



## Report

# Co-op “The Power that Connects”



# Present situation at the Disaster Areas



“For me, Jodogahama beach (photo on left) is a symbol of Miyako and its scenery is always in my heart. It uplifts us when many people visit us in Miyako. We will continue to carry on offering a variety of activities so that more people in the area will learn to smile again.” (Mikiko Kohnoki, Member of the Board, Iwate Co-op)



“This statue (in Iwaizaki, Kesenuma City) is that of Raigoro Hidenoyama, the 9th sumo wrestling yokozuna who was originally from Kesenuma. Although everything in the area was devastated by the tsunami, this statue stood strong, ‘refusing’ to be taken by the waves. We will work to create a Kesenuma that is as strong as this statue.” (Kyoko Kasuga, Member of the Board, Miyagi Co-op)

“Look at Fukushima, and try to understand what is happening here. The Co-op is offering continuous programs, such as a ‘Radiation Study Meetings,’ in order for us to have both an accurate understanding and an accurate apprehension of the situation, so that we can continue making a living in this area.” (Yoko Watanabe, Member of the Board, Co-op Fukushima. Photo was taken at a strawberry farm in Soma City that had resumed operations in January 2012.)



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# I

# Fighting Against the Disaster

An unprecedented earthquake and tsunami, resulting in a catastrophic disaster. Co-ops in the disaster-stricken areas were cut off from head offices, stores, and branch offices, each in a state of isolation. And yet, these Co-ops made their own decisions to find ways to support the local area. Meanwhile, Co-ops in other areas throughout Japan began early to provide support by sending employees and supplies to the disaster areas. Co-ops in the affected areas and all others nationwide joined hands to provide support in the midst of the chaos in the aftermath of the disaster.

## I Earthquake and Tsunami Strike

### Actions taken immediately within the first two weeks after the disaster

March 11, 2:46 p.m.

A large jolt felt around the Tohoku area led to a tsunami along the Pacific coast at a level as never before experienced, resulting in a catastrophe with about 20,000 dead or missing people. Co-ops in the area strived to

comprehend the situation, despite being cut off from all manners of communication. Isolated stores and branch offices began moving forward on their own toward recovery. Employees of Co-ops nationwide also began hastening to the disaster areas to provide assistance.



Central area of Ofunato City in Iwate Prefecture affected by the tsunami.





Iwate Co-op Kamaishi Home Delivery Center, newly built on November 2010, was also heavily damaged by the tsunami.



Inside the Miyagi Co-op Head Office Building "A," which was heavily damaged.



Co-op Mart Kunimi of Co-op Fukushima, with the ceiling down and the wires hanging visibly.



Since supermarkets near the coast were devastated, the Iwate Co-op / Marine Co-op DORA became one of the few supermarkets available to service the needs of the area.



March 18, 10:00 a.m. Despite the snow from the previous day, a long line wraps around the Miyagi Co-op Kunimigaoka Store.



Employees of Miyagi Co-op Kunimigaoka Store escorted people one-on-one. The employees themselves were victims of the disaster, but they still strived to supply the people with products.



At the Miyagi Co-op Kunimigaoka Store, the number of items available for purchase per person was limited in order to distribute items to as many people as possible.



## 2 Start of a New Existence

### Supporting life in the shelters

Buildings that were lost to the tsunami numbered more than 350,000. People who were able to escape sought help in local shelters, with only the clothes they had on them. But since many small shelters were scattered about, there was difficulty in distributing an adequate amount of food supplies to all, creating a very trying

situation for people in the shelters. Those whose houses were spared had to walk many hours to purchase supplies, as the towns were no longer functioning, and gasoline was scarce. To support these people, local Co-ops as well as Co-ops from around the nation assembled in the disaster areas to continue providing assistance.



20 people, including elementary and junior high school students, worked by dividing roles into those that pick the umeboshi plums, those that shape the rice into balls, and those that wrap it with nori seaweed. (Iwate Co-op "Onigiri Team")







A store on wheels (moving shop) held on March 19 at Kamaishi, offering vegetables, instant noodles and articles for daily use.



The first distribution of cooked food offered on March 20 at Ofunato Ward Community Center in Ofunato City.



A Co-op member smiles as she receives a present distributed in a token of sympathy from the Co-op staff. (Miyagi Co-op)



An "Exchange of Goods" corner created at a special event space in the center of Iwate Co-op / Marine Co-op DORA.



After the disaster, high school students actively volunteered at the Iwate Co-op / Marine Co-op DORA.



# 3 Rebuilding Broken Businesses

## Recovering stores and delivery services

Co-ops in the disaster areas had to overcome the loss they suffered and urgently rebuild their stores and offices, while also continuing to provide assistance to the local communities. Stores that were selling in front of their facilities aimed to reopen their stores. Offices that were providing home delivery

and individual delivery services aimed to resume these functions. Not to be forgotten is the fact that these employees, working to realize these goals, were themselves victims of the disaster. It was the start of rebuilding the business from a long-term perspective.



