

Major initiatives 01 Environment, lifestyle, sanitation, waste

Reconstruction Stage First Half (FY2014-2015)

Providing attentive support to disaster-affected people and focusing on environmental protection and preservation

For public housing for disaster survivors, a total of 9,812 units were completed by the end of fiscal 2015 in Miyagi's 210 districts in 21 municipalities. The prefectural government provided financial aid to local municipalities in reviewing support structures for public housing residents in order to ensure that they could live a stable life under permanent housing conditions after moving from temporary housing. We also assisted municipalities with conducting community monitoring activities. To step up efforts to facilitate the return of evacuees from outside of Miyagi, the prefectural government assigned personnel to its representative offices outside of the prefecture to provide consultation services to such evacuees and perform surveys to confirm their willingness to return. To redevelop local communities in affected areas, financial aid was offered for community rebuilding projects in individual districts, advisors dispatched to deal with specific local issues, and leadership seminars and networking sessions held inviting representatives of community associations.

In the environmental field, while continuing to encourage use of renewable energy and introduction of energy-saving facilities as part of community development processes in affected areas, the government focused on hydrogen energy utilization projects, aiming to become a leader in the Tohoku region in the field of promoting a hydrogen energy-driven society. Concerning environmental conservation, academic research was conducted to designate new green conservation areas, and measures were carried out to safeguard rare species of wildlife in three locations near the coast hit by the disaster.

All the huge amount of waste generated by the disaster was completely disposed of by the end of fiscal 2017.



Photo: Tohoku's first hydrogen station opens

Reconstruction Stage Second Half (FY2016)

Assisting revitalization of disaster-affected areas with the aim of creating a sustainable society

For public housing for disaster survivors, a total of 13,784 units were completed in 277 districts in 21 municipalities. To rebuild and revitalize local communities in affected areas, the prefectural government formed reconstruction support teams in nine districts in cooperation with the relevant municipalities and concerned groups, particularly for assisting community-led efforts to address local issues and needs. We also underpinned consensus formation among residents on community-related issues chiefly through support to community development associations.

In the environmental field, support was provided to expand the introduction of solar power generation and usage of other renewable energy sources. Also, jointly with municipalities, the prefectural government offered grants for businesses to conduct "eco-town" projects, in an effort to achieve a society with less environmental impact.

To deal with major changes in ecosystem conditions in the coastal areas as a result of the disaster, the government obtained expert advice and discussed future policies. Then, necessary measures were planned based on the Miyagi Prefecture Biodiversity Conservation Strategies and opinions from the related promotion council, and the relevant information was publicized through holding town meetings and distributing brochures.



Photo: Public housing for disaster survivors (Miyauchi district, Tagajo City)

Reconstruction Stage Second Half (FY2017)

Creating a community enabling a purposeful life and aiming to achieve a society with less environmental impact

For public housing for disaster survivors, a total of 15,415 units were completed in 310 districts in 21 municipalities. To rebuild and revitalize local communities, the prefectural government assisted community-led efforts, underpinned consensus formation among residents chiefly through support to community development associations, and worked to revitalize local communities and increase visitors through providing support for organization of local events, among others.

Efforts were increased to facilitate the returning of evacuees from outside of the prefecture. The government contacted the evacuees via telephone and individual visits to confirm their willingness and scrutinized the relevant list. As a result, the total number of evacuees outside of the prefecture decreased to about 300.

With respect to renewable energy and smart city initiatives, grants were offered for installed home-use solar power generation systems, fuel cells and other systems in order to expand introduction of renewable energy and energy-saving facilities in the household sector. Additionally, hydrogen energy generation systems were introduced for demonstration, in an effort to promote the utilization of the new energy.

To address the environmental conservation issue, the government published radioactivity level measurement data for the meat of captured harmful wildlife, and held eight town meetings to raise public awareness of biodiversity issues.



Photo: Local community revitalization activity

Major initiatives 02 Healthcare, medical care, welfare

Reconstruction Stage First Half (FY2014-2015)

Promoting cooperation among healthcare, medical care and welfare functions to build a society where everyone can live with peace of mind

In coastal areas struck by the disaster, as each municipality implemented its community development plans, most of the affected medical institutions resumed normal operations, and seismic retrofitting work was completed for all but one hospitals in the prefecture designated as a hub hospital in the event of emergency. Also, 99% of the affected welfare centers for the elderly and the disabled resumed operation. The ICT-based regional medical care cooperation system, which had been built in accordance with each municipality's new community development directions, was launched across the prefecture.

