

Final Report

TYPHOON HAGIBIS RESPONSE

Oct. 2019 - May 2020

actalliance



たった一人のためにでも、世界をつなげたい。
CWS JAPAN
Church World Service

Typhoon Hagibis¹ was an extremely devastating tropical cyclone that caused widespread destruction. It lasted from October 6-13, 2019 and was the strongest typhoon in decades to strike mainland Japan. In fact, it was one of the largest typhoons ever recorded.

Widespread torrential rains and strong winds led to flooding and landslides in many parts of central Japan. In just two days, Japan received 30-40% of its usual annual rainfall. Category 5 warnings "... to save your life" were issued, and more than 7 million people in 13 of Japan's 47 prefectures were warned to evacuate.

About a month before Typhoon Hagibis, Typhoon Faxai² struck the same area. With winds up to 210km/h, Faxai made landfall in the Kanto region on September 9. It was one of the strongest typhoons to hit the Japanese capital area in a decade. When Hagibis followed a few weeks later, it hit areas that were already vulnerable. For example, Hagibis tore off the temporary plastic sheeting that Japanese Self-Defense Force and firefighters had used to protect roofs that were torn off during Typhoon Faxai. Several more days of heavy rain followed and aggravated the situation. In Chiba Prefecture alone, more than 70,000 houses were fully or partly destroyed by the historic dual disasters.

For most people impacted by typhoons Faxai and Hagibis, the most severe damage was to the roofs on homes. Surprisingly, considering that Japan is highly developed and disaster prone, there is often a shortage of skilled workers after disasters. Roof repairs require skills, experience and risk beyond the capacity of most of the relief organizations who responded first. Gaps in recovery work quickly became evident. With the widespread damage leading to skyrocketing demand, poorer households could not afford repairs.

In the affected areas in Chiba Prefecture where volunteer groups were trying to be helpful, there was a shortage of volunteers to help families with even makeshift repairs like new or more plastic sheeting.

Hearing of this situation, CWS Japan decided to commit to serve this area, especially the most vulnerable people there.



Boso Peninsula
Tateyama City
Chiba

¹ AKA, Reiwa 1 East Japan Typhoon or Japan Typhoon No. 19 | 2019.

² AKA, Reiwa 1 Boso Peninsula Typhoon: 3 dead; 147 injured; 390,000+ people urged to evacuate; 934,000 households without power and Total damages from the typhoon in Japan are currently estimated at USD 8.12 billion.

RESPONSE OVERVIEW

CWS Japan and our partners focused our response in Tateyama City, which is at southern tip of the Boso Peninsula. With its mild climate, gentle sea breezes and resorts, the area is best known for tourism. However, after the sights and sound changed dramatically when blue plastic sheeted roofs and fallen trees everywhere after the two typhoons left their marks (see photo on the front cover of this report).

A key barrier to timely response was a lack of both skilled responders and volunteers.

In Tateyama City, the situation was so dire that the local Social Welfare Council closed its volunteer center because there were no volunteers to deploy. The temporary disaster waste site in Tateyama City was also closed subsequently. People were, in a way, on their own to recover.

Still, families needed help. Plastic roofing sheets from the first storm had to be repaired or replaced, and newly damaged roofs needed attention. Mold was growing rapidly, which is a health threat to everyone, especially older adults. The rain kept falling, keeping houses from drying out. Some families did not have the means to leave their damp and damaged houses, so they faced the risk of airborne mold spores.

CWS Japan and the National Christian Council in Japan, partnering as the ACT Japan Forum, led the response through the local Social Welfare Council. The response was implemented in cooperation with Operation Blessing Japan, whose experienced staff were especially helpful in volunteer management. With their help, volunteers from the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church and a local Anglican congregation local joined those from two local non-profits *Awa Bunka Isan* (cultural heritage) *Forum* and *Ossekai*. The volunteers canvassed affected neighborhoods and families to learn about immediate protection needs and immediate recovery priorities.



