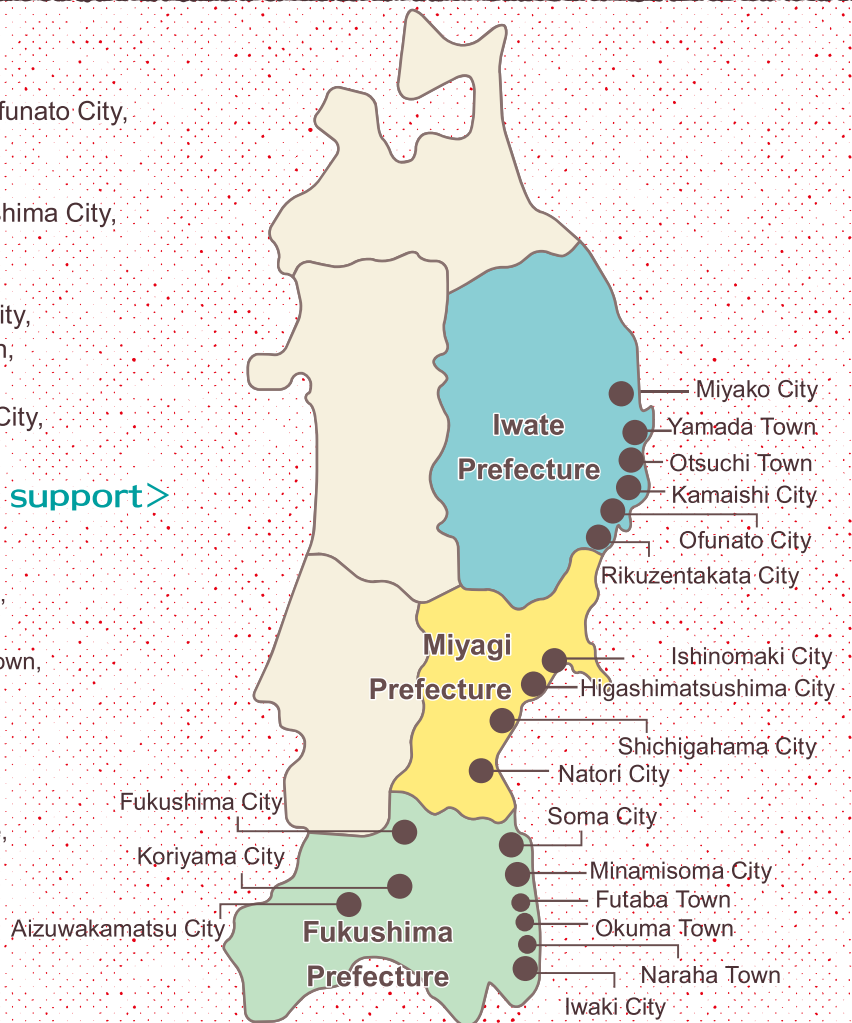
Fukushima Prefecture: Soma City, Minamisoma City, Futaba Town, Okuma Town, Naraha Town, Iwaki City, Fukushima City, Koriyama City, Aizuwakamatsu City

## <Other areas that SCJ provided support>

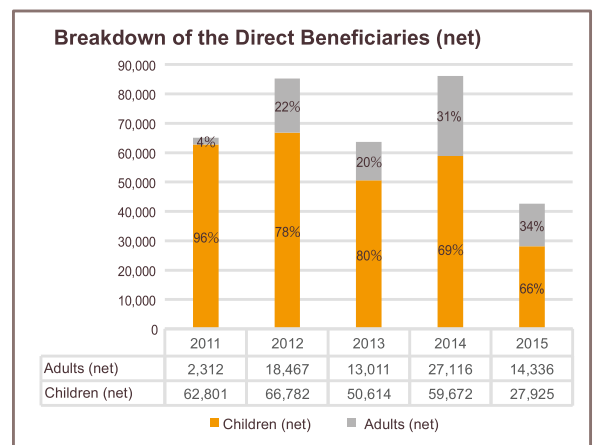
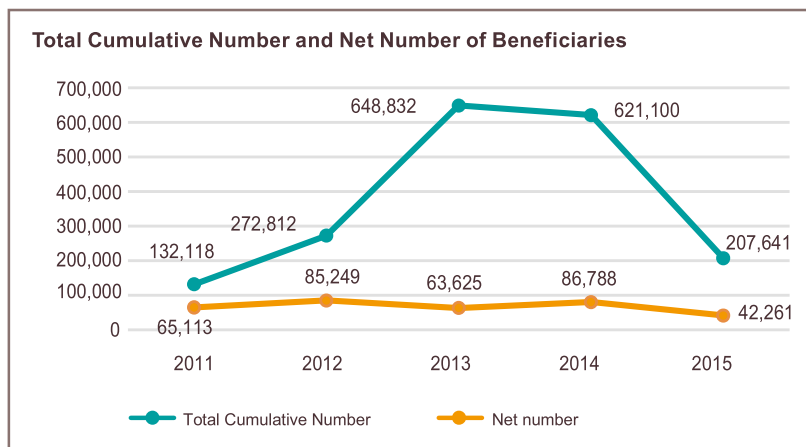
Iwate Prefecture: Hirono Town, Kuji City, Noda Village, Fudai Village

Miyagi Prefecture: Kesenuma City, Minamisanriku City, Onagawa Town, Matsushima Town, Tagajo City, Iwanuma City, Watari Town, Yamamoto Town, Zao Town, Oogawara Town, Shiroishi City, Kakuda City, Marumori Town

Fukushima Prefecture: Date City, Tomioka Town, Katsurao Village, Nishigo Village, Aizumisato Town



## ● Number of Direct Beneficiaries (from 2011 to 2015)



※The 'net number of beneficiaries' is the total actual number of beneficiaries supported through our program, deducting any duplication of beneficiary count resulting from any overlap of activities targeting a given individual.

## ● Institutions Supported by our Program

Schools  
(elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, and schools for special needs education)

	Iwate	Miyagi	Fukushima	Others	Total
Schools	104	141	80	2	327

Gakudo Afterschool Programs

	Iwate	Miyagi	Fukushima	Total
Gakudo Afterschool Programs	42	124	126	292

Non-Profit Organizations for Children

	Iwate	Miyagi	Fukushima	Others	Total
Non-Profit Organizations for Children	185	245	301	33	764

## <Program Objectives and Program Areas>

- ① To support the recovery of children and their caregivers in the aftermath of the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami.
- ② To enable children to be active agents in inspiring breakthroughs in the way children are treated in emergency preparedness planning, disaster risk reduction and during emergency response.



※ Disaster risk reduction activities were mainstreamed into Child Protection, Creating Child-Friendly Communities, Community Grants Initiative, and Fukushima Programs.

### ● Total Amount of Budget Executed (in millions of yen)

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
12.56	16.18	19.48	14.28	9.25	71.75

### ● Number of staff members involved

Total: 200

### ● Number of corporate partners and Save the Children members who supported our program

Corporations	356
Save the Children members	17 members (U.S., U.K., Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, Canada, Korea, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Fiji, Finland, Hong Kong and Lithuania)

# Emergency Response

Immediately after 3.11, SCJ quickly responded to the disaster by opening “Child-friendly Spaces,” distributing non-food items in shelters and providing “Back-to-School” kits.



## Major Achievements

### Provision of “Child-friendly Spaces”

Since space for children to play freely and safely was extremely limited after 3.11, SCJ set up “Child-friendly Spaces” in 19 different shelters in Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures. For operationalizing these “Child-friendly Spaces”, we utilized the wide networks that we’ve established through our domestic programs to secure sufficient number of suitable personnel who could work closely with the children under such challenging environments. In collaboration with the regional Council of Social Welfare, we also built the capacities of community volunteers to run these spaces.

### Preparing for School with “Back-to-School Kits”

In preparation for the new school year that started in April 2011, SCJ provided school supplies such as school backpacks, notebooks and writing tools to 3,390 elementary school students in Ishinomaki City and Higashimatsushima City in Miyagi Prefecture.

### Distribution of Emergency Supplies

SCJ distributed sanitary kits (toothbrush, soap, face washing soap, underwear, etc.) and first aid kits to the families staying at seven different evacuation shelters. We also provided first aid kits to 149 different shelters in Yamada Town, Kamaishi City and Rikuzentakata City in Iwate Prefecture, and Ishinomaki City, Higashimatsushima City and Yamamoto City in Miyagi Prefecture.

### Provision of “Child-friendly Temporary Toilets”

In response to parents’ hygiene and safety concerns about temporary bathrooms in evacuation shelters, we installed 36 child-friendly temporary toilets in two elementary schools and one junior high school in Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture. We also developed “How to use” instructional posters with children.

## Reflections

On March 12, 2011, the day after the 3.11 disaster, SCJ set up an emergency response headquarters at the Tokyo office. By March 14, we dispatched staff members to the affected areas to conduct an initial needs assessment. Based on the assessment results, we initiated emergency interventions aiming to protect children's lives, provide places where they could feel safe and secure, and offer psychosocial support to the children as well as their parents to help them return to normalcy. Being an international child rights NGO, staff with prominent experience in emergency relief operations, from other Save the Children members overseas, were dispatched to Japan, supporting us to maintain momentum in both speed and coverage of our response.

"Child-friendly Spaces" is one of Save the Children's signature interventions during emergencies that have been practiced globally. The fact that we were able to introduce such an intervention that is based on a wealth of experience and expertise accumulated by Save the Children into this emergency response was one of SCJ's major achievements. While we followed the methodologies and capitalized on the lessons learned from Save the Children's past operations, we were also able to cater to community specific needs when designing these "Child-friendly Spaces." This in turn offered us many lessons that we can apply to future emergency support in Japan.

At a later stage in our response and recovery program, we introduced and rolled out a "Psychological First Aid (PFA) for children" program to complement the "Child-friendly Spaces." It is expected that this addition of the PFA program to our menu of emergency interventions enhances the breadth and quality of SCJ's future emergency response.

