

50 Challenge On Learning Activities For Sustainable Society In Nishinomiya, Japan

BACKGROUND

The city of Nishinomiya, with a population of approximately 450,000 and an area of 100.18 sq km, lies between Osaka and Kobe in the southeastern part of Hyogo Prefecture of Japan. This is a city where community and local businesses, especially Sake brewing industries, have once protested against the establishment of petroleum complexes and waterfront land reclamation schemes, because of conserving quality of water.

Influenced by increasing world-wide concern over environmental issues, Nishinomiya city launched a community-based environmental learning project with a focus on activities for children, "Earth Watching Club (EWC)," with civic volunteers by the initiative of Mr. Masayoshi Ogawa who has been a municipal employee of Nishinomiya City since 1992.

After the event of Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995, community-based environmental learning projects are now considered to be the effective tool for tackling not only environmental issues but also various issues such as accident, crime, disaster reduction and generation gap. At the same time, municipal budget for the project decreased, because of the earthquake. Therefore, in order to promote these projects more actively, the concepts of EWC were further reconstructed and saw the birth of a nonprofit membership organization, called "Learning and Ecological Activities Foundation for Children (LEAF)" 1998, which is based on partnership among citizens, businesses and the local government.

OBJECTIVES

LEAF aims to realize sustainable society by 1) cultivating "self-education ability", 2) promoting community-based environmental learning activities in local communities, 3) establishing partnership with various civic groups, private sectors and government agencies, and 4) disseminating its methods to public.

LEAF targets a wide range of citizens. In particular, LEAF tries to establish a system which enables people unconcerned with environmental issues to participate in the projects. It also tries to raise awareness of people in not only environmental issues, but also disaster management and community development through environmental learning activities

ACTIVITIES

LEAF is conducting various programs with community-based environmental learning activities

in corporation with various stakeholders, including civic groups, schools, Nishinomiya city government, Japanese Ministry of the Environment, and the private sector

Firstly, LEAF has been conducting a project called "Eco-Cards" focusing on children. When children take part in any environmental activities, so-called "Eco-Actions," community members (1 500 Eco-Stamp holders) reward them with a special type of stamp, called "Eco-Stamps." Children are registered as Earth Rangers and receive resources for environmental activities when they collect 10 or more Eco-Stamps on the Eco-Cards project.

Secondly, LEAF expanded the Eco-Cards project and published a manual, titled "Safety and Ecological Activities Manual for Nishinomiya". People can learn geography, history, natural environment and lifestyle of Nishinomiya; find various problems through the manual. And then LEAF facilitates people discussing and tackling them. Additionally, in order to increase awareness of the manual, LEAF has held training seminars for teacher to explain children at school how to use the manual and for the elderly, playing an important role as "legacy tellers," to talk about natural environment and lifestyle in their childhood. Moreover, LEAF negotiated with schools in order to start offering special classes where students can learn environmental issues from the views of the "legacy tellers," and also learn the process of production and consumption from private sectors such as those of production companies and recycling manufactures.

Thirdly, LEAF has conducted the municipal Citizens' Nature Survey and the Citizens' Awareness Poll. It was only the city of Nishinomiya that conducted a survey on children's psychology on the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 by EWC, predecessor of LEAF. To disseminate the information of these projects, LEAF has been building a world-wide network of environmental learning activities for children, called "Chikyu Kids Environmental Network", and organized the Third Junior Eco-Club Asia-Pacific Conference.

Besides, LEAF has undertaken environmental projects and schemes commissioned by local governments, mainly Nishinomiya city, Ministry of the Environment, other NPOs and private sectors.

ACHIEVEMENTS

■ The number of collective memberships is 90, and individual membership is 181.

■ An average of 2,000 children are newly registered as Earth Rangers each year. In 2001, "Earth Rangers" were found in all schools in the city (42 municipal and 1 private).

■ Through Eco-Cards projects, not only children but also their parents have shown interest in

participation in environmental projects. To further implement this scheme, Eco-Cards for adult will be introduced in 2005.

■ EWC in Nishinomiya has become the model of "Junior Eco-Clubs" by the Japanese Ministry of the Environment and has been publicized in a national level in Japan.

■ LEAF contributed to the declaration of the City of Nishinomiya as an "Environmental Learning City" in 2003 and has supported promotion of their projects.

■ LEAF was awarded the 5th Green Purchasing Award (Civic Group Category) for continuous community approach in promoting eco-friendly merchandise in 2002, and "Environment Grand Prix 2004 for Local Municipalities" by Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development in 2004 for the outstanding achievements in promoting community-based environmental activities.

LESSONS

LEAF has learned from the experience in EWC that in order to succeed environmental learning projects, it is necessary for various groups to participate in projects and middle organization to bridge each organization is necessary. In the LEAF's projects, LEAF has been playing the important role as a coordinator among various organizations such as schools, board of education, children groups, Parent-Teacher Associations, civic groups, local government, and private sectors and teachers so that they can mutually learn various issues.

