

Acceptance of natural disaster and initiatives of local people to overcome its impact

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Natural disaster especially earthquake is a common problem in Japan because 108 active volcanoes out of approximately 1500 in the world are located in this country. FOLENS in collaboration with RQ organized a 3days long seminar from 7 to 9 March 2012 on “Disaster Education” and volunteer activities in the tsunami affected area of Japan, the

tsunami that hit the northeastern Honshu coast on March 11, 2011 and killed approximately 25,000 Japanese people. At first, I would like to thank FOLENS to arrange such kind of seminar and give me opportunity to work as volunteer and thanks RQ to make arrangement. Before going to visit these locations I watched some videos about the affected area and thought there might more than half of the people still living in the affected area, but after going I saw nothing were left. The villages, the cities were totally abolished by the effect of devastating tsunami. I was really shocked after seeing what was really happened there. Some people still living there who were partially or not affected by tsunami. They accepted the natural disaster as a part of their life and trying to overcome it. I feel lucky that I could be a part of them by helping to reconstruct their habitat as a volunteer. We visited Higashi-Matushima area, Onagawa city, Ogatsu city, Shizugawa city which were mostly damaged by tsunami and participated cleaning activities at Jifuku-ji Temple, Kesen-numa city. Not only us, there were some more other volunteers working with us together. We also visited oyster farming area located at Karakuwa and helped a farmer to tie up oyster seeds with the rope, where maximum farmers lost 80% of their boats and oyster seeds during the tsunami. I found farmers not hopeless. They were not scared to fight against natural disaster and trying to restart their farming. We met a leader of the oyster farmers of that location and listened about the effect of tsunami. He accepted us politely and showed us their activities after the tsunami. He told us about the positive effect of tsunami that was “before tsunami 1 year would be needed to grow oyster but after tsunami it has been half”. Now, within 6 months they can sale oyster. He said, besides destroying our wealth, tsunami has enriched sea water by adding nutrient which helping rapid growth of oyster. These experiences will remain in my memory for ever and I will share this experience with the people of my country.