In case of disasters happening in developing countries, the UN agency often takes initiative in coordinating stakeholders to optimize relief efforts; similarly, in Japan, the government is expected to take the initiative in coordinating all stakeholders when a disaster occurs. However when 3.11 occurred, it was not clear who had the mandate to coordinate the recovery efforts, nor was there a framework established to clarify who led in what activities. Consequently, in SCJ's case, we needed to independently visit the field, meet with the local government departments concerned, and conduct our own needs assessment. While this gave us real insight into what was needed, it also undermined the overall efficiency of our response; which is very crucial in such situations.

Based on this experience of 3.11, SCJ together with other organizations will continue to urge the government that first, the role of civil society such as NGOs and non profit organization (NPOs\*) needs to be defined in emergency situations and second, consideration for children's needs and their participation must be included in the national framework of emergency response. Orchestrating a seamless transition from emergency to recovery and then to reconstruction efforts has always been an issue in humanitarian communities garnering international debate. The fact that we were able to make a smooth transition building on our initial emergency response to various full-fledged programs in child protection, education, child participation, disaster risk reduction and the Fukushima regional focus program, was another major achievement.

\*Here NGOs refer to international NGOs, while NPOs refer to domestic non-profit organizations.

# Child Protection

In order to support children and their parents to recover from the effects of the earthquake and tsunami, we have created safe and protective environments for children to play, learn and grow.



## Major Achievements

### Creation of Safe and Protective Spaces for Children

In the disaster affected areas in Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures, we supported the construction or repair of three nurseries and kindergartens, and seven gakudos (afterschool programs) and children's centers. In addition, we improved 11 facilities for children, such as parks, temporary meeting places, sports fields, and schoolyards with additional equipment or supplies to create safe and protective spaces for children to play.

### Support for Better Childcare in Gakudo(afterschool programs)

To improve the quality of the childcare services provided in gakudos, we provided capacity development opportunities for staff, and offered visiting programs and outdoor excursions for children. We also supported the Ishinomaki City authorities in the drafting the Municipal Gakudo Management Guidelines.

### Study on Post-Disaster Changes in Childcare Environment

For the first three years after 3.11, we heard numerous concerns about an increase in cases of child abuse in the disaster-affected areas. In order to assess the situation, SCJ conducted a comprehensive study based on interviews among childcare specialists in Tohoku and made policy recommendations based on the results. Furthermore, a booklet and training programs were developed for people involved in the childcare community to encourage preventive support and early interventions for parents and children who are showing signs for help.

### Working with Communities in Active Play Programs for Children Aged between 0 and 6

In support of children between the age of 0 and 6 with a recognition for their right to play and develop in a safe environment, we implemented community-based Active Play Programs with caregiver groups in three of the temporary housing compounds in Ishinomaki. The groups met regularly with their children to try out new 'play' methods and to support each other in their 'parenting' under stressful situations. As a result, we compiled the various types of 'play' piloted into a booklet, "Recipe of Play" and distributed it for wider circulation targeting families outside of the disaster-affected areas of Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures. These booklets were officially distributed by selected municipalities to caregivers during routine health check-ups for children.

### Capturing the Voices of Gakudo Staff in the Field at the time of the Disaster

In Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures, the voices of gakudo staff in the field at the time of the disaster were collected and compiled into a report. It documented the role of gakudos and gakudo staff played in protecting children's lives.

Through this report SCJ aimed to communicate widely the importance of strengthening disaster risk reduction capacity at gakudos to protect children's safety during disasters. It also advises strengthening the collaboration between gakudos with schools and communities.



## Reflections

As a follow-up to the implementation of the “Child-friendly Spaces” program in evacuation shelters as part of the emergency response, SCJ continued interventions targeting affected communities to ensure that children are provided with safe and protective environments where they could play, learn, and grow. Our main program target group in the Child Protection program has been the adults in the community—caregivers and childcare professionals—who have the responsibility to establish a sense of security and safety in children’s everyday lives.

For caregivers we implemented a program where we provided play sessions for children as well as networking opportunities among the caregivers for mutual support. After 3.11, many caregivers were forced to relocate to unfamiliar places while facing various challenges in raising their children. Isolated without friends or family close by, combined with general uncertainty about their future, they were placed under a tremendous amount of stress. Thus, we aimed to create situations through our program where caregivers could share their concerns and feelings easily through activities that would in turn reduce their stress levels when dealing with their children.

As for support to childcare professionals, we worked closely with the local government and the National as well as Prefectural Gakudo Afterschool Program Liaison Councils, focusing on improving the quality of gakudo programs. After 3.11, demand for gakudos increased for the following reasons: first, parents felt unsafe leaving their children alone at home afterschool, and second, many parents decided to start working again for economic benefits. Ensuring quality in gakudo programs has been an emerging issue. A certification system was introduced nationally for gakudo instructors only after 2014, and there was no systematic training program for them. To make matters worse, it was not easy for gakudo instructors, who were survivors themselves, to take care of disaster-affected children. Therefore, we have provided training for gakudo instructors in each community and even provided transportation for those who didn’t have easy access to the training sessions. Consequently, we were able to improve the quality of gakudo programs in the affected areas.

Last but not least, we have worked continuously with the government and community organizations that run gakudo to sustain the improved quality in each community. We have also provided booklets and brochures, and provided workshops to encourage people to make use of those materials, which aim to ensure that children can continue to play, learn and grow safely in the community.

## ● From Our Partners

The training provided for instructors in the coastal areas of Iwate Prefecture and in Ishinomaki and Higashimatsushima Cities in Miyagi Prefecture, and the assistance for new gakudo facilities in Fukushima as part of SCJ’s emergency response and recovery program proved to be a great contribution to the gakudo childcare field. In fact, gakudo instructors who participated in the training left positive feedback, such as, “I re-realize the significance of our job,” and “Finally the children can settle down.”

Now that five years have passed since 3.11, a large number of gakudo programs, except for those in nuclear evacuation zones, have resumed their operations, owing their ability to reopen to the efforts of parents, gakudo instructors, and government officials. They have been serving to protect children’s lives and to support their caretakers who tried to combine child rearing and work. Gakudos have a long history of being under-resourced and with the changing policy environment with the national introduction of the Comprehensive Support System for Child and Child Rearing in 2015, a good number of communities continue to face many challenges. Building on the achievements reached together with SCJ, we would like to continue providing long-term support to the gakudos.

Nobuyuki Shimura  
Deputy Secretary-General  
Gakudo Afterschool Program Liaison Council



# Education

We have ensured learning opportunities and created learning environments for children.



## Major Achievements

### Scholarships

From 2011 to 2015, we provided 2,027 students from 21 agricultural high schools and 2,427 students from eight fishery high schools in Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures with scholarships (from 240,000 to 300,000 yen per person). It aimed to ensure that they continued benefitting from a high school education after 3.11 without financial constraints. Since the scholarships had no repayment obligations, they won't become a burden to the recipients, and at the same time they helped to correct the unequal opportunities for education due to financial hardships caused by 3.11.

### Support for extracurricular activities

As we found that participation in extracurricular activities helps children return to normalcy, we supported the resumption of extracurricular school activities and sports/cultural organizations that were seriously affected by 3.11. We provided 472 activities and organizations with micro grants, which enabled them to buy necessary items such as uniforms and musical instruments; and provided travel opportunities for competitions and away games.

### Enhancement of school environments

Based on requests from schools and the Board of Education in Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures, we provided equipment for physical education and musical instruments, especially in the initial phase of emergency relief. In collaboration with the Board of Education, we also provided rapid support for areas where government services had not yet reached. We supported school lunch programs for schools whose food supply systems had been disrupted and transportation for extracurricular activities to schools whose school grounds had become unusable.

### Business and marketing classes at agricultural high schools

In close collaboration with partner corporations, we provided special classes on business administration and marketing at four agricultural high schools in Miyagi and Fukushima Prefectures. While learning about business operations such as commodity planning, sales strategy, public relations, and settlement of accounts, the students had an opportunity to develop and sell their own agricultural products. Through the experience of actual business, they learned how the classes are connected to actual practice in society, which motivated them to learn more.

## Reflections

Although the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami severely damaged schools, they resumed operation much faster compared with our previous experiences dealing with disasters in developing countries. Once operating, however, it took quite a long time to completely restore the learning environments as some municipalities weren't functioning or sufficient budgets were lacking. In order to meet the needs of schools in the meantime, we started providing recovery support in schools.

Before we started any interventions, we worked closely with the Board of Education and each school to appropriately grasp their needs. We found in the early stages that a large number of schools still lacked equipment for physical education and musical instruments after resuming classes. We also found that even schools that weren't affected directly by 3.11 were unable to use their school grounds as many had been converted into temporary shelters. In order for students from those schools to receive their physical education they needed to travel long distances. We provided transportation services to schools for students to travel to physical education when they had no other means of transportation. It was definitely one of our major achievements to have been able to provide needs-specific services for individual schools.

Engaging in sports and/or cultural activities is essential to children's development as well helping children return to normalcy. It was significant for us to have supported organizations providing children with those activities, which was initially supported by the families and communities before 3.11.

As for non-compulsory high school education, we were concerned whether children whose families were financially constrained by the impact of 3.11 could continue their education. Although there are scholarships to remedy the situation, most of them are loans, and even if not, they are hard to get as recipients need to demonstrate a good school record. Therefore, our scholarships targeted agricultural and fishery high school students, since they are extremely valuable to the Tohoku community with agriculture and fishing as its major industries. Moreover, we designed its selection criteria based solely on financial needs directly or indirectly caused by 3.11, without any repayment obligation.

While providing scholarships as a part of the recovery program, we found a connection between the impact of 3.11 and child poverty. In addition to the impact from 3.11, the disaster affected areas were already areas where the working population was shrinking and the economic structures in communities were going through changes. With all these forces in play, we were reminded that it takes a long time for families and communities, supporting the children's livelihoods, to recover fully from the loss of houses, properties, jobs, and overall economic opportunities. SCJ will address this issue of child poverty as part of our domestic program to be launched.

# Creating Child-friendly Communities

We have provided child-participatory community building programs to encourage children to speak out and participate in the reconstruction of their communities.



