



Association for Aid and Relief, Japan

The Great East Japan Earthquake Four years on from the earthquake disaster (Digest)

Apr. 2014 – Dec. 2014

Taking advantage of its refined mobility as an NGO, Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR Japan) has continued its relief activities to support the survivors in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Today, AAR Japan still continues its efforts across the three prefectures of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima, with the aim of fostering independence of persons with disabilities (PWDs) as well as to protecting the wellbeing of those affected by the disaster.

Together with expressing our heart-felt gratitude to the individuals, corporations and organizations that have supported AAR Japan, this report attests our endeavors over the last four years.



Supporting the Livelihoods of Persons with Disabilities

The Great East Japan Earthquake caused extensive damage to the buildings and the equipment of facilities for PWDs that were located in the disaster-affected areas.

In order to promote PWDs' participation in larger society, AAR Japan has been implementing interventions, both in tangible and intangible forms, in an effort to establish a conducive working environment for PWDs and cultivate their sense of wellbeing from being able to work.

Social welfare facilities creating best-selling products

Support for the development of new products

11 social welfare facilities in Fukushima Prefecture made collaborative efforts to develop a new sweet snack. With the help of AAR Japan, Nisshin Seifun Group Inc. and other partners' support, the social welfare facilities jointly created the "Magic Cookie, Polvoron". AAR Japan provided cooking tools and supported marketing and PR, and Nisshin Seifun Group taught them how to make cookies.

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7 social welfare facilities developed a new line of products for the Sendai Classic Festival, held in October, 2014, after participating in workshops on product development with the support of AAR Japan. The series was named "Hachipuonpu" (quaver) and was designed as incorporating forms of music notes and musical instruments. The products were sold at the festival and were very popular among music players.



Provision of equipment for businesses

AAR Japan assisted **13** social welfare facilities for PWDs by installing the necessary equipment for their business enterprises such as sewing machines, cooking tools, and generators. We installed a large freezer at Yamada Kyousei Sagyosho in Yamada Town, Iwate Prefecture, which secured a consistent production and sales of local seafood products. We also provided stepladders for harvesting apples to @ Katatsumuri facility in Ofunato City, Iwate Prefecture, enabling PWDs to engage in outdoor harvesting work. Cultivation and sales of local products also have positive social effects, revitalizing local communities.





Supporting bento box/café businesses

In order for social welfare facilities that engage in restaurant businesses, either making and selling bento (lunch boxes) or managing cafés, to come up with attractive menus, AAR Japan provided support for menu development and organized cooking classes with culinary expert Ms. Chinami Hamauchi. **3** social welfare facilities from Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures took part in the project. The combined efforts of the facilities, applying their own ingenuity to the dishes, and Ms. Hamauchi, providing techniques in bringing out the natural flavors of ingredients, resulted in the creation of new, original menus. One of the participants commented, “We have lost a lot due to the 3.11 disaster. However, we have also gained opportunities to meet a lot of wonderful people like Ms. Hamauchi, whom we would have otherwise never met. Through the sale of bento boxes, we would like to spread the success and endeavors of social welfare facilities in Fukushima Prefecture to the general public.”



Introducing products made by social welfare facilities

AAR Japan held **21** events, in both the Tokyo and Tohoku regions, in which we sold various products made by social welfare facilities. A number of private companies extended a helping hand by offering venues for the sales.



Assistance for social welfare facilities to resume their services and activities

AAR Japan set up library spaces at **16** social welfare facilities for children with disabilities in Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures. One of the facility staff members said that children’s psychological conditions have become more stable since the installment of the library space, where the kids can read books freely and independently. We also provided a total of **2,571** picture books, which were generously donated by Gin no Suzu Co., Ltd. to **27** social welfare facilities for children with disabilities and childcare facilities in three disaster-stricken prefectures. Furthermore, AAR Japan provided assistive vehicles needed for the transportation of facility users to **2** facilities, as well as equipment for administrative duties to **2** facilities.

Promoting healthy living with physical and mental wellbeing

Evacuees have spent a prolonged period of time far from their hometowns. It has taken a long time for the evacuees to return to their previous way of life, in terms of daily grocery shopping, making conversation with neighbors, and going to see a doctor among other aspects. AAR Japan continues to assist the evacuees for a both mentally and physically healthy living.

