

東日本大震災後の復興へ向けた国際 NGO の役割

—岩手・宮城の被災地におけるハビタット・フォー・ヒューマニティ・ジャパンの活動—

The Role of International NGOs in the Post-Disaster Reconstruction Process in Tohoku Region: Habitat for Humanity Japan's Disaster Response in Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures

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The Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, one of the most devastating natural disasters to strike Japan in modern times, caused more than 23,000 casualties. It caused a huge impact because of the loss of the built environment: 118,640 homes were destroyed and 183,033 homes were damaged. This unprecedented scenario engaged diverse national and international actors who joined in the recovery process. This study primarily focuses on the interventions performed by International Humanitarian Organizations. These organizations employed different capacities, expertise, and orientations for their activities conducted in affected areas. This study examines Habitat for Humanity Japan (HFHJ) as a study case. It attempts to analyze HFHJ's operational processes by examining projects conducted to ensure the recovery of the built-environment. This study also identifies crucial issues faced by international NGOs.

Keywords: Great East Earthquake and Tsunami, Humanitarian Response, International NGOs, Habitat for Humanity Japan

東日本大震災、 人道的災害対応、 国際 NGO、 ハビタット・フォー・ヒューマニティ・ジャパン

1. Introduction:

Sudden massive damage resulted from an unprecedented destructive disaster that occurred in Tohoku on the northeastern coast of Japan on March 11, 2011. The extent of the disaster challenged preparedness and post-disaster plans, and strongly impacted the area's permanent awareness of natural disasters.^{1,2)}

In the aftermath of the tsunami that struck Tohoku, post-disaster responses that ranged from early relief efforts to the provision of temporary shelters were spearheaded by government agencies whose efforts restricted Non-Governmental Organizations' (hereafter NGOs) and volunteers' access to affected areas.³⁾ Government agencies also organized the reception and distribution of International Assistance, including donations and immediate rescue teams, when it arrived. However, government agencies were limited in their abilities to coordinate their activities with the activities of national NGOs and international NGOs (hereafter INGOs). Therefore, those organizations were advised by the government to cease activities in affected areas until the disaster situation became more stable.⁴⁾

Despite the government's advisories, and despite the uncertainties that plagued destroyed areas, many Japanese NPOs and INGOs attempted the immediate initiation of volunteer relief activities. This chaotic environment required the use of organizing tools at different levels. Therefore, the Japan Platform (hereafter JPF) worked as a coordinating agency at the national level. Subsequently, different local networks were established. These networks promoted collaboration among NGOs, the identification of local needs, and the coordination of activities and information sharing among the government, NGOs, and local

communities.⁵⁾⁶⁾

Unfortunately, the extensive length of time required by the decision-making and coordination processes slowed down these entities' abilities to focus on local needs that changed constantly. These delays also created obstacles for INGOs, whose efforts to coordinate with Japanese organizations were hampered. These INGOs were required to achieve immediate results from their interventions before they could request additional funds for future projects.

2. Objectives:

The aim of this study is to analyze the complexity of procedures required for the implementation of humanitarian support in areas affected by the Great East Earthquake. This study analyzes the activities and operations of the NGO known as Habitat for Humanity Japan (hereafter HFHJ).

In this study, the following questions will be explored: What barriers to adaptation exist in the local environment? What factors define operational coordination? How might we better understand the organizational orientations and roles of NGOs that operate in Tohoku?

3. Methodology:

HFHJ was chosen as the subject of this research because of its international organizational approach that includes the provision of volunteering, interventions focused on the built-environment, and long-term post-disaster reconstruction support.

This study was conducted in three stages that began with attempts to understand local situations and concluded with an examination of the evolution of HFHJ's activities. The stages consisted of (1) engagement in

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an internship with HFHJ (between October and December 2011), (2) conduct of a literature review, and (3) engagement in field work. A number of qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with HFHJ managers, staff members of the US-based NGO called All Hands Volunteers (hereafter AHV), local residents, and former volunteers located in Iwate. In Miyagi, interviews were conducted with project managers of the INGO known as Samaritan's Purse (hereafter SP).

