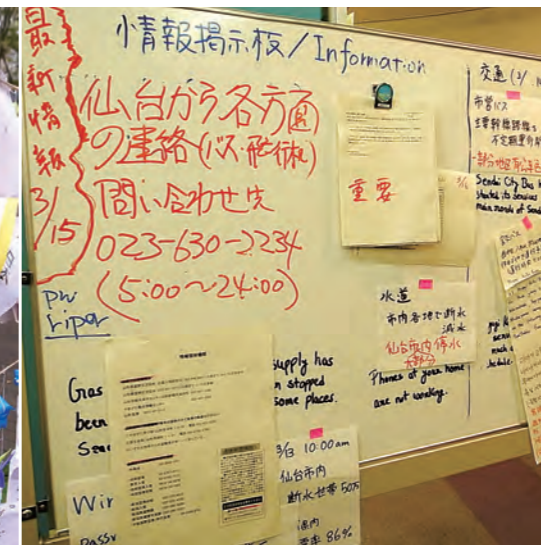


# A Foreigner Focused Collection of Responses to the Great East Japan Earthquake

3.11.2011

The Great East Japan Earthquake

Heading towards a Multicultural Society – recognizing differences between locals and foreign residents being a member of the same community



For all to take action in quake disasters by sharing information

Sendai City



## A Foreigner Focused Collection of Responses to the Great East Japan Earthquake

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# Towards a multicultural society

## How do we co-exist as members of a multicultural society at the time of a disaster?

Natural disasters do not differentiate between our statuses or nationalities when they attack us. What we have learnt from the Great East Japan Earthquake the hard way is that we are equally vulnerable in the face of natural disasters, that we must cooperate to protect lives and livelihoods, and that by combining our efforts, we can achieve effective disaster prevention and disaster risk reduction.

Presently, about 10,000 foreigners are living in Sendai. Sendai City is implementing projects to form a multicultural society in cooperation with Sendai International Relations Association (SIRA) by offering Japanese language lessons and cultivating volunteer Japanese teachers, strengthening multilingual communication support for foreigners, creating awareness in the community, reinforcing cooperation with relevant organizations, and improving the educational environment for non-Japanese children.

We created “A Foreigner Focused Collection of Responses to the Great East Japan Earthquake” to identify possible problems and their solutions and to share this information.

In addition to being a record of the past, we hope it will be of some help in developing a concept of how a multicultural society should cope with disasters in the future.

## We share common norms as members of the same multicultural community

**Do not generalize foreigners, but recognize differences.  
Support must reach all without leaving anyone out.**

**J.F. Morris (Place of birth: Australia),  
Professor of Intercultural Studies, Miyagi Gakuin Women’s University**

What foreigners need to have or know depends on what they experience. We must not categorize foreigners into one group but pay more attention to the diversity among them. The more foreign they are, the more distant they may be from local communities.

Some foreigners I met after the earthquake didn’t have a good command of Japanese, yet they could manage to evacuate. If it comes down to it, they will be able to make an escape by grasping the situation through non-verbal communication or other means. When people are in mortal danger, there is no rule but “save their lives.”

The first message we have to send to evacuees is, “you are not left out.”

They say that the care for the elderly at some evacuation centers was not sufficient because people were too busy taking care of the foreigners rushing there, but as we all know Japan is rapidly aging, so accepting young foreigners as human resources for support, not treating them as “guests,” would be one possible measure.

**Building a “safety net” to cope with emergency situations  
as well as “horizontal connections”**

**Lee Sunhee (South Korea),  
Postdoctoral Researcher of Anthropology**

After the earthquake, foreigners, even those who didn’t care much about it up until then, changed their minds and realized the necessity of community, and a network among foreigners has been formed. It has been my wish, too, to have a more reliable information source, not relying blindly on word-of-mouth communication. Getting involved with people will widen the coverage of the “safety net” that we utilize in emergency situations. Not only the vertical divisions that are often seen in Japanese society, but “horizontal connections” should also be considered.

In the position of a foreigner, it’s rather difficult to provide support in an emergency such as an earthquake. However, I thought that there should be something that I could do, and I started a heritage language class for children. Its mission is to “foster self-starters.” I will continue to contribute to making Sendai a multicultural society by networking with immigrants’ self-help and mutual aid groups.

**Respecting each other’s positions and sharing feelings in Sendai**

**Charles-Aime Bolduc (Canada),  
Father of Mototerakoji Church**

“Suffering” is the same for foreigners and Japanese. It is important for us to respect and share the burden of each other’s situations. In Sendai, I think such “sharing” is possible.

In preparation for the future, it’s critical to have foreigners informed of what we learned from this experience, as they might not be familiar with such disastrous earthquakes. I feel a strong need for disaster drills.

What foreigners living in Japan should bear in mind is that they need to learn and follow Japanese manners and familiarize themselves with Japanese customs such as “don’t shout in public.” I keenly feel that foreigners need to learn Japanese culture rather than being passive.

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## Multicultural disaster prevention in the future

In order to make A Foreigner Focused Collection of Responses to the Great East Japan Earthquake, we invited foreigners from various walks of life, including students, workers, and housewives, who actually experienced the disaster to gather. While recognizing their differences, participants from a variety of cultural backgrounds shared their ideas about “multicultural disaster management” as members of the community. They also proposed ideas for implementation. Here, we introduce that meeting and consider the future shape of cooperation and disaster prevention in the community.

### Isn't it necessary for all of us to think about multicultural disaster prevention?

#### How to create a system that encourages foreigners to participate in support activities

At first, we discussed what “multicultural disaster prevention” is and how it is supposed to be.

Comments that popped up included, “The term is new to me,” “What multiculturalism means varies by country and region,” and “There are different images that must be standardized into one.”

When thinking of multiculturalism in Japan, foreigners and their cultures come readily to mind. What impression do non-Japanese have of the term?

Other ideas included, “Foreigners’ standpoints vary,” “There are students, business persons, and families,” “Some live in Sendai and others in the coastal areas,” “Tourists and businessmen alike.”

In a multicultural society, it might be important to avoid categorizing things for foreigners into one group, and recognize and understand each other’s situations and share resources.

#### Do you know about the “Chonai-kai” (neighborhood associations)?

Those who have lived in Japan for many years talked a lot about neighborhood associations, saying things such as, “Information from neighborhood associations is important!” “Some neighborhood associations are functioning but others are not,” and “Neighborhood association disaster drills are conducted in Japanese, making it difficult for foreigners to understand.”

However, many foreigners new to Japan didn’t know about neighborhood associations. In addition, few knew that neighborhood associations were responsible for disaster prevention and evacuation in emergencies. It might be necessary to get foreigners to see that neighborhood associations play an important role in our communities.

## Foreigners must be part of local communities!

In emergency situations such as natural disasters, lifeline utilities as well as information networks including the Internet and mobile phones may be unavailable. Without connections to the local community, your daily life may be disrupted. With this, many pointed out that foreigners must be part of local communities.

### Disaster drills should be conducted with foreigners on a regular basis.

Due to neighborhood associations’ aging populations, lack of facilitators is a common concern. If young international students were to join neighborhood associations, it would lead to the revitalization of their activities.

How do foreigners get to know local communities, become familiar and participate in activities? This might be a key for planning and implementing multicultural disaster prevention in the future.

#### A key is to increase the number of participants in disaster drills

At the end, we discussed how to increase the number of participants in disaster drills, which have been practical and useful for disaster prevention and creating awareness. The list below shows some of the unique suggestions that came out.

