

*Developing a Elderly Care and Self Support System by Filipino Immigrants' Initiative
in the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Affected Area*

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Introduction

This is focus about that Developing of Filipino immigrant women involved in elderly care in the Local community after 2011.11 the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami.

The largest group of foreign brides in the Northeast Japan comes from the Philippines, The People's Republic of China and South Korea.

Among them, post-disaster, Starting from safety checks and distribution of aid materials strong and resourceful Filipino community groups were born who are actively engaged in various actions as members of their respective local communities.

They made their presence to participate on the elderly care support in the community and local event by introducing Filipino culture through dance.

They empowered and became a visible neighbor through developing them selves.

***1. General information on non-Japanese residents
in the three prefectures affected by the disaster***

Declining birthrate and aging population in rural areas is significant in Japan. Young labor in the Tohoku region moved to the Tokyo metropolitan area. Women are increasingly educated and a growing proportion is economically active. They choose to be a single or married with the middle- class white-collar. And bride and caregiver are insufficient to rural areas.

In Japan Men, for their part, are responsible for continuing the paternal lineage by having sons and, in many cases, must also provide support for their elderly parents. Since the early 1980s, a growing number of Japanese single men have been seeking wives abroad. Married with foreign brides is nearly 3% in the 1990s. This trend spreads from rural to the metropolitan areas. The proportion of married with foreign brides was at 3-5% in 1990-2012.

With regard to non-Japanese residents in the three Tohoku prefectures affected most by the disaster (Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima), if we have a look at statistics of alien registration, we find that 28,830 people, that is 1.39% of the national data of 2,078,508 registered foreign nationals had lived here.

***Emergency Life Saving Phase:
Outreach to diverse ethnic minorities by diverse organizations***

Ethnic minorities were diverse and the risk for isolation was high for travelers, for residents from countries that do not have an embassy in Japan, for people who just arrived and

could not speak Japanese, for areas where there was a practice of international marriage mediation on a local community level, and for divorced women etc.

In midst of a wide-range and large-scale three layered disaster consisting of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster, intervening actors such as foreign governments, international agencies like the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and NGOs had to be diverse too, so that they could assist special needs while also taking into consideration the protection of residents and culture, religion and customs of migrants and foreign nationals. For international marriage migrants, it was difficult to contact their embassies etc., and with them playing a central role, networks were commonly formed along nationality lines on prefectural and local levels.

From the Initial Phase to the Midterm Phase: Abandonment of the principle to give priority to minorities

Even in ordinary times, inadequacies in the social security system of Japan pose a considerable burden especially to migrants in a minority position. During disasters too, such minorities may easily get hurt by damage and may also easily become objected to social exclusion in disaster assistance. That is why assistance guidelines by the UN explicitly state that specific measures for responding to specific needs such as assistance and protection of women, children and certain groups of disaster victims are not discriminative and are not in violation of the principle to assist all people fairly, provided that they are based on different needs. Yet, the idea of providing relief to disaster victims equally is strong in Japan in public administration and other places. While there is a lack of intervention from the social welfare sector to the assistance of non-Japanese wives in local communities around the country, especially in Tohoku, international exchange organizations have been promoting Japanese language rooms, support in healthcare and educational support to children including those from former pre-migration relationships coming from another country. However, concerning the focus of these, there is a strong sense to culturally integrate the non-Japanese wife to the local community. Hence, on the local level there was a lack of support to non-Japanese residents based on perspectives of ethnic and other minorities, as well as gender.

Formation of Filipino communities in Tohoku

Starting from checking the safety of friends and providing support at evacuation shelters, four thousand Filipinos living in the three prefectures affected by the disaster formed local communities with the church as the bond between them.

The communities of Filipino immigrants that were formed during the disaster engaged in exchanges with formerly organized Filipino communities in places such as Tokyo, receiving support from the government of the Philippines and Catholic organizations they provided assistance not only to Filipinos but to local communities as well, and they also engaged in

capacity building by themselves.