Promoting a healthy living (Building Healthy Communities Project)

Rehabilitation and counselling

With the help of occupational therapists and physiotherapists, we conducted massage and calisthenics sessions a total of **49** times. This activity has become very popular among those who are prone to lack of exercise due to the living in temporary housing complexes. At the same time, counselors visit and conduct active listening sessions, which alleviate the evacuees' stress from life in temporary housing complexes.

Hosting of community interaction events

We conducted a total of **21** events, including folk music concerts and workshops for making aromatic soap at assembly halls in temporary housing complexes. Through such events, participants were able to refresh their mentalities and make new friends.

Supporting social events organized by local communities

AAR Japan encourages initiatives of local groups and people to organize social events in various communities within the Tohoku region. In Kesenuma City, Miyagi Prefecture, we assisted events hosted by a local organization, Kesenuma Volunteer Station, which held **12** events, attracting **324** people in total. In addition, Yamada Kyoseikai in Yamada Town, Iwate Prefecture, held **151** events, including traditional tea ceremonies and Karaoke sessions. We also supported Kadappeshi in Kamaishi City, Iwate Prefecture, in holding **47** social meeting sessions.

Economy class syndrome prevention

In cooperation with the Morioka City's municipal office and Morioka municipal hospital, AAR Japan has implemented activities to promote the health of people living in the coastal area of Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures. People living in cramped spaces of the temporary housing complexes are prone to suffer from lack of exercise that could lead to "economy class syndrome". Thus, medical teams made visits to temporary housing complexes to conduct prevention screening, reaching out to a total of **1,022** people. Additionally, we supplied medical equipment necessary for medical check-ups.

Growing vegetables in gardens

At **13** temporary housing complexes, AAR Japan assisted the installation of large planters for vegetable gardening. We also held various events such as "Nagashi Somen*" and harvest festivals, which provided the participants with opportunities to meet and socialize. One of the participants said, "the gardening activities remind me of the time when I used to work in the fields, and they help me feel refreshed". The gardening activities also contributed to make communication among participants livelier and the activities helped tackle health issues arisen from the lack of exercise among the residents. In general, activities in temporary housing complexes tend to attract more female participants, leaving male residents isolated at home. However, the gardening activities successfully attracted many male participants.

* Nagashi Somen (lit. flowing noodles) is a fun way of eating Japanese thin noodles by pouring them through water-filled bamboos and catching them with chopsticks.



Playground for children (Building Healthy Communication Project)



Nishi-Aizu Waku-Waku Kids' School

We organized Nishi-Aizu Waku-Waku Kids' School four times for children who cannot freely play outside because of the radioactive contamination along the coast of Fukushima Prefecture. This is an overnight event where we provide children and their guardians with the opportunity to play without worry in Nishi-Aizu City, which is located in the western part of the prefecture, far from the coast. One parent said, "it was my son's first time playing in snow, and he was so excited. We, as parents, also enjoyed this event very much. We are very grateful for such long-term support."

For safe living

Installation of security lighting

AAR Japan installed **128** security street lights in Ofunato City, Iwate Prefecture, as well as in Ishinomaki City and Iwanuma City, Miyagi Prefecture. As many people have been relocated to new residential areas created by the governmental reconstruction programs, the security lights are appreciated by the new residents because the lights make them feel safer when going out in their unaccustomed neighborhoods during nighttime.

(Joint project with Support21 Social Welfare Foundation)



Side by side with people in Fukushima

AAR Japan conducted night patrol and active listening activities in the Soso area in Fukushima Prefecture in cooperation with Miraito, an NPO in Shinchi Town, Fukushima Prefecture.



Safe water to children

AAR Japan delivers drinking water to **4** kindergartens and fruits for lunch meals to **1** kindergarten in Fukushima Prefecture. Water is also used for making milk for babies.

Transportation services for medical visits

In Yamada Town, Iwate Prefecture, the elderly residents face great difficulty in accessing hospitals as the main hospital is located far from the town center. The heavy traffic, caused by recent reconstruction works, has also made it increasingly difficult for them to go out. In response, AAR Japan has provided the elderly residents with transportation services for hospital/clinic visits a total of **1,348** times to ensure safe access to medical facilities in cooperation with a local organization called Yamada Kyosei Sagyosho.