## Major Achievements

### Children's Community Buildings Clubs

Children from 5th graders to high school students in Yamada Town and Rikuzentakata City in Iwate Prefecture and Ishinomaki City in Miyagi Prefecture regularly meet every week or fortnight. They engage in the community building process while consulting with the government, community members and experts. Every summer for the past five years, Children's Community Building Leaders Tours have been held where children shared activities and opinions and made field trips.

### Club members realized their ideas

Members of the Children's Community Building Club in Yamada Town in Iwate Prefecture developed and designed the "Yamda Fureai Center," which provides children with a place to hangout and also functions as a library. Members in Rikuzentakata City in Iwate Prefecture created the miniature "Tree of Light" as a symbol of the reconstruction in the temporary shopping street. Members of Ishinomaki City in Miyagi Prefecture developed and designed the "Ishinomaki Children's Center" and we have supported the children to take part in managing the facility. Those projects have collectively won six different awards.

### "Hear Our Voice (HOV)"

We conducted four attitude surveys on children's participation, targeting 4th graders to high school students in Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures, with a total of about 48,000 children participating. The children formulated policy recommendations seven times and submitted them to three municipalities, two prefectures and the central government. Moreover, children in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima Prefectures summarized their opinions on disaster risk reduction based on their experiences, and their representatives participated in global conferences on disaster risk reduction on four occasions. They have shared their opinions with the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Disaster Risk Reduction five times. As a result of these efforts, the roles of children and youth were highlighted in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, established on March 2015.

### "Tohoku Children's Community Building Summit" where children and adults exchange opinions

We created six opportunities where children from the Tohoku area could express their feelings and opinions and discuss with children outside of Tohoku, as well as with adults and policy makers to improve their community. This project received the 7th "Kids Design Award."

## Reflections

The children's community building project, "Speaking Out From Tohoku: Building Better Communities through the Participation of Children," originated from the voices of 10,000 children with the hope of helping the community recover from the unprecedented disaster. It started in May 2011 immediately after the disaster, and since then we have worked closely with the government, schools and with parents, as well as the children, and produced the following three major results.

First, we were able to empower children, as members of their community, through the provision of opportunities where they could express their opinions on the reconstruction and disaster risk reduction and participate in society. "I love my community more than ever." "I learned how to communicate with people of various ages and backgrounds." "I used to consider the reconstruction to be a task for grown-ups, but my experience changed this view completely." Children grew interested in their communities, learned the significance of voicing their opinions, respecting others, and social involvement. They became agents of reconstruction and disaster risk reduction.

Second, not only the children but also the adults as caretakers have changed. Since 2003, SCJ has been running child-participatory programs in Japan, and we often heard the adults saying, "Children have no answers" or, "It might be a waste of energy and time to ask opinions from the children." However, through this program, we now hear them saying, "It is important to listen to children's opinions," and, "We need to incorporate and realize children's voices." Indeed, the adults consider children as partners and collaborate together in the reconstruction process.

At last, our efforts to establish child participation as a key pillar in the Convention on the Rights of the Child within the framework of reconstruction and disaster risk reduction should be noted. Children have developed and designed the Children's Center, have been running Children's Community Building Clubs, and have actively participated in opinion sharing with policy makers and at domestic and international conferences. As a result, child-participatory systems and programs on reconstruction and disaster risk reduction are being developed such as "Hear Our Voice," where children regularly make policy recommendations on the reconstruction and disaster risk reduction. "I was feeling helpless, but I participated in community building and learned that I can do something!" said one of the children while looking at the damage left behind in her hometown six months after 3.11. Our role as adults is to ensure that children are given opportunities to speak out and participate in society and to provide emotional support, listen to and reflect their voices. Through this process, children learn to overcome their difficulties, become empowered and become agents to carry out the reconstruction.

Now that children have learned how to take the lead in solving problems through these projects, we believe they can make good use of such abilities not only in disaster-affected areas, but also in any part of the country where issues surrounding children and the problem of child poverty is pervasive.

## ●From Our Partners

It is nobody but children who taught themselves how to recover and play a major role in community building. With the help from adults who were willing to listen, they came to understand that they can make a change and continued speaking out for their communities. Through contact with various people, some children gained a clear vision of their future. They displayed what is called "post-traumatic growth," and it was made possible by the fact that SCJ staff members provided specific support based on each child's needs. Such support stems from the "child's best interest," the core concept in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which requires a certain degree of expertise.

As the voting age for national elections is to be lowered to 18, and today social involvement from an early age is required more than ever, schools and communities are searching for ways to promote social involvement from children and youth. I believe that the Children's Community Building Clubs serve as a good reference not only in Tohoku, but also nationwide.

Yoshie Abe  
Associate Professor  
Department of Liberal Arts, Kogakuin University



# Community Grants Initiative

We provided funds, strengthened the organizational capacities, and raised awareness of child rights to help local NPOs continue their programs for children in the 3.11 affected areas.



## Major Achievements

### Grants provided to various NPOs supporting children in communities

We established seven grant programs with various grant themes and provided a total of 930 million yen (approximately 8.17 million USD) in grants to 773 NPOs. The grants covered not only the direct costs of programs, but also indirect costs covering personnel, rent, etc., to enhance the operational sustainability of the NPOs.

### Technical support to raise awareness of child rights

We have provided technical training on issues such as child rights, child safeguarding, and creating child-participatory organizations. Such training has supported each organization to start mainstreaming child rights perspectives in their activities. A total of 328 staff members of child-related organizations participated in these training activities.

### Strengthened organizational capacities

We supported NPOs' organizational capacity development in areas such as strategic organizational/programmatic planning and PR, through training and direct consultation. We organized nine joint training sessions over the past five years where the grantee NPOs shared experiences, built networks, gained operational knowledge, and reviewed their organizational strategies and activity plans. We also provided consultancies by external experts to enhance the accounting and other operational systems of organizations. A total of 223 organizations and 573 individuals benefitted from these activities.

### List of grant programs established

- Kodomo Hagukumi Fund
- Kodomo Hagukumi Fund: Special Grants Program for children in poverty
- Fukushima Susumu Project: Grants Program for NPOs Active in Fukushima
- RESTART JAPAN Dreams Do Come True Project
- Machikurumi Child Support Fund: Outreach Program for Affected-families
- Minnano Kibou Fund: Special Grants Program for Children in Recuperation Retreats
- Sports, Culture, Community Child Support Fund

## Reflections

Child rights cannot be realized without a community effort in support of children. After the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, a large number of people all over the country engaged in various activities such as installing children's spaces to play and study, helping with child rearing and providing psychological care. SCJ contributed to the strengthening this community support for children through providing grants to NPOs active in the communities. The program had two aspects.

First, from 2011 to 2015, we developed and managed various grant programs with themes based on community needs. We started with short-term grants (up to 12 months) with short application processes for quick support and a good number of organizations took advantage of these. From the second half of 2011, we mostly provided mid-term grants (one to three years) of over 2,000,000 yen, which had the more comprehensive objective of supporting NPOs in program implementation, organizational strengthening and ensuring sustainability. We also set up special themes (child poverty, assistance for children in Fukushima, etc.) and focused our support more towards organizations with greater technical specialization and cutting-edge approaches. We collaborated closely with other organizations and experts to enable assistance with a high degree of flexibility and expertise, and to meet the various needs identified among our grantees. As a result, these grant programs were well received by them.

Second, in addition to financial assistance, we provided capacity building training and the technical support needed for raising awareness of child rights. Many of the NPOs that worked in the field in response to 3.11 displayed a strong passion for their cause, but in many cases, lacked in experience, funds, human resources and organizational capacity. Also efforts to ensure a certain level of quality in activities was essential to contribute to the realization of child rights. Through our capacity building program for the grantees, organizations that were merely implementing activities have now grown and become organizations capable of developing their staff and long-term plans. Others established the community base and social recognition for their activities and are now receiving direct funding from local governments. Furthermore, each organization has started reviewing their organizational policies and activities from a child rights perspective and are working on child safeguarding.

It should be noted that our consistent pursuit to ensure the sustainability of NPO's activities throughout our support had helped each organization to build capacities to continue and expand their programs after the grant period. In fact, most of the organizations that we supported have continued their activities, and some of them have even started getting commissioned by local governments. Others are now implementing projects in partnership with the government, developing accounting systems with their own resources, and are providing training on child safety. We believe those organizations will keep playing active roles in the community in support of children.

## ●From Our Partners

To other child-related organizations providing support for children in various situations, it was encouraging to see SCJ running a wide range of programs in the three Tohoku prefectures by utilizing their long expertise as an international child rights organization. SCJ's support for NPOs was characterized by the provision of capacity building support and professional training on child rights, as well as direct grants for projects. Although the Japan NPO Center has been supporting NPOs in three Tohoku Prefectures through grants and training, support to improve the organizational base such as personnel, materials, cash flow and information has been indispensable for NPOs to continue their activities to solve social issues. I believe that the civil society groups in the affected areas that have started or expanded their projects after 3.11 need support for project implementation and organizational development.

A lot of issues around children in the affected area share common traits with those in the whole nation. I hope what was learned from this project will be utilized to solve issues related to children in the entire country, since those issues are becoming more and more severe and complex by the day.

Eriko Nitta  
Director, Japan NPO Center



# Fukushima Program

We provided support for children living in the midst of various environmental and social changes caused by the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear power plant accident.



## Major Achievements

### Implementation of child-friendly radiation literacy workshops and development of self-help handbooks for children

We provided workshops on radiation literacy, targeting the students of five public junior high schools and one elementary school in Fukushima Prefecture. A total of 490 students participated. We also distributed a child-friendly self-help handbook “Opening Doors to Learning, Thinking, Discussing about Radiation” which was developed based on the questions and feedback raised by the children during the workshops.

### Providing opportunities for safe outdoor play

For children whose living environments were changed by the earthquake and/or nuclear power plant accident, we organized day trips to places in Fukushima where the levels of radiation were relatively low for outdoor play. We provided this program 96 times and a total of 3,048 children participated. From 2014, we shifted our focus to children with greater vulnerabilities, such as infants and children with disabilities, and provided them with opportunities to play outside in nature.