In places like Kesenuma, Rikuzentakata, Ofunato and Fukushima, the groups started with assistance at the evacuation shelters in the disaster area and they shifted from this to expand as organizations engaged in activities of recovery. When President Aquino visited Japan, he participated in a social meeting at a Catholic church in Ishinomaki where approximately 150 Filipinos living in Japan gathered from different areas all around Tohoku. The author also participated in a few masses and gatherings in the disaster area. One of these was a lunch party combined with aid material distribution organized in Rikuzentakata by ICF (Iwate Circle of Friends) who are mainly active around Moriaoka. In this area, many houses were destroyed and evacuation life in the shelters was prolonged. In such an environment, Filipinos were restraining their emotional expressions, because they were afraid of being misunderstood. Maybe that is why young mothers with their children laughed so loud at this gathering chatting in Tagalog, eating Filipino meals, watching dances and playing games.

Filipino support agencies can be divided in two types: professional humanitarian aid organizations and local community based organizations (CBOs). The Filipino communities that this paper is elaborating on are local community based organizations of the latter kind.

Professional humanitarian aid organizations

International organizations, official organizations of the Catholic Church and volunteer organizations providing professional humanitarian aid targeted to a wide area. Since all these organizations had Filipino members living in Japan, considerable assistance was provided on an individual volunteer basis, rather than only on an agency level.

International Organization for Migration (IOM): international agency engaged in considering and solving problems related to migration on a professional level. They provided multi-lingual counseling to disaster survivors and assistance for migrants to return to their respective home countries.

Catholic Tokyo International Center (CTIC): CTIC was established by the Archdiocese of Tokyo in 1990 to support migrants staying in Japan. Disaster relief donations collected by the archdiocese were used in concentration to the assistance of foreign nationals residing in Japan, which is an area not fully covered by public administration.

Caritas Japan: One of the world's most prominent Catholic humanitarian aid organizations. After the disaster, they set up the Support Center for Foreigners Ofunato Base.

Kapatiran: 'sisterhood-brotherhood', founded in 1988 based on Christian ideals. An NGO supporting migrants living in Japan, especially Filipinos and their families. They are training highly professional counselors for consultation and assistance of livelihood and mental health.

Local community based Filipino organizations in Tohoku

Starting from safety checks and distribution of aid materials, community based organizations were formed on each beach along the ria coastline in every area. As the emergency live saving phase passed, disaster relief operations were started by the Filipino communities living in Tokyo with whom exchanges started in Tokyo shelters during the temporary return to the Philippines. Organizations in the disaster area started 2nd Degree Home Helper trainings to boost employment. Content with regard to major organizations in the disaster area is based on interviews with their leaders conducted by the author.

Bayanihan (spirit of helping each other) Kesenuma: Started from a name list for checking safety. Many who were originally employed in a factory for making fishery products that was washed away received assistance from the Japan Association for Refugees (JAR) for the acquisition of 2nd degree helper certificates and found employment in facilities for elderly people. They are engaged in various activities such as the operation of an FM broadcast and participation to local events.

PAGASA (hope) Ofunato: According to the leader, Ms. M, there were no Filipinos in Ofunato 20 years ago, but now there are some sixty households where the wife in the family is a Filipina. They are engaged in safety checks, masses, group rosaries (passing on a statue of Saint Mary among followers and opening home gatherings for believers) and participation in local events.

Philippine Community Miyagi (FILCOM): A self-help organization for Filipinos residing in Miyagi, mainly in Sendai. They are engaged in employment support such as training for teaching English in kindergartens.

Hawak Kamay (join hands) Fukushima: An organization formed after the disaster for socialization and support among diverse Filipinos living in Fukushima including people of the Christian and Islamic faiths. They are engaged in various activities such as distribution of meals and provision of information to Filipino migrants regarding the nuclear accident.

Iwate Circle of Friends (ICF): A group of Filipinos around Morioka. Also active in exchanges with groups other than Filipinos. After the disaster, they helped to organize the distribution of material aid and social meetings in the disaster area.