4. Efforts Focused on Reconstruction: Habitat for Humanity Japan's Response:

HFHJ was established in Japan in 2001 as the local office of Habitat for Humanity International (hereafter HFHI), subsequently in 2003 HFHJ was incorporated in Japan and established as an independent national office. HFHJ operates based on HFHI's international principles that include volunteer advocacy, the provision of shelter assistance and supplies, and the provision of post-disaster housing reconstruction. Prior to Tohoku, HFHJ organized the mobilization of Japanese volunteers independently or in coordination with local offices of HFHI located in developing Asian countries. However, HFHJ activities in the local Japanese context were virtually nonexistent. Thus, HFHJ was faced with a significant task: HFHJ was required to initiate a local presence.

Following the disaster that occurred in Tohoku, HFHJ defined target areas for interventions (see Figure 1) that were extended gradually in Iwate and Miyagi prefectures based on approaches adopted during operational development.

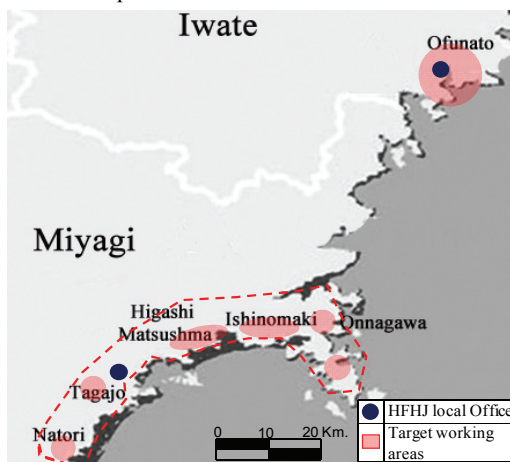


Fig. 1: Selected Working areas by HFHJ in Tohoku Region.

Subsequently, beginning with the initiation of operations and continuing through the development and diversification of projects conducted in affected areas in Tohoku, three stages were identified. These stages are presented sequentially presented in Figure 2:

	2011	2012	2013
Iwate	4/11 Partnership	11/11 Transition	4/12 Development
Miyagi	8/11 Partnership	2/12 Transition	6/12 Development

Fig 2: Evolution of HFHJ operations in Tohoku

4.1 Partnership Stage:

In the aftermath of the disaster that occurred in Japan, the Asia Pacific

Office of Habitat for Humanity International (hereafter HFHI-AP), in conjunction with HFHJ, analyzed alternatives for the initiation of post-disaster support in Tohoku. Following the initial assessment of affected areas, the joint organizations (HFHJ and HFHI-AP) decided to cooperate with local teams to open local offices on a gradual basis so that operations could be managed directly in affected areas.

Due to the limited capacities of the local office (which primarily offered expertise and resources), initial efforts were made to work in partnership with NGOs already established in the field. The first collaboration agreement was established with AHV, which is specialized in post-disaster community assistance. AHV and HFHI had previously worked together during the aftermath of the Earthquake that occurred in Haiti in 2010. This prior relationship also contributed to closer communication and deeper understanding of common goals. AHV initiated volunteer relief activities in Ofunato City by early April 2011. The partnership was established almost immediately.

HFHJ's main responsibility was to fund AHV volunteer activities. AHV was tasked with the provision of working opportunities for HFHJ. Thus, HFHJ's role was limited to the coordination of volunteer activities and the gradual development of future housing rehabilitation efforts.

Later, in Miyagi Prefecture, HFHJ established a similar partnership agreement in August 2011 with the Japanese NPO known as "Peace Boat" (hereafter PB). This organization initiated post-disaster relief efforts in Ishinomaki City in April 2011.

Unlike the partnership created in Iwate, the limited capacity for closer coordination with PB required the initiation of extensive relationship-building with other local stakeholders (see Figure 3). Local targets included local governments, NPOs that worked in the area, local leaders, and local coordination networks. Areas that received less attention from NPOs/NGOs were examined to attempt to exert a stronger impact and to cover resulting gaps in the provision of humanitarian support.

