JCIE

Strengthening US-Japan NGO Partnerships on Humanitarian Responses — Lessons from 3/11

Japan Center for International Exchange

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Lessons from 3/11

Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE)

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The Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE) is an independent, nonprofit, and nonpartisan policy institute that works to encourage deeper international cooperation in responding to regional and global challenges. Operating with offices in Tokyo and New York, JCIE sponsors policy research and dialogue on cutting-edge issues in international relations, leadership exchanges, and initiatives to strengthen the contributions of civil society to domestic and international governance.

Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/Japan)
4-9-17 Minami Azabu, Minato-ku
Tokyo 106-0047 Japan
www.jcie.or.jp

Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/USA)
135 West 29th Street, Suite 303
New York NY 10001 USA
www.jcie.org

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INTRODUCTION

Hundreds of Japanese and overseas organizations teamed up to respond to Japan's massive March 2011 disaster—a 9.0 magnitude earthquake that struck the Tohoku region, followed by a tsunami that reached nearly 40 meters in height, and the Fukushima nuclear meltdown. For many of these groups, their work together was a one-time effort in response to a calamity of unthinkable proportions, one so extraordinary that it came to be known simply as 3/11. But for a number of these groups, especially Japanese and Western nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)[1] regularly involved in disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, 3/11 provided the impetus to forge partnerships that can improve their capacity to save lives, decrease suffering, and accelerate recovery after future disasters.

Their experiences in responding together to 3/11 show that there is greater potential than ever for international partnerships between Japanese and Western civil society organizations to undertake humanitarian activities in third countries, especially in Asia, as well as at home. Realizing this potential, however, requires us to learn what worked in the 3/11 response, what failed, and what must be done to create a more supportive atmosphere that better equips Japanese NGOs and their overseas counterparts to forge and sustain productive partnerships.

This report focuses on how NGOs in Japan and the United States can build on the lessons from the 3/11 experience in order to work together more closely and effectively. While a broad range of civil society organizations played important roles in the 3/11 response, this report places special focus on NGOs that are regularly involved with humanitarian issues as well as those focusing on international development, since they are most likely to mobilize for future disasters elsewhere around the globe. Strengthening their capacity to coordinate and, when mutually advantageous, to partner in their response to humanitarian emergencies around the world will not only ensure more effective humanitarian assistance but should also contribute to a more robust bilateral relationship.

Why Partner on Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Assistance?

Civil society's role in humanitarian responses continues to grow . . .

Recent trends suggest the time is ripe for deeper and more effective nongovernmental cooperation on disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. Over the past two decades, the international landscape has changed dramatically and NGOs have become more central players in large-scale disaster responses around the world, complementing the efforts by governments and international organizations. For instance, after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, nearly 40 percent of all overseas funding was raised by or channeled through NGOs.[2] Seven years later, overseas NGOs and other civil society organizations mobilized substantially more funds for Japan's 3/11 response than all foreign governments and UN agencies combined, collecting more than $1 billion.[3]

. . . the risk of disasters is increasing, especially in Asia . . .

Meanwhile, the threat of natural and manmade disasters has grown, particularly in East Asia. Of course, the region has always been disaster prone. Over the 30-year period through 2011, approximately 55 percent of the people affected by disasters around the world lived in East Asia, and the region accounted for 42 percent of worldwide economic damage stemming from disasters, a staggering $893 billion.[4] But now, climate change, rapid urbanization, and the shift of populations to coastal areas are putting more and more people in Asia at risk. Indeed, a 2013 study by the insurance firm Swiss Re found that 7 of the top 10 urban areas worldwide that face the greatest risk from disaster are in East Asia.[5]

. . . and partnerships enable NGOs to expand their reach and better stretch their resources.

Partnerships require a considerable investment of time and energy, so NGOs cannot afford to work with one another just for the sake of partnership. However, it is clear that in many instances the benefits far outweigh the costs. Working together in a strategic manner allows NGOs to respond more nimbly in places where they do not have an established presence. For example, a Japanese NGO without an office in a country facing a humanitarian emergency can take advantage of an American partner's offices, expertise, and local support structure without the time and expense that would otherwise be required to start up a project on its own in a new region. Both partners can save considerably by sharing costs—office space, vehicles, security, and local support staff—allowing them to do more with less. In addition to the NGOs directly engaged in partnerships, the governments or donors funding the project benefit by being able to have a greater impact with their aid and by reaching areas they otherwise may not have been able to assist. Most important of all, the recipient countries and local communities benefit because the overall value of overseas assistance they receive is likely to be greater and is bound to be coordinated more effectively than if the partners had been implementing their projects independently.

Post-3/11 Partnerships: Two Success Stories

Partnering to Fight Drought and Malnutrition in Niger

In autumn 2012, Peace Winds Japan and Mercy Corps jointly operated a two-month "cash-for-work" project in the Tillaberi region of Niger to respond to a deadly drought. This grew out of the two organizations' cooperation on the 3/11 response.

Although they had worked together since 2001, Peace Winds Japan and Mercy Corps began collaborating much more closely in the aftermath of 3/11. Mercy Corps raised $16 million to respond to the triple disasters, a considerable portion of which it used to support Peace Winds activities, and it dispatched a senior representative to be based in Japan.

In 2012, the funding coalition known as Japan Platform issued a call for proposals for Japanese NGOs to implement programs in the Sahel region, where nearly 20 million people faced malnutrition due to an intense drought. Peace Winds was hesitant to apply for the funding since it had no prior experience there and was small relative to many of the non-Japanese NGOs operating in Africa. However, after consulting with Mercy Corps's Japan representative, it realized it could take advantage of the Mercy Corps Niger office and prepared a proposal for a joint response that would take advantage of Mercy Corps existing operations. Peace Winds ended up utilizing roughly $600,000 in funding from Japan Platform, essentially to add a Peace Winds–managed extension to a program that Mercy Corps had launched earlier in the year.

The project was launched in August 2012 with a joint evaluation visit, which Peace Winds staff credit with enabling them to learn from the experiences that Mercy Corps Niger already had with the target community. Subsequently, two Peace Winds staff were dispatched to Niger and were able to operate out of the Mercy Corps Niger office to implement their program. From September to November, they worked with Mercy Corps staff to hire local men and women to rehabilitate the soil so it could better retain precipitation, in the process providing income to support 4,266 vulnerable households.

Both organizations felt that partnering made for a win-win situation. Mercy Corps benefitted by being able to operate on a larger scale in a way that complemented their other programs in the region. Meanwhile, Peace Winds could quickly launch a project in a new region with minimal start-up costs since it did not have to find an office or arrange logistics on its own and because it could draw on Mercy Corps's local expertise. It also saved a great deal of money and time by utilizing Mercy Corps's administrative infrastructure, security arrangements, communications equipment, housing, and vehicles and by avoiding having to hire local staff on its own.