RESPONSE DETAILS

DEBRIS REMOVAL & ROOF REPAIRS

During the first three months of the response, in a joint home/yard restoration initiative, CWS and the ACT Japan Forum mobilized 179 volunteers to directly help 107 families. Out of everyone impacted by the dual typhoons, older adults needed the most help removing debris like fallen trees from their property. For these vulnerable households, debris removal is an encouraging and visible sign of recovery. And without the volunteers, this important first step would not have been possible.

While volunteers could help clear a lot of the debris, they could not manage the larger fallen trees. For safety and efficiency, CWS Japan mobilized Kazegumi Kanto, an association of professionals like carpenters and firefighters, to use heavy machinery, trucks and skilled operators.



Official statistics that were published in January showed that Typhoon Hagibis alone damaged 94,139 houses. As affected communities focused on their recovery, people in Tateyama City struggled. A limited number of carpenters and roofers were available to help. Some families learned that they would likely wait at least a year for permanent repairs. And even when these repairs would be done, one in three affected families did not have insurance that would cover the costs. Meanwhile, the temporary plastic sheeting that had been covering many homes was quickly becoming degraded and ineffective.

These conditions were the basis for prioritizing who needed help most. Because of generous donations to CWS Japan, the team was able to reach out further to secure help from church groups in Hiroshima as well as technical training for volunteers and community members to organize more durable and better secured plastic roofing. We secured technical information and education opportunities so that volunteers and community members could learn how to help vulnerable families, especially single older adults. By Christmas 2019, the situation was under control and follow-up work was transitioned to local partners, *Awa Bunka Isan Forum* and *Ossekai* and a new faith partner, St. Andrew's Anglican Church.

A key achievement for CWS Japan and ACT Japan Forum in this response is that new civil society partners have sustained their support to families. For example, by February 2020, Osekkai helped another 78 families repair their roofs with the improved materials and methods tested early on. Additionally, the St. Andrew's local parish priest was introduced personally by our CWS Program Director to the Tateyama City Social Welfare Council at their request for follow-up.

“CITIZEN SOCIAL WORKER” DEVELOPMENT

Through the process of prioritizing families who were especially vulnerable, another new partnership--with *Mission Karashidane* (mustard seed)¹--began.

Mission Karashidane is a social service organization focused on care and livelihood opportunities for people who are differently abled. In a joint initiative for Citizen Social Worker development, we developed a guidebook for self-education and practical action for people who want to engage responsibly during disaster response.

The inspiration for the initiative came from what we witnessed during the community canvassing. For a number of reasons, some of the most vulnerable community members--older adults with dementia or families with members who had special needs--were not prioritized for assistance. We saw these groups falling through the cracks of the response. Together with our faith and secular partners, we decided to focus on these households. Equipping citizens and volunteers to responsibly and expertly support these overlooked community members during a response would be key.²



The Citizen Social Worker Guidebook

Led by the CWS Japan team, the framework and guide for mutual self- and volunteer help in communities is now in place. Citizen social workers are the foundation of a more inclusive response methodology, which also relies on strengthened networking among churches, faith-based organizations and secular civil society. CWS Japan is grateful for the opportunity to create a toolkit and guidelines³ that will help make invisible vulnerable disaster victims more visible for the future.

In addition to the toolkit, CWS Japan also shared a disaster risk reduction lessons learned report in 2020 to highlight a variety of topics: the role of media in disaster response; structural flood mitigation and disaster waste management; help for the most vulnerable; and volunteering.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable_of_the_Mustard_Seed#Narrative

² This response's focus on a few vulnerable populations, has led to further study and consideration to also focus on migrants and minorities, when needed, in future humanitarian response efforts.

³ Because of COVID-19 movement restrictions, in-person training workshops had to be postponed indefinitely. However, an educational / training video was shared widely in May 2020.