During the partnership, different approaches were considered for the development of future independent roles. In Miyagi, efforts were concentrated on projects focused on the provision of support for community groups. In contrast, in Iwate, the provision of support for individuals was prioritized through activities that focused on housing repairs.

4.2 Transition Stage:

The transition from partnership to independent management of local projects was a critical moment for HFHJ operations because previously-established relationships were vital to both areas.

In Ofunato, the independent approach was defined by the partnership and efforts were focused on independent activities. The HFHJ Tokyo office obtained a grant from JPF to conduct housing rehabilitation in the area. Thus, activities were promoted by HFHJ for local residents and project preparations were initiated immediately. The establishment of an "operational network" (with local networks, local governments, and

support provided by former local AH volunteers), helped HFHJ obtain access to the local community and secure local residents' acceptance.

In contrast, in Miyagi Prefecture, relationship-building began when the partnership started and continued during this transition period. The purpose was to determine the direction of planned interventions. This process promoted the expansion of target working areas and responses to multiple local needs that ranged from the construction of meeting spaces in temporary shelters to the repair of community centers.

4.3 Development and Diversification Stage:

Once the transition from partnership to operations network was completed, the definition of operational networks (formed with diverse local stakeholders) permitted the determination of HFHJ's roles. Therefore, approaches to the provision of assistance to the community were defined based on local characteristics, the extension of working areas, and the diversification of projects.

As a result, efforts conducted in Ofunato, Iwate Prefecture were focused on a core project that addressed housing rehabilitation. In this project, 115 households received financial support and technical consultations for the repair of their homes. Later, local relationships were established that led to expression of requests by local residents that focused on needs that had not been addressed by local governments. These needs included small and specific projects such as residents' requests for the construction of storage sheds in temporary shelters and urban areas).

The approach adopted in Miyagi Prefecture required specific responses to diverse needs and local relationships. For instance, coordination among local NPOs and local residents resulted in the construction of sheds for fishermen. Residents who lived in temporary shelters protested the lack of space allotted for meetings and storage. In response, gazebos and storage boxes were constructed. In addition, relationships established with local governments spearheaded interventions on public facilities such as the rehabilitation of 2 community centers in Higashi Matsushima and Natori Cities.

In addition, in Higashi Matsushima, a smaller housing rehabilitation project was completed. This project was smaller than a similar project completed in Ofunato. However, this was only the first type of intervention conducted in this area. These projects may continue in the future.

5. Analysis of Operations Conducted in Iwate and Miyagi:

5.1 Targeted areas and work environments:

It was possible to observe differences in work environments in city and community dynamics (see Figure 3).

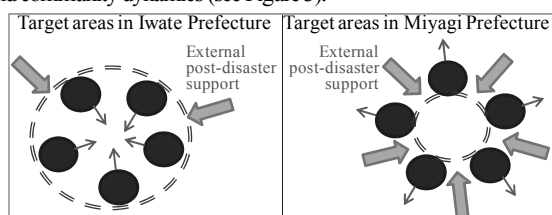


Fig 3: City and community dynamics.

In Ofunato, damaged areas were clearly defined and specific areas were addressed more efficiently, even though only limited humanitarian assistance was provided. The major constraint consisted of difficulties the NGO experienced in maintaining access with the community because only limited contact could be made with outsiders.

In contrast, in Miyagi prefecture, larger damaged areas received major attention from diverse NGOs. However, it was more difficult to address local needs in dispersed settlements.

5.2 Operational Networks and Role Definitions:

Relationships with local stakeholders that participated in the provision of post-disaster assistance have been vital for the coordination of activities and the identification of local needs. These relationships evolved from initial exclusive contacts made with partners and with the Tokyo office. They extended to the local community, local networks, NGOs that operated in the area, and local governments.