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Helping the Philippines Recover from Typhoon Haiyan

Peace Boat, a Tokyo-based NGO, began supporting disaster relief efforts after the 1995 Kobe earthquake, first in Japan and then around the world. Immediately after 3/11 struck, it set up an operations base in the badly damaged city of Ishinomaki and launched a large disaster volunteer program—one of the only such programs not managed by a quasigovernmental agency—which enabled nearly 14,000 volunteers from more than 50 countries to help in the disaster zone. In the immediate aftermath of 3/11, Church World Service (CWS) provided funding to Peace Boat to help it mobilize volunteers and provide hot meals to disaster survivors in emergency shelters. It was easier for them to work together because CWS's head of emergencies for Asia Pacific was a Japanese national with a deep understanding of the nonprofit sector in Japan as well as worldwide. He was dispatched to Japan from its Bangkok office, and CWS was able to work closely on the program design and implementation with Peace Boat, going well beyond just providing funding. The work the two groups did together evolved into a deeper partnership, and since the disaster, CWS and Peace Boat have continued to cooperate on a wide range of issues related to recovery, advocacy, and disaster risk reduction in the Tohoku region and around Japan.

After Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines in November 2013, Peace Boat dispatched an advance team to assess how the organization could help. Since their joint work in the Tohoku region kept Peace Boat and CWS staff in regular communications, Peace Boat knew that CWS also had an advance team on the ground and reached out to the team to explore ways of cooperating. Their experiences in Tohoku allowed them to quickly shift into partnership mode, and during the second and third weeks after the disaster, Peace Boat assisted with a massive program to distribute food and other emergency supplies that CWS and its affiliates had already begun.

After several weeks, CWS and Peace Boat dispatched a joint assessment team to Biliran Island, an area that had been neglected by the international aid community, and they agreed to cooperate in launching a program there with two local organizations. Starting in December 2013, Peace Boat and CWS provided emergency shelter repair kits and kitchen starter kits to 1,125 households. Peace Boat funded its share of the program with ¥8.4 million in donations. This included ¥1.2 million from contributions through its Tohoku office from people in the disaster zone who wished to reciprocate for the aid they received after 3/11, a phenomenon that CWS staff found particularly touching.

Working together allowed both groups to have a greater impact than they could have had independently. Peace Boat was able to take advantage of CWS's access to local networks in the Philippines, where several CWS affiliates had been active for decades. This enabled Peace Boat to save time in delivering aid, and the ability to work with knowledgeable local partners introduced by CWS helped it to expand its reach and operate more efficiently. Since CWS was committed to staying active in the Philippines for a longer period of time than Peace Boat, it was also able to monitor and report on projects after Peace Boat staff had disengaged, allowing Peace Boat to be more accountable to its donors in a cost-effective manner. Meanwhile, CWS benefitted from the additional funding that Peace Boat quickly raised, as well as the experienced personnel it dispatched, and the economies of scale that this provided allowed CWS to operate more efficiently than it could have otherwise.

CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE 3/11 RESPONSE

On March 11, 2011, immediately after news broke of the massive 9.0 magnitude earthquake, humanitarian assistance NGOs and other groups outside of Japan began to mobilize, in some instances putting staff on planes to Tokyo within hours. A handful reached out to longtime partner organizations in Japan with offers of support, but in most cases overseas groups had to scramble to make new connections with Japanese organizations that they could team up with on the response. This proved to be a challenging task. Even among Japan experts and humanitarian professionals outside of Japan, there was little systematic knowledge concerning Japan's disaster relief organizations and, more broadly, about the state of its nonprofit sector.

Meanwhile, thousands of organizations around the world, from small community groups to massive humanitarian agencies, were launching fundraising campaigns for Japan. Although it was not apparent at first, the outpouring of overseas giving proved to be more generous than anybody anticipated. Ultimately, well over $1 billion was donated by groups and individuals outside of Japan, with more than $737 million being given by Americans alone.[6] Yet in many cases, getting these funds to Japanese groups on the ground also turned out to be more complicated than the campaign organizers initially assumed, as the relative unfamiliarity of overseas organizations with Japanese civil society, coupled with the limited capacity of Japanese nonprofits, made it difficult to identify how best to utilize the funds that had been raised.

While things took much longer than US organizations expected, in the end, numerous Japanese and overseas groups managed to partner with one another, and many of these partnerships have made valuable contributions to the recovery of the Tohoku region. These partnerships have tended to follow one or more of the patterns described in this section.

1) Overseas grant making to Japanese groups engaged in rescue, relief, or recovery

The bulk of overseas nongovernmental support for the 3/11 response consisted of funds provided to Japanese civil society organizations. A small portion of this was given as "no strings attached" donations (*kifukin*) that required minimal paperwork and that Japanese groups were free to use as they wished. But most took the form of grants (*joseikin*, etc.) that were designated for a specific purpose and that obligated overseas funders to report back to the original donors about how their money had been used. These required a deeper relationship—in other words, a degree of partnership—that was more intensive than a simple one-time transfer of funds. It also placed a greater burden on both sides. In most cases, these grants necessitated considerable interaction between the Japanese recipients and overseas funders to develop appealing programs that suited the aims of both sides, and they also imposed a degree of accountability on the Japanese recipients to the overseas donors.

2) Overseas funding through affiliates and intermediaries

Prior to 3/11, a number of the large, internationally oriented humanitarian NGOs had affiliates in Japan, many of which operated as fundraising arms and a handful of which were larger and more diversified in function. These included groups such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Salvation Army, Save the Children, and World Vision. The presence of these sister organizations made it relatively easy for overseas groups to raise funds that could be handed over to their Japanese counterparts. In some instances, most decisions on the usage of funds were entrusted to the judgment of the Japanese affiliate, while in other cases there was much more intensive involvement by the overseas donors in the disposition of the funds. However, despite their familiarity with one another and longstanding commitment to work together, many of these relationships came under considerable stress in the aftermath of 3/11. Some affiliates even agreed that it would be more effective to work with outside partners rather than with one another in supporting the disaster recovery. For instance, much of the funds from Catholic Relief Services in the United States were not channeled through its official affiliate, Caritas Japan, but rather were deployed in cooperation with other organizations.

Even among Japan experts and humanitarian professionals outside of Japan, there was little systematic knowledge concerning Japan's disaster relief organizations and, more broadly, about the state of its nonprofit sector.