To deal with issues associated with the severe impact of the far-reaching catastrophic disaster on the mental health of affected citizens, the Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center and other establishments organized outreach programs to provide consultation services to those in need of professional help. Particularly for affected children and parents, a range of measures were carried out, including the children's mental health care team continuing traveling counseling services. Specifically to address the issue of parents suffering from economic and mental stress as a result of the disaster and engaging in child abuse, the prefectural government increased support for relevant services provided by each municipality, and launched new projects to improve functions to prevent child abuse, such as boosting specialist capabilities at child guidance centers. In order to ensure that families can give birth to and raise children with peace of mind in the community, assistance was provided to parenting support centers and groups with similar purposes in addition to vigorous campaigns run across the prefecture to encourage a culture supportive of child-rearing efforts, seeking to create a parent-friendly community.

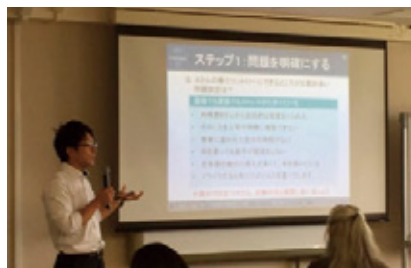


Photo: Mental health exercise seminar (13th session)

Reconstruction Stage Second Half (FY2016)

Promoting regional medical care cooperation system and providing mental health care to disaster-affected people

Projects for restoring affected medical institutions progressed steadily so as to secure adequate medical care functions for the residents of disaster-hit areas. The prefectural government financially supported six municipalities with providing health-related consultation and other services. We also offered dietary guidance programs.

The ICT-based regional medical care cooperation system, which aims to provide higher quality services through complementary operations of multiple medical institutions, increased its membership to 560.

To tackle the mental health problems of affected children and parents, the children's mental health care team continued traveling counseling services, and long-term continuous services were provided for all age groups. For school-age children, psychological counselors were assigned to public elementary and junior/senior high schools to be able to accommodate the specific needs of individual students. For prefectural citizens in general, the Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center and other facilities provided consultation services and skills training to treat PTSD, depression and other mental disorders resulting from disaster-induced stress.

As part of efforts to reduce parenting stress across the region, particularly to address the issue of parents suffering from economic and mental stress as a result of the disaster and engaging in child abuse, the government developed systems to consign to the private sector the call center function for the nationwide network of child guidance centers, a new measure aimed at early detection of child abuse cases.

For the purpose of mitigating the shortage of physicians in the Tohoku region, the Faculty of Medicine was set up at Tohoku Medical and Pharmaceutical University in April 2016.



Photo: Psychological counselor skills training seminar (2nd session)

Reconstruction Stage Second Half (FY2017)

Building dependable medical care cooperation system and achieving a community allowing life with a sense of security

To help health-promoting projects in disaster-affected municipalities, the prefectural government financially supported two cities with providing health-related consultation and other services, and offered dietary guidance programs and special health checkups for disaster-affected people. Restoration plans for affected medical institutions progressed steadily so as to secure adequate medical care functions for the residents of disaster-hit areas.

To promote recruitment and development of medical care professionals, including physicians, the government launched a range of programs, including financial aid for loaned personnel from outside the prefecture, which all progressed smoothly. The ICT-based regional medical care cooperation system continued steadily increasing its membership to reach 820.

The Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center provided consultation services and skills training programs to treat disaster survivors with PTSD, depression and other mental disorders, dealing with the specific needs of individual patients from a long-range perspective. The government supported two medical institutions, one each in Ishinomaki and Kesennuma Cities, with sending personnel to provide medical care services to those with difficulties in accessing hospital care.

To tackle the mental health problems of affected children and parents, professional service functions were enhanced and training programs were provided to improve capabilities for children's mental health care. To provide long-term continuous services for all age groups to deal with mental health problems, appropriate service functions were developed, installing consultation desks and dispatching experts.



Photo: Skills for psychological recovery (SPR) seminar (FY2017)



Photo: 1st National Seminar from Miyagi on Future of Welfare in Japan

Economy, commerce, tourism, employment

Reconstruction Stage First Half (FY2014-2015)

Supporting affected smaller businesses, creating jobs, and rebuilding tourism

The prefectural government worked with individual municipalities to help affected businesses resume operations as early as possible, stabilize management and restore sales networks while improving systems to provide consultation services to address management issues. We also enhanced financial support measures, mainly by launching aid programs for rebuilding affected businesses.