- Provide an opportunity to experience things that are expected to be handy in emergencies, such as the assembly of portable toilets, at disaster drills.
- Create connections among international students, foreigners, and other neighborhood association members.
- Organize combined events, such as an imoni-kai and a disaster drill at the same time.
- Invite more people to disaster drills. Calling them directly would be more effective than distributing flyers or notices.
- Notices should be written in easy Japanese. Important notices should be in English as well.
- Prepare meals outdoors by country like a general election.
- Perform skits at disaster drills.
- Watch SIRA’s DVD (refer to p.26). It’s available on YouTube.
- Hand out disaster information (translated into multiple languages) to foreigners when they enter Japan.
- Impose a fine of 50,000 yen on anyone who hasn’t participated in a disaster drill. Their sense of disaster prevention is too low.

#### Suggestion

When we hear the word “foreigner,” we may think of those who visit Japan from overseas for sightseeing, studying abroad, and business, and may have a global image. On the other hand, we feel that the neighborhood associations and shelters that are involved in disaster prevention and refuge in emergencies are a local thing.

In order to advance multicultural disaster prevention that bridges the gap between global and local, it may be useful to try raising awareness among both Japanese and foreigners that foreigners are members of the community, and to try including foreigners in the community’s emergency drills.

Interview with Foreign Residents

## Verification1

### *At that time, we were...*

What did foreign residents do and think at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake?  
These interviews will verify the facts.

#### CASE1

#### Theme: Overcoming cultural differences

It was the very first earthquake of my life; I was panicking, and was also disturbed by differences in lifestyle.

Gulzar Asanova (Kyrgyzstan), second-year Master's student, Graduate School of Arts and Letters, Tohoku University

International student living in the academic city of Sendai

### Panicking at our very first experience of an earthquake. The children were crying for food.

When the earthquake occurred, I was in a room at the International House\* with my husband who is also Kirghiz. He was acting calmly, because he had experienced an earthquake before in Turkey. However, I was panicking. I thought, "I might die," and even cried a little.

As the electricity went out, we decided to go to Sanjo Junior High School where we expected to find people, which we thought would make us feel better. My husband, who was not accustomed to Japanese food, had a hard time. My friends' children from Uzbekistan and Turkey cried, "There's nothing we can eat." Thus, we gathered up broken furniture at the international center and made a fire to cook meat soup and bake bread with ingredients my friends and I brought together. We managed to eat by using the knowledge of the nomads.

### It may be normal for foreigners with less experience in earthquakes to panic

Bathrooms at the evacuation center were dirty and in terrible condition. My husband cleaned them using water from the swimming pool all night long. The day after the earthquake, he offered his help with heavy work to the staff at the center, but they declined his offer, saying they had enough manpower, although it didn't seem like they did.... We felt guilty as we could do nothing but eat.

There was a foreigner who got scolded by Japanese people for praying loudly, "God, help me." We were scared with all kinds of information coming in from overseas, and it was nothing strange for people from countries that experience disasters less often to panic. I wish they would understand foreigners' feelings.

### After the earthquake, I became active in reducing barriers between Japanese and non-Japanese

After the earthquake, I kept my passport, which is the most important document I have, close at hand, and stocked up on 2 to 3 kg of meat and at least 20 kg of flour for my husband, who is not accustomed to Japanese food.

I registered with SIRA and became a member of the Sendai International Student Program because I thought it was critical to reduce barriers between us and Japanese people after my experience at the evacuation center. I especially focused on disaster exercises, and I went out to Sanjomachi and Katahira to help people communicate by translating and getting involved in planning. During an exercise, we played a game together, but we found that some Japanese people created an atmosphere that was very hard for foreigners to participate in. If they would accept us as neighborhood residents, we could follow the Japanese way.

In fact, I appreciate what I learned at the Department of Applied Japanese Linguistics where instructors told me to first identify the issue, then search for a solution and implement it. I feel that I am now applying that lesson in a practical way in my life.

\* Tohoku University International House, housing for use by international students in Sanjomachi.

#### I wish to spread what I learned in Japan to Indonesia and other countries

Emmy Indah (Indonesia), third-year Doctoral student,  
Graduate School of Arts and Letters, Tohoku University

In order to build personal relationships with people around me, I have been trying to introduce Indonesian culture to them. However, as festivals or other events only attract people who are interested in foreign countries, it is still hard for me to establish an interpersonal connection with people who don't show any interest in foreign countries.

We might be able to help in various ways in times of emergency if residents of the same area knew each other, but privacy policies and other obstacles make it difficult to achieve a balance at the moment.

In Indonesia, education on disaster prevention is insufficient. I hope to spread what I learned in Japan all over Indonesia and other countries. In that sense, I strongly feel the need to learn about disaster prevention in Japan as much as I can.

## CASE2

### Theme: Using the skills of a businessperson

Using my experience, I offered as much support as possible wherever it was needed.

Roy Somech (Israel), Restaurant Owner of "Middle Mix"  
Foreign businessman playing an active role in Sendai

Sendai is my home. My mother was panicking more than I was.

When the earthquake struck, I was alone in my apartment in Gojuninmachi. Although my room was a complete mess, I got on my motorbike and headed to my restaurant, the most important thing in my life. Fortunately, not much was damaged, and I thought electricity and gas would soon be restored. Therefore I intended to open the restaurant. It was fully booked on March 11 but no customers came, so I went home at around half past eight in the evening in the pitch darkness.

My mother called me from Israel. She was panicking with the news of the earthquake and the tsunami in Japan. At the time, I was the only Israeli in Sendai, which attracted the Israeli media. The embassy called me frequently, trying to persuade me to come back. However, I convinced them that I should not leave Sendai, which I consider "my home" where my employees and my family reside.

### Applying business know-how to make everyone happy

I received a call from the Jews in America who wanted to offer support. I decided to combine three facts of the state at the time to draw up a plan to make the situation better. I had to figure out what to do with the fact that no bread was available for people to purchase, the donation from the Jews, and a cake shop owner I know who was out of business and unable to pay his staffs' salaries... As a result, I came up with the idea of baking bread at the cake shop, buying the bread baked at the cake shop with the donation from the Jews, and then having a truck driver deliver the bread to evacuation areas. I thought this plan could make everyone happy. I borrowed a truck from the cake shop owner and drove to Osaka in order to purchase two tons of flour. Back in Sendai, we baked 5,000 loaves of bread a day and distributed them for 28 days.

When the staff and the medical team from the Israeli Embassy were entering the affected areas, I helped them procure ingredients for baking bread that Jewish people can eat\*. I happened to get to know a group of Israeli volunteers who were about to go back as their support was declined, and helped them get to areas that needed support.

## The best support possible with the peculiar survival skills of Israelis

While Israelis have characteristics that allow them to survive in the desert even without proper planning, Japanese people are good at upgrading something that already exists and planning things despite the fact that they are not very good at creating new things. We can combine those different characteristics and collaborate to create something that's even better.

As a business owner, I have a strong sense of survival. I believe that I should stick to my specialties, and do the best I can do within my means. Although I didn't participate in volunteer activities such as shoveling dirt, I paid the cake shop and the truck driver by planning and implementing the bread distribution system instead. I think I was able to offer as much support as possible where it was needed by utilizing my skills.

\*Bread is generally leavened, but Jewish people eat unleavened bread.

### Strengthening yourself leads to recovery

Tsubasa Nishihara (Place of birth: China) President of Good Tree Co., Ltd.