A somewhat similar pattern emerged in which overseas donors channeled funding to the disaster zone through philanthropic intermediaries based in Japan, some of which had a long track record and others of which were newly established in response to the disaster. For instance, the Japan Society of New York provided substantial funding to the Japan NPO Center, which then re-granted those funds to small NPOs, while the Japan Society of the United Kingdom partnered with the Sanaburi Foundation in Sendai to create what is essentially a donor advised fund that distributes grants to groups throughout the disaster zone.

In many cases, the flow of funding became quite complex, passing through numerous bank accounts en route to the disaster zone. The Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/USA) collected millions of dollars from hundreds of individuals and groups in the United States (many of which were already amalgamating funds for other, even smaller donors), then transferred the funds to JCIE/Japan, its Japanese partner, which re-granted the funds to expand the institutional capacity of a range of organizations in the disaster zone.

3) Joint programs by overseas and Japanese partners

While many Western NGOs refrained from dispatching staff to Japan in the way that they normally would for a disaster in a developing country, a number of them eventually posted staff to Japan or regularly rotated them through the region in order to have more control over their programs. In almost all instances, they found it was necessary to team up with local Japanese organizations in order to navigate the intricacies of Japanese society and to access the manpower, skills, and local knowledge needed to effectively implement their programs. Most of these collaborative efforts relied on the overseas partner for funding and the Japanese partner for implementation, but they tended to involve sufficient collaboration in all stages of project formulation and implementation to be considered joint efforts.

Some notable examples include collaboration between Mercy Corps and Peace Winds Japan, the partnership that developed between Peace Boat and Church World Service, and cooperative efforts involving the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and two leading Japanese NGOs—AAR (Association for Aid and Relief), Japan, and JEN (Japan Emergency NGO)—which eventually encouraged the two Japanese groups to enter long-term "partnership agreements" with the IRC.

4) Technical assistance

Western groups have also supported Japanese responders by providing technical assistance, often as part of programs that simultaneously entailed funding or joint work in the disaster zone. Safecast assisted Japanese groups working in Fukushima by providing radiation monitoring technology and support in mapping radiation hotspots, and a number of overseas groups shared their expertise in post-traumatic stress disorder and mental health counseling. Some groups have also teamed up with Japanese partners to support the post-3/11 development of Japan's nonprofit sector by providing training on project design, grant writing, evaluation methods, and overall nonprofit capacity building.

ASSESSING INTERNATIONAL NGO PARTNERSHIPS

Assessing the performance of international partnerships in the 3/11 response provides insights into how Japanese and US organizations might be able to move forward with cooperative endeavors in the future. Overall, it is encouraging that there is a strong consensus among civil society leaders, local-level responders, and local and national government officials in Japan that international partnerships have made important contributions to the Tohoku region's recovery. In addition, those directly involved in the partnerships tend to report that they have been rewarding for both sides. Nevertheless, many Japanese and Western NGO officials engaged in these partnerships note that they have tended to require more work than anticipated and have necessitated repeated recalibrations on both sides to overcome gaps in mutual understanding, work culture, and institutional capacity. In many instances, the Japanese and Western partners have differing assessments of their partnerships, even when both sides brought indispensable expertise to the table and shared a commitment to working together and gratitude for what their counterpart was doing.

In order to better identify where perceptions differ among Western and Japanese organizations cooperating in the 3/11 response and explore how international NGO partnerships can be strengthened, the author conducted interviews with roughly 20 senior staff from Japanese and Western organizations and organized two seminars with 80 key figures from Japanese and Western NGOs, donors, and government agencies involved in the disaster response to elicit feedback. The following summarizes some of the common themes and challenges that emerged from these discussions.

Japanese Perspectives on Western Partners

When assessing international partnerships, Japanese organizations tend to express happiness with their overseas counterparts, but after some prodding, many acknowledge significant gaps in expectations and differences in thinking that have made international partnerships challenging.

Praise for Overseas Partners

As a rule, Japanese organizations are immensely appreciative of the generosity of overseas groups and moved by the caring and sense of solidarity they witnessed among their counterparts. This feeling of gratitude runs so deep that a number of Japanese organizations have looked for ways to return the kindness of their overseas partners—for instance by trying to contribute to the response to Hurricane Sandy in the United States—even while recognizing that their aid's greatest impact is likely to be symbolic in nature.

Japanese groups also consistently express their admiration for the level of professionalism that they see among Western humanitarian NGOs. Many find the institutional, staff, and financial capacity of Western nonprofit organizations to be enviable, and they believe that there are numerous lessons they should learn from their overseas counterparts about nonprofit management and disaster response, even when they feel that what works overseas may not necessarily make sense in the Japanese context.

Several Japanese NGO leaders remarked that, of all of their donors, domestic and international, humanitarian organizations from Western countries—and particularly from the United States—have been the easiest to work with, both in terms of providing funding and in operating joint programs. This is because they tend to understand the need for flexibility in the use of funds and have been willing to trust the judgment of the Japanese NGOs to allocate funds and adjust programs to meet changing needs on the ground.

Challenges to Mutual Understanding

As with any partnership, though, Japanese organizations have faced a number of challenges in working together with their Western counterparts. One major issue they have grappled with is the sense that their overseas counterparts do not fully understand the dynamics of Japanese civil society, how Japanese nonprofit organizations operate, and the degree to which Japanese NGOs need to keep in mind their complex relationships with other domestic organizations. For example, several Japanese NGO leaders commented that, in the 3/11 response, overseas groups consistently underestimated the amount of time and effort that is needed to build up trust, both among key stakeholders in local communities in the disaster zone and with their operational partners. Japanese nonprofit leaders share their counterparts' frustration with how slowly things move but often feel that Western groups do not sufficiently grasp just how much behind-the-scenes work is necessary in Japan to push forward measures that may seem relatively simple and straightforward from the outside.

Even while they are highly critical of the shortcomings of their own organizations, Japanese nonprofit leaders also sense that overseas groups do not fully understand how difficult it is for them to expand their organizational capacity. For instance, many Japanese NGO leaders feel that one of the biggest challenges they face is a lack of professionalized staff, but they also worry that overseas groups tend to underestimate the difficulties of ameliorating this problem. As means of illustration, one Japanese manager remarked that it is nice of an overseas partner to offer one or two years' worth of salary support for an organization to hire another skilled staff member, but Westerners do not realize that in the Japanese system it is difficult to accept this because the organization is likely to feel obligated to employ this person for many more years, even after funding disappears.

Japanese organizations are appreciative of the generosity of overseas groups and moved by the caring and sense of solidarity they witnessed among their counterparts.