In Ofunato, relationships with partners defined independent activities. In Miyagi, relationships among local networks and governments exerted influence on the independent approach (see Figure 4).

In both locations, access to local communities was important for the development of complementary activities based on requests received from local residents, temporary shelters, and other community leaders.

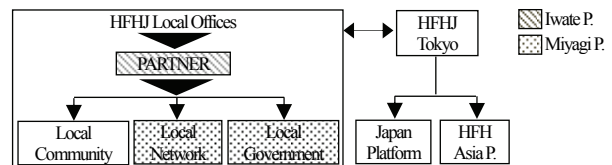


Fig. 4: Operational relationships.

5.3 Deployment of Capacities:

NGOs that provide early post-disaster relief activities and later recovery efforts during the reconstruction process play vital roles in community revitalization.

However, the government provides and will continue to provide primary interventions. The non-profit sector provides complementary support.⁹⁾ In addition to the provision of material support, NGOs provide crucial assistance for communication and interactions with local communities.

The progress of HFHJ's operations, from its initial limited capacities prior to the disaster, to the establishment and development of activities in Tohoku, involved a process characterized by continuous "trial and error."

HFHJ has been criticized for its limited provision of volunteer activities (primarily in comparison with AH's activities in Ofunato) because HFHJ relies on volunteer advocacy. Its approach in Japan has focused on non-permanent volunteer activities in the field. Therefore, the development of local relationships and the consolidation of HFHJ's presence in work environments were achieved through extensive networking activities conducted by local staff based in Iwate and Miyagi.

Subsequently, in March 2012, staff based in Tokyo assumed the management of all Japanese projects following HFHJ-AP's initial

provision of support. This change improved HFHJ's capacities for fundraising and the development of corporative cooperation.

5.4 Challenges and Future Directions:

Undoubtedly, the fact that HFHJ is an international NGO that possesses limited local experience, coupled with the single-site approach it adopted in Iwate Prefecture and the multi-site approach it adopted in Miyagi Prefecture, determined the development of heterogeneous operational systems. However, this also created opportunities for the provision of future internal feedbacks. The development of communication inside the organization will help it overcome future challenges in these unstable environments. In particular, this will occur if HFHJ ultimately decides to extend its support to long-term reconstruction and revitalization stages.

The development of HFHJ's major capabilities in Iwate and Miyagi prefectures has been a long process that has finally reached a certain state of stability. Basic operational relationships have already been established. Core projects have been defined (i.e., housing repairs in Ofunato and the rehabilitation and provision of community spaces in Miyagi) that legitimized HFHJ's interventions with local communities and other stakeholders.

In addition, HFHJ promoted the participation of other NGOs/NPOs in its projects. Eventually, HFHJ volunteers participated in other organizations' projects, created volunteer opportunities in affected areas, and reinforced ties among organizations.

Until now, the different approaches adopted in Iwate and Miyagi created activities that were conducted almost independently from one another. However, due to current trends, the HFHJ team in Iwate has begun to consider the support of communitarian spaces. In Miyagi, HFHJ is expected to discover funding alternatives to extend housing rehabilitation programs, primarily in Higashi Matsushima City. Thus, communication channels should be extended beyond the Tokyo office to promote dynamic participation.

6. Conclusions:

The results of this study are focused on three major issues that determined the feasibility of interventions provided by international humanitarian organizations in Tohoku. These results were based on observations of HFHJ's activities:

6.1 Adaptation to local environments:

Based on a firm understanding of Japanese regulations and the role of the government of a developed country, it is possible to assess different possible interventions that might be employed in post-disaster scenarios. In particular, in case of Tohoku, AHV representatives stated, "Japan is a country that requires more sophisticated responses for reconstruction that demand higher standards that we would be unable to provide." This statement was made in reference to the definition of short-term relief assistance provided in Japan that contrasted dramatically with post-disaster housing supply projects conducted in Haiti and with ongoing projects conducted in the Philippines by the same organization.