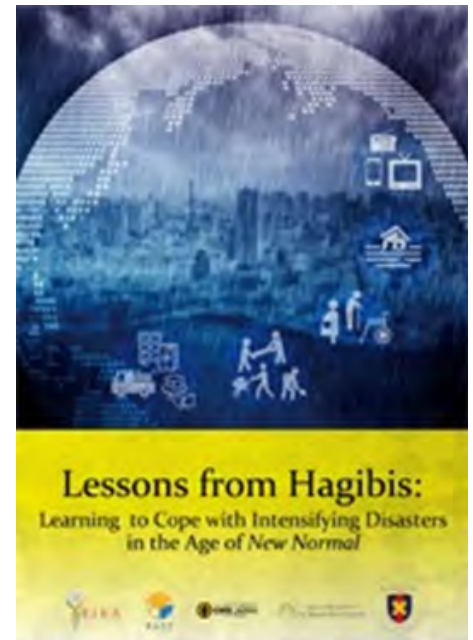
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION LESSONS LEARNED

Finally, since every disaster offers an opportunity to learn, and to enhance resilience towards future disasters, CWS Japan has published “Lessons from Hagibis: Learning to cope with intensifying disasters in the age of new normal.”

Key lessons learned included:

- comprehensive news broadcasts helped early evacuation
- in future responses, more attention must be paid to people with special needs¹
- a shortage of skilled volunteers affects early recovery
- with regard to infrastructure and government responsibilities, effective flood protection structures² and more space for responsibly-managed disaster waste are essential

[The report is available here.](#)



¹ There is growing recognition of this issue globally, especially as many countries have growing senior-citizen populations and greater awareness of the rights of people with disabilities. CWS is active in dialogues about and action on these issues.

² The types of structures, of course, vary from a highly developed country like Japan to less developed ones like Myanmar and Cambodia, for example. Nonetheless, the lesson applies and must be given as much attention as practically possible in local contexts and with local resources: government, civil society, et al.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

CWS is grateful for generous support from the United Church of Canada, the United Church of Christ, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Week of Compassion, Church of Brethren, and other donors who made our shared response to one of Japan's worst natural disasters in recent history possible. Contributions totaling 9,538,848 JPY (≈\$88,323) were essential to all aspects of the response success.

Date	Donor	(JPY)
Oct. 17, 2019	United Church of Canada / IBS Shadan	2,000,000
Nov. 8, 2019	Church of the Brethren	812,925
Nov. 13, 2019	Week of Compassion	2,698,250
Nov. 18, 2019	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	2,695,500
Nov. 26, 2019	United Church of Christ (CGMB) / IBS Shadan	1,000,000
Dec. 23, 2019	Rikko Jogakuin Secondary School	236,820
March 23, 2020	Fuchu Nakagawara Church	52,030
April 20, 2020	United Church of Christ Doshisha Church	43,323
TOTAL		9,538,848

Spending summary:

#	Inputs	Budget (USD)	Spending (JPY)	USD Equivalent
1	Home/yard repairs and restoration	\$32,407	2,702,310	\$25,021
2	Volunteer management / material sharing	\$46,296	3,583,910	\$33,184
3	Lessons/learning (info gathering & publishing)	\$5,556	600,000	\$5,556
Operations/Support				
1	CWS response coordinator	\$5,556	777,887	\$7,203
2	Coordination / indirect costs	\$8,981	970,000	\$8,981
3	Miscellaneous	\$1,204	130,000	\$1,204
Total		\$100,000	8,764,107	\$81,149
Balance			774,741	\$7,174

Note: Rikkyo Jogakuin Secondary School, Fuchu Nakagawara Church, United Church of Christ Doshisha Church, and the United Church of Christ have agreed that remaining funds can be used for ongoing COVID-19 response for the vulnerable people in Japan, as well as for future ACT Japan Forum emergency responses in Japan.