The gap in understanding between Japanese and overseas NGOs also seems to extend to thinking about the formal international partnerships that a number of groups have forged. While Westerners often have a level of comfort with contracts, memoranda of understanding, and other interorganizational agreements, Japanese groups tend to be made nervous by legalistic writing and feel that terms of formal agreements need to be given very serious scrutiny (to a degree that is often seen as overly serious by Western counterparts).

Beyond the differences in approaches to formal agreements, Japanese NGO leaders feel that their Western counterparts sometimes underestimate the cost of engaging in institutionalized partnerships. Japanese groups can get worried that an official agreement with a larger, richer Western organization might inevitably push them into a more junior or subsidiary role, despite their own organizational legacy and track record, and they can also be wary of feeling tied down to a relationship with just one organization. In addition, some leaders feel that working with US organizations means giving up a degree of neutrality when responding to humanitarian crises overseas. While they are delighted to partner with American groups in many parts of the world, these leaders sense that it may be disadvantageous to be seen as being affiliated with US NGOs when working in countries such as Vietnam, where there is considerable historical baggage for groups associated with the United States, to say nothing of Afghanistan or Pakistan.

Differing Work Cultures

Another area where Japanese nonprofit officials sometimes feel a gap with their Western colleagues is in their interactions with one another. Sometimes this is simply a matter of style. Even in Japan's civil society sector, interactions tend to be more formal than in the West and sometimes this clash of styles can be off-putting, even for Japanese NGO leaders who have operated in international circles for many years. For example, in the Japanese work culture, rather than dispatching junior staff to meetings, it is customary for the heads of organizations to meet face-to-face with their partners as a sign of respect, but Western NGOs tend to feel less need for such protocol and hierarchy. In a similar vein, one Japanese NGO leader remarked how jarring it was when she showed up for an important meeting with Western NGOs to find the Japanese wearing suits and ties while the Westerners all came wearing jeans and carrying backpacks.

In other cases, the differences are more a matter of tone. While professing their admiration for their American counterparts and noting how much they would like to learn from their example, a number of Japanese NGO leaders registered their discomfort with the assumption that the role of Western groups is to teach the Japanese NGOs, even while appreciating their partners' eagerness to share what they believe is the right path. These leaders tend to feel that, while there are many lessons that they can take from the Western experience and there is much that Western NGOs can do to be supportive, ultimately it is the responsibility of the Japanese people themselves to develop and professionalize their civil society sector.

The representatives of Western NGOs and philanthropic organizations involved in the 3/11 response tend to have deep admiration for the staff of the Japanese groups they have dealt with, describing their work as "heroic" and "tireless."

Operational Gaps

Many Japanese NGO leaders argue that one of the greatest problems they faced in partnerships was the pressure to move too quickly in implementing projects and spending down funds. Japanese organizations face similar pressures from their domestic and international funders to disburse money quickly, but many felt that while this could be expected from Japanese donors with a less sophisticated understanding of nonprofit management and disaster responses, their Western partners should better understand the need to take more deliberate approaches and concentrate on funding for the long term. They had hoped that Western groups could be firmer in resisting donor pressures and convince their supporters to allow funds to be used over a longer period in order to have a more sustainable response.

Many Japanese nonprofit staff also note that their overseas counterparts tend to underestimate the amount of time and energy needed for partnerships, particularly since it is typically the Japanese partner that has to operate in a foreign language, translate documents into English, and spend considerable time explaining the complexities of Japanese society to their overseas counterparts. In particular, meeting the accountability and transparency standards that many

Western organizations take for granted requires considerable effort for Japanese groups, which are accustomed to domestic modes of reporting that value different criteria. (For example, Japanese NGOs are accustomed to presenting meticulous reporting of precise expenditures and tend to avoid taking credit for developments that can only be partially ascribed to their actions, while Western organizations place greater emphasis in reporting on program impact and are more comfortable claiming credit for positive developments that can reasonably be explained by multiple factors.) Furthermore, given how the Japanese work culture obligates senior staff to represent the organization, the burden of dealing with Western partners typically falls on the highest-ranking and busiest people in the office.

There were few established mechanisms to facilitate domestic coordination among Japanese organizations and even fewer that could go the extra mile to help connect overseas NGOs with Japanese NGOs.

Finally, the gap in external communications and marketing capacity between Japanese and Western groups can leave some Japanese organizations feeling overshadowed in their partnerships. Western NGOs have stronger systems for disseminating information on their activities, and there also is a much higher value placed on branding and other efforts to gain publicity in the United States and elsewhere than there is in Japan. Some Japanese nonprofit organizations feel that Western groups garner most of the publicity from joint efforts for themselves with less credit going to the Japanese partners. In fact, the degree to which some Western groups advertise their activities would normally be seen as distasteful in Japan's nonprofit culture, and Japanese nonprofit organizations feel that attempting to compete with their Western partners by touting their own contributions in a similar way may end up antagonizing the partners that they have to rely upon permanently in their day-to-day work—namely, other Japanese organizations.

Western Perspectives on Japanese Partners

Meanwhile, representatives of Western organizations have high praise for Japanese responders but mixed feelings about the state of partnerships with Japanese groups. On the one hand, they report that they found Japan to be an especially challenging place in which to operate, in large part because it already has well-developed societal systems and structures that they did not fit into or fully understand. A number of organizations with long track records in international responses—and, in some cases, a deep understanding of Japan—attest to having found Japan to be one of the most difficult places in the world to find partner organizations to which they can provide funds. But on the other hand, when Western groups have succeeded in forging partnerships, these have tended to be much more rewarding and longer lasting than elsewhere, and their Japanese partners often have outperformed their expectations.

Admiration for the Work of Japanese Nonprofits

The representatives of Western NGOs and philanthropic organizations involved in the 3/11 response tend to have deep admiration for the staff of the Japanese groups they have dealt with, describing their work as "heroic" and "tireless." Many who have been dealing directly with Japanese partners have developed strong personal connections to their colleagues and consider them to be lifelong friends.

There were a number of reasons for the Western groups' eagerness to work more closely with Japanese nonprofits. In the initial days after 3/11, many Western NGO leaders felt a strong connection to Japan and wanted to do whatever they could to help. At the same time, many groups also had large amounts of money pouring in from donors who were pushing them to play a role in the response. Driven by their donors to come up with some response, many concluded that it was best to avoid taking direct action on their own and instead worked as much as possible with Japanese

organizations in order to ensure that their funds would be utilized in the most responsible and effective manner.