Restoration of local festivals

Up until 2011, local residents in Yoshihama area in Ishinomaki City, Iwate Prefecture, carried on the tradition of "Mikoshi Togyo", a traditional festival original to the Kumano shrine, in which young people parade with portable shrines throughout the community. However, the community had been unable to hold the festival due to depopulation and declining birth-rates. Before the Great East Japan Earthquake, 56 families lived in the Yoshihama area but the devastation caused by the tsunami further accelerated the depopulation. On April 27th, 2014, the festival was restored with AAR Japan supporting the repair of the portable shrines. A woman at the festival, who had left the community after the earthquake, shed tears of happiness, saying, "I cannot believe I am seeing Mikoshi Togyo again in Yoshihama".



Disaster Risk Reduction for Future Disasters

Living in evacuation centers for PWDs

AAR Japan conducted evacuation drills on July 26th and November 10th, 2014, in Iwaki City, Fukushima Prefecture, in which participants experienced living in an evacuation center. Many PWDs participated, learning registration procedures at the center and how to navigate the center in wheelchairs.

In addition, AAR Japan distributed **254** emergency kits to **11** social welfare facilities for PWDs in Fukushima Prefecture.



Magic Cookie "Polvoron"

Many PWDs have evacuated from Futaba District (which is within a 30 kilometer radius of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant) to Koriyama City, Fukushima Prefecture. Shinsei, a nonprofit organization in Koriyama City, provides support for PWDs, who left their hometown, to lead purposeful lives and to have a role in society through employment.

In November 2013, Shinsei networked with 10 other social welfare facilities in Fukushima Prefecture, and took the initiative to develop a new product, leveraging their relationships with AAR Japan and private corporations created after the 3.11 disaster. The project for the baked cookie "Polvoron" was then launched. Nisshin Seifun Group Inc. taught techniques for baking cookies, while AAR Japan assisted with package designs and cooking tools. We also provided marketing and PR support, including the production of brochures and hosting launch events for private companies and the general public in Tokyo.

The social welfare facilities received many orders immediately after the release of "Polvoron" in October, 2014. PWDs diligently work on each task assigned to produce the cookies. It is by working closely together that the 11 facilities in Fukushima Prefecture keep up with the high demand and fill large orders.

Ms. Miho Tominaga, the Board Chairperson at Shinsei, said, "the PWDs have grown to love and be proud of their work on 'Polvoron' production and public relations activities."



Workers at CAFÉ Sweet Hot in Koriyama City cutting "Polvoron" out of pastry dough. (September, 2014)

2011.3.11 – 2014.3.31 *Activities for the past three years:*

Delivery of relief supplies

To **180,000** individuals in **1,606** locations

Drawing from our experience in overseas disaster relief that PWDs and the elderly are prone to be overlooked during a disaster, AAR Japan implemented its activities focusing on these two population groups. Adult diapers and retort food were well received at social welfare facilities.

Soup kitchens

25,000 meals in **73** locations

Mobile clinic

Recipients of medical check-ups **817** individuals

AAR Japan organized mobile clinics with a medical term led by Dr. Toshiaki Yasuda, a local medical practitioner, and implemented health-related services including check-ups for chronic illness, prevention of infectious diseases, and provision of psychological support through counseling on Ojika Peninsula, Miyagi Prefecture.

Delivery of daily essentials to victims in Fukushima

22,599 families

Daily necessities including kitchenware and basic furniture were distributed to all households in temporary and subsidized housing complexes across 13 municipalities in Fukushima Prefecture.

Delivering kindness from across the country

Hand-made tote bags delivered **10,543** bags

Chocolate **4,843** boxes

In response to suggestions made by the disaster survivors that a tote bag would be useful when going to school or to organize relief supplies that were provided, a large number of handmade bags with messages attached were donated after a nation-wide call out for their creation.

Several people also contributed to the 'Heart-Warming Chocolate Campaign' in which messages of support from the general public were attached to boxes of AAR Japan's charity chocolate and delivered to the disaster area.

Reconstruction of facilities for the elderly and PWDs

79 locations

AAR Japan conducted reconstruction of facilities for elderly and PWDs and senior care centers, and provided necessary equipment in cooperation with local contractors. This helped the PWDs in disaster areas reunite with their fellow colleagues and resume their former activities and jobs.

Vehicle provision

48 vehicles

Assistive and standard vehicles were provided to facilities and local municipal offices throughout the Tohoku region to be used for pick-up and drop-off services for facility users and as a means of transportation for those partaking in recovery efforts.

