

ECD – MUST DOs in Emergency

Lessons Learned from 2011 Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

unicef 
for every child

Japan Committee for UNICEF



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Overview and Background

On 11 March 2011, the largest earthquake of M9.0 and tsunami disaster of the last 1000 years hit the Tohoku region with coastline of over 800km. Even as far away as the UNICEF House in Tokyo, the ground shook violently. As the aftershocks continued in the night, we wondered if there was any way that we could offer immediate help. Watching the news in more than 10,000km distance, Mr. Lake swiftly issued a letter to the Government of Japan announcing that UNICEF was ready to provide support to protect the children and started supporting us to deliver UNICEF humanitarian assistance.

At the bedrock of our efforts always lied the concept of “Build Back Better”. We knew that, before the disaster, especially the worst affected areas had been rapidly becoming aging societies and therefore had had difficulties in continuing and/or setting up policies and services for children.

Our work, initially led by dozens of UNICEF’s Japanese national experts coming from such places as Somalia, Afghanistan and Haiti, NATURALLY followed UNICEF expertise developed through many years of experience in disaster and conflict areas all over the world.

The whole society, the government, NGO/CSOs, private sector and even

individuals rushed into the disaster areas with unprecedented scale of humanitarian support. Nevertheless, comparing to the children of school age, we found that relatively limited attentions and supports were provided to the children of early/pre-school age and their parents. This was why we started putting our efforts especially (but not exclusively) on this population group.

We did not recognize and therefore categorize many of those works as ECD at that time, except the ones on pre-school and nursery. We do not know how much impact the works brought on the children and/or parents as we do not have a luxury to undertake any scientific evaluations. Nevertheless, many of those early works laid the “foundation” leading us to continue/start providing our partners, especially local governments in the affected areas, to (re)establish systems to support families and communities with children of pre-school age. No doubt, some of our early works played instrumental roles to “build back better”.

We have completed all of our works in the Tohoku region last year. However, their legacy continues in our on-going advocacy and communication in the Child Friendly City Initiative and the ECD campaign.

Situation



5,716,000*

of people affected

* Total of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima in 2010



766,000*

of children affected

*age 0-15

#Early Moments Matter

“Many still believe that small children suffer less than the other age groups. We did want to start providing psychosocial training to parents and teachers of kindergartens and nursery schools much much much earlier.”

Ryoko Honda

Psychosocial Support Specialist
Advisor for Japan Com for UNICEF
on the Emergency Programme
Japan Association for Play Therapy

“In emergency, parents especially with small children are also in desperate need of external support to look after children.”

“Interventions like CFS helps parents and caregivers to rest and recuperate, let alone doing other important things to survive.”

Michiko Ono

Child Protection Specialist
Advisor for Japan Com for UNICEF
on the Emergency Programme
Former UNICEF Child Protection Specialist

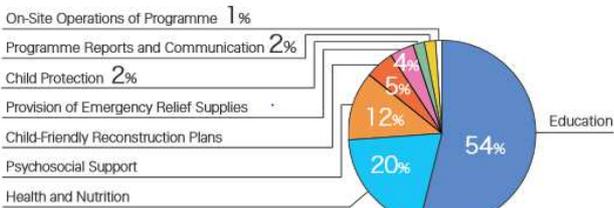
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Donations and Programme Areas (As of December 31, 2015)

Emergency relief donations received by the Japan Committee for UNICEF

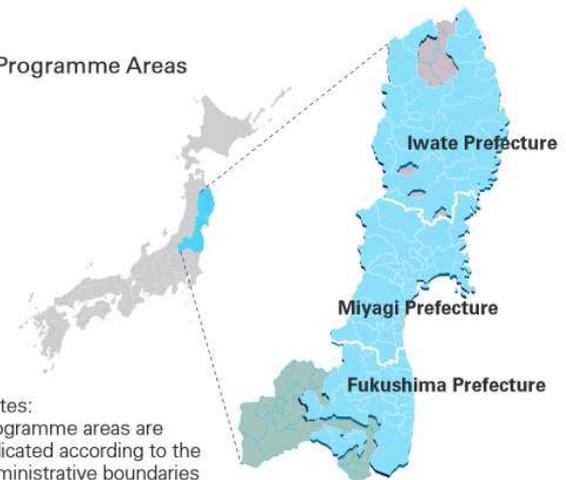
From within Japan: ¥3,540,741,276
From outside Japan: ¥1,212,946,130

Disbursement of Donations by Programme Pillars



Note: Donation disbursement percentages are calculated based on total amount received including the expected expenses. (See page 16 for the Income and Expenses Report.)

Programme Areas



Notes:
Programme areas are indicated according to the administrative boundaries of the local municipalities.

Responses in ECD



Child Friendly Space

While running CFSs, we provided guidelines and Code of Conducts to local governments and NGO/CSOs. Lessons learned were compiled as Japanese version of CFS Handbook and training opportunities are offered and provided to any groups across the country preparing themselves for future disasters.



Parenting Hotline

A toll-free hotline provided parents advice on infant nutrition including breastfeeding. Posters and leaflets calling for communities' support to parents with infants were distributed in the shelters where "child/mother-friendly" were unknown.



Restarting Infant Health Checkups

Provided supplies and health experts to local governments to restart regular health checkups and immunization, which had been completely disrupted due to the loss of facilities, supplies and experts.



"Back to Kindergarten" (and Nursery School)

Provided various supplies to meet different needs (e.g. toys, desks, chairs, toilets, bedclothes, supplementary meals etc.) to re-open the services in such temporarily facilities as temples and community centers.



Psychosocial Support (Training)

In parallel to the Back to Kindergarten, training were provided to teachers, caregivers and parents on psychosocial care using "play-therapy" method. While the work including counselling were continuously provided to some facilities which experienced such serious damages as loss of children, the work later evolved to be a training package to various child-care experts of local governments who started (re)establishing child-care systems.



Excursion to "Non-Nuke" Areas

Fukushima's more than 40,000 children of pre-school age and their parents, who lost opportunities to play outside after the nuclear power plant accident, participated in UNICEF-organized excursion trips.



Picture Book Distribution (Parenting Support)

Distributed more than 300,000 books donated by people throughout Japan to shelters and child care facilities. Special effort were made to give good number of picture books to parents with young child and substantial numbers of those books were sent to individual houses in Fukushima where parents had no option but to keep their children inside. For those whom we couldn't reach with books, two short stories were distributed by one-page advertisement published on local papers.



Kindergarten/Nursery School Reconstruction

Responding to requests from local governments received during the Back to Kindergarten campaign, temporarily or new facilities were constructed in 14 locations throughout the region.



Parenting Support for Fathers

Primarily started as support to children who lost primary-care givers, the activity evolved to set up a network to provide support to fathers who were either being a single parent or living in distance from their children who fled Fukushima due to the nuclear accident. Report available in English:

http://www.unicef.or.jp/kinkyu/japan/pdf/2015_fushishien.pdf



Communication

Approaching the 1st year after the disaster, when the whole country was mourning for the lost, the 30sec PSA celebrated the 1st birthday of children who were born on the day of disaster and called for support. bit.ly/2j6r5TN



Advocacy

Lessons learned were shared with members of parliament, government officials, academics, NGO/CSOs and media at bimonthly meeting held at the Diet Members Hall and other occasions.

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Note: The opinions expressed in this paper are the author's own and may not reflect the view of the Japan Committee for UNICEF.