### Securing safe after-school play spaces through strengthening gakudo programs

As a part of an effort at creating safe after-school play spaces for children, we supported gakudo programs, which play an important role in children’s lives. This activity mainly targeted Fukushima City, where there were some hotspots of high radiation, Iwaki City, which has accepted a large number of displaced children from other areas of Fukushima, and Minamisoma City, where a lot of displaced children have returned from evacuation. We built five new gakudo facilities and also provided support for field trips and training for gakudo instructors.

### Financial assistance and technical support for organizations providing recuperation retreat programs outside of Fukushima

There are a lot of recuperation retreats being held outside of Fukushima that provide children with opportunities for outdoor play during school holidays. To encourage children to participate in these programs, we provided 34 organizations with financial assistance and technical support. We also strengthened the organizational capacity of the 311 Japan Nuclear Disaster Aid Association, the umbrella network of these organizations, to ensure the safety and quality of these recreational programs.



## Reflections

Immediately after 3.11, the children in Fukushima Prefecture faced a wide variety of problems caused by the serious long-term effects of the nuclear power plant accident. They were concerned about the effects of radiation on their health, about families relocating and being separated from one another, and about being discriminated against because they were from “Fukushima”. Adults tried their best to ensure the safety and security of children in the face of the challenges brought about by the unprecedented nuclear power plant accident. Many individuals stood up and made their voices heard, even opposing each other from time to time. However, somewhere in this process, the voice of the children seemed to have been left out.

When SCJ decided to develop a program for the children in Fukushima, we thought that adopting the same emergency relief and recovery strategy that we had implemented in Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures would not be sufficient. Especially from a child right’s perspective, we thought it best to conduct an assessment where we could collect children’s voices and understand how they perceived the situation. In 2012, SCJ interviewed 157 children in 15 different locations in Fukushima, and the findings showed that among their many needs, what children were asking for the most were: 1) opportunities for safe outdoor play; 2) child-friendly information on radiation and its effects. In addition, children from all age groups confirmed that they lacked opportunities to share their concerns and opinions about radiation and its effect on their future with either their family or friends.

Based on those findings, we developed our Fukushima Program, through which: 1) we created opportunities for children to play safely and concern-free from radiation; 2) we provided activities on radiation literacy, aiming to educate children so that they become more empowered to make their own decisions on how to deal with radiation and other issues brought about by the accident.

The environment surrounding children in Fukushima has changed over the past three years since we started the Fukushima Program. Now that the levels of radiation have decreased, more children are playing outside as they used to before 3.11, with the exception of the restricted areas. Seeing containers filled with contaminated soil, and talking about radiation levels in tested foods and at monitoring stations have become part of their everyday lives. But how do children actually feel about these changes?

What we have found through our Radiation Literacy Program was that despite the initial impression of indifference, children are interested, want to ask questions and will express themselves if they are just given an opportunity to do so. If they do not react initially, it is because they are so used to not speaking out about radiation and other issues with their family and friends. Thus, it is our task to make sure that those opportunities are consistently given to the children. We will continue working with adults in the community to ensure children receive support in addressing and voicing their concerns.

## ●From Our Partners

Since the nuclear power plant accident, Fukushima Prefecture has been promoting radiation education in public schools; however, it hasn't been easy for teachers to cover sensitive subjects like the long-term impacts on health, and issues about evacuation and returning to Fukushima. That is the reason why SCJ's Radiation Literacy Program was developed in partnership with a number of junior high schools in Fukushima. This program is unique in that it helps children learn the basics of radiation science, understand the social impacts of radiation contamination and radiation exposure, and at the same time explore ideas of how they can address the complex issues associated with the effects of radiation. To maximize inputs from children, the program relies on dialogue and facilitating discussions among children through active learning methods. After being implemented over 20 times, we have received positive feedback from teachers, but more importantly, we have seen real changes in children becoming proactive in the classrooms. I believe that this Radiation Literacy Program will certainly help children overcome the extensive and prolonged impact of the unprecedented nuclear power plant accident.

Akifumi Ueda  
Executive Director, NPO Citizen's Science Initiative Japan



# Disaster Risk Reduction

We aimed to create a community where child-centered disaster risk reduction is practiced reflecting children's opinions.



## Major Achievements

### Disaster risk reduction learning material developed based on the lessons learned from 3.11

Based on interviews with community members who experienced 3.11, SCJ, together with the NPO Plus Arts, developed and disseminated three different learning materials on disaster risk reduction for children: "Tossa no Hitokoto: Let's learn the lessons from 3.11"; "Namazu no Gakkou"; and "Quartet for everybody to play and help". To make them child-friendly, we adopted manga and game formats.

### Children's disaster risk reduction efforts on a global scale

Since 2012, we have been supporting children to transmit globally their feelings and opinions based on their experiences of 3.11 and to have their voices reflected in the various international frameworks for disaster risk reduction. As a result, not only children were empowered, but also children's roles were identified in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which was adopted during the 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

### Child-centered disaster risk reduction bridging schools and communities

To create an environment where children's lives are protected 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and to ensure children can actively participate in disaster risk reduction efforts, SCJ coordinated closely with the local governments, schools, and other relevant organizations. Using our disaster risk reduction learning materials, we provided schools with teacher training, inputs for the disaster risk reduction curricula, and opportunities for child to child training. We also provided training on disaster risk reduction for gakudo instructors. In collaboration with schools and communities we supported local events on disaster risk reduction and implementation of disaster drills.

### Distribution of child-friendly disaster preventive supplies

We distributed child-friendly emergency kits and disaster hoods to the children in 292 gakudo programs in 30 cities in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima Prefectures. To help children understand what is in the kits, we included a child-friendly list of supplies. Based on our experience operating child-friendly spaces soon after disasters, we also included supplies such as origami paper and playing cards in the kits so that all children can play under whatever situation they are placed in.

## Reflections

Children are the agents of change as well as our equal partners when it comes to improving the community's disaster risk reduction efforts. However, what we saw on the ground after 3.11 was the fact that specific needs of children weren't clearly defined or addressed separately in emergency relief and disaster risk reduction efforts. To make matter worse, in some cases, adults were so worried about the impact of the disaster on children that they didn't want to provide sufficient information about the situation to them, and in other cases, children had no opportunities to make their voices heard. Therefore, SCJ has been working to ensure children's participation in disaster risk reduction and to have their voices reflected in both the recovery process and future frameworks. Those efforts were well received by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), which led to meetings between children of Tohoku and the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Disaster Risk Reduction. It also led to the adoption of children's voices in the global framework on disaster risk reduction.

The Japanese Government has been promoting disaster risk reduction programs in schools. However, in case a disaster occurs outside of school hours, disaster preparedness of gakudo, families and communities, as well as collaboration among relevant parties need to be improved in order to protect children's lives. As far as gakudo programs are concerned, a large number of them still have very little disaster preparedness due to budgetary restrictions and/or lack of a coordination scheme with the schools that are sometimes even located on the same premises. Emergency supplies that we provided aiming to strengthen disaster preparedness of schools and child-friendly learning materials on disaster risk reduction definitely improved children's disaster risk reduction capability outside of school.

In Higashimatsushima City, we promoted child-centered activities to improve disaster preparedness, involving the local government, communities as well as schools and gakudo programs. The introduction of child-friendly disaster risk reduction learning materials that we developed have facilitated the collaboration between community-based organizations and schools. The local government is encouraging such collaboration and the child-centered disaster risk reduction activities we promoted in Higashimatsushima City seem to be steadily bearing fruit.

## ●From Our Partners

I often use the analogy of "wind, water and land" to describe the roles of stakeholders involved in community and international cooperation. Those who live in the community are the "bearers of land", those who bring seeds (activities and events) to solve issues are the "bearers of wind", and those who water those seeds to ensure the activities and events are firmly established are the "bearers of water". When we developed and disseminated the disaster risk reduction learning materials after 3.11, Plus Arts was the "bearer of wind", while SCJ was the "bearer of water". It was because of this special "bearer of water" who worked so closely with the communities of Tohoku in their recovery that our seeds of collaboration were able to grow. Those good seeds have already spread out, taking root not only in other parts of Japan, but also globally. "Tossa no Hitokoto", the illustrated learning booklet on disaster risk reduction, has been translated into English, Spanish, Thai and Turkish, and has already been utilized in various countries in South East Asia and South America. I know those seeds will continue helping disaster risk reduction education for children in many different countries and regions.

Hirokazu Nagata  
Chairman of the Board, Plus Arts



# Voices of Stakeholders: Children

Here are some of the children's voices that we have collected through our projects. (Children's grade levels are as of the time they were provided)

I have no place at home, but I can do whatever I want at this afterschool hangout space(gakudo) without worrying about taking care of my younger brothers. I have found a place for me.

(2nd Grader, Miyagi Prefecture, Male)

It was always difficult walking from my school to gakudo. Cars were passing right by us, and we were scared whenever our umbrellas were about to hit cars on rainy days. I am glad that the new gakudo is very close to my school. It makes me feel safer going there.

(3rd Grader, Fukushima Prefecture, Male)

I participated in a Recuperation Retreat program outside of Fukushima and had a lot of fun playing outside without worrying about radiation.

(5th Grader, Fukushima Prefecture, Female)

By participating in activities, I learned to see things from various angles and became more active. I can now not only speak out voluntarily in the club, but also submit my opinions at school.

(6th Grader, Miyagi Prefecture, Male)

Since I have learned a lot about radiation, I want to start a discussion about it with my family.

(7th Grader, Fukushima Prefecture, Male)

The Children's Community Building Clubs changed me. I used to be shy, and it was difficult for me to share my opinions, emotions, and what was going on with my community. However, I learned how to express myself, and I can even volunteer myself to speak out. I think I have changed a lot.

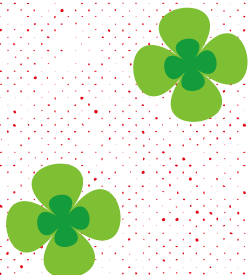
(6th Grader, Iwate Prefecture, Female)

It is important for us to know how radiation affects our body and where the high dosage radiation spots are. I want everybody to know because it was very scary when the nuclear power plant accident happened so close to me.

