The Great East Japan Earthquake and Mentally Disabled People

What We Saw during Support for the Disaster Areas

Masahiro Tanaka, Inclusion Japan
“Disaster Management Liaison Council of Organizations for Mentally and Developmentally Disabled Children and People”


*Random order

Headquarters for “Disaster Management Liaison Council of Organizations for Mentally and Developmentally Disabled Children and People” in the Three Prefectures of Tohoku Area

Chart on delivery of relief products

1. Offer Relief products
   - Welfare associations in prefectures
   - Regional sectors of Inclusion Japan
   - Associated organizations

2. Collect products in one site to sort, pack and ship them to the institutions in the sites
   - Collection site: Nakano Gakuen in Chiba
   - Collect, sort and pack relief products

Integration of headquarters

3. Further divide and pack products for institutions and individuals

4. Deliver them to disabled people (institutions, facilities and private homes)

Integration diagram:

- Iwate
- Miyagi
- Fukushima
On Mar 11, the earthquake happened when two people were engaged in administrative works in the secretariat

- Electricity, water, gas and telephone stopped immediately after the earthquake. Mobile phone was difficult to get a connection for and then down after five minutes. Mobile text was possible to send for about 15 min but then disconnected until night.
- They went home late afternoon due to strong intermittent afterquakes. Electricity came back three days later in the secretariat and five days later at home. Water supply resumed about one week later and gas about three weeks later.

From Mar 13, we visited the secretariat and affected coastal areas nearby

- Safety confirmation with chairs of Municipal sectors of Inclusion Japan
  → Communications were mostly down
- Visited affected coastal areas nearby
  Confirmed the status of the fully destroyed facility in Natori
  → Visited the evacuation center
    → Confirmed safety of all the members
    Visited high schools with dormitories and confirmed the conditions
    Continued an attempt to confirm safety
  → Conditions of all the regions were confirmed after the holidays in May
Establishment of Miyagi Headquarters for Disaster Management Liaison Council of Organizations for Mentally and Developmentally Disabled Children and People

On Apr 8, Miyagi Headquarters was established to initiate cooperation of regional organizations

- Mr. Masahiro Tanaka was sent from the central Disaster Management Liaison Council to coordinate efforts among organizations and policies for supports in the affected areas, and we started collaboration of organizations in Miyagi Prefecture

The established Headquarters tried to clarify the situations by having a general meeting twice a week and made full efforts for problem solutions. Confirmed the statuses of institutions in the prefecture and visited them if we couldn’t communicate with them.

1. Spread information
   2. Explore the needs
   3. Receive voices
   4. Hearing
   5. Documentation
   6. Decision making
   7. Implementation
   8. Collect information
   9. Report

Types of supports they need

A. Dispatch of staff  B. Life support  C. Material support  D. Institution management  E. Others
Employees were sent from Inclusion Japan to establish Miyagi Suboffice and start safety confirmation of each home

Started full-fledged activities of Inclusion Japan
  - The Headquarters was mainly engaged in confirming the statuses of institutions and it was difficult for them to confirm safety of disabled children and people who stayed home, so “Miyagi Suboffice” started its activity by filling this gap.

We confirmed daily activities in daily morning meeting, called each home to confirm safety and repeatedly visited their homes if we could not contact them
Establishment of Comprehensive Consultation Service during Emergency

- Consultation service
  - Local consultation services + Consultation support workers from other prefectures

- Special needs education
  - Special needs education coordinator

- Nursing support
  - Facilities commissioned for the nursing support project + JDD, etc.

- Peer support
  - Inclusion Japan, Zenshiren, Association for Children with Severe Physical and Intellectual Disabilities

Coordination of service

Direct support (offer a range of services)
- In-home/respite service, etc.
System to Accept Consultation Support Workers (Process)

Consultation support workers to be dispatched

Area to accept
Area to accept
Area to accept
Area to accept
Area to accept
Area to accept

Integrate in the prefecture

Local coordinator
Dispatched leader and coordinator

Main center or Consultation desk in the affected areas

Information sharing and aggregation of instructions

Areas affected

* The prefecture requests dispatch to Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare
Then the prefecture allocates the staff dispatched
Offering a Range of Services

Use of a new service → Classification of disability level → Determination of payment → Request for assistance from municipalities and prefecture

Loss of certificates and re-issuance → Re-issuance of certificate → The prefectural rehabilitation centers handle via municipalities

Loss of family, residence → Urgent preparation of residence and advocacy → Support for admission to facilities, increase of GHCH, adult guardians

Loss of daily activities → Emergent preparation of daily activities → Use of facilities with individual benefits, temporary day support, day service for children, mental salon activities

Support for families → Respite support → Provision of short stay, temporary day support

Long-term psychic burden → Mental care → Securing a mental care team, effective use of JDD clinical psychotherapists, peer counseling

Labor shortage of employees → Support facility staff → Effective use of dispatched employees

Support beyond a public scheme → Provision of informal services → Fixing home, transportation support, shopping, companion, etc.
Condition of the affected area (May 2011)

Downtown area, Minamisanriku Town
Condition of the affected area (May 2011)

Gamo Area, Sendai City
Yamamoto Town

Condition of the affected area (Apr 2011)
Trace of the disaster (Ishinomaki City)
The ship stranded onto the land (Ishinomaki City)
Health and Welfare Center in Minamisanriku Town
A view looked back from the Health and Welfare Center
Madoka, facility completely destroyed by Tsunami
Rubato, completely destroyed facility
Condition of the affected area (May 2011)

Group home and working space affected by the disaster (Tagajo City)
Visit of Members’ Homes

Visited the chair of each regional sector, together with an employee of the Prefectural secretariat of Inclusion Japan.