Midterm Phase:

The bashing of certain non-Japanese resident organizations

Although not only Japanese nationals were hit by the disaster, a major newspaper in Japan made a report that called out to 'Make All Efforts to Protect the Life and Property of Nationals', which was described with disappointment in the editorial column of the March 16th

2011 issue of the Mindan the Korean Residents Union in Japan Newspaper. There was a groundless rumor that 'Foreigners are looting' and it was claimed that the reason for foreign nationals to leave Japan and return to their respective home countries was merely irrational 'panic'.

2. Towards long-term recovery: empowerment of non-Japanese residents affected by the disaster

Many support organizations understood the importance of forming peer groups. However, since support organizations that are related to the public sector provided support while concentrating on the equal participation of all 'foreign wives' to these events, including Chinese, Koreans and Filipinos, they rather contributed to a delay in the assessment of needs and the organization of individual ethnic groups.

Fukushima roundtable by disaster affected non-Japanese residents

In most multicultural organizations around Japan, it is rare that non-Japanese serve as directors or trustees. Yet, the most important thing in disaster recovery is to have local residents and non-Japanese residents affected by the disaster work in partnership and take the initiative in support activities.

Despite it was the end of the year, 180 people from 50 organizations that support non-Japanese residents participated, including members from international agencies and the embassy of the Philippines.

Speaking out - Migrants deciding themselves what their needs are

Workshops were set up along lingual and religious lines and participants could decide on the language they use during the meeting. Workshops in Tagalog, in Spanish, in Portuguese, for Koreans (old-comer and new-comer Zainichi Korean groups: in Japanese), for Muslims (Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Afghans, Japanese etc.: in Japanese) and for Japanese supporters (in Japanese) were set up.

Strengths assessment - Non-Japanese residents' self affirmation

Mapping the social environment in the disaster area and its relationship with their own recovery to self-reliance, and recognizing their own strengths.

We managed to establish that there are national organizations in almost every prefecture, and that there is promising staff with the same cultural background who are engaged in wide-area communication via social networking services (SNS). Starting from providing meals during the disaster, strong and resourceful groups were born who are actively engaged in various actions as members of their respective local communities, and they pointed out the need for considering about the serious unemployment situation and the upbringing of the next generation.

3.Developing a Elderly Care and Employment Support System of Filipino communities

Tsunami destroyed fish food factory and many Immigrant women lost their jobs.

After the disaster, they received a caregiver training, began to work in nursing homes in the community.They managed to build a support system in Tagalog expanding to the three prefectures hit hardest by the disaster.

Japan Association for Refugees (JAR) began training program that targets (Philippines, China, South Korea, from Chile) the foreign migrant women victims were unemployed.

After Tsunami In JAR, first,target Philippines women that about 70 people were living concentratedly within Kesenuma and has network of community.

The purpose of program is the work of long-term care facility and qualification of Grade 2 elderly care giver. Training consists of elderly care giver and Japanese language training Project underway in 10 students per group, I was carried to three quarters for the first fiscal. Project for Filipinos was continued takeover Caritas Ofunato-based from JAR.

But Women of South Korea and China could not make mutual aid network.And JAR could not out reach their needs.

They made their presence to participate on the elderly care support in the community and local event by introducing Filipino culture through dance.

Conclusion - Non-Japanese residents as equal partners of recovery in Tohoku

As many residents' lives were destroyed in a large-scale disaster, networks were formed by non-Japanese residents themselves. For disaster recovery and the establishment of support systems for self-reliance by non-Japanese residents of the three disasters affected prefectures, it is important to have active participation by non-Japanese residents themselves.

The most crucial thing in earthquake recovery is that residents affected by the disaster, as well as non-Japanese residents, take the initiative and engage in capacity building through support practice and providing assistance for self-reliance to fellow residents. The role of people working in international exchange and social welfare professionals is nothing else but to facilitate the formation of self-help groups that provide assistance for self-reliance to fellow non-Japanese residents.

Filipino immigrant women empowered and became a visible neighbor through Developing a Elderly Care and Self Support System

It was important that Philippines immigrant took the initiative of self-support and to create his or her own organization.

In addition, support of NGO and supervise professional had carried out properly so that immigrants can take the initiative.