As time has passed, some humanitarian NGOs have also focused more on the long-term strategic benefits of partnering with Japanese groups. In addition to learning from experienced Japanese organizations about how to respond to a mega-disaster in a highly developed country, some also came to feel that Japanese and Western NGOs can complement one another by working together on humanitarian and development initiatives in other countries, such as Myanmar and Vietnam. These NGOs are under pressure to maximize their resources and impact, so they tend to see greater cooperation as an important strategy for their future activities. In addition, some Western NGOs hope to partner with Japanese groups in order to access Japanese government and corporate funding in a way that will benefit both sides.

Western organizations that sought to work with Japanese groups tend to cite their greatest challenge as being the weak institutional capacity of potential partners in terms of finances, internal systems, and staff.

Concerns about Japan's Weak Nonprofit Sector

The relatively underdeveloped state of Japan's civil society has been a major obstacle to international partnerships. Especially in the early days, Western groups were hampered by a lack of familiarity with the Japanese nonprofit sector and a paucity of personal connections with Japanese NGOs. Other than those like the Japanese Red Cross that operate as affiliates of broader networks, only one or two indigenous Japanese organizations' names were recognized in international circles of humanitarian NGOs, and just a handful of Japanese NGO leaders were widely known overseas.

The low international profile of Japanese NGOs was due in part to their limited number, size, and institutional capacity. As a result, many Western groups tried to get in touch with the same two or three Japanese NGO leaders, quickly overloading them. A similar phenomenon emerged in terms of overseas funding. As one Japanese NGO leader recounted, as soon as a Japanese group gained a reputation as being capable and responsive, a range of Western organizations rushed to work with them and provide funding, overwhelming their institutional capacity and eroding the very traits that made them attractive and effective partners in the first place.

Once Western groups began working with Japanese nonprofit organizations, they also found their attempts to operate in Japan hampered by the lack of a strong support system for humanitarian NGOs. For instance, in their home countries, internationally minded humanitarian NGOs in the United States and Europe are accustomed to sharing information on overseas responses through coordinating bodies such as InterAction and CONCORD (European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development) respectively and, when on the ground in developing countries, via UN-led donor roundtables. Meanwhile, when they respond domestically, they often can rely on organizations like the US-based NVOAD (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster). However, in Japan there were few established mechanisms to facilitate domestic coordination among Japanese organizations and even fewer that could go the extra mile to help connect overseas NGOs with Japanese NGOs. As a result, coordination efforts were more ad hoc in nature. Associations originally designed to facilitate outbound humanitarian responses, such as Japan Platform and JANIC (Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation), ended up trying to step into a coordination role but had limited capacity and resources to undertake this new responsibility at a time when they were already overstretched.

To some degree, the coordination challenges were understandable because it was unprecedented to have such a large international response to a disaster in a developed country, but clearly the lack of a strong nonprofit infrastructure made it more challenging for overseas groups to operate effectively in Japan. Moreover, even when Western organizations could

engage in a degree of coordination and link up with potential partners, managing the politics of relationships within Japan's nonprofit sector proved to be a considerable challenge.

Faulty Communications among Partners

From the start, many Western groups also struggled to understand why communications with their Japanese partners were so difficult. This was not merely an issue of the limited number of Japanese NGO staff with strong English abilities but also a problem of expectations about what, when, and how to communicate with one another. Western groups operating from Tokyo or overseas complained that it was challenging to find out from Japanese counterparts what the real needs on the ground were with a degree of specificity. They often went long periods without communications because their Japanese counterparts hesitated to be in touch unless they had finished preparing a comprehensive and polished memo or document on the topic at hand, while the Western groups were hoping for more frequent updates, even if they were incomplete and not perfectly crafted.

In particular, Western NGOs and other funders faced difficulties in getting adequate reporting on the impact of their support, particularly compelling and concise "human stories" that they could share with their supporters.[7] Representatives of several Western groups remarked that, when they made site visits, they were often amazed to see the impact that the programs were having on the ground, as well as the sophistication of their approaches. However, in most cases, these successes were not sufficiently captured in the communications from their Japanese partners, often leaving these achievements invisible to the outside world. Fortunately, there were several prominent exceptions to this trend, especially among the handful of Japanese NGOs that assigned internationally trained staff to collect human interest stories and other indicators of impact and regularly feed these to their Western partners. Several Western groups cite such communications as an important factor in decisions to give greater funding to these groups.

Gaps in Thinking

Western groups also found that their efforts to work with Japanese partners required considerable time and energy because of significant gaps in terms of how they think about their challenges. For instance, many feel that their Japanese partners tended to focus too much on process and insufficiently on impact. This attention to details rather than the big picture manifested itself in project planning, and some Western groups found the arguments in their Japanese partners' project proposals to be of low quality. As one Western NGO representative noted, many of the Japanese organizations that she worked with focused too much on "Do we have the right words in our proposal?" and not enough on "Does our argument and plan make sense?" Western groups tend to find similar problems with grant reporting, which often emphasizes outputs such as the number of events held rather than outcomes such as whether these succeeded in advancing broader goals.

Despite the challenges they faced working together on the 3/11 response, Western and Japanese NGO leaders tend to give high marks to the partnerships in which they were directly involved.

Western partners also raised some concerns that their partnerships were held back by the risk aversion of Japanese groups and a reluctance to bend societal rules and improvise in order to push for the greater good. They became accustomed to hearing "That will be difficult" and similar pessimistic terms from Japanese partners, and many had a hard time determining when these reactions reflected the fact that something truly would be impossible to achieve and when it merely represented a level of discomfort with an unfamiliar course of action or humility and caution about not appearing to promise something that they were not absolutely certain they could deliver. While this was preferable to the tendency for local partners elsewhere to sometimes overpromise, these types of attitudes as well as the need for numerous consensus-building consultations meant that moving things

forward in the Japanese system required a great deal of time and energy, a challenge that often wore down Western partners.

Limitations in Institutional Capacity

By a large margin, Western organizations that sought to work with Japanese groups tend to cite their greatest challenge as being the weak institutional capacity of potential partners in terms of finances, internal systems, and staff. There are important historical, political, and cultural reasons for the underdevelopment of the Japanese nonprofit sector, but one result has been that most Japanese nonprofit organizations lack a strong funding base, and few have endowments or reserves like their Western counterparts. This led many Western groups to worry whether the joint work they supported would be financially sustainable when they would inevitably need to transition out of Japan.