To alleviate the burden of the costs of restoring factories and facilities, the government formed group subsidy schemes for disaster-affected small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), granting 4.3 billion yen to 74 companies and 9.5 billion yen to 142 companies in fiscal 2014 and 2015, respectively.

To reduce unemployment of disaster-affected people and ensure their stable livelihoods, the government implemented a range of measures, such as increasing consultation desks for displaced workers, launching low-interest livelihood support loan programs for disaster survivors, and creating employment opportunities through conducting emergency job creation projects. We also worked to invite businesses to set up offices and factories in industrial sites, utilizing various preferential treatment systems.

To revitalize the commercial sector in coastal areas, we provided support for the relocation of shopping street operations from temporary to permanent sites. Arahama Nigiwai Kairo Shopping Street (Watari Town) and Seapal-Pier Onagawa (Onagawa Town) opened in permanent facilities in fiscal 2014 and 2015, respectively.

In the tourism sector, as a result of a range of promotion campaigns, the number of visitors increased to nearly recover to the pre-disaster level in fiscal 2015. A number of new initiatives were launched to offer new aid programs for new establishment of tourist attractions and facilities in coastal areas, attract education tourists from Taiwan, and develop sightseeing routes that involve the entire Tohoku region.

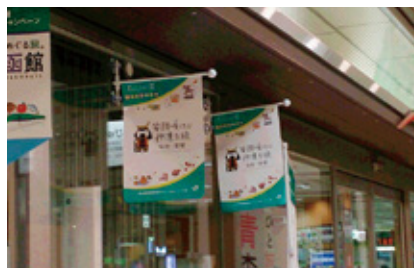


Photo: JR East View Travel Service outlet offering travel plans

Reconstruction Stage Second Half (FY2016)

Attracting businesses and tourists to revitalize local commerce, industry and tourism

The prefectural government continued supporting affected businesses to resume operations, stabilize management, and address other needs. SME group subsidy schemes were formed to pay a total of 9.27 billion yen to 121 companies in 23 groups. Other continued initiatives were under way to boost technological and skills development efforts to increase corporate competitiveness. Additionally, we enhanced consultation and advisory services for rebuilding business, sales increase and marketing network expansion. In an effort to attract businesses from outside the prefecture, we launched incentive measures for new establishment and expansion of factories and other facilities in the prefecture, which effectively drew businesses set up by manufacturers mainly in the automobile, high-tech electronics and machinery, and food processing industries.

In the area of employment, prefectural measures centered on government-funded emergency job creation projects in addition to measures promoted for stable creation of employment opportunities as part of industrial policies. As a result, the jobs-to-applicants ratio increased to largely exceed 1.0.

To revitalize commercial functions in coastal areas, we continued to offer aid for restoration of facilities. In March 2017, Minamisanriku San San Shopping Village (Minamisanriku Town) opened in a permanent site.

With respect to tourism, a range of promotion activities were carried out to bring back foreign tourists, primarily from East Asia, with a focus on attracting education and incentive tourists and communicating correct information to dispel harmful rumors. Aiming to recover the reduced number of visitors from broader regions, massive advertising campaigns were conducted creating taglines, such as "Date-na- tabi: Sendai-Miyagi Summer Tour," "Sky Journey to Sendai-Miyagi," and "Explore Miyagi" for a joint program featuring Pokemon Go.



Photo: Minamisanriku San San Shopping Village opens in permanent site (Minamisanriku Town)

Reconstruction Stage Second Half (FY2017)

Attracting businesses to achieve a prosperous Miyagi, and drawing tourists from in and outside of Japan

To help affected businesses restore facilities and resume operations, support was provided so as to meet the specific needs of individual operators according to the progress in infrastructure recovery. To accelerate industrial reconstruction processes, the prefectural government continued to cooperate with municipalities to implement comprehensive assistance initiatives, chiefly by attracting businesses, providing matchmaking services to operators seeking customers, and hosting practical seminars and providing consultation services for overseas business development.

In the area of employment, owing to government measures to promote stable creation of employment opportunities as part of industrial policies as well as the factor of rising labor demand related to reconstruction projects, the jobs-to-applicants ratio significantly improved.