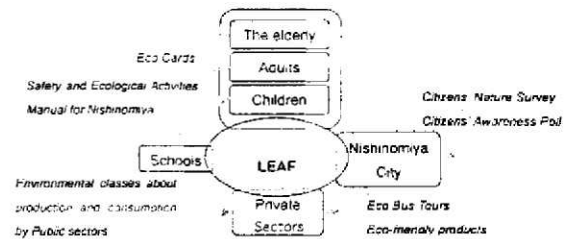
Moreover, in order to continue its implementation, LEAF believes that it is important to establish a sustainable framework where common citizens, especially those who are not particularly environmentally conscious, can participate with ease, and projects can motivate them to take civil movement in the future.

In addition, one of the big challenges in LEAF is how one can effectively manage and sustain such environmental learning activities. Often times, it is difficult to keep implementing NPO's projects, because of limited budget and human resource. In the case of LEAF, the director, Mr. Ogawa, thought that management skill was essential for sustainability of NPO. LEAF could successfully call for enough funds to operate projects through partnering with Nishinomiya city, Ministry of the Environment, private companies and NPOs, and also from membership fee of LEAF.

FUTURE

LEAF tries to incorporate the themes from environmental learning projects into city planning to further degrees. With support of

LEAF, Nishinomiya city plans to establish eco-communities that are organized in each junior high school zone where people discuss and create community plan through environmental learning activities.



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51 Establishment Of The Disaster Reduction And Human Renovation Institution (DRI)

BACKGROUND

Since the 1960s, Japan has made remarkable progress in disaster prevention, thanks mainly to governmental initiatives. Parallel with the contributions made by science and technology to economic growth, significant results were achieved in disaster prevention, in the area of meteorological disasters in particular, based on the thinking that challenges by nature can be overcome with science and technology. However, in the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of January the 17th, 1995, harsh realities were revealed: the limited capacity of the governmental sector, damage to building structures far beyond anticipation, and divergence between academic research and the real world. On the other hand, citizen initiatives came to be realized as an important factor in disaster reduction. A spirit of mutual aid and nationwide expansion of volunteerism emerged, which had been a rare concept for Japan's traditional disaster prevention approach. With the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake as a turning point, the paradigm of Japan's disaster reduction has shifted to one of building a society to coexist with nature while reducing losses. Against this background, the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution (DRI) was established in April 2002.

OBJECTIVES

By transferring the experiences of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and applying lessons learned from the earthquake, DRI aims at cultivating a disaster reduction culture, mitigating vulnerability of local societies, and developing policies for disaster reduction; thereby contributing to realizing a safer and more secure civil society.

Through its museum exhibits, DRI demonstrates to the public the importance of disaster reduction and the mutual dependence of all citizens. DRI also undertakes action research, develops human resources to lead disaster reduction in the future, assists managers in disaster response, and promotes cooperation by strengthening various networks. Ensuring that these are conducted in an integrated way, DRI strives to effectively create, systematize, and share such wisdom and information.

ACTIVITIES

■ **Exhibition using primary materials of the disaster:** In collaboration with disaster victims, local citizens, and volunteers, DRI exhibits live experiences and lessons learned from the Earthquake using AV facilities and 160 thousand primary materials provided from the victims. DRI already had 1.2million visitors from around the world, and the 40% are school generation who visit here as school educational programs.

■ **Action Research on Disaster Reduction:** Based on academic research and the experiences and lessons learned from the Earthquake, DRI seeks to understand and communicate important disaster reduction issues. DRI conducts action research that contributes to the formulation and implementation of policies and management actions. DRI is conducting a practical research on the countermeasures for coming mega disasters such as Tohankai-Nankai Earthquake with Tsunami disasters.

■ **Training of Disaster Management Practitioners:** DRI conducts training of local government practitioners who should play central roles in disaster management. DRI thus contributes to upgrading the emergency management capacity of local governments. DRI already finished 6 terms training courses with totally about 600 participants from local governments all around Japan.

■ **Development of Disaster Reduction Professionals:** DRI provides the opportunity for promising disaster reduction professionals to acquire knowledge of the Earthquake, obtain a high-level action research capability, develop a permanent interest in mitigating social vulnerability, and become capable of imagining various phases and dimensions of disasters. DRI has 9 young professional researchers, who will be future leaders in disaster reduction, in various positions and perspectives.

■ **Headquarters Assistance in Disaster Response:** In the case of mega disasters, DRI dispatches experts with practical and systematic knowledge in disaster response to provide appropriate information and advice to headquarter managers, thereby contributing to damage mitigation and smooth recovery and reconstruction. DRI dispatched its researchers to Algeria (2003), Bam in Iran (2003-4), and recent Nigata Chuetsu Earthquake in Japan to

make proactive and effective advisory support to the head quarters of disaster countermeasure.

■**Networking:** DRI functions as a crossroad of government practitioners, researchers, citizens and business enterprises that are related to the Earthquake and disaster reduction. It provides a venue for encounters of various disciplines and people, as well as for domestic and international cooperation, so as to promote diverse initiatives for mitigating social vulnerability.