For this reason, HFHJ was unable to conduct a directly-managed massive housing rehabilitation project. Rather, it limited its efforts to the provision of consultations and financial support in specific areas.

HFHJ's and other NGOs' understanding of the local environment helped them identify gaps that occurred in the provision of governmental assistance. It also helped them provide assistance to specific temporary shelter residents or community groups, build small community spaces, and rehabilitate damaged community centers.

6.2 Construction of Operational Networks:

Humanitarian relief environments require the efforts of different actors, host governments, military, local, and international humanitarian organizations, as well as the private sector.⁷⁾ Typically, no single actor possesses resources sufficient for effective responses to a major disaster.⁸⁾

HFHJ's access to affected local communities was strengthened by the permanent volunteer presence of a partner, its contacts with key local individuals, and by the relationships it established with other local organizations that provided support to HFHJ. This was particularly

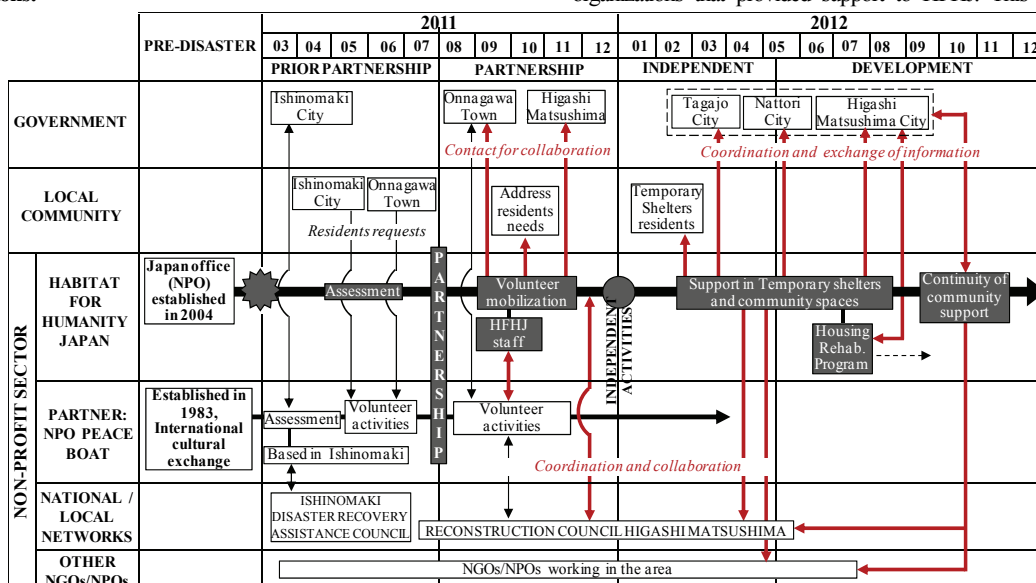


Fig 5: HFHJ Operational network construction in Miyagi Prefecture.

important during the transition period, as well as later in the process, when the implementation of core projects began. HFHJ's access also encouraged the extension of community support projects.

In Miyagi Prefecture, this process was extensive and complex (as shown in Figure 5). It ranged from the identification of key actors to the gradual establishment of crucial relationships. For instance, in Higashi Matsushima, the development of close relationships and the construction of a network helped HFHJ propose, coordinate, and complete projects in collaboration with local networks and communities. Ultimately, it encouraged the diversification of those projects. In other locations, such as Tagajo and Natori, HFHJ's relationship with the government enabled it to initiate interventions focused on community facilities.

6.3 Building Operational Capacities:

Operational processes and roles were defined in established areas based on each organization's specialization following an evaluation of each organization's initial capacities and, later, by the identification of local needs and the establishment of relationships with key stakeholders involved in post-disaster assistance.

Because HFHJ functions as a Non-profit Organization, it was required to discover alternatives when it attempted to develop an initial presence in affected areas. HFHJ also had to improve its organizational capacities (technical, financial, logistic), and define its terms (at least, its tentative operational terms) when it focused on possible long-reconstruction interventions.

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