I had just established my company and was thinking what to do with my business. That's when the earthquake struck. I had to put my business on hold, but Mr. Kenichi Sasaki, one of the founders of the "IT de Nihon wo Genkini! Project" (IT Revives Tohoku), hit me up, and we discussed how IT could perhaps support the affected areas. We repeatedly planned tours with IT fellows from Tokyo, stayed overnight in the area, and organized events. As press members accompanied us, we were able to deliver information about the disaster-affected areas to other areas of Japan. Our survey conducted at nursing homes after the earthquake revealed that the software for nursing was hard to use and expensive. Based on that feedback, we started developing our own software for nursing, "Care-ki."

Your business would be weak if you thought that you were owed support. Nothing is more important than strengthening your business in the first place. Real recovery means self-reliant economic recovery. I believe that being strong contributes to recovery. In my case, my human network is even stronger since I created my own business. By experiencing the earthquake, I realized again that you should "make friends, not money."

### CASE3

#### Theme: Setting out to be independent

What can I do?

I published an English book with my students

Matthew Rowe (UK), ALT

ALT teaching English at schools in Sendai

As Japanese are “shy,” I tried to be independent and secured necessities myself, such as bedding.

I was at school when the earthquake happened. The shaking was something I'd never experienced in England and I felt very insecure about staying at my apartment. I got out of my apartment and went to nearby Tachimachi elementary school with my Chinese friend.

At the evacuation center, Japanese people around me were kind to me but they seemed busy preparing meals and doing other chores, so I couldn't really depend on them. I tried to be independent enough to secure necessary things myself, such as bedding. I spent four days at the center, but there was nobody who would try to communicate or interact with me. I know that Japanese people tend to be “shy,” but I think it's important to try to communicate even by gestures at least. I felt fragile with my limited Japanese, the lack of food, and how uncertain my life in Sendai was going to get. Under those circumstances, at the time, I had no choice but to leave Sendai.

Is there anything I can do in my own way?  
Then, I came up with the idea of publishing a book with high school students.

Due to my work, too, I decided to temporarily evacuate to Tokyo and Osaka, where my friends lived. An outsourcing company I worked with gave me an offer of financial support, and I accepted it. It helped me out a lot.

After three weeks had passed, I came back to Sendai with very little money left. I worked as a volunteer in Tagajo, through an acquaintance, and cleaned up the dirt for several days. However, I still felt anxious about my future, and concerns about my students and their families never ceased to grow. I thought, “It is important to provide labor, but isn't there anything I can do in my own way?” This brought me to the idea of making a book with high school students.

Why not write a book about Japanese culture in English so that people all over the world could better understand Japanese culture? The proceeds from the book could be used for people in the affected area. When a Japanese teacher explained the proposal for me, some students jumped up

and cried tears of delight during the class.

“Let's Pop Culture!”

Real aspects of voluntarism brought out from shy high school students.

The book is titled “Let's Pop Culture!” I worked as the editor and the coordinator of the book while also planning the classes for producing it. Each student wrote freely about Japanese culture in English, and some of them voluntarily drew adorable illustrations.

Students who had shown very little interest in English wrote the longest articles and columns, and I was surprised that their English, although they get shy when speaking it, turned out to be very good. I was also impressed with their drawings.

We published the book through Amazon, and its proceeds will be donated to the affected areas. We received messages from overseas readers saying the book is fun to read. Now, we are planning to issue the second edition. I'm glad that the book, which originated from my idea, is now spreading to the world from the hands of the local high school students.

#### I felt the need to speak better Japanese and become friends with Japanese people

Wurichaihu (China), second-year student of Tohoku Computer College

About a week after the earthquake, all my friends, including ones living in the apartment block where I lived, left for their countries. People around me advised me to go back, but I decided not to leave Japan until I accomplished my goal. I came here with a mission hoping that I would do something great.

I would sometimes feel lonely and anxious because I didn't have Japanese friends, and my Japanese, back at the time, was not as good as it is now. After the earthquake, I began to strive to speak better Japanese and make Japanese friends.

Some customers at a place where I work as a part-timer threw harsh words at me. One of the reasons for that could be my imperfect Japanese. Language can be a barrier in communication if you are not fluent. I'm going to keep studying Japanese hard. I have some Japanese friends now. As Japanese and Chinese have different characteristics, I want to respect each of them.

## CASE4

### Theme: Family bonds

A family-like relationship with Japanese.

Trusting your spouse is important.

Tiffany Browne (U.S.A.), PTA President, Tohoku International School  
Her husband, Stephen C. Browne, Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army, Japan.  
Liaison Officer to JGSDF Northeastern Army  
A housewife living in Sendai with her family

### We are like family at our church. Help from Mr. Hiroki Konno.

When the earthquake occurred, I was with my son who was four years old at that time, in the middle of a party celebrating Hiroki's junior high school graduation. My three older children were in the middle of their class at the international school. My family came to mind and I became anxious, but Hiroki, a steady and dependable boy, immediately started collecting information about the tsunami, news in Japanese, and information about evacuation, which we very much depended on. Thanks to him, who considers me his second mother, we managed to stay together even in the midst of the shaking. Hiroki stayed with us until we left for the U.S. with consent from his parents who came to our place to pick him up.

My husband was in Tokyo that day and he told me that he realized how serious the situation was on the news after dinner. He had so much trouble finding transportation, but on the 13th, he came to Sendai by sharing three rented cars. All of my family members, including Hiroki, made a teary reunion.

### Trusting in my husband, we took off from Narita to Texas

The U.S. embassy contacted us and on the following Friday, I would be leaving with my four children for our country. I wanted to stay in Sendai to help my much-loved Japan and Japanese friends, but when my husband pleadingly said, "I would regret it if anything happened, so please," I was convinced by him and decided to go back to America temporarily. I gave my friends kerosene in a tank, food and other things that could be useful. Initially we planned to fly from Sendai to Camp Zama in Kanagawa Prefecture by helicopter but it was aborted due to snow. Instead, we went to Narita via Niigata by bus, and then flew back to Texas. My husband, who was responsible for the coordination of "Operation Tomodachi" in collaboration with the Japan Self-Defense Force in Ishinomaki, told us, "I won't be able to go back for months. I'm not sure when I'll see you again. I have a mission to do," and watched our departure. It was very difficult to say goodbye to him.

While we were in Texas, Hiroki updated us with information about Japan and our church, which

has deepened our relationship.

### Trust in husband, love for family, and my Japanese family

"Wives of military men are strong. We hold down the fort." I know I'm responsible for protecting my household and I have been doing so, but in an emergency like this I was sometimes at loose ends, wondering what to do. While my husband was busy with such an important role, I was always concerned about him.

However, the two of us have a "bond" which is different from that of a regular couple. One of the military quotes says, "Military wives must be strong to protect our peace and harmony." My husband put priority on working for the victims at the time of the earthquake, because he trusted and respected our family, and after the earthquake, he has been continuously supporting us. "Trust goes both ways." That explains us well.

We are so fortunate to have our "Japanese family." Hiroki and my youngest son have a good relationship, calling each other "brother from another mother." Another person who helped us was Sachiko Kotake, a Japanese instructor, who taught us Japanese customs and provided information about the earthquake. She also told me how to get along with people here and about the condescension peculiar to Japanese.

### "Calligraphy" for healing hearts.

#### Making more Japanese friends through cultural exchange.

Dianchang Hou (China), Chinese herbal doctor/medical doctor, Kaijindou Kampo Medicine Pharmacy

From the end of March 2011, I engaged in support activities such as delivering aid and Chinese medicine to the Sanriku coastal areas and clearing debris. In July of the same year, calligraphers from China and Japan gathered to send our sympathy and love across borders to people in the affected areas through calligraphy. The picture in the lower right shows our public presentation of drawings held in Shichigahama, which stands out in my memory.