We heard the local situations and whereabouts of members we felt particularly concern about, and received the list of members (list was developed based on memory, etc. if it was lost)

We visited members’ homes based on the list.

We heard about their life and problems to help provide assistance needed.
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<th>Father's name</th>
<th>Mother's name</th>
<th>Child's name</th>
<th>Child's date of birth</th>
<th>Address</th>
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*Home *supported by the Youth center

Onagawa high school
We visited facilities for mentally disabled people to learn their situations.

Information was shared in the Disaster Management Liaison Council made of eleven organizations, to cooperate to offer assistance needed.

(An ambulatory facility in Iwanuma City, Miyagi. The farm where they had day activities was covered by sludge.)

Assisting employees were dispatched mainly to small facilities where not enough support was provided.

(Farm work together with users of a facility in Yamamoto Town, Miyagi)
Activities to Support the Affected Areas with Other Divisions of Inclusion Japan

Offered a variety of support activities for the affected areas together with employees dispatched from other divisions of Inclusion Japan

- Special events were organized with cooperation of many people and financial support from Nippon Foundation. Sport and music events were held so families could enjoy even only one day, as they were exhausted by caring disabled children while their schools were closed for a long period. Also organized a Rakuten bus tour.
Activities to Support the Affected Areas with Other Divisions of Inclusion Japan

The two-days event held in “Iwanuma Civic Hall” was joined by about 600 people, including residents of the temporary houses nearby. Tetsu Kashiwa invited his friends and created excitement in the event, and he also holds concerts from summer to autumn this year as well!!
We prepared new works and dispatched instruction staff to completely destroy “Nozomi Welfare Working Center” in Minamisanriku Town. Although they used to make papers by hand, a paper pressing machine was donated and now paper making is the major job of this center.
Miyagi Division of Inclusion Japan Started Activities to Support the Affected Areas

From Nov last year, our activities receive the earthquake-related national grant as “the Project to Develop a Structure of Mutual Support in the Community” with assistance from Miyagi Prefecture. We performed personnel training, mental care group work, dispatch of clinical psychotherapists to individuals, symposium with peer supporters and other trainings mainly in Minamisanriku Town, and organized “Community Welfare Forum” in Mar.

This group work triggered creation of a bond among people, necessary for them to continue living in the affected area.
In “Community Welfare Forum in Miyagi,” we requested people who offered welfare services in a variety of forms as we were definitely willing to hear their speeches. They shared their initiatives with us.

Miyagi Division of Inclusion Japan Started Activities to Support the Affected Areas
Miyagi Division of Inclusion Japan Started Activities to Support the Affected Areas

Starting from last summer, “Kids Club” cares disabled children in Minamisanriku Town during children’s long vacations. It was managed by Miyagi Division of Inclusion Japan from the winter vacation, operating “Winter Vacation Kids’ Club” and “Spring Vacation Kids’ Club.” During this summer vacation, two employees were dispatched from Tokyo Division, while “Summer Vacation Kids’ Club” was offered every weekday and Saturday together with employees of Miyagi Division of Inclusion Japan. We plan to continue the service as the formal and legally compliant one.

Takarazuka Division of Inclusion Japan contributed a large sum of donations for this activity.
What I felt from the current situations of the affected areas and support for them

Along the coast hit by Tsunami, many municipalities have problems for choosing a relocation site and they still do not have plans to relocate their populations to an upland. When we think if “they can start a life in a restored house in one year,” that is difficult in reality. Nevertheless, they “still want to continue living in the area,” and they are currently discussing how disabled people should live with their families in the community and what they can do to make the community more comfortable.

In a questionnaire in one region, more than half of the respondents answered that they were “disturbed with bias,” and they wished “people would better understand about their disabled children in the community.” Some also answered that they wanted “their children to participate in local events” and “to live in the community they were brought up.” All of these show many people still have low understanding about disabled people and it remains difficult for disabled people to live in the community, while social resources are limited.

It was the same in evacuation centers. Many people said their “family could not live in an evacuation center” and they “couldn’t go to an evacuation center in order to avoid bothering other people.”
At last...
What I felt with the support for the affected areas

Miyagi Division of Inclusion Japan currently provides personal support on one hand, while developing the foundation of welfare in the affected areas together with coordinators of other divisions of Inclusion Japan on the other hand. Their purpose is not restoring what are lost

but achieving a “society where disabled people and their families can fulfill their lives in the community” and “rich welfare in the community” by making even a step or two forward to improve the situation, with the support from advisors in Tokyo, Niigata, Iwate and Miyagi to the affected areas.

We should always act by thinking about how we’d like to live in the community and how we can change the community, instead of noticing them only after a disaster.