(7th Grader, Fukushima Prefecture, Male)

After graduating from high school, I would like to get a job where I can learn about Yamada Town, share my opinions on the reconstruction, and get involved in developing a reconstruction plan reflecting the voices of community members. I want Yamada's population to grow and our community to become very vibrant.

(7th Grader, Iwate Prefecture, Male)



My interest in the community grew through participation in the community-building process. I want to realize a society where children's opinions are also incorporated since the community consists not only of adults but also us children.  
(9th Grader, Iwate Prefecture, Female)

I had never taken disaster drills at school too seriously before, but now that I have to teach the younger children, I need to change to set an example for them.  
(High School Junior, Miyagi Prefecture, Female)



I like my community more than ever after participating in the community-building activities. Now I am very interested in my community and revitalizing it although I was never interested in those things before.  
(High School Senior, Miyagi Prefecture, Male)

I attended the international conference on disaster risk reduction, which taught me the significance of voicing my opinions and the joy it brings. I was very happy that the audience from all over the world paid attention to my speech, and I felt like we shared a common perspective. I learned that we have support from all over the world.  
(High School Junior, Fukushima Prefecture, Female)

Because of the scholarship, I was able to improve my credentials by trying out for various qualifications that I aimed for. It helped me become who I am now.  
(High School Senior, Miyagi Prefecture, Female)

The Children's Community Building Club taught me how to express myself and share my feelings. It always puts a smile on my face after I give my best. I used to think the community reconstruction was the adults' task, but that view has changed completely. Children do need to take part in the reconstruction process!  
(High School Junior, Iwate Prefecture, Female)

I would like to become a researcher and help develop our fishing industry. Thank you for realizing my dream to study in college.  
(High School Senior, Iwate Prefecture, Female)

# Voices of Stakeholders: Adults

Here are some of the adults' voices that we have collected through our projects.

I am a fisherman, but my house was destroyed and I lost everything including my fishing boat and other equipment. I am still paying back my loans, but I saved up the scholarship funds provided to us so that our children can go to college to study whatever they want after graduating from high school.

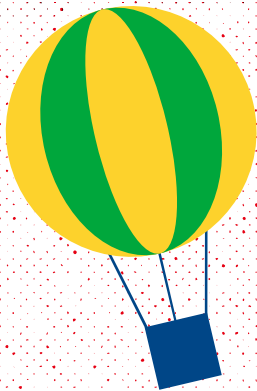
(Parent, Iwate Prefecture, Female)

Thanks to the scholarship, my students could continue after-school activities and participate in school field trips without financial worries.

(Teacher, Iwate Prefecture, Male)

The children met new friends who shared the same passion towards the reconstruction and community building, and they discovered something new in themselves. Watching my child's growth heightened my own awareness.

(Parent, Miyagi Prefecture, Parent)



A student of mine who had to give up acquiring qualifications due to financial reasons is now back studying for them because of the scholarship program. It enhances students' motivation to learn.

(Teacher, Fukushima Prefecture, Female)

Watching children grow through the club's activities gives me hope for the future of Ishinomaki City. Their specific visions of how to create a better community and future encouraged me.

(Board of Education staff, Miyagi Prefecture, Male)

My child spent a lot of time in her room at home, but she became more cheerful after she participated in the recuperation retreat program and was able to play outside. She looked well when she came home.

(Parent, Fukushima Prefecture, Female)

The children thought seriously about the reconstruction and community building, summarized their ideas in a proposal, and handed it to the city. In addition to the Tohoku area, I see their activities have been expanding nationwide and globally, and it is very

encouraging and empowering. I hope to see them staying involved in the reconstruction process and create a new community together with us!

(Government official, Iwate Prefecture, Male)

I joined the training to prepare myself before teaching my students what I've learned about the comprehensive disaster drill. It was very easy to understand and now I see how to do it.  
(Teacher, Miyagi Prefecture, Male)

In the participatory disaster risk reduction training, all the participants listened to the lecture intently. It turned out to be child-friendly training as participants learned effective activities for training.  
(Government official, Miyagi Prefecture, Female)

Through my experience working with the members of the Children's Community Building Clubs, I am convinced that they are not "children" as opposed to adults, but comrades in creating a new community. Let's join forces together, regardless of age, and create our own community! Meeting with them pressured me to take action!  
(NPO staff, Iwate Prefecture, Female)

I always wondered what I could do to make children smile. Having experienced such a huge disaster and dealing with the aftermath, I am sure other instructors were struggling too. I am very thankful for the various training that SCU provided for us.  
(Gakudo Instructor, Miyagi Prefecture, Female)

Although I knew that I needed to have emergency take-out goods prepared, we have been unable to purchase them since it involved paying an expense we couldn't afford. It was very helpful to see what was required in the emergency bag.  
(Gakudo Instructor, Fukushima Prefecture, Female)

I think it was very rewarding to see the community members get together and create a system collectively to watch over children through the provision of play spaces. This system was incorporated as an NPO so that it keeps supporting the community as a community-based organization.  
(NPO Staff, Miyagi Prefecture, Female)

The leaders' training supported by the grant helped them accumulate relevant knowledge and improve the quality of their work with children, and consequently, increased their motivation. As a result, some of the trained leaders voluntarily started designing activities based on the newly gained knowledge.

Since this led to more new programs, we started attracting more children who would come back more often to utilize the play areas. We were able to create an environment where children are more focused and engaged in these activities without them even knowing it.  
(NPO Staff, Fukushima Prefecture, Male)

Training on child safeguarding was very meaningful and useful for the operational aspects of our organization. We all read the "Code of Conduct on Child Protection," and posted it on recreation program sites to raise public awareness. We tried implementing what is on the checklist as much as possible, and consequently, we became well-prepared and the programs generated good results.  
(NPO Staff, Yamanashi Prefecture, Female)

# The Great East Japan Earthquake Emergency Response and Recovery Program : Lessons Learned

In response to 3.11, Save the Children Japan provided an emergency relief and recovery program for the first time in-country. Through the program implementation, we have learned many lessons and accumulated knowledge in partnership with various stakeholders in the field. We have summarized below what we learned for future emergency relief and recovery programs in support of children.

## Lesson 1

**Immediately after a disaster, when a large number of organizations travel to the affected areas to provide emergency relief and recovery support, it is critical for each organization to identify which roles they will play based on their organizational strengths; and for them to be responsible for implementing such roles.**

Save the Children, with 30 independent members serving about 120 countries globally, has a long history as an international NGO promoting child rights and actively leading emergency relief and recovery programs worldwide. As Save the Children, we are experienced and knowledgeable in supporting children in emergency situations, however, it was SCJ's first time providing a disaster response in the Japanese domestic context. At first, there was a lack of central coordination body to navigate the large number of NPOs, voluntary groups and volunteers that rushed into the field with the intention of running emergency response programs. Therefore, there was much confusion and uncertainty in where and how to focus our programs. Through various discussions and collaboration among organizations, we began to recognize each one's strengths and weaknesses and as a result, each organization began playing complementary roles. SCJ was able to concentrate in the following areas where we had a comparative advantage:

- Introduction of universal concepts and standards (child rights programming, creating child-friendly organizations and projects) that have been practiced internationally; implementation of new programmatic areas (projects to promote child participation in emergency support, psychological first aid for children, projects concerning child protection in

cases of emergency); and transmitted outcomes nationally and globally;

- Reaching out to local, national and international authorities as an international NGO;
- Strengthening collaboration among various local authorities in the affected areas, as well as among different departments within a local authority. We also supported networking among local NPOs;
- Implementing projects on the ground, but also transmitting achievements and messages with regard to awareness raising and policy recommendations.

We were able to develop our response plan immediately after 3.11, utilizing our experience overseas as an international NGO, however, a lot of adjustments were needed to adapt to the local Japanese context. To bridge the gap between our initial plan and the actual needs on the ground, we had to frequently dispatch staff to the field, keep in close communication with various relevant people, and build relationships of trust with them. Making the extra effort to maintain close communication with the stakeholders in the affected areas has been the one rule that we have valued the most throughout the five years of implementing the Great East Japan Earthquake Emergency Response and Recovery Program.





## Lesson 2

**Emergency relief and recovery efforts for school aged children tend to place its focus on supporting in-school activities, however, support of their outside-school activities and leisure time is just as important.**

Since the disaster drastically changed children's living environments, we prioritized helping them getting back to normalcy. In fact, there was much support provided to schools, since children spend so much of their time there.

However, children do have lives outside of school. The disaster also affected the places where they spend time afterschool and on school holidays, and deprived them of opportunities to play, study, engage in afterschool activities and spend time with friends. As we believe ensuring those opportunities play an important role in helping children get back to normalcy and contribute to their psychosocial recovery, SCJ ran various projects with this in mind. For this reason, one of our main focuses was to support gakudo (after-school care), where a large number of children spend their after-school hours, and ensure children had a safe and secure environment. Moreover, we supported gakudo instructors through the provision of various training to help them support their students who were affected by 3.11, in addition to building and repairing gakudo facilities.

We also supported sporting and cultural after-school activities. In the affected areas, a lot of after-school activities were disrupted as school grounds were used to build temporary shelters. Thus, we provided transportation services between schools and their after-school activity sites and repaired damaged grounds. Moreover, we set up a "Sport, Culture, and Community Children's Support Fund" to provide cash assistance for uniforms, necessary equipment and expeditions, which benefitted 208 activities.

Although children's right to play tends to be deprioritized in times of disaster, we believe it is important to provide them with opportunities and environments to play as it encourages their recovery. Thus, we improved damaged playgrounds and provided play spaces in temporary housing facilities in Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures, and provided opportunities for outdoor play in Fukushima Prefecture targeting areas where the residual effects of radiation were a concern. In various ways, we successfully ensured safe and secure play environments for children during and after the disaster.

## Lesson 3

**The application of a child rights programming (CRP) approach is effective in the context of relief and recovery.**

The concept of child rights programming (CRP), which introduces human rights principles and standards in the project development and management for children, is an approach incorporated in Save the Children programs worldwide. Nevertheless, it has been considered a challenge to apply CRP in the relief and recovery context, because CRP requires detailed situation analysis regarding child rights violations at the planning stages and careful processes ensuring child participation. In fact, it was very difficult to share and obtain consent from relevant people and supporters as well as our own staff regarding CRP, since CRP entails a longer-term perspective of realizing child rights when there were overwhelming need for immediate support visible in the areas affected by the disaster.