In January 2014, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of my stay in Japan, I donated my 32 drawings of "the year of the horse" to people in the area, hoping that the culture of calligraphy would heal the hearts of people there. I would like to keep making Japanese friends through cultural exchange and my business. I think we should learn about cultural differences and deepen our interaction while respecting each other.



## CASE5

### Theme: Experience and learn about Japan

#### Learning about Japan.

#### Challenges of a Japanese language school, where the first steps are taken.

Sendai International School of Japanese

A Japanese school that teaches Japanese culture along with language

#### Students evacuated smoothly, which made us realize the importance of regular disaster drills

At our school, self-protection is a part of lectures, and watching DVDs about earthquakes in class was a routine, even before the earthquake. In addition to that, we have been having a disaster drill with Tohoku Computer College twice a year since the school was founded.

At the time of the 3.11 earthquake, students were able to evacuate from the 7th floor to the open space in front of the school building by the stairs, following the staff's precise instructions and guidance. Our students proved how important it is to have disaster drills on a regular basis.

“We want to help.”

#### The disaster triggered independent-minded activities

Students seem to have learned a lot from the earthquake and are now motivated to initiate activities independently. The day after the earthquake, one of our students went to the area hit by the tsunami by bicycle so that he could obtain information about the disaster and damage firsthand, not through media reports. Another student tried to think about the nuclear accident for himself calmly without blindly accepting information provided by the government, which impressed us.

For about one year after the earthquake, many students headed to the affected areas as volunteer workers. In response to a request from students who wanted to help, our instructors laid the groundwork for them to work smoothly as volunteers. By joining hands with Japanese people in the area stricken by the disaster, students must have learned a lot.

#### Sharing information in the community leads us to the future of “co-existence”

The earthquake taught us that networks are critical. To be prepared for disasters in the future, we switched a main tool from our website to Facebook for faster distribution of information. To

invite more students to our Facebook page, we update information more often, and have our own friendly mascot created by a student that appears on our page.

We have compiled a book, “Nihongo de Yomu Sendai/Miyagi (Reading about Sendai/Miyagi in Japanese)” for students to advance their Japanese skills and gain knowledge in common with local people. We hope this will improve communication and inspire an awareness of their local surroundings. In addition to our students, we think other foreigners who study Japanese, as well as Japanese people, will find it interesting.

Sendai City strives to be multicultural, but we must start by realizing that each of us is different. In that sense, the term “coexist” would be more appropriate. We have to understand that after familiarizing foreigners with Japanese culture, manners and rules, they can better manage their lives if we give them a lot of space.

#### What we learned was the Japanese attitude. To proudly “help each other in times of trouble.”

James Steward (Canada), Head of School, Tohoku International School

At our school, students from the ages of 4 to 18 are studying on the same campus, which nurtures close vertical relationships. One of the good things that happened at the time of the earthquake was that senior students took care of younger ones and they helped each other.

Japanese people cooperated with one another even after such a huge earthquake. I thought it was a wonderful thing. If the same thing happened in a different country, things may have been worse.

I have the impression that everyone positively coped with challenges and acted with pride. I also learned more about the collective way of thinking in realizing that if people gather together in any numbers, they can make a difference.

When living abroad, you should begin with learning about local cultures and communities. It's important to educate yourself and adjust yourself gradually in order to be accepted by the local people. I have lived in many countries and I've always respected the 'local culture.'

I'm grateful for people who were very kind to me at the time of the earthquake. As we have come to know each other better, we all were able to act upon the idea that “we must help each other in times of trouble” (*komatta tokiha otagaisama*).



Interviews with Organizations

## Verification2

### How did organizations react?

How did organizations supporting and related to foreigners function?

These interviews introduce problems at the time of the disaster and efforts to solve them after the disaster.

#### CASE1

##### Theme: Embassies and consulates

The role of the consulate: to confirm the safety of citizens, provide assistance and protect them.

Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Sendai, Japan Vice Consul-General Yang Gae Hwa, Exchange Cooperation Officer Yang Woo Jong  
Diplomatic establishment connecting Korea to Tohoku

### The consulate as an evacuation center, functioning day and night for 24 hours.

First of all, we checked the safety of the building. There was no serious damage and, fortunately, phone lines and water were available. In addition, to our great relief, a power generator secured our electricity supply. On the day of the disaster, 12 staff members handled the situation for 24 hours. Female staff members were busy answering phone calls, while others engaged in rescue operations. Some evacuees helped us provide food, and a Consul General's wife joined in catering as well.

In foreign countries, the role of embassies or consulates would be to confirm the safety of citizens, provide assistance and protect them in emergencies. On the day of the disaster, students and visitors from South Korea came by twos and threes and a multipurpose hall on the first floor turned into an evacuation space. Two to three days after the disaster, the number of people in the space reached about 200, including a naturalized pregnant widow with three children from Ishinomaki, who had lost her husband and father-in-law in the earthquake. She stayed with us until the end of April and we assisted her at the consulate.

### Emergency Rescue Team and Rapid Response Team of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs arrived from South Korea

We tried to provide the latest information by posting a notice released by the prefectural government. We assisted more than 600 people who were leaving Japan in securing a means of

transportation to Akita and other destinations.

The second day, the Emergency Rescue Team and Rapid Response Team dispatched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs arrived from South Korea. As the teams consisted of well-trained experts, and a clerical officer, who used to work in Sendai until February, joined the team, operations went smoothly. We could overcome critical situations because of the mutual trust we cultivated for years, I think. Aid from companies in Tokyo, private organizations and related groups in neighboring districts was of great assistance.

### Both foreigners and Japanese are members of local communities.

Living in Sendai—what does it mean? It's important to understand other people by recognizing them as residents of Sendai, not categorizing them by nationality.

Foreigners living in Sendai are members of local communities and they play a bridge-building role by telling people in their own countries about Sendai. After the disaster, we realized the necessity of smooth communication, so we improved Korean networking in the six prefectures of the Tohoku region. I can tell that Sendai is “a friendly city for people.” For Koreans as well, the city provides various opportunities such as Sendai World Festa\* and Japanese language lessons.

We will continue to support the victims. In February 2014, we held an event in Wakuya-cho, introducing Korean cuisine using local ingredients. Our plans include holding exchanges such as cooking classes and movie screenings on a regular basis and implementing activities for high school students in the prefecture.

\* International fair at Sendai International Center

### I believe “recovery” comes first in Miyagi Prefecture.

#### Approach to recovery assistance

We have been providing aid to the coastal areas around Ishinomaki, and what people in Ishinomaki need is changing over time. As we thought that the victims were looking for cultural and mental support, we organized a K-pop concert and an event where participants could share two different cultures featuring Sendai *hakusai* (Japanese cabbage) and kimchi making, which represents Korean culture, in November 2013..

We strongly believe that the most important issue in Miyagi Prefecture is “recovery.” Our ambassador, posted to Japan in June 2013, is actively engaging in recovery assistance. Immediately after his arrival, he visited and encouraged the victims at temporary housing in Ishinomaki. He re-visited them after that and invited them to events organized by the consulate. Proceeds from those events and student visits to Korea are part of our approach to recovery.

## CASE2

### Theme: Cooperation between international students and communities

Complaints about international students' bad manners.  
Stronger ties with communities are required.

General Affairs Section, Student Exchange Division, Tohoku University  
Tohoku University, where many international students pursue their studies

### Confirmed the safety of international students by on-line registration

There were approximately 1,500 international students at Tohoku University at the time of the earthquake. We worried about their safety, but no phone calls went through. Under those circumstances, we started using the on-line registration system of the international student section on March 16 to confirm their safety. By March 28, we confirmed the safety of all 1,499 students.