Even more so than finances, however, many Western organizations found that the most daunting obstacle to stronger and more equal partnerships was the small staff size of Japanese nonprofits. For a Japanese NGO, a professional staff of 20 is thought of as large, while for American humanitarian NGOs, a staff of 50 is considered to be relatively small. This means that partnerships can often end up feeling lopsided. Even major Japanese organizations like JEN, which has fewer than two dozen full-time staff, or Peace Winds Japan, with less than 40 staff in Japan, seem tiny in comparison to Western NGOs like Mercy Corps with its 4,500 staff, or the IRC with more than 8,000 staff worldwide. The result is that Japanese nonprofit staff are perpetually overextended, each trying to do the work that would be covered by several staff members in their Western counterparts.

The challenges that Japanese NGOs face in terms of staff capacity go well beyond sheer size. Whereas Western humanitarian NGOs often have program staff who specialize narrowly on topics such as gender issues and psychosocial care, as well as other staff who focus solely on communications, fundraising, or a range of administrative and back-office operations,

Japan's Humanitarian NGOs at a Glance

A January 2014 report by Japan Platform and Mercy Corps that surveyed 45 of the leading Japanese NGOs engaged in international work provides insights into the state of Japan's humanitarian sector.

- These NGOs averaged 23 full-time staff and 4 part-time staff.
- Annual income varied dramatically from ¥4.5 million ($47,000) to ¥45 billion ($474 million). However, only seven groups had an income of more than ¥630 million ($6.6 million), and half of the NGOs surveyed raised less than ¥182 million ($1.9 million) per year.
- Ten of the responding NGOs were members of international alliances—e.g., Save the Children, CARE, and World Vision—including the three largest NGOs by income and five of the top ten.
- The survey revealed that the "alliance NGOs" have stronger capacity not just in terms of fundraising but also in terms of just about every other relevant measure, from human resources and financial management, to technical capacities and programming tools. The authors speculate that the interactions of these NGOs with their alliance partners around the world pushed them to develop their institutional capacity, suggesting that efforts by other non-aligned Japanese NGOs to work in partnership with American NGOs can also yield similar side benefits in terms of expanding institutional capacity.

Source: Japan Platform & Mercy Corps, *Tomodachi NGO Leadership Program NGO Baseline Survey Report*, January 2014. Exchange rate calculated at $US1=¥95.

Japanese nonprofits are typically too small for this. As a result, it is more difficult for them to meet the transparency and accountability standards that are considered customary in Europe or North America. These constraints (along with many other factors) also contribute to a phenomenon whereby many Japanese NGOs remain overly dependent on the wits and stamina of a single charismatic leader.

People involved in the 3/11 response cite a number of factors that have made it difficult for Japanese nonprofits to expand their staff in the way that Western NGOs have. Limited financial resources and the relative underdevelopment of philanthropy and fundraising in Japan are often pointed to as major culprits. There is a relatively small pool of funding available for Japanese NGOs in normal times, and things are made worse by the tendency of Japanese funders to offer less support for personnel expenses than is considered common elsewhere, helping to ensure that Japanese NGO staff remain underpaid. (Many Japanese donors also are resistant to covering the indirect or administrative costs that NGOs need to keep running, which also helps perpetuate their institutional weakness.) Also, the lack of a clear career path for young NGO staff and a hierarchical culture in Japanese organizations that limits the degree of authority given to younger staff are often cited as disincentives for talented young professionals to stay in the field.

In addition, there is a problem of high turnover among young staff, who often work for Japanese humanitarian NGOs for several years before leaving for positions at the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) or UN agencies, where the salary and prestige are higher and working conditions less arduous. This phenomenon is particularly frustrating for Japanese NGO leaders, who feel that they have become a feeder system that trains staff for JICA and UN agencies when they should instead be receiving support from those agencies to help strengthen their institutional capacity and become more professionalized like their overseas counterparts.

Despite the challenges they faced working together on the 3/11 response, Western and Japanese NGO leaders tend to give high marks to the partnerships in which they were directly involved. Many feel that it is important to expand and consolidate them in order to work together in third countries. In fact, a number of groups have begun exploring ways of strengthening their institutional linkages, including by forging "partnership agreements" and by attempting to obtain funding for joint projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS: STRENGTHENING US-JAPAN NGO PARTNERSHIPS AFTER 3/11

The successes that Japanese and American NGOs had in working together after 3/11 suggest that there is much to gain by encouraging them to expand their capacity to coordinate and, when advantageous, to work jointly. Not only will this better equip them to implement more efficient and effective projects in third countries, but establishing patterns of cooperation should also leave Japanese and US NGOs better prepared to coordinate their responses the next time a mega-disaster like 3/11 requires them to scale up activities quickly.

Even though the dynamics of responding in a third country are bound to differ considerably from what Japanese and American organizations experienced with 3/11, there are a number of preparations they can undertake to strengthen their ability to partner. Of course, most NGOs—especially Japanese NGOs—tend to operate with limited financing and staff capacity, making it difficult for them to invest too much time and money in advancing long-term strategic objectives that are not closely tied to their day-to-day work. This means that one of the most practical ways that Japanese and American NGOs can build up their capacity to work together effectively is by starting to partner on discrete pilot projects, specifically ones that come with enough funding to make the effort worthwhile. Since most Japanese and American NGOs involved in disaster responses also work on broader development and humanitarian initiatives in developing countries, a range of opportunities exist for them to work together, building up a partnership capacity that can be leveraged when needed for unanticipated emergencies.

Nevertheless, there are still major challenges that need to be overcome to make it easier and more appealing for Japanese and US NGOs to work together. For instance, there are still significant gaps in mutual understanding, as well as in expectations. Also, there is limited institutional capacity to partner, especially on the part of Japanese NGOs. Plus, the environment in which Japanese and American groups operate is not sufficiently supportive of partnerships. In fact, not only is there insufficient appreciation of the value of partnering among NGO leaders and donor agencies, but the regulations that govern funding for Japanese NGOs too often dissuade them from partnering. In light of these

Recommendations for Strengthening US-Japan NGO Partnership

Deepen mutual understanding

1) Strengthen personal networks linking Japanese and US humanitarian NGOs
2) Support innovative personnel exchanges
3) Fund joint studies by US and Japanese NGOs

Strengthen institutional capacity

4) Launch consultations on hiring and staff retention policies
5) Support capacity building for Japanese humanitarian NGOs
6) Better align communications approaches

Create a more supportive environment

7) Make encouraging partnerships a priority
8) Modify restrictions on government funding
9) Create a US-Japan Partnership Fund

challenges, there are several measures that can enhance the capacity of Japanese and American humanitarian organizations to work together in meaningful partnerships.