To revitalize the commercial sector, two grant programs were launched, each for rebuilding SMEs and commercial functions, and a total of 36 operators in four groups were selected to be recipients. Financial aid was also offered for the restoration of facilities, including relocating operations from temporary to permanent sites.

To accelerate tourism recovery, vigorous promotion campaigns were run to bring back foreign tourists, primarily from Taiwan, China, South Korea and Hong Kong. With a particular focus on Hong Kong, a governor's delegation was organized to conduct marketing around the city and a local support desk was installed. To increase the convenience of foreign tourists, financial support was provided for tourist facilities and accommodations to introduce free WiFi connection systems. Seasonal advertising campaigns were held under the taglines of "Cool Summer in Miyagi" and "Miyagi Yuwatari-gundan," a first-ever winter campaign to promote the attraction of local hot spring resorts.



Photo: Prefectural governors from Tohoku giving a sales presentation

Agriculture, forestry, fishery

Reconstruction Stage First Half (FY2014-2015)

Developing productive, competitive and advanced industry for agriculture, forestry and fishery

In agriculture, various support programs were provided to achieve early recovery of production foundations and early resumption of affected farming operations and stable management. In addition, to promote the development of large-scale next-generation horticulture business in the affected region, the prefectural government launched a program to support model projects to build appropriate facilities utilizing local natural and energy resources and introducing advanced environment control and other technologies. Actually, a selected project was promoted in the Kitakami district, Ishinomaki City.

In forestry, government support was provided for restoration of affected plywood factories and lumber mills. To increase the supply capacity of the Miyagi brand quality wood, support was provided for development of appropriate facilities mainly for wood processing and drying. Other initiatives were under way to encourage broader use of wood biomass in an effort to mitigate global warming, and to advance the plan to restore coastal disaster prevention forests in Sendai.

In fishery, the government promoted plans to restore affected fishing ports, and partially bore the costs of collecting and disposing of debris deposited in the fishing grounds. Other activities were carried out to consider management models for each fishing type, and introduce the "sixth industry" concept. Research and development was promoted to explore fishing techniques and technologies for improving the sea floor environment of fishing grounds. Measures related to the workforce centered on recruiting new workers and developing young leaders.

In order to improve the national reputation of products of Miyagi, the prefectural government ensured strict operation of radioactivity level measurement standards for food and hosted campaign exhibitions in the Tokyo area and other parts of the country.



Photo: Support for new home building using the Miyagi quality wood

Reconstruction Stage Second Half (FY2016)

Encouraging collaboration between agriculture/forestry/fishing sectors and commerce/industry sectors, and improving reputation of prefectural products

The total area of farmland subject to restoration work was 13,000 ha, out of which a portion for a total of 12,489 ha was restored to be available for resuming operations. A range of projects were planned to readjust farmland and improve production foundations and functions, with a particular focus on allowing large field allotment and installing systems for agricultural water usage remote monitoring and centralized operation control. Recipients of agricultural subsidies for multifunctional community-use facilities increased to 938 organizations managing farmland with a total of 72,096 ha, which helped rebuild an attractive agricultural business and community.

In forestry, government support was continuously provided to expand wood supply capacity, develop the industry, rebuild damaged homes and expand usage of wood biomass. To rebuild coastal disaster prevention forests, foundation development work was started for a total of 556-ha land and planting was completed for 228 ha.

In fishery, support was provided to help early resumption of operations, achieving a restoration rate of 98% for fishing boats, 100% for marine culture facilities and 94% for fish processors. Three distribution hub markets for locally landed fish were completed in Shichigahama, Oshika and Minamisanriku. Recovery work was commenced for all of the 140 fishing ports located in the prefecture.

To help food manufacturers resume full-scale operations, continuous support was provided through creating matchmaking opportunities involving the agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors and facilitating efforts to develop new products. To improve the brand value of Miyagi's products and expand sales networks, business operators were encouraged to participate in trade fairs and business meetings.



Photo: Wood biomass chips

Reconstruction Stage Second Half (FY2017)

Rebuilding attractive agriculture, forestry and fishery, and promoting strong food production industry

In agriculture, as progress was made to restore production foundations and resume operations, out of a total of 13,000-ha farmland subject to restoration work, a portion for a total of 12,782 ha was restored. And, 99% of the damaged horticulture facilities were recovered. Also, other projects were under way chiefly to restore and improve common-use facilities and introduce the farming machines and tools necessary for resuming operations. Recipients of agricultural subsidies for multifunctional community-use facilities increased to 992 organizations managing farmland with a total of 73, 240 ha, helping rebuild agricultural business and community.

