



Japan Relief Efforts: Progress Report 6 Months Later



PROGRESS MADE SINCE THE MARCH 11, 2011 EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI ● OCTOBER 2011

The purpose of this report is to provide supporters with an update of activities and accomplishments on Direct Relief International's response efforts related to the magnitude-9.0 earthquake and subsequent tsunami that struck Japan on March 11, 2011. The earthquake was the most powerful known seismic activity to have ever hit Japan, and one of the five most powerful quakes in the world since 1900. The tsunami triggered by the earthquake created waves over 30 feet high that traveled up to six miles inland. The disaster left 15,000 people dead, over 4,000 missing, and more than 750,000 buildings damaged or destroyed. After the disaster occurred, Japan's Prime Minister, Naoto Kan, told reporters: "In the 65 years after the end of World War II, this is the toughest and the most difficult crisis for Japan."

Direct Relief International's approach to disaster response is to support the immediate needs of survivors by working with local partners best situated to assess, respond, and prepare for long-term recovery. Each emergency has specific characteristics that are dependent upon local facts and circumstances. Experience has taught Direct Relief that the basic tenets of responding to specific needs and involving the local people are essential, particularly in an emergency setting.

Immediately following the quake Direct Relief partnered with the **Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)** to identify, vet, and support local Japanese groups that were working in affected areas and providing care and services to some of the most vulnerable populations who were most impacted.

Local organizations that Direct Relief works with in emergencies often shoulder a significant amount of relief and recovery work yet are too busy and spread too thin to worry about fundraising to support their efforts. In severely impacted areas where relief is needed, often nonprofit groups help fill critical gaps in recovery services. In the days following the earthquake and tsunami, Direct Relief and JACL established the **Japan Relief and Recovery Fund** to ensure that 100% of funding received would be used to support locally-run community-based organizations providing relief services ranging from medical care in areas where all health facilities were destroyed, to the provision of essential food and non-food items to evacuees.

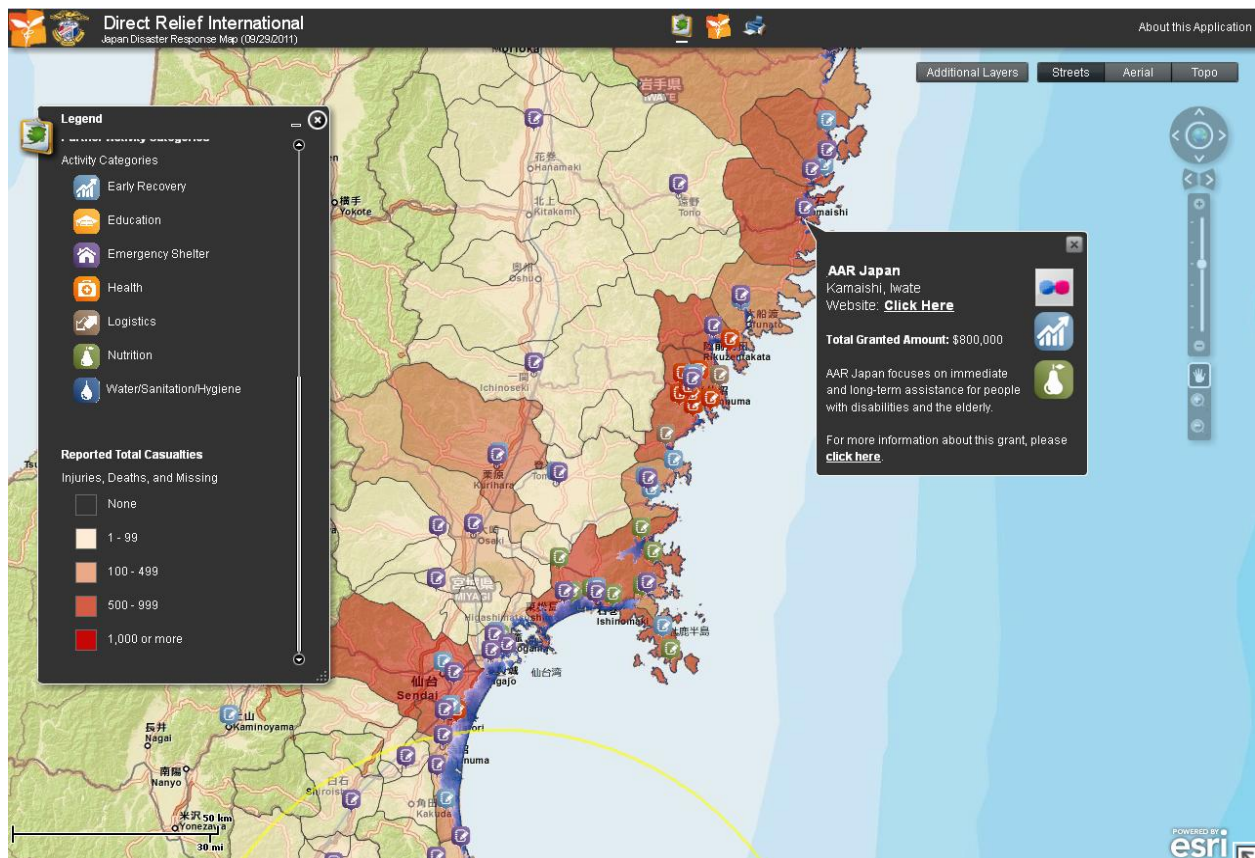
Since the earthquake and tsunami, Direct Relief and JACL have granted over \$2.5 million to eight (8) Japanese nonprofit organizations providing relief and recovery services to people in Japan affected by the disaster. **These groups focus on providing services to the most vulnerable people based on their more severe and longstanding needs.** Direct Relief and JACL continue to provide support to Japanese relief and recovery groups through the Japan Relief and Recovery Fund and will continue to provide support as long as need exists.

