

<< AMDA's Three-Year Program of Supporting Tohoku's Recovery >>

In May 2011, AMDA shifted its activities in the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami from emergency relief to recovery. Since then, AMDA has launched various projects to support people in the disaster-stricken areas, and brought the new projects together under the name of "Three-Year Program of Supporting Tohoku's Recovery". This Activity Report summarizes AMDA's recovery activities carried out under this three-year program.

Currently, the following are up and running projects:

1. Dispatching Medical Volunteers: AMDA supports hospitals in the affected areas by sending volunteer doctors, nurses, and others related to the field.
2. "AMDA Otsuchi Health Support Center": AMDA contributes to the enhancement of health and the rebuilding of the community for the people in Otsuchi. The Center is also expected to serve not only the people of Otsuchi but the entire Tohoku region by reaching out to neighboring communities similarly affected by last year's disaster.

Activities at the Center are:

 - a. Treatment at Acupuncture Clinic
 - b. Local events in the "Salon"
 - c. Activities to unite neighboring communities in their joint rehabilitative efforts
3. Supporting the Young in Tohoku: AMDA supports the young people in the affected areas who will play the main role in rebuilding their communities in the future. AMDA encourages them to communicate with outside communities in Japan and foreign countries so that they would be aware of the value of human networks and mutual assistance in their effort of recovery.
 - a. AMDA International Scholarship for High School Students in Tohoku
 - b. Supporting AMDA High School Club in Otsuchi
 - c. Sports and cultural exchange
 - d. Sending school supplies and uniforms
4. Ad Hoc Projects: AMDA also conducts ad-hoc projects as needs arise.

1. Dispatching Medical Volunteers

■ Second dispatch in winter (December 2011 – January 2012)

AMDA sends medical volunteers to the two public hospitals in the affected areas in Tohoku three times a year – in spring, summer and winter -- to support local doctors and nurses and enable them to take days off. Following the success of the first dispatch to the Otsuchi Hospital (Otsuchicho, Iwate Prefecture) and the Shizugawa Hospital (Minamisanrikucho, Miyagi Prefecture) in summer of 2011, as reported in the Activities Report-II, AMDA again sent medical staff to the Shizugawa Hospital in winter 2011/2012.

<Number of dispatched volunteers – Summer and Winter>

Occupation of the volunteers		Doctors	Nurses & Assistant Nurses	Pharmacists	Pshycho-therapists	Medical Students	Nursing Students	Accupunc-ture therapists	Coordi-nators
Hospitals	Otsuchi Hospital (Iwate)	2						2	
	Shizugawa Hospital (Miyagi)	1	14	1	1	21	25		2
	Winter	1	6				2		1

<Period of dispatch>

- 1st Dispatch (summer): 1st May – 18th September 2011
 2nd Dispatch (winter): 5th December 2011 – 31st January 2012

<Daily operations at the Shizugawa Hospital in winter 2011/2012>

- Duty hours for dispatched workers: 9am – 5pm on weekdays. (*)
- Sections the volunteers were assigned to: Internal medicine, surgery, pediatrics
- Average number of patients seen in the above sections: 200 patients / day
- Major diagnoses of the patients treated in the Hospital: Hypertension, diabetes, flu, chronic illnesses
- Tasks of the dispatched nurses: Measuring vital signs before the first consultation, escorting patients from reception to consulting rooms, assisting the hospital's nurses in the vaccination of children(**), etc.

(*): Some of them also took part in the night and weekend shifts.

(**): In winter, many visited the hospital for influenza vaccinations.

Under the leadership of the head nurse of the Shizugawa Hospital, AMDA's volunteer nurses were assigned to the sections listed above. Medical and nursing students also worked as assistants to the nursing staff by making medical interviews, calling the names of the patients in the waiting room and escorting them, sorting out medical records to prepare for next day appointments and so forth.

<Status of recovery in the hospital>

Eight out of nine dispatched medical volunteers in winter had previously experienced working as AMDA's volunteers in Tohoku immediately after the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami and also in the first dispatch in summer 2011. One of these volunteers, Ms. Kikuchi, nurse, told us about the conditions at Shizugawa in December.