On April 1, Miyagi Co-op Akashidai Store (Tomiya Town) was able to resume almost normal operations. The store floor again began offering colorful selections of a variety of items.



Co-op members were very happy when the home delivery services were resumed.





Many Co-op members said that they were cheered to see the delivery trucks running through the devastated areas.



Yamada Town on the coast of Iwate prefecture, which was stricken by both the tsunami and fire.



Ms. Uchiumi (left), participating in the home delivery service, is living alone in temporary housing. She converses with Ms. Miura of Co-op, who has become a familiar figure to her.



Yohei Katagiri of Co-op Kyoritsusya, making the rounds of temporary houses in Miyako City, Iwate Prefecture for “Nakama Zukuri Shien (group support network).”



# 4 Searching for a Roadmap towards Regional Recovery

## Regional recovery through support from clients and producers

The towns have finally made its way out of the chaos of the disaster, but it still has a long way to go for its recovery. Long-term support is essential. The fishing industry, the main business of these coastal parts, must be restored, which will lead to the recovery of processing plants and retail stores,

thereby reestablishing a healthy economic system. The people look to Co-op with high expectations because of Co-op's *Sanchoku*\* business, which develops close ties with the local producers.

\* *Sanchoku* is a Japanese word translated as direct transaction or direct buying routes from producers to consumers.



Half of the market in Kesenuma City of Miyagi Prefecture has resumed operations (as of December 2011). Recovery efforts for Kesenuma City are being made centered around this market.



“Miyagi Food Recovery Network” held on July 2, with approximately 300 participants.



On September 11, more than 3,000 seedlings of Sendai Hakusai Cabbages were planted on a field in Natori City. The seedlings were cultivated by agricultural high school students in Miyagi Prefecture.





Kyoto Co-op employees are working with the Tottori Stock Raising Farm Co-op to continuously send groups of volunteers to the Shizugawa Office of the Miyagi Prefectural Federation of Fisheries Co-operatives Associations to help them resume their business. On November 27, a mochi rice-cake making event was held to distribute them to the many fishermen living in temporary housing.



On September 10 and 11, Iwate Co-op hosted a “Recovery Support: Local Production for Local Consumption Festa” at a shopping center in Oshu City of Iwate Prefecture.



Member Stores of the U Co-op Business Association conducted a “Disaster Area Relief Campaign,” and has donated 9,100,678 yen (five Co-ops combined) by February 2012 to the disaster-stricken areas.



Members of the “Kyoto Volunteer Group.” They helped with the heavy work of creating sandbags to serve as weights to put on the rafts for cultivating oysters.

“Kyoto Volunteer Group” cooked food, offering steaks to the residents of Minami Sanriku Town in Miyagi Prefecture.



“Yamagata Volunteer Group” cooked mountain vegetable soup at the Yamashita Junior High School in Ishinomaki City.



# III

# Continuing the Support

Even after the chaos immediately following the disaster had settled, people were living in temporary housing without a vision of a future, having lost their house, job, and families. In Fukushima, people are still fighting the effect of radiation, a battle with no end in sight. While the disaster areas look for long term and continuing support, Co-ops nationwide are coming up with ways to help. They are also beginning to work in cooperation with various groups to assist in volunteering activities.

## I Despite the Distance

### Receiving support from areas far from the disaster

Co-op employees nationwide not only provided support to the disaster areas, but also did what they can while doing their usual job of operating stores and delivering products. They also invited Co-op employees and people

living in the disaster areas to visit them in their area, so that they can rest and recuperate. This showed a new way to continue supporting to the people affected by the disaster, despite the distance.



Photos gathered from Yamada Town in Iwate Prefecture hanging on the line to dry after washing. Some people commented that they “didn’t realize how important photos were until now.” (Co-op Mie)



November 1. Co-op Kobe staff who visited the temporary housing in Shishiori at Kesennuma with Yoshio Onodera, leader of the Shishiori Middle School Ground Temporary Housing Community (front row center). This is part of an ongoing effort to discuss with the people affected by the disaster on what can be done to provide continuous support to the area into the future.





Children attending the “Happy Food 2011” event showing messages that they wrote to the people in the disaster areas. (Okayama Co-op)

On November 21, Co-op Net Business Association held a “Fureai Cafe” at the temporary housings in Higashi Matsushima City, Miyagi Prefecture. Children are excitedly learning to play with spinning tops under the guidance of childcare instructors.



39 participants of the recovery tour hosted by Co-op Aichi cleaned Goishi Kaigan beach (Ofunato City) and visited people living in temporary housing, delivering 230,000 towels to the people.

On November 26, the Saitama Co-op and Co-op Fukushima jointly hosted the “Fureai Cafe” at the temporary housings in Minami Soma City, Fukushima Prefecture.

Christmas cards were delivered accompanied by folded paper cranes made by 83 people including members of the Iwate Co-op.

Each card was uniquely made and came with a message.