TRACKING PROGRESS AND AID DELIVERED

To effectively share their aid activities, Direct Relief and JACL created an interactive aid distribution map which provides a complete and accurate overview of all support distributed to Japan through the Japan Relief and Recovery Fund. This map provides donors with unparalleled transparency. Viewers of the map are able to visualize where Direct Relief and JACL's in-country partners are working and learn about their accomplishments and ongoing recovery efforts. Demographic data from Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications are also included in the map as layers, providing contextual information about the affected population.

Direct Relief's Japan Aid Map is available at:

<https://maps.directrelief.org/JP/Events/2011Earthquake/index.html>



APPROPRIATE AID THAT IS MOST NEEDED

Direct Relief mobilized immediately after the earthquake and tsunami struck Japan – reaching out to partner healthcare facilities across the affected areas to offer assistance. As with all of their emergency responses, Direct Relief only provides aid that is specifically requested by in-country healthcare organizations. In their talks with Japanese healthcare and relief organizations, the pressing need was for cash support, as community-based organizations were quickly running out of the money needed to continue and expand their relief and recovery work.

STRENGTHENING JAPANESE RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS

Direct Relief and JACL have focused on supporting local, effective Japanese organizations that continue to provide relief and recovery services in affected communities. Based on Direct Relief’s extensive experience, these organizations usually have the best information, credibility with the local people, are most effective, and often are so intensely focused on their response efforts that they are unable to access financial resources from the global outpouring of support. Direct Relief and JACL both understand that relief efforts must be fast, but also must be informed in order to be effective. In line with these principles, Direct Relief and JACL prioritized funding to credible Japanese community-based, nonprofit organizations providing essential relief services immediately after the quake and tsunami, including medical services, the provision of food, shelter, water, and fuel to assist those most affected by the circumstances.

Direct Relief and JACL have focused on funding services to the most vulnerable people based on their more severe and longstanding needs.

Since the establishment of the Japan Relief and Recovery Fund, Direct Relief and JACL have granted over \$2.5 million in emergency funding to eight (8) Japanese nongovernmental organizations providing care and support to the people in Japan affected by the earthquake and tsunami.

Direct Relief and JACL have worked in consultation with faculty from Meiji Gakuin University to identify several Japanese nongovernmental organizations active in recovery and relief efforts and in need of financial support. Direct Relief and JACL staff members have traveled to Japan throughout the recovery period to meet with, vet, and evaluate these Japanese organizations. Grants provided to Japanese groups have enabled them to expand their provision of essential emergency-response services in their communities and increase coordination among relief and recovery efforts.

“We are happy for this opportunity to partner with a superior organization such as Direct Relief, whose record of efficiency is second to none. Many of our collaborative human and civil rights organizations will be supporting this relief effort. We are happy to provide an avenue for funds that will go directly to help stricken victims of the disaster, many who are friends and family to our membership.”