In forestry, as government support was provided to expand wood supply capacity and develop the industry, forest road reconstruction work was nearly completed. Support was also provided to promote wood biomass power generation projects. To rebuild coastal disaster prevention forests, foundation development work was started for a total of 605-ha land and planting was completed for 340 ha.

In fishery, two distribution hub markets for locally landed fish were completed in Onagawa and Shiogama. Also, restoration and improvement work progressed steadily for the Kesennuma fish market. As part of efforts to secure workforce, a consultation desk was set up for job seekers and employers, Miyagi Fishermen College launched to provide training, job fairs hosted in Sendai, and promotion campaigns run broadly.

To support food manufacturers, the government arranged opportunities for participation in trade fairs and business meetings in the Tokyo area, organized exhibitions in Taiwan, held business meetings inviting overseas buyers. The Japan Wagyu Olympics was held in Miyagi, in an effort to raise the brand value of prefectural food products.



Photo: Tasting campaign held in a Korean supermarket in Los Angeles

Major initiatives 05 Public works facilities

Reconstruction Stage First Half (FY2014-2015)

Improving public infrastructures to build disaster-resistant community

One key road construction project planned for fiscal 2014 and 2015 was related to the improvement of the Sanriku Expressway, a project funded by the national reconstruction budget, as part of high-grade expressway development plans aimed at strong disaster prevention road networks. Also, the prefectural government promoted plans to consign the operations of Sendai Airport to the private sector, seeking to enhance its functions and revitalize the surrounding areas.

As measures against tsunamis and tidal waves, coastal protection projects were continuously promoted, focusing on enlarging and newly constructing coastal levees. In addition, river channel and dam improvement projects were launched as flood control measures.

To prevent container cargo, vehicles and other objects from being carried away from port areas and scattered around by tsunami waters, we promoted projects for constructing appropriate structures.

Improvement work for public utilities, such as water and sewerage, was implemented, primarily for repair, revamp and renewal of damaged water and sewerage systems, with a view to extending the service life. In preparation for possible landslide disasters, projects were launched to perform foundation ground surveys for high-risk spots and designate caution zones.

Relocation plans were under way for two districts: the Nobiru district, where the JR Senseki Line and Nobiru Station were planned to be moved to highland areas; and the Shinyamashita Station Neighborhood district, where the JR Joban Line and Yamashita Station were planned to be moved inland. The two projects were implemented under national government programs for land adjustment for affected urban areas and regional center development in tsunami-hit areas, to meet the schedule of completion in fiscal 2016.



Photo: Fumotoyama No.1 regulating reservoir under seismic retrofit work

Reconstruction Stage Second Half (FY2016)

Extending the Sanriku Expressway, and promoting private consignment for Sendai Airport

Sanriku Expressway's road extension work progressed to open three sections between Tometowa IC and Mitakido IC on April 16, 2016, Mitakido IC and Shizugawa IC on October 30, 2016, and Shizugawa IC and Minamisanriku-kaigan IC on March 20, 2017. As a result, coastal areas in the northern part of the prefecture and Sendai's urban areas have been connected by expressway networks. Following this, on March 30, 2017, road widening work was completed to allow four lanes to run for the section between Ishinomaki-onagawa IC and Monotoyosato IC.

At Sendai Airport, private operations commenced in July 2016. Airport sales activities were promoted vigorously (220 proposals in fiscal 2016), resulting in an increased number of flights to/from Taipei and Seoul.

The coastal protection project was advanced to start construction work in a total of 59 locations as of the end of fiscal 2016, achieving a construction start rate of 96.7%. The river improvement project was also moved forward, having started work in all the planned locations and completed one. The project for designating caution zones for landslide disasters progressed steadily as scheduled.

To upgrade port functions, projects were organized to expand Takasago Container Terminal facilities and build Takasago No. 2 Quay.

Improvement projects for water and sewerage and other utilities were underway with a focus on seismic retrofit and increased backup capabilities.

The community relocation plan for disaster prevention progressed to have completed residential land development for 96% of the entire planned area. Also, the project for developing regional centers in tsunami-hit areas was moved forward with development work started in all the planned districts, out of which 92% were completed and started sale of residential land lots.