At the time of confirmation, 21.8% of them were staying outside Sendai in Japan, 5.7% of them were in Sendai, and 72.5% were in their countries. A few days after the earthquake, most of them had left Sendai.

### Through force of circumstances, all students felt like going back to their countries

Although the International House in Sanjo was not designated as an evacuation center, international students staying at apartment units there and foreigners in the city were turning out for information. Foreign residents had country-specific communities, and those communities were obtaining information independently so it spread quickly, and foreign residents of Wakabayashi ward, Miyagino ward, and even other cities gathered there.

There were about 300 foreigners, including families, residing in 254 rooms at the International House, but only 15 or so were there at the time of the earthquake. News of the nuclear accident spurred their intentions of going back to their home countries, despite our explanation that Sendai was not within the evacuation zone. People were more concerned about issues related to the nuclear power plant than the earthquake or the tsunami. They couldn't carry on without lifeline utilities, which were essential for showers and heating.

### Sharing information and creating awareness using what we learned from the disaster

Cleaning up rooms at the International House was hard work as international students left their belongings there. We had to contact each department to decide how to handle personal

effects of the students whose contact information was unknown. Faculty members handled items remaining in private apartments. Usually an international student rents a private apartment unit backed by the university's guarantee. About 20 to 30 inquires of unpaid rent came to our section, some of which we claimed insurance for.

In order to solve problems including those issues that were revealed after the earthquake, we have to ensure that all international students are thoroughly informed. We also found out that alpha rice\* was no use without water, which is stockpiled now.

Some international students went to Sanjo Junior High School, one of the evacuation centers, where people complained about their bad manners. We started to encourage our students to participate in disaster drills held in their communities and build up cooperative relationships with members of neighborhood associations, which will help them prepare for disasters and create better awareness of manners at evacuation centers.

\* Emergency-provision, processed quick-cooking rice

### With Sanjo's neighborhood association, we are calling for international students to attend evacuation drills

Working closely with neighborhood associations in communities

We started announcing an annual evacuation drill in English, which was originally meant for university personnel. Also, working closely with Sanjo's neighborhood association, we called for international students to take part in local drills by posting notices and other means. As a result, 40 to 50 international students took part in the drills held at Sanjo Junior High in November.

At an orientation held in April and October every year, officers from Kita Police Station put more emphasis on the location of evacuation centers and evacuation procedures in addition to explaining Japanese traffic rules.

We are now part of a committee for preparation of evacuation centers under Aoba Ward Office, Sendai City. We didn't run out of stockpiled supplies this time, because most of the international students left the International House, but otherwise stockpiled supplies would not have been sufficient. Designating the International House as an evacuation center would be ideal.

### CASE3

#### Theme: Sharing beyond national boundaries

It's important to see things from other people's points of view and for everyone to share their feelings.

Sabri Cakir (Turkey), President of Sendai Japan Turkey Association, Principal of Sendai Abroad Language Center  
Turkey Association responded quickly

#### Arrival of a rescue team named “Kimse Yok Mu”

I was a student at Tohoku University and lived in Sanjo. After the earthquake, the gas supply stopped for a month due to a fire caused by gas in Sanjo. Thus, my wife and I moved to my friend's apartment in Kitamemachi from the next day.

In the afternoon of March 12th, a rescue team named “Kimse Yok Mu” arrived in haste from Turkey accompanied by journalists. “Kimse Yok Mu” means, “Is anyone there?” The team, including one medical doctor, headed to Shichigahama and Shiogama to grasp the situation and take photos, and prepared themselves to begin their support. After their observation, five containers' worth of essential resources arrived from Turkey and additional rescue members came as well.

I supported the activities of Kimse Yok Mu by negotiating with my friend, who owned an apartment building in Kamisugi, the rental of five units as a base for the rescue team, and compiling and providing various data and information in order to support communications.

#### After returning to Turkey, I engaged in publicity to dispel false rumors

While the Turkish government left the decision of whether to return to the country up to individuals, the Tokyo Turkey Cultural Center contacted us about returning home, and Kimse Yok Mu proposed a free airplane ticket. Behind this offer, there was a strong sense that they wanted to focus on their own mission while Turkish people were safe back in Turkey. I didn't want to leave, but I decided to go back to Turkey at that time.

In Turkey, I continued my support in alliance with the Abroad Language Center members who were helping the rescue team in Sendai. I determined to avoid false rumors, and meet many people and tell them the facts about the nuclear power plants. Mass media tends to exaggerate matters, which leads to false information. I strongly felt that they shouldn't have disturbed people who were experiencing hard times. I appeared on TV news to share accurate information about the situation as a victim, and an NPO established by the Turkish government named Turkish Red Crescent organized a donation campaign.

#### Sharing resources as well as feelings, the norm of Turkish culture

I try to create a “place” on a daily basis so people can get to know the Turkish culture. I think it's important to bring hearts together by being in the same place. I sometimes feel that people in Sendai don't really know each other. If there were more places to create social networks, Sendai would be more livable.

After the earthquake, I tried to help by seeing things from other people's points of view. I thought, “Japanese people must be suffering, too. What do they need?” And then I thought, “It must be extremely tough for young people who have never experienced a war.” I consider sharing feelings equally important to sharing materials and resources.

As a Turkish proverb says, “One who sleeps while his neighbor is hungry is not one of us.” When I visited an evacuation center, I brought as many blankets as I had so that they could be useful for Japanese people. Sharing is a part of the Turkish culture.

#### Communication across a cultural barrier for disaster prevention

Muhammad Noboru Sato, President of I.C.C.S. (Islamic Cultural Centre Sendai)

Within Islam, there are religious sects with different levels of rigidity, but we always try to get along with each other regardless of sect or nationality. At the time of the earthquake, three persons stayed at ICCS and handled the situation for two months. Although information was not sufficient, the center functioned like a hub in the affected area by providing logistic support.

At any evacuation center, evacuees should not just receive support, especially young and healthy international students. They can also provide support with help from the university, which provides them with guidance and awareness, and I think this is necessary. We at ICCS reach out to people who may be interested in working with us and participate in a disaster-prevention event held at Katahira Elementary School.

Muslims are not very curious about Japanese shrines and temples. However, as communication is critical in emergencies, we need to know the differences in culture and language beforehand.



## CASE4

### Theme: Review of management of evacuation centers

Foreigners occupied one evacuation center. Support didn't reach those in need.

Kazuhiro Takahashi, Administrative Manager, Hokuto Kojokai, East Bloc, Kunimi Association of Volunteers for Disaster Prevention  
Neighborhood associations with a lot of foreign residents

### Evacuation space at Sanjo Junior High School was occupied by foreigners

When the earthquake struck, I came home from shopping immediately and confirmed the safety of residents who needed long-term care along with commissioned welfare volunteers. All the staff of our neighborhood association were out for work and we didn't have enough manpower. I could only reach Sanjo Junior High, where there were evacuees, in the evening.

I was surprised to notice that there were so many foreigners in the building. Information about this particular place was spread among foreigners, who invited more foreigners even from a long distance, and the number of people increased over time. Initially, there were about 1,000 people at Sanjo Junior High, 90 to 95 % of whom were foreigners, as if they occupied the place. I wonder how many Japanese, including ones needing long-term care, couldn't find space. Some of the aged were baffled by the scene and went back home.