*Floyd Mori,
National Executive Director
Japanese American Citizens League*



Descriptions of the grants are provided below:

- **Caring for the Elderly and Disabled (\$800,000) - Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR Japan)** – dispatched emergency teams and began relief activities immediately after the earthquake and tsunami occurred. Funding received by AAR Japan has been used for the distribution of food and non-food items, mobile clinic services, soup kitchen operation, hot bath delivery, repair of welfare institutions, transportation services, and office set-ups in the affected areas of Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures. AAR Japan’s relief efforts focus on elderly people and people with disabilities – particularly vulnerable population groups.
- **Bringing Mobile Medical Services to Affected Areas (\$250,000) – Service for Health in Asian and African Regions (SHARE)** has focused on providing emergency medical and healthcare services. SHARE sent a team of doctors, nurses, and logisticians to the Tohoku International Clinic and is operating a mobile clinic in areas where all health facilities were destroyed. The SHARE team re-established a visiting nurse care center in Kesenuma, one of the areas hardest hit by the tsunami, to serve the elderly population not living in temporary housing. While most large temporary housing establishments offer medical services, this area is home to many elderly people who remained in their homes.
- **Restoring Dignity and Helping People Return to their Homes (\$300,000) – Peace Boat** has been delivering hot meals to people living in and out of evacuation centers, up to 2,000 meals per day since the earthquake and tsunami. Each week, 200 to 300 Peace Boat volunteers also clear mud and debris from buildings, roads, and other property. By November 2011, Peace Boat expects to have cleared 4,500 homes and buildings. In addition, Peace Boat is training volunteers and sharing best practices with other nonprofit organizations in Japan.



Peace Boat volunteers prepare meals for disaster survivors in Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture (9/2011)

- **Coordinating Local Groups to Maximize Effectiveness (\$328,000) – Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC)** has played the central role of coordinating body for over 40 nonprofit organizations responding to the earthquake and tsunami. JANIC’s role has included meeting coordination, information collection and provision, donation matching, and cooperating nonprofit activities with government agencies. JANIC’s member organizations have been assisting people affected by the disaster in a number of ways, including distributing basic necessities to evacuation centers, providing hot meals to evacuation centers, providing medical care and supplies, and offering counseling services.
- **Working in Areas Where Others Are Not (\$185,000) – Shapla Neer** operates in the area immediately south of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, where most other nonprofit organizations have not been working. Shapla Neer partnered with the local government to establish the Iwaki City Nakoso District Volunteer Center, where each district’s response is coordinated with local government entities and nonprofit groups. Shapla Neer established a needs-analysis system for affected people, created a mechanism for matching volunteers with people in need, and established a volunteer intake system. Because each district in Japan is responsible for its local response, a well-coordinated and supported volunteer center has been vital to guarantee that no one in need is overlooked.
- **Supporting Displaced Communities (\$285,000) – Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA)** has transported relief supplies to remote and scattered evacuation centers in Iwate Prefecture, provided hot meals to people living in and out of evacuation centers, helped clear debris from homes, and transported people to bathing areas to maintain sanitation. While people waited for water and power services to be restored, cooking and bathing were a serious challenge, especially for the elderly. SVA has also supported displaced people by providing a mobile library service to 16 temporary housing establishments in Iwate Prefecture.



A mobile library provided by SVA at a 150-household temporary housing community. This is one of 16 communities served by SVA’s mobile library service. (9/2011)

- **Matching Human Resources to Needs (\$151,000) – Japanese International Volunteer Center (JVC)** launched a nutritional support program following the earthquake and tsunami to bring vegetables and other nutritious food to distribution sites. JVC’s initiative has supported local farms while supplying displaced people with fresh produce. JVC is also working with the Kesennuma Municipal Welfare Council and the Disaster Volunteer Center to coordinate and match volunteers with people who need support.
- **Reviving Livelihoods (\$250,000) – International Volunteer Center of Yamagata (IVY)** has been operating a Cash for Work program for disaster survivors in Miyagi Prefecture. Within a month of the earthquake and tsunami, IVY launched this program which hires survivors to clean up damaged homes. Some disaster evacuees, especially elderly people, have been unable to return to their homes because of debris and flooding. IVY’s Cash for Work program has accelerated the return of the elderly to their homes by targeting these houses for debris removal. The program is rehabilitative and provides a first step for survivors to regain their lives and earn an income.



Participants in IVY’s Cash for Work Program clear debris in Miyagi Prefecture (9/2011)

LOOKING AHEAD

As with all emergency response activities, Direct Relief continues to provide support to in-country partners to strengthen their capacity long after the immediate effects of the disaster end. Six months after the earthquake and tsunami struck Japan, tens of thousands of people remain in temporary housing and millions of tons of debris still need to be removed. The long-term health effects of the natural disaster and ongoing nuclear crisis remain unforeseen. Furthermore, tight power supply restrictions are expected this winter unless nuclear reactors that were shut down after the earthquake and tsunami are restarted. This will complicate clean-up efforts and potentially limit heating for homes and temporary shelters.

Because of their extensive emergency response experience as well as their ongoing support of in-country organizations to strengthen local healthcare systems, Direct Relief has an exceptional capacity to support their partners with both immediate and long-term assistance in the event of a disaster. With the generous support from individuals, businesses, and foundations, people affected by poverty and disaster are leading healthier lives in Japan and throughout the world.