Photo: Sanriku Expressway section between Mitakido IC and Shizugawa IC opens

Reconstruction Stage Second Half (FY2017)

Upgrading transportation infrastructures to build disaster-resistant community

The Sanriku Expressway's road extension work progressed to open two sections between Minamisanriku-kaigan IC and Utatsu IC on December 9, 2017, and Oya-kaigan IC and Kesennuma-chuo IC on March 25, 2018, the first newly opened road in Kesennuma City after the disaster.

At Sendai Airport under private sector operation, owing to energetic international sales activities including those of the governor's delegation, the number of flights to/from Taipei and Seoul increased significantly. Within Japan, Peach Aviation selected Sendai Airport as an airline hub, increasing domestic route operations.

The reconstruction-related coastal protection project continued progressing with construction work started in all the planned locations. The river improvement project advanced as scheduled to have completed work in two locations. In addition, the Teizan Canal Reconstruction Council was established jointly by the national, prefectural and municipal governments and the private sector, and specific plans would be created while ensuring coordination with other projects and initiatives.

To improve port functions, a new project was commenced to extend and improve the Takasago No. 2 Quay structure, in order to be able to handle growing volumes of container cargo. Also, the Takamatsu No. 2 Quay project was completed, which aimed to increase the capability to handle larger bulk cargo ships and reduce cargo traffic congestion at the port.

To maintain water and sewerage and industrial water supply systems, seismic retrofitting and other improvement work was completed. In the Kitakami River, expansion work was completed for downstream water treatment facilities to be able to deal with an increase in inflow volume.

The disaster prevention park project was promoted to start work in all the 21 planned locations. The community relocation plan for disaster prevention progressed to have completed residential land development for 194 districts, achieving the target for fiscal 2017.



Photo: Expanded water treatment facility (Ishinomaki Water Treatment Center)

Major initiatives 06 Education

Reconstruction Stage First Half (FY2014-2015)

Supporting studies, providing mental health care, and promoting disaster prevention education

In order to address an increasing number of school children suffering from mental health problems in the wake of the disaster, psychological counselors and similar professionals were assigned to schools in the prefecture to be able to provide a better learning environment and mental health care for students in need of help. Also, school expense subsidies were offered to children with financial difficulties to help them attend school regularly and study with a sense of security.

School safety education was promoted based on the Miyagi School Safety Basic Policy and in consideration of local characteristics and children's development stages. A new initiative got under way to appoint a disaster prevention manager at every public school, and a lead teacher in charge of disaster prevention at designated key regional schools. To improve the school disaster prevention education system, a disaster prevention education book was created to be used at schools in the prefecture, and regional capabilities for cooperation with relevant communities were enhanced. Great East Japan Earthquake Archive Miyagi, a database created to maintain memories of the disaster and serve education for disaster prevention and disaster risk reduction, was made available to the public from fiscal 2015.

Aiming to deeply foster children's social awareness and career aspirations under the prefecture's original Kokorozashi (education of the will) youth development project, promotion districts were designated and activities were organized in accordance with the actual situation of individual schools and communities.

All prefecture-run local education and culture centers affected by the earthquake and tsunami were restored to reopen by the end of fiscal 2015, excluding Matsushima Nature Retreat.



Photo: School safety forum discussing disaster prevention education

Reconstruction Stage Second Half (FY2016)

Supporting children suffering from mental health problems, and developing a parent-friendly community

Out of a total of 91 prefecture-run schools that were affected by the disaster, 88 schools, or 96.7% of the total, completed restoration work as of the end of fiscal 2016. School expense subsidies were continuously offered to financially constrained households with school-age children to help their regular school attendance.

To increase schools' capabilities to provide mental health care to children with problems, psychological counselors, social workers and additional teachers were assigned or dispatched to schools as appropriate. Additionally, the prefectural government provided support to the Miyagi Children's Mental Health Care House, an out-of-school service established and operated by individual municipalities to help local bullied or truant children return to school or become independent.

In a project to enhance disaster prevention education, the disaster science department opened in Tagajo High School in April 2016, representing the second senior high school in Japan to establish such a department. Among continued initiatives were those for appointing a disaster prevention manager for every public school and a lead teacher in charge of disaster prevention for designated key regional elementary and junior high schools.

In order to build human capabilities within the community to support parents of young children, the prefectural government held seminars for local parent support volunteers and leaders of volunteer support activities. At the same time, guidance and training sessions were organized for parents.