### How to use the toilet; signage and verbal explanations did not work

A professor from Tohoku University translated the instructions for foreigners at the evacuation center and we left their care to university students. I negotiated with the director of Kitayama Shimin Center in order to secure space for victims who needed long-term care. Kitayama Shimin Center was under construction and not yet opened, but I asked him to make the space available with the condition that we would use water from a swimming pool for the toilet. I individually contacted 20 to 30 people who needed long-term care to tell them to move in.

Toilets at Sanjo Junior High were a mess. We put up signage and explained verbally but no improvement was made. Cleaning the toilets after the center was closed was real hard work. Blankets, bicycles, motorbikes and the like belonging to foreigners were left unclaimed. We had trouble getting rid of them, too. I realized that our common sense was different from that of foreigners.

### System for smooth management of evacuation centers

After the earthquake, Sendai city contacted our association about establishing a committee for preparation of evacuation centers. Members of neighborhood associations are also participating in it. We must create a system for the future that allows for the smooth management of evacuation centers at the time of a disaster, even if it happens at night.

In 2013, the General Affairs Section of the Student Exchange Division of Tohoku University joined us for the first time and helped with an evacuation drill at Sanjo Junior High. We divided the gymnastic hall into eight blocks and designated one for international students. Every year, we have 300 to 400 participants in this drill, including 50 to 60 international students. We provide alpha rice (cooked and dried rice) and pork soup, but soup without pork is also prepared for non-pork eaters.

I wonder if the government is aware of the number of foreigners who gathered at Sanjo Junior High and the state of the place. I'd like them to come to our evacuation drills and see what our neighborhood association is like. I'd like them to make an effort to know the circumstances.

### Enhancing neighborhood associations' partnerships

#### Approaches after the earthquake (1)

Another case in which many foreigners gathered at an evacuation center was reported by Katahira Elementary School near the Katahira campus of Tohoku University. It is said there were some foreigners who did not clean up after meals, and those who monopolized the area around a stove. On the other hand, although some foreigners saw and wanted to help the serious situation, they say their offers were refused, or they didn't know how to ask.

Based on the problems at evacuation centers at the time of the disaster, Sendai City created the "Sendai City Evacuation Center Operation Manual." On the principle of operating evacuation centers through collaboration between regional organizations and evacuees, the persons concerned, including Sendai City, facility managers and employees, have held many talks. For smooth operations, it is important to establish face-to-face relationships from before a disaster, and for both Japanese and foreigners to be conscious that foreigners also participate in evacuation center operation as members of the community.

## CASE5

### Theme: The role of radio

Sensed heavy responsibility as a sender of information, as well as the importance of grappling with the task on a regular basis

Keiko Itabashi, Radio Personality, Producer

Immediate multilingual support by Date fm in cooperation with SIRA

### From 2004, before the earthquake, a program about disaster prevention started to create more awareness

In response to predictions of the Miyagi-ken-oki earthquake, we started a radio program called “Sunday Morning Wave” to raise local awareness of disaster prevention. Every week, a tsunami engineering expert, Dr. Fumihiko Imamura of Tohoku University, gives us various talks about disaster prevention. With music suitable for Sunday morning, I’m trying to make the program relaxing yet informative for listeners.

Given the fact that the number of foreign residents in Sendai and Miyagi had increased, it was necessary to provide them with disaster-related information, as it was highly probable that they would have been vulnerable in emergencies. Based on our proposal, SIRA joined a new monthly program, “GLOBAL TALK,” that began in November 2005. In the program, we have interviewed foreigners from more than 30 countries about 1)disasters in their countries; 2)how they felt when an earthquake struck; and 3)how to prepare for an earthquake.

### Daily routines worked perfectly

I was in the corridor on the third floor of the building that housed the radio station. When the long shaking stopped, I went down to the newsroom on the second floor, being wobbly on my legs. Right after the earthquake, due to a power failure coupled with technical problems, nothing went on air.

Just before 3 o’clock, we were able to resume broadcasts, and I rushed to the studio. We repeatedly broadcast information about the earthquake, warnings about aftershocks, the large tsunami warning, and the call for evacuation along with our routine disaster prevention talks.

Amid strong aftershocks, I tried to speak in a calm voice as much as I could, hoping that listeners would act in a levelheaded manner.

In the evening of that day, staff from SIRA with three foreigners came all the way down to the station in the snow. Right away, we broadcast what was happening and warnings about aftershocks in easy Japanese, English, Chinese and Korean. Whenever news came in, they took the trouble of visiting us. When the station’s preparations were complete, we recorded information about evacuation and lifeline utilities for foreigners that went on air several times a day. At the end, we always added one message: “If you need information in a foreign language, call the Disaster Multilingual Support Center.” This could have been done only with the relationship with SIRA we built up over years through “GLOBAL TALK.” Grappling with the task on a regular basis worked indeed.

### Radiocast helped listeners act calmly. “Listen to the radio in emergencies” is proved.

We have been asking people to “listen to the radio in emergencies,” and the 3.11 earthquake proved that unexpectedly. Many said that they depended on the radio for various information, the one and only media available during a power failure. One listener said that a radiocast he listened to in a car made him decide not to go home to Natori, which saved his life, and another said that the familiar voices of announcers put her mind at ease so much in a state of anxiety. I’m glad to know that I was of some help, and was reminded of the seriousness of the responsibilities of a radio host.

The thing I regret the most is that so many people did not evacuate even after the large tsunami warning went on air, and then they became victims. That the tsunami was huge beyond all expectations could be one of the reasons, but I must think about what could convince listeners to take action, and how we send them messages to protect their lives.

### Broadcasts must be heard, but how?

#### Approaches after the earthquake (2)

We have been discussing with SIRA a system that could enable us to deliver reliable information to the public in emergencies. Just when we were talking about that in detail, the earthquake occurred. We are now in the process of preparing a radio program that will provide information fulfilling minimal criteria in easy Japanese, English, Chinese and Korean during an emergency. We share the sound source with each community FM station in Sendai. More radio programs in different languages should go on air regularly to spread the message, “listen to the radio for information in emergencies.”

The Sendai Disaster Multilingual Support Center managed by SIRA is distributing manually operated radios as a promotional tool to encourage foreign residents in the affected areas to listen to the radio.

# Activities of Sendai City and Sendai International Relations Association

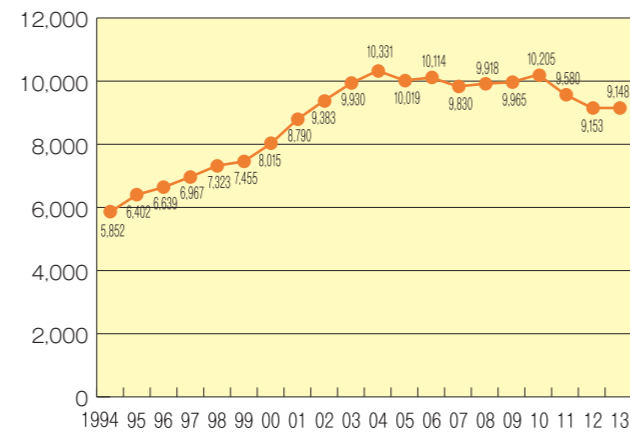
In order for all people with differences such as, nationality or race, to live without anxiety in Sendai as a member of community by recognizing and respecting cultural differences of each other, and to "create a multicultural society" under the city's comprehensive plan, Sendai City is implementing various projects in collaboration with Sendai International Relations Association (SIRA).

