

5

Restoration and Disaster Prevention Learning Program

Restoration and disaster prevention learning program operations team
 Director Jun Ishido; Kensuke Emura, Higher Education Promotion Center; Kazuya Sugiyasu, Faculty of Policy Studies; Keiko Chiba, Sanae Kumamoto, Aki Yoshihara, Hamish Smith, Patrick Maher, Morioka Junior College

Applicable principle

Principle 9: A commitment to promoting sustainability through education

1. Beginning of the Bottled Water Distribution Activity ("MizuBora")

The bottled water distribution activity (commonly known as "MizuBora") was initiated by a faculty member of the Morioka Junior College Department of Iwate Prefectural University when they, alongside colleagues and students, personally delivered drinking water bottles that were donated to Iwate Prefecture as relief supplies after the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami that occurred in March 2011. The water was given to affected people living in temporary housing. This faculty member also personally encountered the tsunami while on a business trip.

Even after lifelines were restored and the provision of relief supplies ended, they continued the activity with support such as donations from the Honjo International Scholarship Foundation and the provision of drinking water from ITO EN, Ltd. The purpose of continuing this activity is to use the distribution of drinking water to as a "conversation starter" with people who have been forced to move into temporary housing. It is a way to open up an opportunity to talk with them and let them know that people are looking out for them, as well as to be of some help in the creation of a new local community.

2. Expansion to Student Exchange Program

Meanwhile, there was an offer from Ohio University (Athens, Ohio, United States) for joint volunteer activities immediately after the 2011 earthquake. Every year, Ohio University students studying at Chubu University (Kasugai City, Aichi Prefecture), students and faculty from Chubu University, and students and faculty from our university cooperate in activities in Miyako City, Yamada Town, and other areas.

In 2013, by incorporating "Water Volunteering" into this joint volunteer activity, it became known as the "Expanded Water Volunteer Program" which includes a larger range of participants. Chubu University and Ohio University have already had exchanges for about 50 years, and in 2016, a student exchange Program between Iwate Prefectural University and Ohio University, was created. Also, from 2018, in addition to these three universities, International graduate students from all over the nation who are given scholarships from the Honjo International Scholarship Foundation began to join the activity, making the activity a collaboration of four organizations.

3. Evolution into a Restoration and Disaster Prevention Learning Program

In 2022, the direction of this activity evolved into a disaster prevention learning program. The program entitled the "Restoration and disaster prevention learning program", focuses on service learning. After a two-year hiatus due to the spread of COVID-19, the activity was resumed for the first time in three years.

In 2023, 62 students and faculty members from three organizations (the Ohio University was not able to participate) participated in the program, which was held at the Takata Matsubara Tsunami Reconstruction Memorial Park, which was completed approximately 10 years after the disaster, and the Iwate Prefectural Outdoor Activity Center.



Commemorative photo taken in front of the prefectural Tochigasawa Apartments

(1) Breakdown of participants

Organization	Students	Faculty and staff	Total
Ohio University	-	-	-
Chubu University	5	3	8
Honjo International Scholarship Foundation, Ito En, Ltd.	21	5	26
Iwate Prefectural University	15	13	28
Total	41	21	62

(2) Program overview

① Preliminary learning/Gathering 1 (ice-breaking) [Iwate Prefectural Outdoor Activities Center]

Following greetings from the representatives of the three participating organizations, the origins of the drinking water distribution activity in the wake of the Great East Japan

Earthquake and Tsunami, and the history of exchanges were outlined. After that, as an icebreaking event, "Getting-to-know-you BINGO" was conducted to encourage interaction among participants.



Icebreaking scene

② Visiting the remains of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami [Takata Matsubara Tsunami Reconstruction Memorial Park]

A group photo was taken with all participants at the Takata Matsubara Tsunami Reconstruction Memorial Park. Afterwards, they were divided into three groups and toured the Great East Japan Earthquake Tsunami Memorial Hall, the seawalls (Sea viewing spot), the Miracle Pine Tree, and Kesen Junior High School, whose interior was newly opened to the public from 2021. Local guides provided explanations.



Tour of former Kesen Junior High School

③ Exchange program with residents (Mizubora) [Iwate Prefectural Tochigasawa Apartment Complex]

The participants were divided into 6 groups and distributed bottles of tea provided by ITO EN, Ltd., and engaged in conversations with the residents.



Students engaging in Mizubora

④ Gathering 2 (campfire) [Iwate Prefectural Outdoor Activities Center]

On the second night, participants gathered around a campfire. After a fire lighting ceremony by the "God of Fire", participants had fun joining in a "Jenkka (a Finnish folk dance)". International students performed songs and dances from their home countries and other countries around the world and the "Morioka Sansa Odori" dance was introduced as a local dance from Iwate.



Jenkka

⑤ Experience of setting up a shelter [Iwate Prefectural Outdoor Activities Center]

On the third day, after visiting the 3.11 Temporary Housing Experience, the participants toured the Rikuzentakata Global Campus, where they saw a model of the "lost city" and materials from the evacuation center, and also took part in a disaster prevention training session where they were asked to imagine what they would do after a disaster. This year's program was concluded with three students representing each of the groups of students, reflecting on the experience.



Temporary housing experience