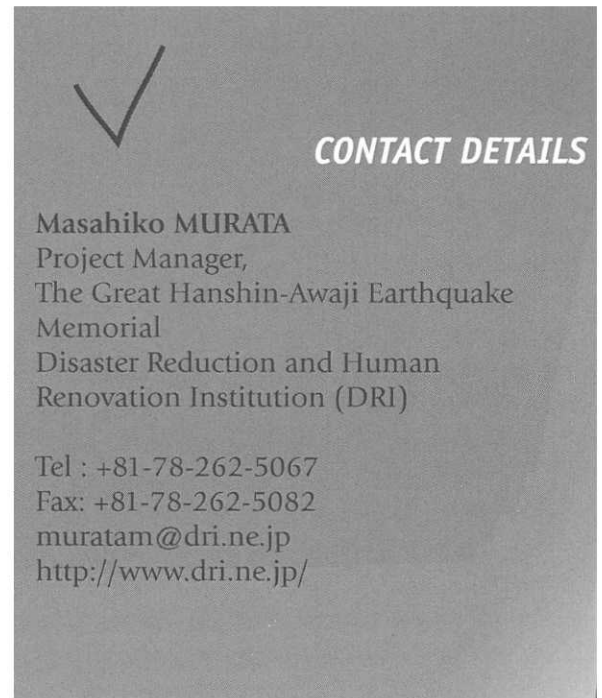
DRI established the Disaster Reduction Alliance (DRA) with 13 international disaster related organizations in Kobe, and DRA co-organizes the WCDR thematic session with UNESCO at the cluster 3.

LESSONS

DRI's museum function for citizens especially for young generation turned out to be very practical and effective educational facility for future disaster reduction, which is essential for sustainable development and human security.

FUTURE

Taking the opportunity of the WCDR, DRA proposes the establishment of "Transfer Live Lessons Network". This is to facilitate sharing and transferring live experiences and lessons learnt from past disasters on a citizen-to-citizen basis worldwide



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52 Impact On Household Level Of Cash Distribution To Herders In Zavkhan Aimag, Mongolia

BACKGROUND

In winter 1999-2000 the first of three subsequent severe Dzuds, dry summer followed by snow-rich and harsh winters, hit a large part of Mongolia diminishing the Mongolian livestock by one third over the three years. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) started to provide humanitarian assistance in 2000, responding to a UN emergency appeal. In the autumns of 2002 and in 2003, SDC implemented 'cash projects' in Gobi-Altai and Zavkhan aimag (province), respectively.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the project was to assist those herders, that had lost all or the majority of their animals, with MNT 200,000, so that they could prepare themselves for winter, freely spending the money on the items that they felt most needed. Beneficiary lists were prepared based on the statistical data of the aimag and soum administrations and partly verified with bagh governors. The money was handed out by the Khan Bank branch offices, which exist in all soums (province or aiming is divided into soums) according to the approved and publicized lists of beneficiaries.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In Gobi-Altai 2100, and in Zavkhan, 2400 herders benefited from the project. A year after the distribution of the cash in Zavkhan, an external review of the impact on the households was conducted.

LESSONS

■ **Timing:** The cash distribution of the SDC was implemented in October 2003. Most beneficiaries used the cash to re-stock their

herd flocks. However, they express that spring time was a suitable for them to buy animals when they are less expensive for re-stocking.

■ **Local capacity building:** Local leaders had the role of helpers, not partners. Local knowledge and experience of the administration might have increased the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme significantly. The bagh leaders for instance acted as advisors to many people as to how to spend the money received. It would have been worthwhile to conduct soum and/or aimag based workshops with bagh and soum leaders facilitating and exchange among them as to how people can spend the money effectively and to help the local leaders reflecting their own role. If the training was conducted for the local leaders for a day or two to facilitate them for the program implementation, it would have given them a higher sense of ownership of the program rather than seeing help from external organizations. They should have been included in decision making.

■ **Focus on community rather than individual:** The project provided almost exclusive support to individual families and not to herder groups or 'communities'. Mongolian society is strong 'community' orientated and it would have been interesting to see the impact of the project if some funds had been provided to communities for community-run projects. These projects could have been for improving preparedness for dzuds (community fodder preparation, irrigation, etc). A revolving fund managed by a soum was mentioned as another option. Alternatively, the thought was expressed that those families that did benefit from the schemes should have contributed something back to the community.

Some analysts insist that the greater impact of the dzud in 2001-2002 than previous climatic events was directly related to the collapse of prevention and preparedness measures (well repair and maintenance, fodder storage, collective responsibility for winter shelter repair and the organised hunting of wolves) which have all virtually ceased since the dissolution of the negdels (collectives) in the early 1990s.

FUTURE

■ It is recommended to select most suitable timeframe for future interventions.

■ Local leaders should be included as partners rather than helpers

■ For future actions, it is recommended to focus on community preparedness activities to prevent from future disaster



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