



# JAPAN **1** YEAR REPORT

 International Medical Corps

One year ago, coastal communities in Northern Japan were devastated by a 9.0 earthquake and subsequent tsunami that destroyed countless homes and livelihoods and killed more than 15,600 people. Due to the catastrophic destruction, as well as an ensuing radiation emergency in Fukushima Prefecture where the damaged nuclear power plant put locals at serious risk, thousands were forced to evacuate their neighborhoods for temporary shelters.

While Japan has significant disaster response capacity, the magnitude of this tragedy compelled us to respond. International Medical Corps' emergency response team was on the ground within 48 hours, assessing needs and offering our partnership to the Japanese government. Our emergency response team was able to reach isolated communities north of Sendai that had been entirely cut off from the outside world to deliver critical relief. International Medical Corps also partnered with well-established Japanese organizations to augment our work through material support as well as training and education for front-line workers in mental health and psychological first aid.



**We worked in coordination with local response agencies and the government to:**

**Deliver Medications, Medical Equipment & Critical Supplies:**

Our teams reached more than 20,000 people at evacuation centers with medications, food and basic supplies.

**Provide Hot Meals:**

International Medical Corps partnered with trusted local organizations to deliver food to families in temporary shelters, evacuation centers and to those isolated in their homes.

**Restore Communications:**

In response to the severely damaged communications infrastructure following the disaster, we delivered satellite phones, laptops, and internet-connecting data cards to disaster response centers, local non-profits and evacuation centers to allow emergency responders to communicate and process key information, such as where families were stranded with no access to medical care.

“One year on, local organizations are working tirelessly to support those affected by the disaster as they struggle to rebuild their lives. As the needs of survivors vary greatly, these organizations are very respectful of the need for individualized support. International Medical Corps is committed to working with our local partners to continue strengthening community bonds and supporting survivors as they rebuild their homes, livelihoods and emotional well-being.”

- Yumi Terahata  
International Medical Corps,  
Japan Country Representative





## FROM EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO LONG-TERM SUPPORT



Although the disaster has faded from the headlines and affected communities have begun rebuilding their lives, countless survivors remain without their homes, possessions, and sources of income – many are also enduring long-term emotional consequences. In the past 12 months, International Medical Corps has been committed to helping Japanese communities overcome these challenges and start anew. Just as we did in our emergency response, we continue to collaborate with local and national government agencies and partner with a variety of local Japanese organizations, so that our recovery efforts have maximum impact.

“Rebuilding homes and lives will take years and the effects on people’s emotional lives will last forever. International Medical Corps was able to respond quickly and can help with the process of recovery thanks to the generosity of donors and all those who cared about people in a time of need.”

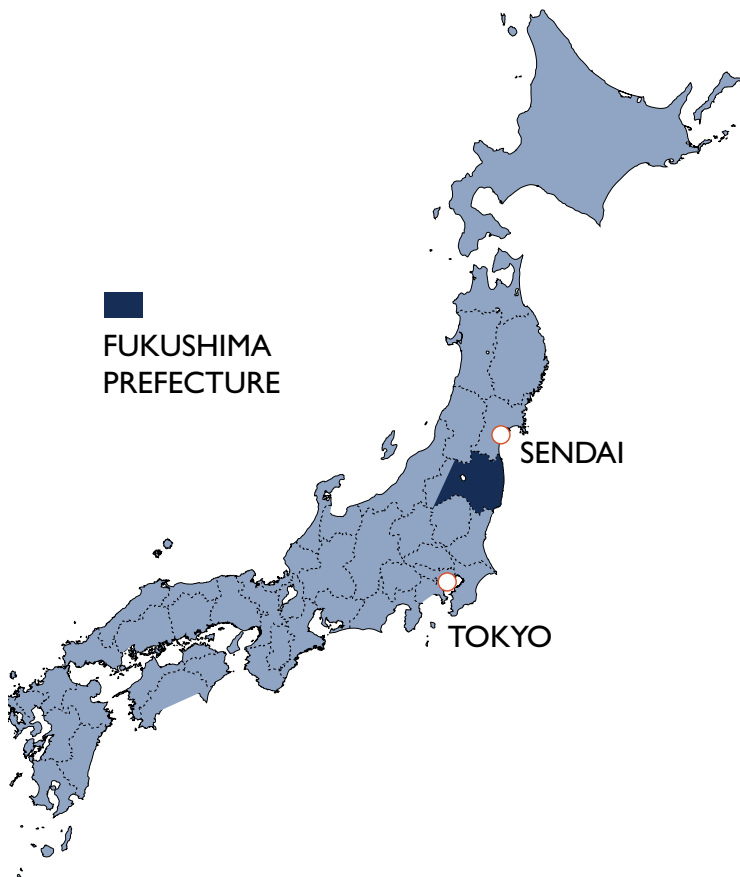
**- Dr. Neil Joyce, International Medical Corps  
Emergency Response Team Japan**