Deepen Mutual Understanding

The networks of personal relationships that connect representatives of Japanese and US humanitarian organizations remain tenuous. Outside of a small circle of people who were engaged in the 3/11 response there is still a limited understanding on both sides about how to effectively work together. And the mismatch in size and resources between Japanese and American groups continues to feed a gap in expectations about partnerships. In order to build a stronger foundation for US-Japan partnerships, it is important to have more interactions among a range of NGO personnel that promote the sharing of information and the development of stronger personal networks. The following measures can encourage this:

1) Strengthen personal networks linking Japanese and US humanitarian NGOs

Regular participation in international conferences and other forums should help representatives of Japanese humanitarian groups to expand their personal networks with their American counterparts. Modest funding to enable Japanese representatives to take part in international meetings and professional associations (i.e., InterAction's annual forum, etc.) can provide an important incentive for their participation.

2) Support innovative personnel exchanges

Personnel exchanges that allow mid-level NGO staff to work temporarily in a counterpart's headquarters are useful in helping to deepen mutual understanding and trust, and the Japanese foreign ministry currently funds one well-regarded program.[8] Unfortunately, Japanese NGOs tend to be woefully understaffed, making it difficult for them to spare capable employees for extended periods of time. The staff capacity of US NGOs tends to be stronger, so one option worth exploring is funding for mid-level American staff to be placed in potential Japanese partners' offices, ideally with additional funding for both organizations that can be applied to some sort of joint project.

In addition, efforts to pursue joint projects in developing countries in which Japanese and US partners share a field office, thereby allowing staff to work side by side, should be encouraged. Also, programs like the Atlas Corps TOMODACHI Fellows Program that provide support for young, aspiring Japanese NGO workers to be based in US organizations should be sustained and expanded.

3) Fund joint studies by US and Japanese NGOs

There are many ripe areas for joint studies between Japanese and American groups that compile lessons from 3/11 for future disaster responses, including studies on lessons for international responses to humanitarian emergencies in developed countries and for responses to radiological emergencies. By supporting such joint work, funders would not only ensure that we are better prepared for the next disaster, but also encourage the Japanese and US

organizations undertaking the study to strengthen their ties to one another.

Strengthen Institutional Capacity

American NGOs typically lack expertise regarding how to interact with Japanese organizations, but it is the low institutional capacity on the Japanese side that is the greatest obstacle to more productive US-Japan NGO partnerships. The weak institutional capacity of Japanese NGOs inhibits their ability to partner with other groups in at least three ways.

First, the financial base of Japanese NGOs tends to be weak, making it difficult for them to partner with Western NGOs on an equal footing. One root cause is the relatively underdeveloped state of domestic philanthropy in Japan, although the fundraising success of Japanese NGOs that operate as "alliance organizations" affiliated with international networks—groups such as Save the Children Japan and World Vision Japan—demonstrates that there is considerable potential for Japanese NGOs to expand their domestic funding base. Another reason—one that can be remedied more quickly—is that the amount of government official development assistance (ODA) that is channeled through NGOs in Japan remains miniscule compared with other developed countries. For instance, while the United States distributed 23 percent of its bilateral aid to or through civil society organizations (CSOs) in 2011, including $4.8 billion alone through US-based groups, barely 2 percent of Japan's bilateral aid was given to or channeled through CSOs—well below the average for other developed countries.[9] Of this amount, only about $70 million went through Japanese NGOs carrying out projects in developing countries.[10]

Second, Japanese NGOs tend to have too few staff, especially professional staff capable of operating in international settings. As a result, the burden of partnering with external organizations tends to fall disproportionately on the shoulders of a few senior staff who are also juggling a wide range of other duties. The lack of skilled professional staff can be linked directly to the NGO sector's weak financial base. However, it is also exacerbated by the brain drain that occurs as promising mid-level staff who have received on-the-job training in Japanese NGOs are lured away for more lucrative jobs with JICA and UN agencies.

A third issue involves the mismatch in communications ability that makes US-Japan NGO partnerships even more difficult. The experiences that groups had in responding to 3/11 demonstrated that there is a clear gap in mindsets and capacity between Japanese and American organizations regarding communications, both in terms of how they communicate with partners and in the way they conduct external communications. In many instances, 3/11 strained partnerships that were already facing numerous challenges.

Several measures can be taken to improve Japanese and US NGOs' institutional capacity to partner effectively:

4) Launch consultations on hiring and staff retention policies

Japanese government officials and representatives of Japanese NGOs should start consultations on ways to combat the brain drain of promising NGO staff and keep the hiring practices of JICA and other agencies from undermining the development of the nonprofit sector.

5) Support capacity building for Japanese humanitarian NGOs

There are a number of initiatives underway to provide technical training for Japanese NGO staff on the skills and methods utilized by their Western counterparts, including project design, budgeting, reporting, and evaluation, in some cases through programs of exchange with US NGOs. It is important to sustain these efforts.

Meanwhile, it would help if domestic funders in Japan would provide more institutional support for humanitarian NGOs that could allow them to expand their capacity over the long run, rather than solely offering project-based funding. Also, moves by the Japanese government and other donors to be more flexible in allowing NGOs to use their funding to cover indirect expenses will help considerably in strengthening Japan's NGO sector.

6) Better align communications approaches

Japanese groups may benefit both in terms of communications with partners and in raising their profiles

outside of Japan by assigning staff to focus specifically on international communications, striving not just to communicate more effectively in English but also to adopt communications styles that are more common outside of Japan. Meanwhile, Western organizations, which are accustomed to quickly touting their accomplishments, should be more cognizant of the way that their aggressive communications strategies can unintentionally give rise to imbalances in their partnerships with Japanese organizations and be careful that Japanese partners get sufficient public credit for their joint work.

Create a More Supportive Environment

A more supportive environment would enable Japanese and US NGOs to take steps to build up mutual understanding and strengthen their institutional capacity to work together. To start, government agencies and other donors should be more appreciative of international partnerships. Most of the financing for Japanese NGOs to carry out humanitarian activities and development projects in places where they might benefit from teaming up with US partners tends to come from the government. However, the regulations that govern these funds make it difficult to pursue partnerships, even when they would be the most effective approach in the long run. In addition to allowing the funding that is currently available to be applied to partnerships, it would also be beneficial to mobilize new funding specifically for international partnerships, and especially for Japanese NGOs so they can operate on more equal footing with overseas counterparts.

7) Make encouraging partnerships a priority

The Japanese and US governments have, at various times, called for bilateral government-to-government cooperation on development and humanitarian responses, as well as for expanding public-private partnerships. Cooperation between NGOs in each country also should be recognized more prominently as an important component of bilateral cooperation and, indeed, as potentially being the leading edge of deeper US-Japan collaboration. Government leaders in both countries can help set a more supportive tone by endorsing US-Japan NGO partnerships and making the encouragement of these a priority in strengthening bilateral cooperation.