Even though we could not apply CRP comprehensively throughout all of our interventions, we managed to incorporate it as much as possible wherever we could. Looking at the situation with the CRP lens proved effective in identifying the affected children's potential needs when we were programming, since very little opportunities existed in which we could gather information like children's voices to go beyond the obvious needs.

Also, CRP turned out to be very useful when selecting the target group of our interventions. Children who require special support such as children with disabilities, children living with families with economic difficulties and children in foster-care were taken into consideration whenever possible.

## Lesson 4

### It is difficult but highly important to develop, implement, monitor, and assess programs based on children's voices.

It is not an easy task to collect children's voices in a meaningful manner under any context. There are currently very few opportunities and systems to reflect and transmit children's voices in Japan even under normal situations. Needless to say, in the disaster affected areas of Tohoku, a large number of adults were very reluctant to have their children interviewed, saying that they were too concerned about the effects 3.11 had on children. In addition, we needed to ensure an environment where the children would feel safe enough to speak freely, and then for us to carefully listen to, record, and summarize their opinions without holding any bias. All of this together can be quite a monumental task.

While recognizing such constraints, we believed that it was problematic as a child rights advocate organization if children lacked opportunities to speak out about SCJ's programs. Thus, we attempted to create such opportunities as much as possible, listened to the children carefully, then recorded and transmitted their opinions to be reflected in project development and implementation as well as policy recommendations.

As a result, we were able to make sure that our programs did meet children's needs, and at the same time, we provided them with opportunities to learn and connect with each other, which consequently empowered them.

## Lesson 5

### Children's right to participate should be guaranteed even in emergency relief and recovery programs.

SCJ included a child participation project as one of the cornerstones of the Great East Japan Earthquake Emergency Response and Recovery Program. This was recognized as a pioneering initiative not only in Japan but also globally, as this has never been done before. Although schools resumed operation, children's lives were not even close to how they were pre-disaster. At school, they couldn't use the school grounds because temporary shelters were built on them, and food supply systems and after-school activities were not fully restored while a large number of children were still forced to live in temporary housing. In such unusual circumstances, SCJ established Children's Community Building Clubs, and provided children with an opportunity to express their opinions about the recovery process and to realize their participation in society. Through involvement in the clubs, children were empowered, and one by one, in cooperation with local authorities and the government, children were able to realize specific plans they envisioned to help their communities recover. Moreover, children's

achievements brought positive change to people around them such as other children, their parents, other community members, schools, and government officials. They also had a strong influence on the recovery plan and even on international framework of disaster risk reduction. Through these experiences, children grew up to be powerful agents of change, which renewed the adults' conception of children.

The objective of the Children's Community Building Clubs is "to build child-participatory recovery planning at the time of disaster in Japan," and it does not limit the means. It could be public or private, and could be in the form of local, national or global efforts. What is important is to have children speak out and be involved in any topics concerning children at home, at school, in the community, in the prefecture, or in the country, and to develop, implement, monitor and assess those efforts with them. By doing so, we are able to exert children's capabilities, and reflect perspectives of children in the recovery and reconstruction processes.

## Lesson 6

### Supporting local NPOs can increase the impact of emergency relief and recovery programs.

Regardless of its capacity, one organization on the ground can only serve a limited number of beneficiaries and achieve limited impact. This is especially the case in disasters such as the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, where the disaster affected a wide range of areas and it was operationally difficult to cover all the areas with a low child/adult population ratio. Moreover, we needed to consider that non-local organizations such as SCJ would need to exit the region at some point in the recovery process. Under such circumstances, it was a successful strategy for SCJ to develop and implement a "community grants initiative program" that financially and technically supported local NPOs to support children and caretakers at an early stage of recovery process. We made a significant contribution to support various child-care programs run

by a range of NPOs in many different parts of the affected areas, allowing us to achieve a certain scale of program; something that would have been impossible for SCJ to have done by itself.

There are a substantial number of new local NPOs established in response to 3.11 as well as many new programs that existing NPOs started after 3.11. To support those new organizations and programs, SCJ provided organizational capacity building and technical support for raising awareness about child rights in addition to financial assistance. According to each organization's needs, we have provided one, two, or all of these kinds of support and successfully contributed to improve the sustainability of many activities in the communities.

## Lesson 7

### Strengthening Child Safeguarding initiatives is essential in supporting children in emergency relief and recovery situations.

After 3.11, many domestic and international organizations dispatched a large number of staff members and volunteers to the disaster-affected areas to implement their relief programs. As a result, what became an issue was that those who are committed to the cause of helping children do not necessarily have adequate knowledge on how to deal with children in a safe and appropriate manner. As a result, many of them ended up working with vulnerable children in the field without any technical guidance on ensuring children's safety in an accountable manner.

SCJ, on this note, has made its code of conduct on child safeguarding known to all staff members and reminded them of their roles to protect children from hazards through an appropriate relationship with children. However, there was a lack of common understanding with our partner organizations, and because of that, they were relying on their own safeguarding protocols and organizational experiences. It became clear that in Japan, even organizations with high-risk management skills had no preventative measures in place specifically for misconduct by their staff or volunteer members including corporal punishment and sexual abuse.

Therefore, SCJ asked our partner organizations to adopt our child safeguarding measures while we ourselves reviewed our own safeguarding protocol and

raised awareness among staff. These efforts highlighted the fact that indeed such input was in great demand among practitioners working in the field in support of children of all ages.

Child Safeguarding is so crucial during the emergency relief and recovery stages because so many external personnel and volunteers are mobilized to enter the affected areas and are given access to children who may be in a vulnerable state. This is why it is important to work with our partners during non-emergency situations, preparing ourselves through awareness raising and setting systems to prevent any harm to children. Also in organizations that provide grants, it would be desirable to include as a prerequisite for the applying organizations to install child safeguarding protocols and preventive measures against misconduct, and to include a necessary budget to cover for any costs incurred in their enforcement.

#### What is "Child Safeguarding"?

Child Safeguarding is a comprehensive effort to create an environment that does not tolerate any harm towards children, including abuse and exploitation, and to build preventive measures to detect any signs of violence. It aims to prevent not only accident or injury, but also misconduct of relevant personnel, and to nurture respect for children, in order to build and maintain a healthy relationship with them.

## Lesson 8

### For emergency relief and recovery programs, implementing a mid-term review helps ensure the quality of the programs.

Launching emergency relief programs immediately after the disaster requires organizations to focus their efforts on meeting the urgent and immediate needs of children and caretakers in the affected areas. SCJ started implementing emergency relief in Tohoku on March 14, 2011, only three days after the disaster. As we prioritized the speed of our delivery, we were so overstretched in providing support that we could not spare too much of our resources to conduct a comprehensive assessment based on the limited amount of information and data available at that time.

While taking into consideration the constraints that come with program planning in an emergency relief

and recovery context, it is important to schedule a third party review of the project to ensure whether the program plan is relevant to the target population's needs and if there is an implementation system robust enough to succeed in implementing the plan.

SCJ had two interim evaluations, one in February 2012 and another in December 2014. Although such evaluations do require extra effort by staff and stakeholders to collect relevant information, they were quite useful as opportunities to verify the relevance and effectiveness of our interventions and for us to revisit our program strategies if required .

# Main Deliverables

Here are some of the reports and materials that we have developed and published through our emergency relief and recovery program.



**Lessons Learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami: A Study on Changes in the Social Environment and on Support Systems for Children- Efforts to Prevent and Increase Awareness of Child Abuse**

Focusing on the lack of official statistics on child abuse in disaster-affected areas, we conducted a study on: 1) how perceptions of the various people engaged in supporting children changed after 3.11; 2) changes observed in the child-care environment and impact on social resources; and 3) recommendations on constructing a comprehensive partnership to address the emerging needs of vulnerable children and families.



**Active Play: Encouraging Children's Healthy Development (0 to 6 years)**

This publication summarizes our experiences and lessons learned from the Active Play project, which we implemented in three temporary housing facilities in Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Prefecture from September 2012 to August 2013. It introduces: 1) a series of activities for playing with children indoors; and 2) experiences from organizing child-care groups and promoting networks among caretakers. This book targets all who are raising small children and is for anyone working with children of that age group.



**Park Rehabilitation Project: Reflecting Children's Voices**

SCJ worked together with the city of Ishinomaki to rehabilitate parks in disaster-affected areas. In this project, we involved children and other community members in improving parks through surveys and design competitions. It explains the child-participatory process that we adopted in simple language and serves as a reference for those who engage in improving parks and other child related facilities within and outside of Tohoku.



**Children's and Volunteer Workers' Notebooks on Play**

We provided children with play spaces in temporary housing facilities as 3.11 deprived them of play and hangout places. This book offers tips for providing children with safe and secure environments in a limited space during times of emergency.



**Story of Gakudo Instructors and the Roles they Played in Saving Children in the Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami**

This document records actual statements from gakudo instructors in three Tohoku prefectures about their experiences during and after 3.11, with future recommendations for those who are involved in gakudo programs. This book aims to: 1) clearly indicate the critical roles of gakudos and their instructors at times of disaster; and 2) highlight the significance of strengthening disaster preparedness at gakudo sites.



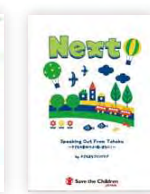
**For the Healthy Development of Children: What to do if you see a suspected case of child abuse?"**

This booklet targeting adults that work with children in communities. It explains how to identify potential cases of child abuse, the importance of paying attention to subtle changes in children's behavior, and reasons that may trigger child abuse in a household. It aims to illustrate how adults can play the important role in identifying troubled families and linking them with necessary support.



**SOFT Interim Report 1 "HOPE"  
SOFT Interim Report 2 "Action"  
SOFT Interim Report 3 "Connect"  
SOFT Interim Report 4 "Future"  
SOFT Interim Report 5 "Next"**

To explain our achievements in the "Speaking Out From Tohoku: Building Better Communities Through the Participation of Children" project, we have published these interim reports each year on Children's Day, November 20th, from 2011 to 2015. These reports list the activities of the "Children's Community Building Clubs" and summarize the children's voices collected through the "Hear Our Voice" program.





