

16) School management and education in the aftermath of a disaster

[recovery phase, early and late reconstruction phases]

[Issues] (1) How to promote education on reconstruction and disaster management following a disaster.
(2) How to restore connections between schools and communities.

[Situation and issues created by the Great East Japan Earthquake]

It was crucial for schools in disaster areas severely damaged by the earthquake to develop effective educational curriculums on reconstruction efforts and disaster management/prevention so that the experience from the Great East Japan Earthquake did not fade away and could be used to prepare for and recover from disasters in the future. This also pointed to the need to promote educational curriculums focused on disaster management and prevention and other areas, taking advantage of local features and with the participation of a broad array of residents in order to strengthen ties with the community around schools.⁽¹⁾ The challenge was in identifying ways to restore connections between schools and local communities, which had been transformed as a result of the evacuation and relocation of residents.

[Initiatives in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake]

- Promoting school safety and disaster management/prevention education in Japan (Issue 1)

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is engaged in enhancing disaster management in schools, including through the development of “Guidelines on the creation of school disaster prevention manuals (earthquake and tsunami disasters)” (March 2012)⁽²⁾ and revisions to school safety manuals “Safety education in school to develop a ‘zest for life’” on safety in school (March 2019).⁽³⁾ In fiscal 2016, the ministry launched the “MEXT x School Safety” portal site⁽⁴⁾ to actively disseminate information, such as by introducing activities in different prefectures. A notice⁽⁵⁾ was issued in 2019, in light of the Okawa Elementary School lawsuit over tsunami victims, requesting schools around the country to review educational content on disaster management and prevention in order to move further ahead in promoting practical educational practices in this area.

- Promoting education on disaster management and prevention in the three prefectures affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake (Issues 1, 2)

“Disaster prevention officers” have been assigned to all public schools in Miyagi Prefecture since April 2012, with “senior disaster prevention teachers” located in elementary and junior high schools that serve as bases in each municipality. In October 2012, the prefecture formulated its own new guidelines, Miyagi Basic Guidelines on School Safety, covering the three areas of education on disaster management and prevention, road safety and daily life safety (including crime prevention). Far-reaching school safety initiatives are also being promoted, such as with the release of a publication on “Building a new school disaster management system to protect children's lives” in December 2020.⁽⁶⁾⁽⁷⁾ The Miyagi Pilot School Project on Promoting Disaster Management Education, launched in fiscal 2014, presented a model for education on disaster management and prevention (Miyagi Model) for use in schools in the prefecture through classes on disaster management and

prevention using the “Miraieno Kizuna (Link to the future)” Supplementary Reader for Miyagi Disaster Prevention Education.⁽⁸⁾ Koriyama Junior High School in Sendai City, which is implementing the Disaster Management and Prevention Education Challenge Plan (Disaster Management and Prevention Education Challenge Plan Executive Committee), is conducting student-led community disaster prevention drills, raising awareness on disaster management, prevention and mitigation, and putting educational curriculums into practice together with the local community.⁽⁹⁾

In February 2012, Iwate Prefecture created a curriculum on “Reconstruction Education in Iwate,” which was implemented in 50 designated schools in every municipality in the prefecture, known as “reconstruction education promotion schools” (elementary and junior high prefectural schools), as a way to educate the children who are the future of Iwate Prefecture. Notably, Otsuchi Town, which offers a continuous educational curriculum that extends from primary through to early secondary levels at the Otsuchi Municipal Otsuchi Gakuen (compulsory education) and Otsuchi Municipal Kirikiri Gakuen (combined elementary and junior high school), is promoting a “course of study on hometowns” as a special curriculum focus based on the concepts of “vitality” and “hometown creation.” Under the course, schools, local communities and families work together and collaborate on a variety of studies, such as work experience in the community and joint evacuation drills with local residents, with a focus on original educational studies on reconstruction, disaster management and prevention, and careers (Case study 16-1).

By the same token, Fukushima Prefecture has focused its attention on educational curriculums on radiation and disaster management/prevention to help children acquire basic knowledge about these areas and foster an attitude of contributing to the development of the community as members of society. The prefecture creates, publishes and encourages the use of instructional materials and collections of practical case studies based on its experiences in the Great East Japan Earthquake in order to develop unique educational curriculums on radiation and disaster management and prevention that is tailored to local conditions and the actual needs of children and students.⁽¹⁰⁾

- Developing future-creating education in Fukushima Prefecture (Issues 1, 2)

With no prospects in sight for resuming classes in original school buildings in Futaba District, Fukushima Prefecture, the Council on Education and Reconstruction in Futaba District, Fukushima Prefecture (established in December 2012), organized by the Futaba District Board of Superintendents in July 2013, decided on and announced the launch of a Vision on Reviving Education in Futaba District, Fukushima Prefecture. This vision is focused on the establishment of a prefectural integrated educational curriculum extending from junior to senior high. Following discussions between the prefecture and the Futaba District Local Towns and Villages Association, the Fukushima Prefectural Futaba Future School high school division opened in April 2015, followed by its junior high division in April 2019. Futaba Future School is engaged in the development of “future-creating education” based on the school philosophy of “Be Innovators” and the school’s motto of “independence, collaboration and creativity,” and is implementing original educational activities, including “hometown creation studies” (referred to as Future Creation Studies (junior high school) and Future Creation Exploration (high school)) that challenge students to solve regional problems in practical ways.⁽¹¹⁾

- Participating in reconstruction city development and tsunami disaster prevention (Issues 1, 2)

Before the earthquake, the machinery course at Iwate Prefectural Miyako Technical High School had used a tsunami model, which was capable of reproducing the types of floods that occur with a tsunami, when conducting classes at local events and elementary and junior high schools located nearby. In the aftermath of the earthquake, the course's scope of activities has expanded to include the promotion of tsunami disaster prevention, with lectures given around the country and welcoming visitors for tours from overseas.⁽¹²⁾

Students at Otsuchi High School in Iwate Prefecture have continued to use their perspectives as high school students to contribute to the reconstruction of the region by taking part in local reconstruction city development and offering ideas on land readjustment and recommendations on new city development policies. These student-led activities have resulted in the establishment of a Reconstruction Study Group, which has carried out activities such as fixed-point observations to record changes in the townscape with photographs taken at 180 locations in the town three times a year since April 2013, and talking about reconstruction activities through exchanges with high school students from outside the prefecture.⁽¹³⁾

→ *Related topic: 66) Passing down memories, records and experiences from disasters*

[Lessons learned and know-how gained]

- (1) Create educational programs and curriculums that utilize lessons learned from the disaster and local features to develop the human resources of the future in areas affected by the disaster.
 - Establish a system to promote education on disaster management and prevention through the creation of educational programs and curriculums that will serve as reference for schools and assigning teachers to be responsible for education on disaster management and prevention.
 - Provide practical and effective disaster prevention and recovery education in cooperation with local communities and related organizations.
- (2) Create opportunities for schools, which are at the heart of city development, to interact with the local community.
 - Offer learning opportunities to think about the community and local issues.
 - Promote the participation of youth in reconstruction city development, and local disaster management and prevention activities and encourage interaction with local residents.

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