8) Modify restrictions on government funding

Currently, funds distributed to Japanese humanitarian NGOs through Japan Platform cannot be used to cover their overseas partners' indirect costs, which essentially forces American NGOs to subsidize their Japanese counterparts, eroding support for partnerships among potential US partners. Reforms should be considered so that Japanese government funding through Japan Platform and other channels can be used to cover the overhead of partner NGOs, provided the partner makes sufficient contributions to the project.[11]

9) Create a US-Japan Partnership Fund

Japanese and US government agencies can build upon past US-Japan development cooperation by creating a US-Japan Partnership Fund through which each country provides matching ODA funding for humanitarian responses and development initiatives that require Japanese and American NGOs to work together. An arrangement in which USAID and Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs each annually commit $10–$15 million of matching ODA funding for projects in which Japanese and American NGOs work together in priority areas would encourage groups from both countries to explore ways of saving money by teaming up, while pioneering new models of joint programs.

NOTES

1. In international discussions, the term "NGO" usually refers to a wide range of institutionalized nongovernmental and nonprofit groups, but it is worth noting that in Japanese, the term "NGO" is typically used only for large nonprofit organizations that focus specifically on overseas issues such as international development, while "NPO" is used more often used for smaller, domestic-oriented nonprofit organizations.
2. Michael Flint and Hugh Goyder, *Funding the Tsunami Response* (London: Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, 2006), 27.
3. Combined, the cash and in-kind donations from foreign governments for the 3/11 response total approximately ¥69 billion or roughly $730 million. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan reports that a total of ¥17.5 billion ($184 million at $1=¥95) was provided in cash donations from foreign governments, as well as a number of large in-kind donations. The largest expenditures by foreign governments appear to be ¥40 billion ($420 million) in oil donated by Kuwait, the $95 million that the US Congressional Research Service estimates was expended for Operation Tomodachi, and another 10,000 tons each of gasoline and diesel fuel at a market price of approximately $25–$30 million that was donated by China.

   In contrast, at least ¥118 billion (roughly $1.25 billion) came from overseas private donors. The Japan Center for International Exchange has tracked $737 million in donations from the United States. Meanwhile, a survey by *Giving Japan 2012* found that approximately $188 million (¥17.9 billion) was donated through nongovernmental channels from Taiwan, $47 million (¥4.5 billion) from Korea, $26 million (¥2.5 billion) from the United Kingdom, and $252 million (¥24 billion) through the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in other countries.

   Sources for these figures include Andrew Feickert and Emma Chanlett-Avery, *Japan 2011 Earthquake: US Department of Defense (DOD) Response* (CRS Report for Congress, no. 41690), Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 2011; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Shogaikokura kara no bushi shien/kifukin* [In-kind and cash donations from various foreign countries], Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, 2012; Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE), "US Giving for Japan's 2011 Disaster Totals $737 Million," *Civil Society Monitor* (March 2015); and Japan Fundraising Association, *Kifu hakusho 2012/Giving Japan 2012* (Tokyo: Japan Business Federation, 2012).
4. Data is for the period 1982–2011 and is from EMDAT International Disaster Database, Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, Université Catholique de Louvain, Brussels, Belgium, www.emdat.be.
5. Swiss Re, "Mind the Risk: A Global Ranking of Cities Under Threat from Natural Disasters," 2013, http://media.swissre.com/documents/Swiss_Re_Mind_the_risk.pdf.
6. JCIE, "US Giving for Japan's 2011 Disaster Totals $737 Million."
7. A JANIC survey of Japanese NGOs involved in the 3/11 response found that one major problem facing international partnerships was the expectation gap between Japanese and overseas NGOs on reporting. Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation, *The Great East Japan Earthquake: Joint Review Report on Relief Activities by the Civil Society—From the Perspective of International Cooperation NGOs* (Tokyo: JANIC, 2014), 126.
8. The Japanese foreign ministry supports a well-regarded overseas NGO study program, which is operated by JANIC and which annually supports a stay of one to six months for 11 mid-career staff in the offices of an overseas NGO, international organization, or educational institution.
9. OECD Development Co-operation Directorate, *Aid for CSOs* (Paris: OECD, 2013).
10. In FY2011, less than ¥6 billion (approximately $70 million) in Japanese ODA was channeled through NGOs, with roughly half going through Japan Platform and half through a "Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects" initiative. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Kokusai kyoryoku to NGO: Gaimusho to Nihon no NGO no paatonaashippu* [International Cooperation and NGOs: Partnership between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and Japanese NGOs], *Japan's Official Development Assistance White Paper 2013*, 2014. For English see: http://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000024755.pdf For Japanese, see: http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shiryo/pamphlet/pdfs/oda_ngo_2013.pdf
11. It may seem counterintuitive that government funding for Japanese humanitarian NGOs to work with US partners in a third country should be allowed to cover the indirect (or overhead) costs accrued at their partners' headquarters in the United States; however, an example illustrates why this is important. The most advantageous partnerships for Japanese NGOs—which usually are not large enough to have the broad network of field offices of their Western counterparts—are ones in which they can piggyback off of the field operations of their American partners, gaining an economy of scale by utilizing their local infrastructure (offices, vehicles, security contracts, and sometimes their legal registration and bank accounts) as well as their global support system that makes this all possible. If an American NGO puts $5 million toward a joint project in Africa where it has a strong field office, some portion of these funds, say 15 percent, will need to be allocated to cover the expenses accrued by its headquarters to design the project, manage its finances, monitor and report on it, support relations with the host government, and provide other remote support for the project. If a Japanese partner then puts $5 million more into the project, taking advantage of the US organization's local infrastructure, the costs to the US partner to support this project, which has doubled in size, will increase. Therefore, a problem arises when the Japanese partner cannot provide funds to offset these new expenses, even while saving considerable money by taking advantage of what the US partner organization has built up over the years. Moreover, in practice, most such partnerships require the Japanese NGO to deposit its funds into the accounts of its US partner, and technical issues involving the financial accounting systems of the US partners as well as their contracts with USAID and other donors often obligate the US partner to somehow raise additional funds to offset the overhead that is not being paid by its Japanese partner, putting an inordinate burden on the US side.

Japan Center for International Exchange

135 West 29th Street, Suite 303
New York, NY 10001 USA
Tel: (212) 679-4130
www.jcie.org

4-9-17 Minami Azabu, Minato-ku
Tokyo, Japan 106-0047
Tel: (03) 3446-7781
www.jcie.or.jp