"I could see many signs of recovery from the disaster. For example, the amount of debris from the earthquake and tsunami seems to have been reduced compared to the past summer. I also noticed that construction had started in the area. The number of fishing vessels seemed to be increasing, and some local residents made comments such as, 'I resumed seaweed harvesting', 'I finally reopened my fish sausage factory.' However, I also heard some residents say 'My son cannot find a job', or 'I cannot afford receiving vaccination.' Many victims are looking for a job and being pressed for money."

"The Shizugawa Hospital started to construct a new temporary hospital building, but the construction is running behind schedule. Though it was originally planned to be completed by December 2011, it is now expected to be finished by the end of the 2011 fiscal year, in March 2012. I also heard that a meeting was held recently to explain to the local residents on the relocation of the hospital to an upland open space. As my activity was limited within the hospital, most of the residents I met were those who were able to come to the hospital on their own or with the support of their family. My concern is that there would be people who are not able to come to the hospital without assistance and don't have family to help them."

"There are some positive changes in the working conditions at the Shizugawa Hospital. For example, hospital office clerks now work as receptionists in the mornings, taking the task over from nurses. Also, the home-visit nursing section is sending three part-time volunteer nurses to the hospital semiweekly, and some volunteer nurses come from Sendai twice a week. Despite these extra staff, the number of holidays for nurses has not changed significantly since last summer. A local nurse told me, 'If I could take a few days off, I would be able to recharge myself.' The shortage of local doctors was a serious problem. There were just two or three physicians on duty each day. Due to the shortage of doctors, patients often have to wait over two hours, which is burdensome to the elderly. I saw the patients and their attending families get exhausted when



Staff and volunteers at Shizugawa Hospital



Temporary hospital building



Pharmacy of the temporary hospital

consultation was over. The working environment in the hospital was harsh in winter. Due to the severe cold, the water pipes froze and the water in the temporary toilet also froze in the morning and stopped flowing.”

Even under the difficult conditions reported by Ms. Kikuchi, AMDA believes that it is noteworthy that the dispatch of medical staff has enabled the local nurses to take days off during the summer and the New Year's holidays. However, shortage of manpower will continue to be a serious problem. As some nurses left the hospital at the end of year 2011, now even older nurses have to work the night shift. Though outwardly the nurses remain cheerful and friendly, some of them are suffering from insomnia and anxiety and taking medicines to ease their symptoms.



Temporary toilet in Minamisanriku

<Next plan of dispatch>

AMDA's next dispatch of medical volunteers is planned from 18 March to 13 April 2012, when 1 doctor, 3 nurses and 1 pharmacist will be sent for about four weeks.

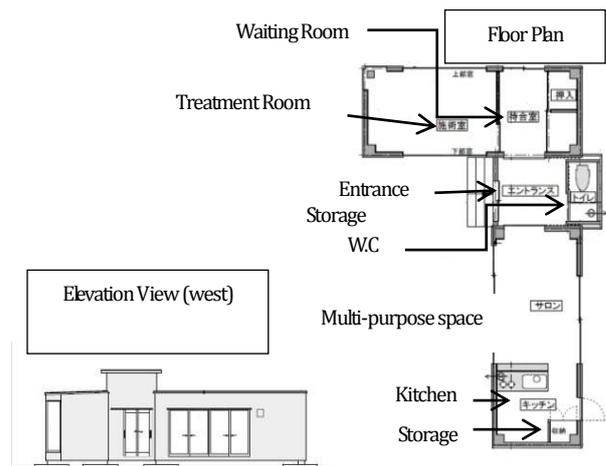
2. AMDA Otsuchi Health Support Center

■ Opening (December 2011)

The idea of creating a place for the well-being of the people whose lives were disrupted by the earthquake and tsunami was conceived as early as late April 2011, when AMDA started planning to shift its activities from emergency relief to rehabilitation. This idea has become a reality as the project of “AMDA Otsuchi Health Support Center.” AMDA has supported the people in Otsuchi in constructing the Center, and will continue to support them for the next three years until they start managing the project on their own by setting up an independent NGO.

Due to the unique method of construction, it took only a month and a half from its ground work in early November 2011 until the completion. The AMDA Otsuchi Health Support Center formally opened on 18th December 2011 with a small ceremony held by the people who had worked together in its construction.

