

I. Background of the project

A. Background of the assistance by the JRCS

In 2012, the Nursing Department of the Japanese Red Cross Society (hereinafter referred to as “JRCS”) and the Japanese Red Cross College of Nursing (hereinafter referred to as “JRCCN”) jointly conducted a study subsidized by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. The study was about evaluating functions of community’s health safety and risk management systems and improvement of its quality; and response to the public health needs of citizens who were evacuated from the areas near the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant and living in Iwaki City (Urata, Takada, Naiki, 2012).

The purpose of the study was to smoothly provide public health services to people who evacuated from Futaba County, Fukushima Prefecture to Iwaki City, Fukushima Prefecture by revitalizing public health centers in Fukushima Prefecture. It is needless to say that enough assistance was not provided for the evacuees from this study and continuous assistance to them was still necessary. The Nursing Department of the JRCS and the JRCCN took this situation seriously. In spring of 2012, both parties started to consider how assistance activities should be provided for the people who evacuated from the neighboring areas of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant to Iwaki City, Fukushima Prefecture. During the consideration period, Namie Town, which is one of the eight towns and villages in Futaba County, asked the JRCS for assistance. Namie Town was struggling to secure public health nurses. The pattern of living locations of the evacuees from Namie Town was different from that of the evacuees from other affected municipalities and this made it difficult for the Namie Municipal Government to figure out the well-being and health conditions of their citizens. Therefore, the JRCS and the JRCCN decided to provide assistance to Namie Town since they had requested support and highly needed assistance.

B. Reasons for choosing Namie Town

After the announcement of the reviewed evacuation areas by the Japanese government in April 2012 (Cabinet Office's Team in Charge of Assisting the Lives of Disaster Victims, 2013), many evacuees from Okuma Town, Futaba Town, Tomioka Town and Namie Town were living in Iwaki City.

At that time, Namie Town had the following issues:

1) Namie Town faced difficulty in securing public-health related human resources.

Of these four municipalities, only Namie Town did not regularly dispatch or station public health nurses or clinical nurses to or in Iwaki City.

2) Namie Town faced difficulty in providing public health services because its evacuees were living dispersedly in Iwaki City.

Of these four municipalities, only Namie Town did not have temporary housing for its evacuees in Iwaki City. The evacuees were living in private rental housing units rented by the prefectural government for them. If they lived in the same premises of temporary housing that usually had a meeting room, it would be easy for them to form a new community and for the municipal government to provide administrative services. However, the rental housing units were dispersed in Iwaki City and this made it difficult for the evacuees to interact with one another and form their community.

3) Namie Town faced difficulty in rebuilding the communities of Namie Town because the evacuees might be settled dispersedly in more than one location in the future.

Since the government announced the reviewed evacuation areas, three areas have been mixed in Namie Town: (1) difficult-to-return area; (2) restricted residential area; and (3) evacuation-order-cancel preparation area. Due to this, the evacuees from Namie Town are likely to continue to live dispersed in more than one location. In the area which was designated as evacuation-order-cancel preparation area of Namie Town, about 40% of the Namie citizens used to live before the nuclear accident. However, the quickest route to this area from outside Namie Town runs through the

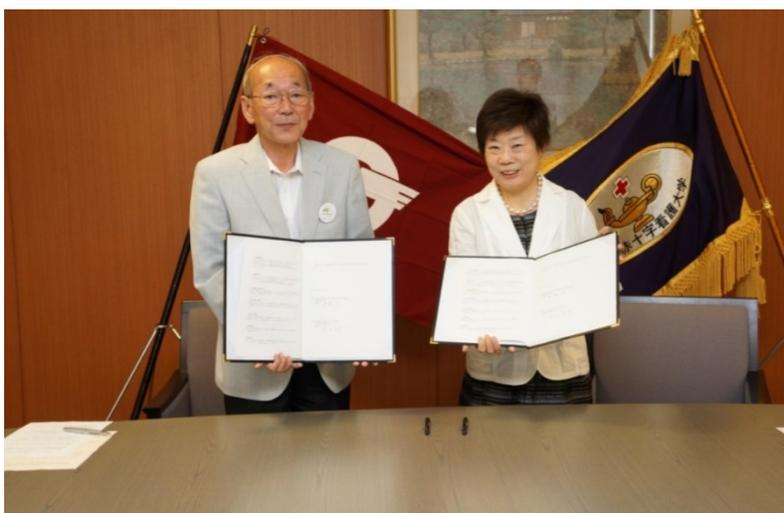
difficult-to-return area with high level of radioactivity and this makes their early return to the area difficult.

For these reasons, the way of providing public health services by the municipal government to the evacuees who were dispersedly living in many locations was a serious issue.