## 2 Fighting Radiation

### Dealing with an unprecedented situation

Fukushima was not only affected by the earthquake and tsunami, but also suffered from radiation from the accident at the nuclear power plant. 100,000 people were forced to evacuate. Their agricultural, livestock, and marine products could not be shipped

out. Products determined to be safe were still affected by negative rumors, adding to their difficulties. Local and nationwide Co-ops are working to support the people who live in these areas in a state of uncertainty, even today.



Co-op employees who gathered from all around the nation to support the recovery efforts helped with the event “Makenai Minami Soma City (Minami Soma City will Not Be Defeated).”



The market event offered natto, an item that was difficult to find in the city, as well as tofu, proudly made by Co-op Fukushima. A wide variety of fresh produce were also offered, which were precious at the time.





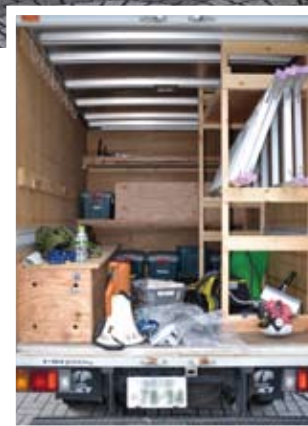
Volunteers helped with radiation decontamination in order to protect the health of people living in the area for a long period of time.



Co-op Fukushima's radiation decontamination car.



The top 2 cm of surface dirt was removed with a shovel and transported away in plastic bags.



Stacked with a variety of equipment necessary for radiation decontamination.



July 17, children playing with paper clay at the "Kodomo no Asobi no Hiroba (Children's Play Area)" held at the gym of the Kyu Kisai High School shelter.



"Snow!" Children playing despite their wet shoes. ("Fukushima no Kodomo Hoyo Project (Fukushima Children Protection Project)")



# 3 Growing Support from Volunteers

Because of the enormity of the disaster spanning a great distance, the recovery effort requires much time with the help of many people. Co-ops employees and members nationwide actively conducted volunteer activities. Their work was not only confined to within the Co-op organization, but also reached out to connect and work with other organizations.



In November, Co-op Ishikawa provided footbaths and massages to those in temporary houses of Rikuzen Takata City in Iwate Prefecture to warm their body and soul.



Volunteer work called for by the CVC of Iwate Co-op. Removing debris involves both work that requires heavy machinery, as well as work that can be done by the hands of the volunteers.



“Oyuzurikai (Giving Event)” that gives people in the disaster areas items that have been collected from the Co-op members (Miyagi Co-op).



Music concert held at the Miyagi Co-op / Hebita Store.



Fukushima kids visiting Oita Prefecture.



Supplies (detergents) provided by Kao Corporation, being distributed by Co-op employees together with members of the Joint Committee for Coordinating and Supporting Voluntary Disaster Relief Activities.



# 4 New Road to Recovery in Distribution of Goods and Product Procurement

## Creating a system of distribution

JCCU continued to provide supplies to the disaster-affected areas through its subsidiary, CX Cargo. Since distribution facilities and equipment in the Tohoku area were out of commission due to the disaster, supplies were delivered while working to restore the distribution network. Co-op delivery trucks from all around the

nation were placed in the disaster areas to deliver supplies from a local delivery hub to the shelters. The usual delivery system was combined with aid activities, making Co-op an invaluable presence in the disaster areas.



At the most in a single day, 50 trucks loaded with supplies departed for the disaster-stricken areas from the Okegawa DC of CX Cargo.



A truck being loaded with supplies for the disaster areas at Okegawa DC of CX Cargo.



# Preparing for the Next Disaster

Preparations for the next earthquake are already beginning. One of these efforts is in reviewing the Co-op's Business Continuity Planning (BCP). The other is an effort to have each member know their towns and build disaster prevention plans to keep damages to a minimum. Efforts are being made from every angle, assessing everything from the technical, non-technical, organizations, people and equipment for disaster preventative measures.

## I Business Continuity Planning that is Prepared for a Major Disaster

With no communication possible between the Co-op head offices, stores, and branch offices, each location had to make their own decisions, and these decisions were later praised. However, there were many points that needed to be reviewed as an organization. In order to

minimize damage at the next earthquake and to provide more assistance to the communities, the Business Continuity Planning (BCP) must be carefully reviewed and revised at each local Co-op, co-operative union, and JCCU.



Task force created immediately after the disaster at Miyagi Co-op (photo from the 18th meeting on March 18, 2011).





Miyako City, Iwate Prefecture in November 2011, with still a long way to go for recovery.

## 2 Efforts in Various Areas to Prevent and Diminish Damages by Disaster

The disaster has made local co-op members make efforts to enhance disaster prevention awareness amongst local children. Usually, these measures involve inviting specialists to hold study meetings, but hands-on workshops that simulate evacuation routes on maps also attract the interest of many people. The people in the community should not be simply instructed, but also taught to think and judge for themselves to be truly effective in disaster preventative measures.



A slogan that says “Live Together” written by Miyako High School students hang inside the store of the Iwate Co-op / Marine Co-op DORA.



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Co-op Plaza, 3-29-8 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku Tokyo 150-8913

Tel: 03-5778-8183 (Publishing Department)