**“Hear Our Voice” (HOV): Attitude Survey on Child Participation HOV 1 (2011), HOV 7 (2012), and HOV 9 (2014)**

We have conducted three attitude surveys about the perception of the level of recovery of communities in Tohoku, targeting 11,000 to 14,000 children, 4th graders and up, in Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures. From 2012, we expanded our survey to include adults and observe any changes in their views on child participation. Those reports consist of date analysis, and the voices of children and adults, along with comments from relevant experts.



**Report on the Project to Record Contributions Made by Junior High and High School Students after the Earthquake**

Children played important roles during and after 3.11 such as caring for younger children, helping to distribute supplies and engaging in volunteer activities. To record their achievements, as a part of the “Kodomo Hagukumi Fund,” we summarized their experiences and the comments from adults who saw them.



**Supporting Children Together with the Community: Record of Supporting NPOs after 3.11**

This report summarizes our activities and achievements from the past three years in providing financial grants, reinforcing the organizational structures, and providing technical support to NPOs through “Community Grants Initiative”. It also argues for greater support for, and recognition of the roles and successes of supporting NPOs during the recovery period.



**“Child Poverty: Observations from the field in Tohoku”**

This is a report summarizing the activities and achievements of the Community Grants Initiative targeting Child Poverty. It focuses on the results of supporting NPOs tackling the issue of child poverty, the problems of child poverty in terms of child rights, the condition of children and families in the field, and the challenges of providing sustainable support.



**Child-friendly Handbook on Radiation Literacy: Opening Doors to Learning, Thinking, Discussing about Radiation”**

With the objective of addressing children’s questions and concerns about the impact of the nuclear power plant accident in Fukushima, we started implementing Radiation Literacy Workshops from 2013 targeting children in Fukushima. Based on these workshop experiences and various opinions and questions from children, we developed a child-friendly radiation literacy handbook for wider distribution in the affected areas.



**Tossa no Hitokoto: Let’s learn lessons from 3.11**

This is a manga-format learning material on disaster risk reduction, including lessons learned based on the actual voices of the children and adults who experienced 3.11. It aims to equip children with enough knowledge to act on their own initiative in times of emergency.



**Child-Centered Disaster Risk Reduction: Efforts of Higashimatsushima City in Miyagi Prefecture to link schools and communities**

This report summarizes the activities and achievements from the Child-centered Disaster Risk Reduction model implemented in Higashimatsushima City. It explains how to encourage children to actively learn and engage in disaster risk reduction efforts while having fun, and how schools, gakudo programs, the community, families, and the government collaborated through children.



**Child Safeguarding: Development of programs and organizations that are safe and secure for children**

This publication explains our efforts to create and maintain environments that tolerate no action that hurts children, and includes preventative measures an organization can take to discourage child abuse and exploitation. It includes a code of conduct, and a reporting and consultation system that staff members and relevant people should comply with. It serves as a guideline not only for SCJ staff members, but also for anyone who works with children.



**The Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Recovery Program Interim Report: Child-Friendly Version**

We reviewed our emergency relief and recovery program from June to November 2013 and made an interim assessment. To make its results available not only for concerned adults, but also for the children, we developed two different child-friendly versions of the report. Each version is adapted to a different stage of child development.

# Recommendations for Promoting Good Practice in Support of Children in an Emergency Relief and Recovery Context

~Based on the Experiences of Save the Children Japan in Tohoku~

How and what is required in a national emergency relief and recovery response has been actively reviewed in both public and private fora since the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. Nevertheless, specific needs and issues regarding children in disasters have been neither sufficiently examined nor addressed. Based on Save the Children Japan's (SCJ) experience working in Tohoku, we made eight recommendations from the following two perspectives: 1) general recommendations in preparation for any future disaster that may occur in-country; and 2) recommendations for future support of children in 3.11 affected areas. Some of our recommendations below have already been issued through past program deliverables (please see pp. 27 and 28).

## <General recommendations in preparation for any future disaster that may occur in-country>

### Recommendation 1

**Households, schools, communities and the government must work together to come up with measures and systems for "child-centered disaster risk reduction" that would protect children 24 hours a day, seven days a week.**

A disaster can strike at any time or place, not only when children are at home or at school, but when they are attending after-school activities or just playing outside at a nearby playground. Therefore, it is important to have disaster preparedness ready to protect children in every aspect of their lives. Japan has long been working to enhance disaster risk reduction measures especially at schools, with disaster drills, curriculum on disaster risk reduction, strengthening buildings against earthquakes, and developing manuals on disaster risk reduction. Also, because of increased public awareness efforts, disaster preparedness at home has been reinforced. However, there are still gaps in disaster preparedness outside of schools and homes. The 3.11 disaster occurred on a weekday

around the time when children were leaving school; some had already left to go home, some had remained in school to attend gakudo or after-school clubs etc. Since the disaster occurred outside of any existing disaster preparedness plans, people were left with little guidance except to rely upon individual judgment, which in turn may have increased the impact of the disaster. In order to protect children no matter where they are or what time it is, households, schools, communities and the government must work together to have a comprehensive system in place to protect children in emergency situations.

### Recommendation 2

**Disaster risk reduction measures need to be strengthened to ensure children's safety and security not only in schools, but also at gakudo sites.**

As 3.11 occurred at 2.46pm on a Friday, gakudos played a significant role in securing children's safety and facilitating their evacuation. There was a large number of children on their way to gakudo from schools, and in such cases, gakudo instructors played the crucial role of ensuring the safety of their students and guided them until a family member came to pick them up. Given the difficult roles that they played, gakudo instructors were less than prepared to respond to such an unprecedented disaster in several ways. First, there was a lack of coordination with schools despite the fact that many gakudos are physically located on school grounds. Each gakudo is managed differently, some by local government, some by private companies, and some by parents' groups. Such

diversity in management creates a challenge in suggesting a common and comprehensive agreement that would require schools to coordinate with gakudos in times of disaster. Also from a financial perspective, gakudos often lacked funds to enhance their disaster preparedness since they are deprioritized in comparison to funding for public schools or nurseries.

We recommend that the national, prefectural, or municipal governments take necessary measures to ensure children's safety at gakudos, so that all children are protected at gakudo sites regardless of what kind of management is in place.

## Recommendation 3

**In post-emergency situations, efforts to establish child-friendly environments or to provide psychosocial support to children is critical, taking high regard of the negative impact that a disaster could have on children.**

Immediately after a disaster, interventions that address the specific needs of children, such as establishing safe and secure spaces for them to play or assigning someone who can provide child-friendly explanations about what is happening, play an important role in accelerating children's recovery. Despite high public interest in the wellbeing of the children affected by 3.11, and extensive media coverage, children's specific needs were hardly understood nor taken into consideration in evacuation shelters and in other post-emergency situations. In fact, cases were reported where evacuation shelter managers had no idea how many children stayed in those shelters and what they were doing. When SCJ was trying to expand "Child-friendly Spaces" after 3.11, there were many shelters where we could not introduce such activities because the shelter managers didn't agree with the purpose of our activities. All personnel involved in disaster risk reduction and response must understand that children have specific needs in emergency situations, and every framework on disaster risk reduction, including setting up and managing evacuation shelters, must incorporate children's perspectives.

In the "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030," adopted during the 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in March 2015, the need to enhance psychosocial and mental

health support was highlighted for the first time. Although children experience various feelings similar to adults in emergency situations, they have their own ways of understanding things and expressing their feelings according to their stage of development, which are different from adults. When adults fail to take appropriate measures, it may cause more pain for children. SCJ has been disseminating the psychosocial support tool "Psychological First Aid (PFA) for Children," which aims to inform concerned adults about typical developmental characteristics, common child reactions to stress, and effective communication methods targeting children. In future disaster risk reduction efforts, we hope that systems and training programs about children's psychosocial wellbeing will be strengthened so that every person engaging in emergency relief activities will be knowledgeable about children and their reactions during emergencies.

**Psychological First Aid (PFA) for Children:**  
Psychological First Aid for Children is a set of skills and competencies that help adults in their work to reduce the initial distress of children caused by accidents, natural disasters, conflicts or other critical incidents. It includes both psychological support for children to help reduce the initial suffering caused by disasters, and also a social support component to link the children with necessary social services. WHO developed a PFA manual for adults in 2011 and it has been disseminated globally, including in Japan. Save the Children's Psychological First Aid for Children was developed based on the WHO's PFA, and focuses more on children and their caretakers. PFA has been recommended by various organizations and experts, and is included in the IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings and the Sphere Project.

## Recommendation 4

**In emergency situations and the following recovery phases, all children should have access to opportunities where they can express their opinions and actively participate in developing policies and programs concerning children.**

Children's rights to have access to information and to express their views on any topics that concern them must be guaranteed. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child states in their General Comment No.12 (2009) that "the right embodied in article 12 (children's right to express views and the right to opportunities to be heard) does not cease in situations of crisis or in their aftermath". However, when SCJ was implementing activities in disaster affected areas, we often heard adults saying, "Children won't understand even if we attempt to explain," "It would be cruel to children if we remind them of what happened at 3.11," and "We are too busy reconstructing our own lives." Children had few opportunities to express themselves as they were considered vulnerable victims of the disaster to be cared for by adults. On the other hand, through our program we confirmed that many children were more proactive, wanting to know more about what happened in the earthquake and tsunami as well as the nuclear power plant accident, were worried about the future,

and wanted to share their opinions and be involved in rebuilding their communities. We should not overlook this discrepancy between how adults' perceive children and how children perceive themselves. Furthermore, children have proven to have capacity to play active roles in emergency relief and recovery programs. Children played a part in helping food drives in shelters, raking mud at school and at home, checking in on other children and seniors in the community, and by voicing their opinions on building a better community to the government.

While we respect and support children expressing themselves and participating in society at any time, ensuring children's rights to participate should also be considered as a major element in emergency relief and recovery programs.

