

## Current Status of Recovery Efforts in Arts & Culture

### 1. Why the emphasis on “culture” in hard-to-reach areas?

- **For sustainable recovery**

Relief efforts now move from the initial stage of emergency rescue efforts and assistance for basic human needs such as food and shelter to the stage of focusing on sustainable recovery and rebuilding communities.



Culture is closely connected with the fundamental part of the human condition in every aspect of people’s life (see box below). That special linkage can be leveraged to make support for recovery efforts in next stage for more effective.

#### **Role of Culture:**

- Vital link in a community to connect local residents (through traditional events, festivals, etc.)
- Helps create hope, pride and a will to live
- Catalyst for “social gathering” (prevention of isolation and solitary deaths)
- Power to instill serenity and courage
- Source of creativity, imagination, and inspiration necessary for the recovery process
- Memory and record of everything lost in the disaster
- Diverse viewpoints

- **Damage wrought by the disaster = loss of “diverse local cultures”**

Diverse local cultures have developed over hundreds of years in the devastated region, and restoring those cultures can help affected communities recover mentally and emotionally (i.e., avoid prioritizing only economic and temporal efficiency for immediate results in recovery efforts)

#### **【Case studies of recovery assistance through arts and culture】**

\* From the examples of grant-aided activities of GBFund (Recovery Assistance Fund for the Great East Japan Earthquake through the Arts and Culture)

- Restoration of associations striving to preserve the traditional arts (= recovery of pride)
- Commission of sales of artwork by artists and designers in the disaster area to artists in Kyushu area, western Japan (= economic benefits)
- Support for massages, stretching and exercise programs, communication games, etc. by dancers and actors making visits to care centers for the aged and the disabled suffering from insomnia, lack of exercise, depression, and loss of voice from shock (= maintenance of health and quality of life)
- Installation of temporary jazz teahouses at meeting halls at evacuation centers(= prevention of isolation)
- Implementation of art programs for children and the aged at evacuation centers and temporary housing facilities (= energy booster, psychological benefit, heightened attention span)
- Mobile picture book library bus (= pleasure and learning experience)
- Visual record of the disaster area (= record keeping and preservation)
- Screening of movies on natural energy (= introduction of new perspectives for recovery)

## **2. More effective support: use of intermediary organizations**

- Intermediary organizations have the capacity to screen and select appropriate organizations for carrying out a donor’s wish through their rich database of accumulated information, as well as to conduct surveys, provide feedback, and help ensure accountability.
- Legal incorporation status of such organizations serves to guarantee that donations are being used for public good.
- While there are many skilled intermediary organizations in Japan, the reality is that they have not been used very much except for one part, and have not been able to develop enough confidence and trust that they can carry out effective support.

## **3. Chronology of artistic and cultural movements on the ground**

- Corporate response to the March 11 disaster was very quick, with many corporations making immediate donations to the “Gienkin” fund on the day of the earthquake and tsunami. A rapid increase in financial and in-kind donations was seen after Monday, March 14, together with offers of supplies and office fundraising efforts.
- On March 11, the day the earthquake and tsunami occurred, many cultural and artistic events were cancelled, even outside the affected region, due to confusion in transportation systems and the need to inspect safety of facilities. Many others were either cancelled or postponed thereafter, especially once damage to cultural facilities became apparent, coupled with rolling blackouts and energy-saving measures. Some of the cultural facilities in the disaster areas were converted to evacuation centers.
- In the following week to ten days, numerous culture-related civil organizations launched special fundraising projects to support the affected region. Social media was used to survey the extent of damage to facilities and cultural properties, something that was not used following previous earthquakes.
- Cultural events in east Japan in general were voluntarily cancelled while many overseas artists cancelled their trips to Japan following the nuclear crisis.
- The general mood of voluntary restraint subsided after one month, and there was a rise in the number of charity events organized to support the victims in the disaster zone since the end of April, as Japan was entering the Golden Week holidays(a long holiday from the end April to early May). Major national and local newspapers in the affected region started to comment on the “importance of cultural aspects even in times of disasters” in their editorials. With many of the main people who normally organize local festivals and traditional performing arts having fallen victim to the disaster, some feared the intangible cultural heritage in the region to be in crisis.