## Foreigners in Sendai

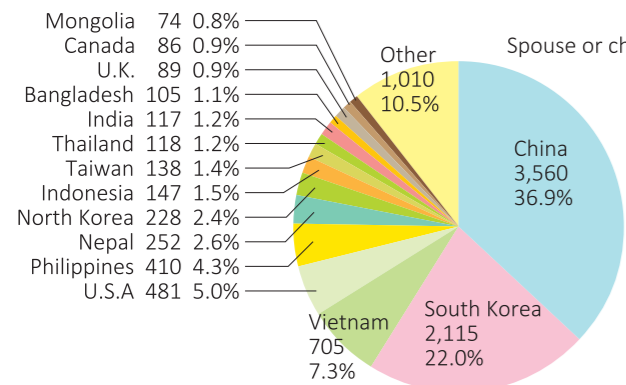
Compared to other cities, foreigners in Sendai City indicate the following characteristics: (1) "student" accounts for the highest rate as the type of visa (resident status), (2) they spread across the city in general, although there are certain areas where relatively more foreigners live in.

As of March 1, 2011, there are 10,271 registered foreign residents in Sendai, which accounts for approximately 1% of the city's entire population. The top three by resident status (as of March 1, 2011) are students (28.1%), permanent residents (20.7%), followed by special permanent residents (14.0%), and the top three by nationality (as of May 1, 2010) are China (44.2%), South Korea (23.9%) and the United States (4.2%). Currently, the number of foreign residents in Sendai is getting smaller partially because of the abolition of the foreigners registration system in addition to the Great East Japan Earthquake. As of December 1, 2013, the number of foreign residents is 9,635 of which the top three by resident status are students, permanent residents, and special permanent residents, and the top three by nationality are China, South Korea, and Vietnam.

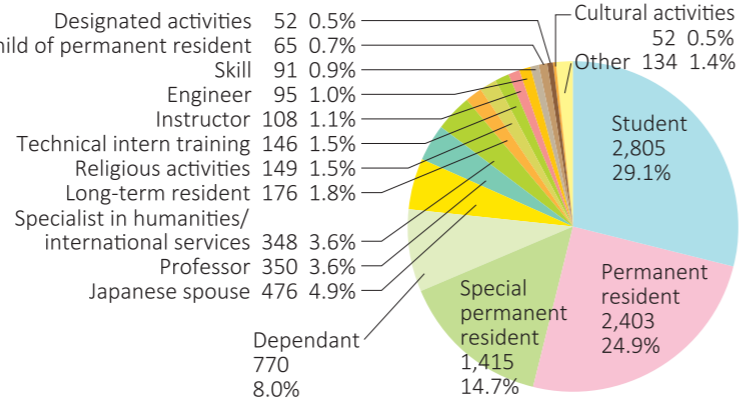
Number of foreign residents in Sendai(as at the end of April)



Number of foreign by nationality (as of December 31, 2013)



Number of foreign by resident status (as of December 31, 2013)



## Activities before the earthquake

SIRA, based at the Sendai International Center, has been planning and implementing various programs, including supporting foreigners' daily life, building bridges between foreigners and the local communities, and human resource development for creating a multi-cultural community. Before the earthquake, SIRA had already implemented disaster-related measures, such as providing information about disaster prevention through an FM radio program, producing and distributing materials about disaster prevention in multiple languages, or briefing for foreigners who are to start living in Sendai, created awareness of disaster prevention among foreigners by inviting them to fire drills organized by neighborhood associations, helped them increase their knowledge of disaster prevention, and laid the groundwork for supporting foreigners at the time of disaster.

The city and SIRA are jointly engaged in bringing up volunteer interpreters who help communication (Multilingual Disaster Volunteer), establishing and managing Sendai Disaster Multilingual Support Center, and preparing and distributing various signage in different languages, especially at the time of disasters.



Example of signage in different languages

## Situation and measures taken when the earthquake struck

### <Situations of foreigners>

After the 3.11 earthquake, many foreigners headed to evacuation centers just like the Japanese did. Foreign students tended to gather by country or region they were from and moved as a group from one evacuation center to another, and searched for information and the sense of security through their own network. On the other hand, some of them such as permanent residents stayed with their families or their Japanese friends. Due to evacuation warning issued by each country in response to Tepco's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant accident, many of foreign residents left the affected areas backed by their embassies in Japan, while some foreigners remained to work and support or for other reasons. What non-Japanese did would vary depending on their situations. That also applies to the local people.

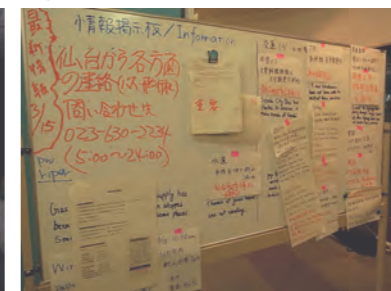
### <Activities of Sendai Disaster Multilingual Support Center>

Established by Sendai City and managed by SIRA, Sendai Disaster Multilingual Support Center provides support to foreigners who are unable to receive support because of the difficulties in getting information due to communication problems or cultural differences at the time of wide-scale disasters.

Following the earthquake, the center, which was initially open for 24 hours a day from March 11, 2011 through April 30, provided multilingual support including offering information and consultation, visiting evacuation centers, liaising with foreign embassies and responding to media inquiries. Languages we handled were Japanese, easy Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean and some others. For 51 days, the center received 1,112 inquiries. They were about inquiring after someone's safety (479), information about evacuation to their own countries (132) followed by information about volunteer work (95). The center also translated disaster-related information such as essential utilities issued by the city or relevant organizations into multi languages, and announced them through blogs, e-mail magazines, and radio programs. The staff visited 32 evacuation centers including designated areas, city centers, and churches 55 times in total to update foreigners' situations and distribute multilingual information.



Sendai Disaster Multilingual Support Center, immediately after the earthquake



At the center



Visiting an evacuation center

## Activities after the earthquake

Having learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake, we have launched more programs. One of them was to restock and promote multilingual signage, as it seemed not to have been fully utilized at some evacuation centers after the earthquake. SIRA, based on learning from the experience, is pursuing various tasks by organizing conferences and symposiums, which would give an opportunity to the public to think about foreigners and disasters, producing and distributing new educational brochures or video tapes of earthquake/disaster prevention in multi languages, encouraging foreigners to participate in fire drills held in their communities so that each member would better understand each other. We do not miss any opportunity to spread information across Japan about our experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake.



Disaster prevention video in multi languages



Disaster prevention pamphlet in multi languages

To read study reports or watch multilingual videos about disaster prevention, please visit the following:

SIRA <http://www.sira.or.jp/japanese/index.html>

Sendai Disaster Multilingual Support Center <http://www.sira.or.jp/saigai/>

Disaster prevention video in multi languages (YouTube) <http://www.youtube.com/SIRAsendai/>



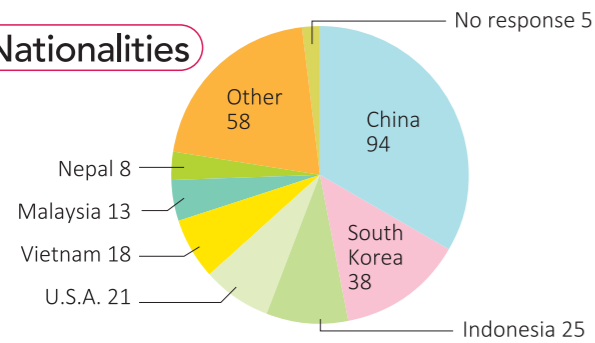
# Survey about foreign victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake

