

## Special Issue on NGO Operations in Disaster-hit Areas of Tohoku

### Introduction

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This special issue on NGO operations in disaster-hit areas of Tohoku is comprised of three papers. The first paper “Activity of International Cooperation NGOs during the Great East Japan Earthquake and Challenges for the Future” is written by Yamaguchi Masashi, Secretary General of Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC). Yamaguchi gives a bird’s-eye view of NGO operations during the triple disaster in Tohoku. His paper sheds light on issues NGOs faced such as funds required to conduct projects, human resources, relationship between the local administrations of the disaster stricken area, and so on. Yamaguchi mentions on cooperation with foreign NGOs as well. During the Great East Japan Earthquake, a number of NGOs headquartered outside of Japan worked in Japan for the first time: AmeriCares, CWS (Church World Service), International Medical Coops (IMC), Direct Relied International (DRI), Mercy Corps, to mention a few.

Nejima Susumu, Komatsu Toyoaki, and Sato Midori write on “Shaplaneer’s Disaster Relief in Iwaki, Fukushima Prefecture.” Shaplaneer is a Japanese NGO working for poverty alleviation in South Asian countries such as Bangladesh and Nepal. They have been working in Bangladesh for more than forty years. Facing with the great damages caused by the 311 triple disaster, Shaplaneer decided to start the first operation within their own country. They established a local office in Iwaki, Fukushima Prefecture in order to support the affected people of the quake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster. This paper examines Shaplaneer’s experiences from March 2011 to February 2013.

The third paper is “Introducing AmeriCares in Tohoku: with focus on horticultural therapy” by Sakurai Kyoko. She is from Japan, and works at AmeriCares, a nonprofit global health and disaster relief organization that delivers medicines, medical supplies and aid to people in need around the world and across the United States. Responding to disasters is not only about physical care and delivering necessary materials. Healing survivor’s individual and communal post-disaster stress and anxiety is also necessary. She gives a detailed for horticultural therapy, one of the most successful projects for affected people in Tohoku.

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