The Center is uniquely designed by the Japanese architect Seiji Terakawa as a set of self-contained inter-connecting units. This construction method suits the tsunami-affected areas where ground readjustment is still going on. The Center consists of an acupuncture clinic run by a local acupuncture therapist and a multi-purpose room for such events as social gatherings and lectures. AMDA hopes the Center will serve as a community Center for Otsuchi. After the tsunami had struck the town, many people in Otsuchi were forced to move to temporary housing or to other safer areas and have lost contact with their old friends and neighbors. It will be a great pleasure for AMDA if people in Otsuchi could visit the Center to receive therapy, chat with friends and neighbors, and participate in the Center's Programs, thereby regaining enough strength to rebuild their own life and the community.



<From Ground Work to Opening>

- **2nd November 2011:** Ground work started.
- **13rd November 2011:** The framework of the Center was completed. In keeping with Japanese tradition, staff

held a small ceremony to celebrate the house-raising. People in Otsuchi had kindly helped AMDA's staff to prepare food and "mochi" (rice cake) the day before. A lot of local people, including those who happened to pass by, joined the ceremony and enjoyed catching small mochis thrown from the top of the framework.

- **14th November 2011:** Exterior and interior finish work started. Because of the scarcity of building materials after the disaster and the unstable winter weather, construction work had to stop every so often. However, thanks to the hard work of the local construction company and the association of workers in Otsuchi, construction picked up speed in the later stage. Volunteers helped make wooden benches by hand, interior decorating, and setting up the wooden deck outside.
- **13rd December 2011:** Completion and handover.



Local people making "mochi" cakes.



Throwing "mochi" on the frame-raising ceremony



Setting up wooden deck in front of the Center

<Opening Ceremony on 18th December 2011>

Staff started the final touches to the wooden deck at 7am, finishing just before the ceremony started. The Center opened, even though some of the work was as yet unfinished. Mr. Akikazu Koike, Head of the Volunteers Center at AMDA Headquarters, came over from Okayama to congratulate the people who were engaged in the construction of the Center and the student volunteers who spared their time to help construction work. After a shrine ritual, which is a Japanese tradition commonly seen when a new building is built, there were entertainments such as mochi pounding, an outdoor lunch, singing and dancing by the local people. After all these events, the Center officially opened and the acupuncture clinic started treating patients.



Traditional dance at the opening ceremony



TV crew interviewing the acupuncture therapist



AMDA's staff and volunteers

■ Acupuncture Clinic has treated nearly 1,000 patients

AMDA met Mrs. Kanako Sasaki, an acupuncture therapist whose residence and clinic had been washed away by the tsunami, during the emergency relief period. AMDA started to collaborate with her in providing medical treatment to the victims in the evacuation shelter where AMDA was working. She continued seeing her patients at her temporary clinic in the evacuation shelter, and in December she re-opened her clinic in the AMDA Health Support Center. From May 2011 to the end of February 2012, Mrs. Sasaki treated about 100 patients per month in average, 986 patients in total. Exercise therapy was launched at the clinic in February 2012.

Number of patients treated at the acupuncture clinic (May 2011 – February 2012)

May	56
June	118
July	144
August	52
September	98
October	118
November	111
December	126
January	73
February	90
Total	986



Mrs. Sasaki treating a patient in her new clinic in AMDA Otsuchi Health Support Center

■ Events in “Salon”

Since the opening, there have been various events in the “Salon”, as the community space in the Center is known:

- Health check for the elderly
- Seasonal events like Christmas gathering for children
- Japanese tea ceremony
- Japanese traditional card games, using the local dialect
- Craftwork classes

243 people in total visited the Salon from 15th December 2011 to 13th February 2012. On the opening day, AMDA conducted a questionnaire survey. According to its result, older people want such events as body exercise, yoga lessons and health lectures in the Center, whereas children want to play sports. Staff of the Center will try to listen to the voices of local people and hope to realize their wishes as much as possible, in an effort to contribute to the physical and mental well-being of the people in Otsuchi.

■ Helping to build a bond between two affected towns: Otsuchi and Kesen'numa (March 2012)

AMDA encourages the affected communities in Tohoku to work together toward their common goal of recovery from the disaster. AMDA tries to provide them with opportunities of sharing and exchanging resources to ease and speed up the recovery. This process will help the people to forge stronger bonds among themselves. As the first step, AMDA organized a cultural exchange event for the people in Otsuchi (Miyagi prefecture) and Kesen'numa (Iwate prefecture) early in March, one year after the earthquake and tsunami had hit these cities.