## Recommendation 5

**In official disaster risk reduction plans, the roles of NGOs and NPOs must be clearly defined in advance.**

Immediately after 3.11, there were cases where private sector actors, including NGOs and NPOs that came to the affected areas to provide emergency relief, experienced difficulties in coordinating with local government authorities communities, and other organizations. This undermined overall efforts to provide a rapid and effective response. Based on this experience in Tohoku, we emphasize that the roles of NGOs and NPOs during times of disaster need to be specified in advance in disaster risk reduction plans to

facilitate their entry and collaboration with government programs. Government led response alone cannot address all of the diverse needs emerging in post-disaster situations. Furthermore, it would be preferable that future capacity building opportunities involve central and prefectural government authorities together with NGOs and NPOs so that all stakeholders can build complementary partnerships.



### <Recommendations for future support of children in 3.11 affected areas>

## Recommendation 6

**Even after five years, the need for programs targeting vulnerable children continues. It is also crucial to provide continuous support to the people supporting those children.**

Now that five years have passed since 3.11, there are concerns that memories of the disaster are wearing thin with time, especially in those areas outside of Tohoku. In the affected areas, much of the children's living environment has recovered, and there are even concerns of children becoming too accustomed to receiving aid, which may give people the wrong impression that children's needs in the affected areas are diminishing. However, when you take a closer look it is not hard to see that there are children whose recovery has been slow due to their special needs or difficult conditions in which they live. These vulnerable children are those who come from low-income families, children with disabilities, children whose parents are mentally or physically ill, or children who are with families forced to relocate repeatedly and are isolated from their communities. These children, in addition to their difficulties that existed before the disaster, have been forced to deal with the extra challenges caused

by 3.11. To tackle the issues surrounding children with such special needs, emergency relief and recovery programs are not enough. The response requires more strategic support that caters to each child according to her or his specific background and current needs.

To reinforce the ability to provide such support in disaster-affected areas, where lack of human resource has been a serious issue, capacity building initiatives supporting institutions supporting children are essential. Also, close collaboration between the community and experts in various fields is crucial when providing support for families with multiple challenges. What is needed in 3.11 affected areas to solve more multi-faceted and long-term issues are programs that ensure support for hard-to-reach children and families.



## Recommendation 7

**Early interventions targeting children and their caretakers in the “grey zones” in post-disaster areas are essential to prevent more serious cases of child abuse and neglect cases.**

While we were working in Tohoku in the affected areas, we often heard concerns from people working with children such as, “I am worried about the future of the children,” and “I am foreseeing a rise in child abuse cases.” There was increasing concern that caretakers were under tremendous amounts of stress caused by changes in their lives due to the 3.11 disaster: of having to stay in evacuation shelters; families being relocated or separated; or financial hardship. Furthermore, their stress was affecting children. In 2014, SCJ conducted a study targeting child care professionals, requesting them to pick a category that most accurately described the current situation of “children that need special attention paid to them.” The results showed that the number of children in “grey zones” who do not receive

enough or appropriate care is increasing, while the number of children that “require interventions” hasn't changed much. Moreover, it showed that children who have been relocated several times or had a change in family structure, require further special attention. It also showed that we needed to develop support systems in communities, including the utilization of private sector, and reinforce “support for the supporters” in order to prevent child abuse from happening.

## Recommendation 8

**To make child care programs more inclusive, partnerships between government and civic society, including local NPOs, needs to be strengthened.**

In 2015, the Japanese Government launched a new child-care support policy that encourages the involvement of private organizations such as local NPOs in supporting caretakers at the community level, so that caretakers can utilize a variety of social resources without solely relying on government services. By utilizing the strengths of each local NPOs, such as those supported by SCJ's Community Grants Initiative program, they can continue to provide useful services in the community. As children and their caretakers have a wide variety of needs, there is

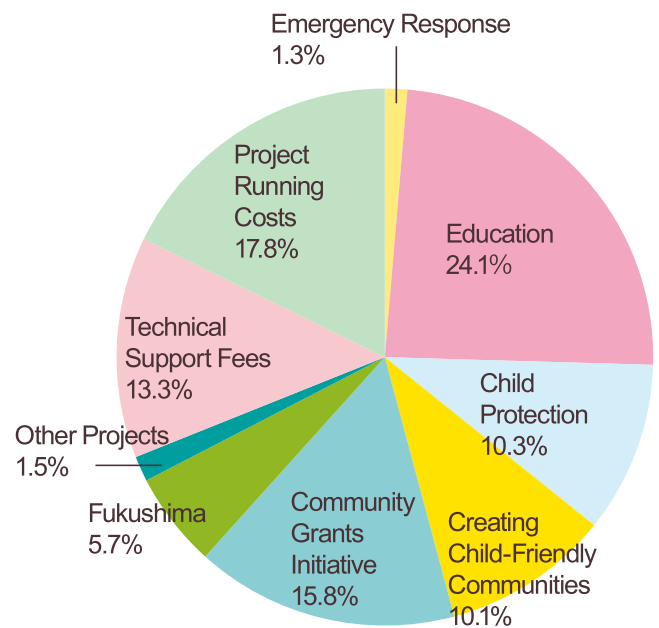
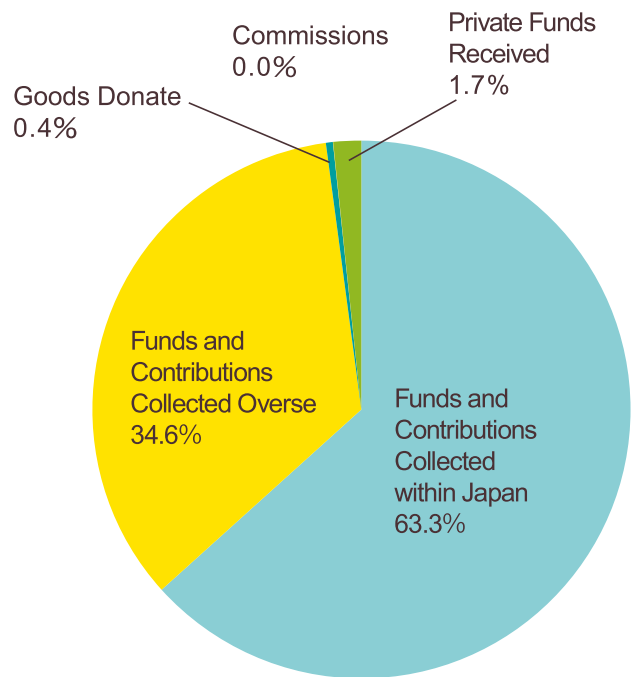
enough room for these local NPOs to play active roles under the new system. Nevertheless, these organizations have found themselves in an increasingly difficult operating environment as they are running out of funds. To provide a more inclusive child-care support program, partnerships between the public and private sectors needs to be strengthened, where funds need to be provided to local NPOs in securing their personnel and reinforcing their organizational base.



# Financial Information

## Income/Expenses

Income		(Unit: yen)	
Items	Total	Ratio	
Contributions	7,481,528,593	97.9%	
Funds and Contributions Collected within Japan	4,840,339,239	63.3%	
Funds and Contributions Collected Oversea	2,641,189,354	34.6%	
Goods Donated	31,900,364	0.4%	
Commissions	1,962,815	0.0%	
Private Funds Received	128,062,258	1.7%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,643,454,030</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>			
Items	Total	Ratio	
Project Costs	5,901,770,396	82.2%	
Emergency Response	96,632,542	1.3%	
Education <sup>1</sup>	1,729,968,170	24.1%	
Child Protection <sup>1</sup>	739,902,767	10.3%	
Creating Child-Friendly Communities <sup>1</sup>	722,529,890	10.1%	
Community Grants Initiative	1,136,707,168	15.8%	
Fukushima <sup>1</sup>	410,928,765	5.7%	
Other Projects	109,175,161	1.5%	
Technical Support Fees <sup>2</sup>	955,925,933	13.3%	
Project Running Costs <sup>3</sup>	1,273,961,072	17.8%	
<b>Total<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>7,175,731,468</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
<b>Balance<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>467,722,562</b>		



1. Costs for disaster risk reduction activities are included in Education, Child Protection, Creating Child-Friendly Communities and the Fukushima Program.
2. It includes outsourcing expenses for professionals and experts required for projects and traveling/transportation expenses.
3. Project running costs include expenses for support staff, rent and communication expenses.
4. This will be used for continuing projects and follow-up projects from 2016 on.

## Closing Remarks

After five years, Save the Children Japan has completed the Great East Japan Earthquake Emergency Response and Recovery Program, and we would like to thank those who have supported our projects and partnered with us.



Even for us, as an international NGO with experience providing support to emergency situations in various parts of the world, this was our biggest program to date. Throughout the program, people from all over the world raised funds for the children of Tohoku, and children from countries we supported such as Mongolia and Pakistan have sent messages of encouragement to them. That kindness reminded us all that we have many supporters in the world who maintain hope for the recovery in Tohoku.

Over 200 staff members and volunteer workers have been involved in our emergency relief and recovery program so far. Some of them work for Save the Children overseas and they came all the way to Japan to help. All of us have committed to support children and caretakers in Tohoku and literally worked throughout the day and night towards their recovery. As one of our international staff said, citing Kenji Miyazawa, "Be not defeated by the rain, nor let the wind prove you better."

For a child, five years makes a huge difference. Those who were in kindergarten then, now go to elementary school, and those who were excitedly waiting for their elementary school graduation ceremony have just graduated from high school. Some of the original members of the Children's Community Building Clubs now go to college and have become supporters of the children and the current club activities.

In the coastal areas of Tohoku that were severely damaged, in some areas large reconstruction projects have just started, while in other areas the reconstruction process has progressed so far that we can hardly see any remaining damage. As for the more intangible aspects of the recovery, I would say there is so much more to do so that child rights are reflected in the recovery process.

Now that five years have passed, there are concerns in the affected areas that people are forgetting about what happened on 3.11. By remembering and utilizing what we have learned over the past five years in the field, SCJ will continue working with children to solve issues that are critical to them not only in the Tohoku area, but also all over the country through close collaboration with our partners.

Save the Children Japan  
Director, The Great East Japan Earthquake Recovery Program & Domestic Program  
Takumi Koide

**Save the Children Japan**

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