School safety plans were improved for every public school in the prefecture by incorporating regional capabilities for cooperation with local communities.



Photo: Meeting of Miyagi General Safety Education Promotion Network

Reconstruction Stage Second Half (FY2017)

Ensuring that children can study with a sense of security, dealing with mental health problems, and inspiring social awareness

Out of a total of 91 prefecture-run schools that were affected by the disaster, 90 facilities, or 98.9% of the total, completed restoration work as of the end of fiscal 2017. To Miyagi Prefecture Agricultural High School and Kesennuma Koyo High School, which were severely damaged by the disaster, school equipment and supplies were provided to be used in the restored facilities.

As a measure to address the mental health issues of children, in addition to psychological counselors, mental health care supporters were assigned to 32 senior high schools to increase capabilities to provide consultation and guidance to students with problems at each school. Looking at the gradually increasing number of students receiving counseling at school and sessions per person, the government provided adequate assistance on an ongoing basis. Continued prefectural support was provided to 13 municipalities with operating the Miyagi Children's Mental Health Care House, out-of-school service to help local bullied or truant children.

In the area of disaster prevention education, support was provided to prepare facilities and teaching materials for the disaster science department opened at Tagajo High School. Among continued initiatives were those for appointing a disaster prevention manager for every public school and a lead teacher in charge of disaster prevention for designated key regional elementary and junior high schools.

The Kokorozashi project was promoted with a focus on activities aimed at setting a future vision and aspiration, holding the 2017 Kokorozashi Education Forum and publishing the second selection of stories of great figures from Miyagi, Mirai-e-no-Kakehashi (bridge to the future), to be delivered to elementary and junior high schools in the prefecture.

In order to build community capabilities to support parents of young children, seminars for local parent support volunteers were held in addition to programs organized for parents of young children.



Photo: 2017 Kokorozashi Education Forum—Develop the will to open the way to the future (brochure)

Major initiatives 07 Disaster prevention, safety, comfort

Reconstruction Stage
First Half (FY2014-2015)

Increasing disaster and crime prevention capabilities to develop safe and secure community environment

The prefectural government supported disaster-affected municipalities to restore their government functions, including fire-fighting and disaster prevention services, as early as possible. To rebuild local disaster prevention functions, we provided basic knowledge on disasters and assisted with creating natural disaster hazard maps for each municipality.

To build appropriate nuclear disaster prevention systems, the prefectural government conducted a nuclear disaster drill including evacuation exercises for local residents, a first for Miyagi, in fiscal 2014. In fiscal 2015, prior to distributing iodine tablets for thyroid protection, local briefing sessions were held in Onagawa Town.

To prepare for large-scale natural disasters, training programs were held to develop volunteer leaders of neighborhood disaster prevention forces. We also supported each municipality to increase capabilities to perform structural risk assessment independently for key functions such as evacuation centers immediately after the occurrence of a disaster, as well as for affected housing and other structures subsequently. To raise public awareness of disaster preparedness, responsible persons were sent to give lectures to local residents.

Programs were launched to strengthen local security capabilities for new communities formed by residents of public housing for disaster survivors and community members relocated from high-risk areas. To raise public awareness of the importance of crime prevention efforts, government personnel gave lectures to the locals and public-private joint campaigns were held. To increase organized community security functions, government support was provided for forming neighborhood watch groups to play a key role in volunteer security activities.



Photo: Community security volunteers from residents of public housing for disaster survivors

Reconstruction Stage
Second Half (FY2016)

Developing volunteer leaders for local disaster and crime prevention activities

To promote broader regional disaster prevention initiatives in Miyagi Prefecture with all its municipalities grouped into seven blocks, land was acquired to build an operation center for each block, which were scheduled to open partially in fiscal 2017, and communications equipment was purchased to be installed in each center.

To maintain nuclear disaster prevention systems, resident evacuation plans were created for all the seven designated municipalities where priority areas were located. Iodine tablets were distributed in case of future need.

To develop volunteer leaders of neighborhood disaster prevention forces, a total of 22 training sessions were offered for new candidates, and nine follow-up seminars for authorized leaders to improve skills. Government personnel were continuously sent to speak at awareness-raising sessions in various locations. To build capabilities for each municipality to perform structural risk assessment independently for emergency response functions as well as for affected residential and other buildings, training programs were organized for acquiring relevant qualifications.