The event, entitled “Building a Bond between Otsuchi and Kesen'numa”, was held on 4th March in Kesen'numa. 54 people in Otsuchi, where AMDA has been working since after the earthquake and tsunami, visited Kesen'numa to perform their traditional drumming, music and dance. And a young people's group in Kesen'numa performed songs. When the “Usuzawa Shishiodori” dancing team from Otsuchi paraded along the shopping street in Kesen'numa, people



AMDA's volunteer doctor checking blood pressure for the elderly



Christmas party for children

came out of the shops and clapped hands. A sense of unity was created as the parade was welcomed by the cheering crowd.

People in Kesen'numa told AMDA: "Today I got lots of good energy and encouragement from the people of Otsuchi. I don't want this to be a one-off event", "I immediately felt something in common with people from Otsuchi. I felt tears in my eyes", "Talking with people who experienced the same disaster is consoling", "Next time we want to visit Otsuchi and perform our music and dance." A person in Otsuchi sent a message to AMDA: "It will be great if this bond between Otsuchi and Kesen'numa would expand into whole Tohoku and if people would work together hand in hand. Today was the first step toward this goal."



People from Otsuchi and Kesen'numa



"Usuzawa Shishiodori" parade in Kesen'numa

3. Supporting the Young in Tohoku

■ AMDA Scholarship for High School Students in Tohoku (from April 2011)

During the emergency relief period, AMDA and the medical teams from Japan and abroad that were cooperating with AMDA, agreed on the idea of establishing a scholarship program for the local high school students who aspired to becoming a

medical profession in the future. In April 2011, the scholarship project was formally announced and fundraising started. Thanks to the great response from the public including some generous donors, by the end of September 2011 AMDA had paid the first year's grant to 74 students from 5 high schools, 1 unified lower and secondary school and 1 vocational technical school. Each student receives 15,000 yen / month (180,000 yen/year) with no repayment obligation until she/he graduates from school. Under this project, AMDA preserves the right to choose schools but the selection of beneficiaries is left up to each school's discretion.

<Profile of the scholarship recipients in the 7 schools>

Type of school	Grade	Number of recipients
High school	3 rd grade	19
	2 nd grade	20
	1 st grade	20
Unified lower & upper secondary school	various	10
Vocational school	4 th grade	13
	3 rd grade	1
	2 nd grade	1
Total		84

<Ambitions>

Future hope	Number of students
Doctor	10
Nurse	26
Physical therapist	14
Occupational therapist	2
Clinical laboratory technician	3
Prosthetist	1
Radiological technician	1
Pharmacist	5
Maternity nurse	1
Caregiver	1
Health worker	1
Others	8

It is worth noting that the beneficiaries include Tohoku North Korean School students. The school's main building was badly damaged, but they opened its dormitory to the elderly in the neighborhood and delivered food and emergency supplies to evacuation shelters. AMDA thought the school's efforts deserved recognition and support, especially considering that schools for foreign residents are not treated equally by the School Education Act of Japan

and do not qualify to receive state subsidies even in times of disaster.

■ AMDA High School Club in Otsuchi started (June 2011)

The “AMDA High School Club in Otsuchi” was started by 11 high school students in Otsuchi. It began and continued to evolve as the youth group of the “AMDA Otsuchi Club” which was set up in the aftermath of the last year’s disaster. “AMDA Otsuchi Club” was started by 10 local people who volunteered to support AMDA’s staff working in Otsuchi, deliver local opinions and create opportunities for the town people of various ages to gather and mix with other communities.

<What is AMDA Club?> AMDA Otsuchi Club has become the eighth AMDA Club, following the AMDA Clubs in Kamakura (Kanagawa), Kobe (graduates of Kobe Jogakuin University), Kochi (Kochi), Fukuyama (Hiroshima), Takehara (Hiroshima), Tamano (Okayama) and Yubari (Hokkaido). All of these Clubs are organized by local people who are in full agreement with AMDA’s philosophy and its humanitarian activities are conducting volunteer activities on their own.

“AMDA High School Club in Okayama” has actively supported AMDA’s activities

for the affected regions in Tohoku by raising funds and volunteering. AMDA will support these High School Clubs in Okayama and Otsuchi help organize Sports and Cultural exchange programs.



