

Save the Children's Response for Children and Families:

The Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

July 2011



Background: On March 11, 2011 a 9.0 magnitude earthquake struck the northeast of Japan, immediately followed by a massive tsunami. The disasters caused devastating human and physical damage along a large section of Japan's northeast coast, especially in the Miyagi, Iwate and Fukushima Prefectures, and are among the most severe ever facing Japan. The crisis has been compounded by damage to nuclear power plants that resulted in large-scale evacuations and a state of atomic power emergency being declared by the Government of Japan.

Save the Children's Response: Save the Children began mobilizing immediately after the disaster struck. We found a need for child-focused programs for children affected or displaced by the earthquake and tsunami.

To date, our impact for children has included:

- Save the Children established 19 child-friendly spaces, which help girls and boys regain a sense of normalcy by giving them a place to play, socialize and begin to recover. These spaces served over 800 children in Miyagi and Iwate. Child-Friendly Spaces also enabled parents to concentrate on recovery needs knowing that their children were safe. With evacuation centers closing down gradually, the child-friendly spaces continue to operate in five locations.
- Supported schools in time for the start of the new term, in coordination with the Board of Education in Miyagi as well as assisted children's return to school by preparing up to 5,000 "back-to-school" kits of materials that children lost in the earthquake and tsunami.
- Helped provide lunches in 19 kindergartens, primary and junior high schools, benefiting approximately 3,300 children.
- Provided a wide range of other support, including mobile theatres; temporary toilet facilities at schools with damaged waste water systems; and essential hygiene items for displaced families.
- Continued to identify partners, relief agencies, and authorities in and around the impact zone to assess the services available and to efficiently meet the needs of children and families.

"Save the Children will ensure children's needs are met and that they can participate meaningfully in the recovery process. We have been supporting children and their communities from the first hours following the disaster, and will continue to support them on the long road to recovery." Hiro Miyashita, Save the Children's Emergency Response Team Leader

Looking Forward for Children - Our Five-Year Strategy: Given the scale of the disasters and the urgent needs, Save the Children has committed to a five-year response strategy. *We aim to support the recovery of children and their caregivers in the aftermath of the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami and to enable children to be active agents in inspiring breakthroughs in the way children are treated in emergency preparedness planning, disaster risk reduction and during emergency response.*

Save the Children is focusing our recovery programming on three critical areas in which the agency can play the most valuable role in the affected areas:

- **Child protection:** Supporting the psychosocial recovery of children and their caregivers.
- **Education:** Supporting learning environments and opportunities that facilitate children's educational, cognitive and social development.
- **Creating Child-Friendly Environments:** Promoting safe and child-friendly communities through increased participation of children in the rebuilding process in the affected areas.

We plan to directly reach approximately 100,000 children, and many more through advocacy, research and creating more child-friendly environments. Our programs will be implemented primarily in six coastal cities in Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures, which suffered from the most severe damage due to the earthquake and ensuing tsunami. In addition, select activities will also take place in Fukushima Prefecture, according to needs and safe access, and in areas to where children from Fukushima Prefecture have been moved, such as Yamagata or Ibaraki Prefectures.

Child Protection: Save the Children will help children regain a sense of normalcy through play zones in temporary housing settlements and other areas, and will enable children affected by the nuclear crisis to access safe, outdoor play areas. We will also support a range of child care service providers, ensuring that they can continue to provide adequate and appropriate care for children.

Education: Save the Children will provide targeted support to address the specific needs of damaged or otherwise affected schools. It will also establish two innovative programs for children at risk of not continuing their studies or who need extra educational support: financial support for children whose parents have lost their livelihoods and online tutoring for displaced children.

Child-Friendly Environments: Save the Children will establish child-led clubs, and organize children's events. Using children's design input, Save the Children will renovate buildings for use as SOFT Centers (Speaking Out From Tohoku). All of these interventions will enable children to meaningfully engage in disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness and response planning, and the rebuilding process. Save the Children will also establish the Sendai Institute for Children in Emergencies as a global center of expertise, bringing together learning from the Great East Japan earthquake and other disasters, and promoting research, innovation and best practices to ensure emergency response and recovery programs best serve children in need.

Save the Children's strategy will be undertaken through a combined approach of direct implementation and partnerships, including a Community Grants Initiative that will support local organizations' efforts in each of the areas above. We will strengthen partnerships with government and corporations, and facilitate partnerships, in order to ensure the widest impact. We will also harness the great energy, skills and determination of communities themselves to rebuild.

Save the Children Japan was established in 1986. It has supported children in difficult circumstances to ensure their survival, development, protection and participation. Save the Children Japan has operated both development and emergency response programs across the Asian region, including in the Philippines, Nepal, Thailand, Vietnam, India, Mongolia, Myanmar and Afghanistan.



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