For new towns formed for communities relocated for the purpose of disaster prevention, traffic safety facilities were installed in major roads. Social workers for disaster-affected people were sent to temporary housing complexes to give residents guidance on road and neighborhood security. To ensure adequate neighborhood security in temporary housing areas, continued support was provided for organized volunteer efforts, and awareness-raising activities for residents were continued.



Photo: Visiting personnel giving traffic safety guidance for residents of temporary housing

Reconstruction Stage
Second Half (FY2017)

Promoting self-help and mutual help policies to build safe and secure community environment

As a measure to rebuild disaster prevention systems, a range of research was conducted to develop broader regional disaster prevention functions, communications equipment was purchased to be installed in the disaster prevention center for each of the seven blocks, and manuals were prepared for opening and operating the centers.

To develop volunteer leaders of neighborhood disaster prevention forces, a total of 23 training sessions were offered. As part of efforts to raise public awareness of disaster prevention, government personnel were sent to local sessions to speak using disaster investigation reports and other records from the Great East Japan Earthquake. New support was offered for organizing and revitalizing volunteer disaster prevention activities in six districts in the prefecture.

Restoration plans for police functions and facilities progressed to complete new buildings for a total of seven bases, including Ishinomaki Police Onagawa Station, to be relocated from temporary sites. Also, design work started for the project to construct a new building for Minamisanriku Police Department to move from its temporary location, a plan to increase the local security capabilities.

To build safe and secure community environment with a focus on disaster and crime prevention, a range of measures were carried out against prevailing bank transfer fraud and similar crimes, such as creating and distributing leaflets to warn residents to take precautions and launching the Miyagi Security Mail program to send information on suspicious individuals and warning messages.



Photo: Minamisanriku Police Togura Station

Special Report

Private efforts to support reconstruction of affected areas

In response to the occurrence of the Great East Japan Earthquake, numerous people have taken action to support efforts to reconstruct affected communities and individual lives. This section introduces part of their continued efforts to create bright future for disaster survivors from a long-term perspective.

Ishinomaki KIZUNA Newspaper Project

Community newspaper, mutual help

Revitalizing community through local news publication

Ishinomaki KIZUNA Project took over the project of publishing and distributing a free newspaper for residents of temporary housing in Ishinomaki City, which had been hosted by the Peace Boat Disaster Relief Volunteer Center from October 2011 to March 2016, and has relaunched the project as the Ishinomaki KIZUNA Newspaper (monthly circulation of 6,000). The project aims to serve the following four objectives: (1) provide information to help temporary housing residents live a self-reliant life; (2) visit residents to deliver the newspaper, and take that opportunity to communicate with them and monitor their conditions, looking to reduce their mental stress and build a relationship of trust; (3) develop local volunteers to create systems of mutual help, looking to provide a sense of fulfillment to participants; and (4) welcome volunteers from outside of the prefecture, aiming to maintain memories of the disaster.



Matsushima Ryutoe Uminobon Executive Committee

Community activities

Praying for the repose of souls, essential purpose of observing o-bon

Matsushima Ryutoe Uminobon was launched by people feeling strongly attached to Matsushima as their hometown to commemorate victims of the 2011 disaster. We are striving to create a festival featuring the two major aspects of Matsushima—sacred spot and famous tourist destination—and looking at development into the future. Every summer, the festival takes place at the Matsushima Beach Central Plaza as the main venue, attracting many people to enjoy various traditional events, including bon dance, food stalls, fireworks and lantern floating, a highlight of the event. Illuminated by numerous lanterns floating on the water, an essential o-bon ritual to pray for the repose of souls, Matsushima Bay is enveloped in a fantastical atmosphere.



Photo provided by Matsushima Tourism Association

Café Chikyumura

Cafe

Creating the café as a community center

Café Chikyumura is a part of Kobo Chikyumura (studio global village), a welfare facility established by Yamamoto Town Social Welfare Association to provide employment opportunities to those with difficulty finding regular employment due to disabilities and illnesses. Café Chikyumura was opened in a house trailer purchased using donations related to the disaster to employ users of the facility who had lost jobs after the disaster. To prepare the project, facility users and staff worked together to plan the menu to offer and the uniform to wear. The cafe has grown to attract customers not only from nearby areas but also from a distance even outside of the prefecture. Going forward, the café is planning to add a function as a casual community interaction center.