C. Preparations for starting the health interview survey project

Against this background, the Namie Municipal Government, the JRCS and the JRCCN concluded an agreement to conduct the project for one year (October 1, 2012 – September 30, 2013). The JRCS estimated the amount of funds and the number of staff which would be necessary for the project and then made a plan. In terms of role sharing, the JRCS and the JRCCN agreed that the necessary funds would be financed by the JRCS using the donations through Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world to support the survivors of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami; and the JRCCN would be responsible for creating a framework and operating the project. The signing ceremony for the project was attended by Mr. Tamotsu Baba, Mayor of Namie Town and held on September 18, 2012 at the JRCCN.

<Photo 1: Signing ceremony>



D. Damage in Namie Town, the status quo and prospects for the future

Namie Town was affected by the intensity 6 upper of the seven Japanese seismic scales in the Great East Japan Earthquake, and the over-15-meter-high tsunami inundated 6km² of the town. This disaster totally destroyed 651 houses (of which, 586 houses were washed away by the tsunami and 65 houses were destroyed by the earthquake), about 1,000 business offices were affected, 182 people died (of which 31 were missing and one was crushed to death by a collapsed house). Due to the nuclear accident, all of about 21,000 citizens of Namie Town were evacuated. As of February 2016, 3,200 evacuees were still living in temporary housing and 5,000 evacuees in private rental housing units rented by the prefectural government for them. The protracted evacuation caused as many as 378 earthquake-related deaths (Namie Town, 2016).

As of April 30, 2015, the population of Namie Town was 21,020. Of which, 6,415 (30.5%) evacuated to outside the Fukushima Prefecture and 14,605 (69.4%) evacuated within the prefecture. The evacuees in the prefecture live in Fukushima City (23.2%*), Iwaki City (19.5%*), Nihonmatsu City (14.4%*) and Koriyama City (11.9%*). Cities of Iwaki and Koriyama are still having more evacuees from Namie Town (Namie Town, April 30, 2015).

(* Ratio to the citizens who evacuated from Namie Town and were living inside Fukushima Prefecture)

In April 2012, the Namie Municipal Government developed “Namie Town’s Vision for Recovery” regarding directions for rebuilding lives of the citizens and rehabilitation of the town. Following this vision, “Recovery Plan for Namie Town (first plan)” was developed in October 2012 about specific efforts to realize the vision. The plan’s basic principles for the recovery are: (1) To rebuild lives of all citizens of Namie Town (Recovery of people); (2) To rebuild Namie, our hometown -Responsibility for taking over and handing over the heritage- (Recovery of the town): and (3) To make use of the survivors’ experiences for the next generation and Japan -Abandoning of nuclear power generation and disaster preparedness- (P. 26, Namie Town, 2012).

The “Recovery Plan for Namie Town (first plan)” prepared in October 2012 expects the current evacuation order to be lifted in March 2017 (P. 11, Namie Town, 2012; P. 1,

Namie Town a, 2014). Following this assumption, the Namie Municipal Government is preparing for its citizens' return to the town while supporting their current lives. In November 2013, the "full-scale decontamination" of the town started. As of December 2015, of all the 34 administrative areas of the town, seven areas were decontaminated. The decontamination was completed in 34% of the housing lands, 36% of the agricultural lands, 47% of the forests and 67% of the roads of the town.

Furthermore, the removal of the damaged properties is ongoing. As for the infrastructure, water supply and sewage systems are scheduled to be recovered by March 2017. The roads have also been gradually repaired and reopened. With regards to the secondary and tertiary industries, 35% of business operators of the town reopened their business as of February 2016. As for the primary industry, farming of rice and vegetables was resumed and the products have been sold if they pass the residual radiation testing. However, the fishing industry is still in a phase of test fishing.

Since 2014, public housing for the survivors has been built. About 25,000 housing units are planned to be built. From December, some citizens of the town have started to live in the public housing and the municipal government is working to form a temporary municipality mainly in the cities of Nihonmatsu, Minamisoma and Iwaki in Fukushima Prefecture. When "Recovery Plan for Re-creating Namie Town" was developed in 2014, the population of the town after lifting the evacuation order was expected to be 2,500 households or 5,000 people (23% of the population at the time of the earthquake and tsunami) (P. 10, Namie Town, 2014).

The recovery plan refers to "what should be prepared by March 2017 before the evacuation order is expected to be lifted." Based on this, efforts such as decontamination, infrastructure recovery and radiation measurement have been made for the citizens' return to Namie Town (P. 14-30, Namie Town, 2014). A committee of experts for Namie Town reviewed and evaluated these efforts objectively five times from September 2015 and made their recommendations to Namie Town for necessary steps (Yoshida, 2016). The committee's report says that it will be six years in 2016 from the earthquake and tsunami and if the return to Namie Town is further postponed, it will mentally hurt the town citizens. The report goes on to say that the resumption of the citizens' living and making livelihoods in the town is believed to be the best way to

recover the environment of the entire town. The committee states that efforts for rehabilitating Namie Town including its difficult-to-return area need to be accelerated. For returning to the town in March 2017, the municipal government is working to solve priority issues and trying to realize the temporary overnight stay by the citizens as early as possible by planning and taking necessary steps.