Hosting of Community Interaction Events

Rehabilitation and active listening **219** times

Community interaction events **183** times

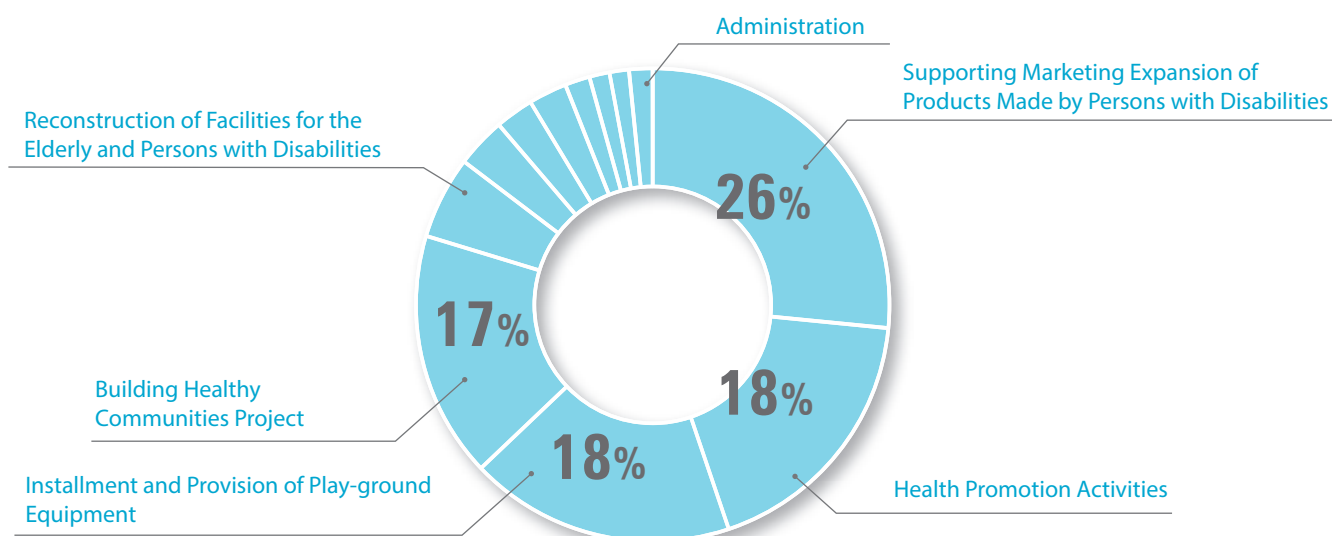
We hosted many events combining various programs such as rehabilitation, concert, active listening and handcraft class.



Financial Report AAR Japan The Great East Japan Earthquake

Income	(Unit: JPY)	2014. 4. 1-2014. 12. 31	2011. 3. 11-2014. 3. 31
Total		161,897,520	3,276,608,081
Domestic and Overseas Donations, Oversea Grants		158,897,520	2,030,477,585
Domestic Grants		3,000,000	1,246,130,496

Expenditure	(Unit: JPY)	2014. 4. 1-2014. 12. 31	2011. 3. 11-2014. 3. 31
Total		180,051,163	2,933,476,127
Supporting Marketing Expansion of Products Made by Persons with Disabilities		47,826,398	235,593,643
Health Promotion Activities		32,853,363	99,463,553
Installment and Provision of Play-ground Equipment		32,567,959	171,376,061
Building Healthy Community Project		30,263,503	121,543,781
Reconstruction of Facilities for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities		10,157,665	877,166,683
Patrol Activities		6,140,729	4,872,799
Transportation Service to Hospitals		4,714,590	0
Security Lights		4,713,073	5,515,945
Disaster Risk Reduction		3,055,819	0
Vehicle Provision		2,463,136	71,533,464
Delivery of Relief Supplies (Food Items)		2,406,194	50,013,247
Delivery of Daily Essentials to Disaster Survivors in Fukushima		0	756,253,678
Delivery of Relief Supplies (Non-Food Items)		0	299,994,694
Container Housing Project		0	80,912,057
Distribution of Radiation Dosimeters		0	55,114,011
Others		0	8,879,554
Administration		2,888,735	95,242,958



We appreciate your kind support.

AAR Japan will plan its future activities with focus on assistance to those in Fukushima Prefecture, as well as PWDs and the elderly in the disaster areas in all these prefectures.