High school students in Otsuchi supporting AMDA

■ Soccer exchange for junior high school children (2-6 August 2011)>

In August 2011, AMDA invited junior high school soccer teams from Tohoku to hold a sports Program in Okayama and Soja cities, both in Okayama prefecture. 46 children and 6 teachers from three junior high schools in Miyagi and Iwate prefectures in Tohoku visited Okayama, and more than 120 children and teachers from 4 junior high school in Okayama prefecture participated in the event. The children of Tohoku had not played soccer outdoors since the earthquake and tsunami. They played with their peers in Okayama and Soja over two days and enjoyed home-staying with the families of the children in Soja. A Buddhist temple, a generous supporter of AMDA, also offered their hall as their accommodation. This event provided a good opportunity for the children in Okayama and Soja to understand the reality of the affected cities over 1,000km away from Okayama prefecture. As a token of their friendship, children in Okayama prefecture gave hand-made key holders to their new friends from Tohoku. With the support of AMDA’s volunteers, children from Tohoku and Okayama enjoyed playing soccer together and nurtured new friendship. After the soccer event, children from Tohoku went to Hiroshima to visit the Peace Memorial Museum and listened to the A-bomb survivors’ talk. On their way back, they also visited Kobe to see how the city had recovered from the severe earthquake in 1995.

Children from Tohoku commented: “I was very happy to be able to play soccer on a beautiful pitch”, “It was wonderful to make new friends”, “I was surprised to know that there is so much sympathy and that there are so many people who care for us”, “I want to find something I can do for other people”, “We were encouraged to do whatever we could toward the recovery of Tohoku.”



Last day of the event (in Okayama)

■ ”KIZUNA” (Bond) Concert (March 2012)

AMDA invited Otsuchi High School Brass Band to Okayama and Hiroshima in March 2012 to perform with local high school brass bands. Two concerts entitled "Kizuna" meaning "bond" in Japanese, were held in Okayama and Hiroshima. Through the concerts, AMDA helped to convey sincere gratitude of the people in Otsuchi toward the people in Okayama and Hiroshima who have supported them in their very trying time. It offered the students of both sides with learning opportunities as they played the leading part in managing the whole event. The students from Otsuchi also had the opportunity of visiting the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. AMDA hopes that the event has given the young people an opportunity to strengthen their bond and awareness that they must take on the responsibility to create a peaceful and safe society for the future.

<Future Event>**Sending school uniforms to Otsuchi High School (Planned for April 2012)**

Nearly 80% of the students at Otsuchi High School lost their school uniforms in the tsunami. Otsuchi High School, one of the designated evacuation shelters in the aftermath of the disaster, was also the base of AMDS's emergency relief efforts. In response to a request from the schoolmaster, AMDA, in collaboration with its main donors in Okayama, will donate money for the students of Otsuchi High School to buy new school uniforms. 80 students will receive donations by the beginning of the spring school term in April 2012. This was the second time AMDA asked for donation to send school uniforms to Tohoku. In the spring of 2011, AMDA initiated a program calling upon Okayama people to help send school uniforms to the affected students in Tohoku. To this request, people of Okayama, including a department store, a local council and a clothing company answered with generous donation by sending uniforms to the affected schools in Tohoku.

4. Ad-Hoc Projects**■ Supporting homeless people in Sendai (January and March 2012)**

An increase in the number of homeless has recently become a serious problem in Tohoku. About 100 people in Sendai city are living on the street. After the disaster, these people had come to Sendai to take a job, but as soon as their employment contract expired they were out of work. They became homeless as they couldn't pay for temporary housing and have been taking shelter at Sendai Japan Railway station. To support them survive in the freezing cold weather, AMDA, in collaboration with its donors in Okayama and a local NGO in Sendai, provided them with 300 sleeping bags, 2,000 instant noodles and 2,000 disposable body warmers. Free hot meals were also served in the park. AMDA distributed aid supplies again in mid-March.



Delivering food in a park in Sendai in January 2012

■ Sending beds, hot-water bottles and blankets to a hospital in Kesen'numa (January 2012)

Hospitals in the affected area are still on their way to recovery. AMDA sent four beds to one of the hospitals in Kesen'numa. Hot-water bottles and blankets, which were given to AMDA by its donors, were also delivered to this hospital.



Hospital staffs receiving hot-water bottles and blankets.