- 1 Conducted by: SIRA
- 2 Survey period: from April to October, 2011
- 3 Respondents: Participants of SIRA businesses/events, and members of foreign communities/groups
- 4 Languages: Japanese, easy Japanese, English, Chinese, and Korean
- 5 No. of responses: 328, and 282 are valid
- 6 Collaborators: Graduate School of International Cultural Studies, Tohoku University; Institute of Sociolinguistics, Hirosaki University

\*The result shown here is an edited excerpt of the survey

## Respondents

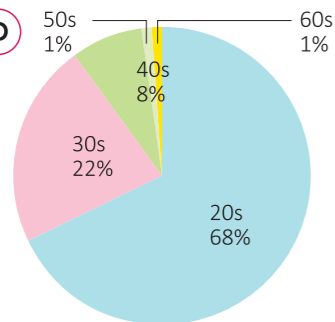
### Nationalities



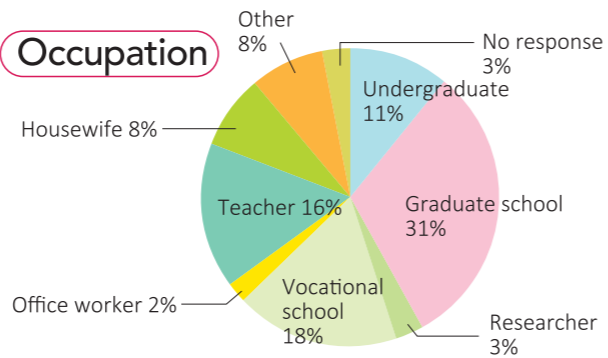
### Other breakdown

Five each from U.K., Canada and Turkey; 4 from Australia; 3 each from Thailand, Bangladesh, Philippines and Mongolia; 2 each from Egypt, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, New Zealand, South Africa, Morocco, and Laos.

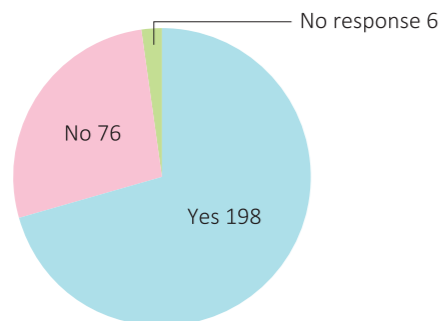
### Age group



### Occupation



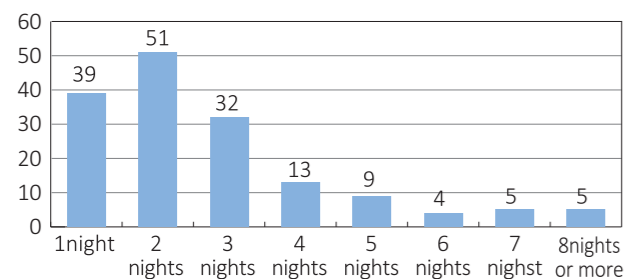
## Q1 Did you go to an evacuation center?



### Reasons for not going.

- The place I stayed was safe: 48 persons
- I didn't know where evacuation centers were: 9 persons
- Other: 12 persons
- No response: 7 persons

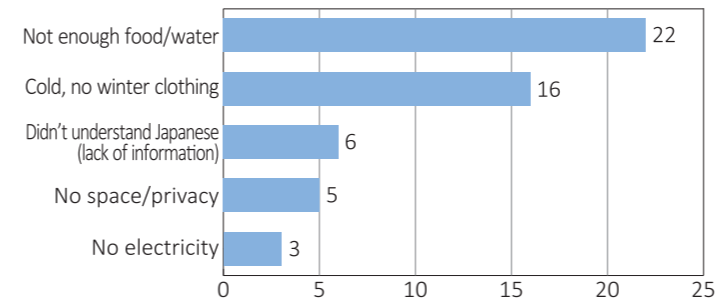
## Q2 How long did you stay at the evacuation center?



### Locations for evacuation (top 5)

- Sanjo Junior High: 22 persons
- Aramachi Elementary: 16 persons
- Elementary (name unknown) and Tomizuka Elementary: 8 persons each
- Katahira Elementary and Tohoku Fukushi University: 7 persons each
- Kkunami Elementary and a consulate-general: 5 persons each

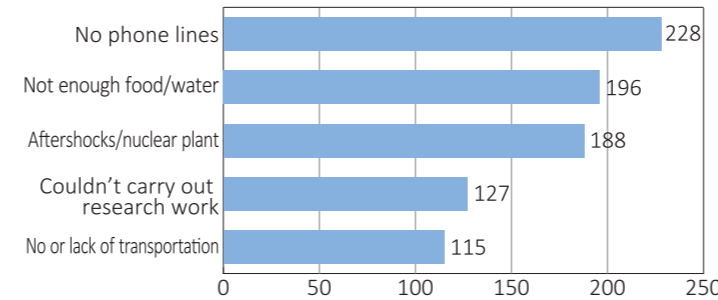
## Q3 Difficulties faced at some evacuation centers (top 5)



### Other response

- Not enough toilets
- Couldn't eat food provided as aid due to allergy.
- Air was bad.
- There were difficulties but cannot specify.

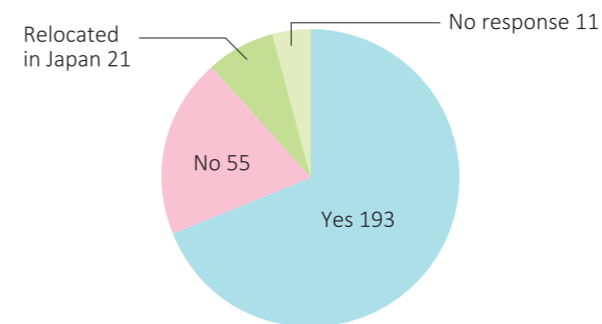
## Q4 Hardships related to the earthquake (top 5)



### Other response

- Houses/belongings were broken.
- Lack of information/conflicting reports. Very few information was available in English.
- Pressure from overseas families/friends.
- I couldn't depend on anyone, because my family went back to my country.

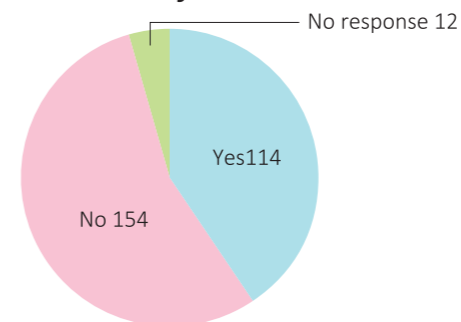
## Q5 Did you go back to your country after the earthquake?



### Reasons for going back to their countries (multiple answers allowed)

- Families or friends in their countries were worried about them: 107 persons
- Concern about the nuclear accident: 98 persons
- Suggested by their government or embassy: 71 persons
- Life was inconvenient due to the damage: 69 persons
- Other reasons (illness, worried about aftershock, reluctant to consume limited resources by themselves, etc.)

## Q6 Could you manage to obtain necessary information on the day of the earthquake and the next day?



### Reasons for not being able to obtain information (multiple answers allowed)

- Mobile phones or PCs were down: 115 persons
- Couldn't access to information: 63 persons
- Lack of information in their languages: 55 persons
- Other: 17 persons

## Their feelings about the disaster (free views)

- It's very sad and tragic that Japan, the country I like very much, had such a dreadful experience. I felt like I was doing a bad thing when I returned to my country because Japanese people took care of me in many aspects on a routine basis. (Taiwan)
- A few days after the quake, information was available and many people helped each other, but it was tough for those who didn't speak Japanese or had no family members. (U.S.A.)
- I realized that we had to prepare for disasters by getting an emergency pack or confirming the location of an evacuation center near my place. (China)