- As more and more artists became active in the affected region, recognition grew of the cultural needs in the disaster zone and of the positive impact of the arts in maintaining health and preventing isolation of victims etc. Movements emerged to forge stronger ties between the eastern and western parts of Japan and to share experiences from the Kobe Earthquake in 1995. Starting around the time of Golden Week, some of the cultural facilities in the affected region were able to resume in part their functions.
- By the end of May, arts-related NPOs began carrying out long-term assistance activities, promoting cultural and artistic support programs in which they have expertise. On the corporate side, aside from company-wide commitments to making donations to “Gienkin” funds that sprang up immediately after the disaster, various sections/departments started to promote their own programs of assistance. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) departments have increasingly been giving support to culture-related recovery efforts.
- In Tohoku, local communities are now trying to restore community ties and pride by organizing their usual summer festivals or “Obon” (around mid-August), the traditional festival of souls of the dead, and reviving their local traditional performing arts as a first step toward recovery.



#### 4. Damages reported in the artistic and cultural fields

- As of July 12, damages suffered as a result of the earthquake and tsunami of March 11 totaled 278 cultural facilities in 19 prefectures while damages to national treasures and places of historical importance or extraordinary scenic beauty reached 704 in 19 prefectures (according to a press release by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology). The Agency for Cultural Affairs organized a “Cultural Property Rescue Program” on March 30 and a “Cultural Property Doctor Dispatch Program” on April 27 to send senior cultural properties specialists to help restore cultural structures and architectural properties.
- The March 11 disaster led to numerous cancellations of artists and artworks from overseas scheduled to come to Japan, creating a secondary disaster as offices were forced to handle ticket refunds and manage losses as well as suffer decline in business.
- On April 12, Seiichi Kondo, Commissioner for Cultural Affairs, made an appeal to the public “to actively engage in cultural activities at all levels—while also giving due consideration to electrical power shortages and various safety issues—as culture and the arts provide hope and encouragement to people in disaster-stricken areas and can support rehabilitation and reconstruction.”

## 5. Assistance offered by arts organizations and artists

### 【1】 Fundraising:

The earliest fundraising efforts started two days after the disaster, with new methods introduced reflecting the age of Internet: websites soliciting funding, fundraising through the download webshop system, donation of profits gained from release of works on the Internet, etc.

### 【2】 Information portal:

Creation of a site to collect and disseminate information on damage to artistic and cultural properties in the affected zone and support given for their recovery and restoration.

### 【3】 Charity projects:

Dissemination of information on concerts, performances, art auctions, and free use of website contents, etc.

### 【4】 Art programs:

Support for art workshops and story-telling sessions at evacuation centers and child centers, stretching exercises with dancers, concerts, etc. to enhance quality of life of victims forced to survive under dire conditions and to offer them moral support.

### 【5】 Assistance platform:

Dissemination of information, distribution of funds, networking of those willing to offer assistance.

### 【6】 Assistance by overseas artists:

Donations of profits from charity sales of CDs and special auctions.



### 【7】 Pro bono services:

Online counseling services offered by lawyers and legal experts to artists and cultural organizations and advice on matters related to intellectual property rights. Pro bono contributions from designers offering their assistance in creating online posters calling for power saving or soliciting funding.

### 【8】 Grantmaking:

The private sector has been the leader in this. Free licensing of copyrighted works for charity concerts was organized by the Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers and Publishers (JASRAC).

### 【9】 Receiving evacuees:

Welcoming those wishing to evacuate to artists' centers in the Kansai region, etc.

## 6. Activities of corporate mécénat (arts and cultural support)

### 【1】Donations and sponsorship:

Aside from making direct donations, special funds are created using partial profits from sales to support relief and recovery efforts of NPOs and others.

### 【2】Switch from standard programs to those supporting disaster relief:

Quick and flexible adjustments made in promoting support for the affected region by holding programs in the Tohoku region or changing the objective to promote support for the disaster victims, etc.

### 【3】Support using in-house products and facilities:

Provision of equipment, supplies, etc. for workshops in the affected region; donation by publishers of picture books for children in the affected region; offering of own space and facilities for charity auctions, etc.

### 【4】Use of cultural facilities run by companies:

Setting up of donation boxes, organization of charity events, donation of partial profits from sales of goods at in-house museum shops over the mid and long term.

### 【5】Fundraising packs:

Launching of fundraising campaigns to support parts of the Tohoku region with which relationships had already been established through previous activities.

### 【6】Support for recovery through business activities:

Sales of items with donations added to price, development of new systems to convert shopping points to support for the affected region, etc.



Photo by Hikaru Fujii, from website of Arts NPO Aid