# SPOTLIGHT ON FUKUSHIMA

Although the epicenter of the earthquake was located off the coast of Miyagi Prefecture to the north, Fukushima Prefecture, an agricultural region on Japan's coastline, suffered massive damage from the disaster. Catastrophic damage to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant caused the Japanese government to enforce a mandatory evacuation for anyone living within 20 kilometers. Varying temperature readings at the plant continue to raise concerns today over the stability of the reactors and the safety of those exposed to the air, land and water surrounding the location. Many residents, unaware of how long the evacuation might last, fled with few possessions and one year later are unable to return to their homes.

The government is struggling to provide critically needed public services such as mental health care and livelihoods opportunities for the displaced. In addition, many residents continue to live in fear and face the uncertainty about long-term radiation effects, their livelihoods and their homes. In response, International Medical Corps is supporting local organizations to run community spaces for evacuees struggling to rebuild their lives after the disaster.



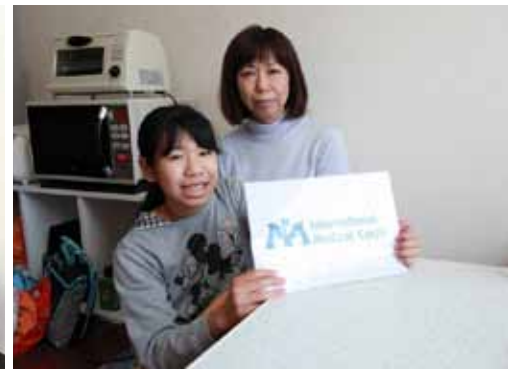
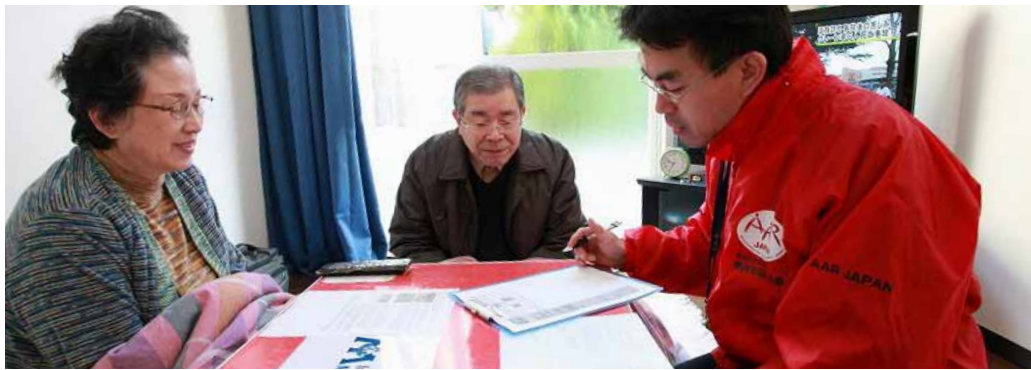
## CRITICAL OUTREACH FOR THE DISPLACED

Mitsuko (pictured above) and her husband Yuichi were forced to evacuate from their home in Fukushima due to the ongoing radiation threat from the nuclear plant. When they left home, they only took minimal items, believing that the evacuation would be temporary. One year later they still haven't been able to return home, living today in a subsidized housing complex in Saitama City in Saitama Prefecture.

Together with our local partner, Association for Aid and Relief Japan (AAR Japan), International Medical Corps has reached 300 evacuee households (about 900 individuals), like Mitsuko's and Yuichi's, to distribute critical household supplies for families left with little and struggling to rebuild in new surroundings. Teams distributed kits containing basic cooking and cleaning supplies – we also delivered heating units to help families get through the extremely cold winter. Mitsuko says the daily household items and cleaning supplies provided by International Medical Corps have been “exceptionally helpful” in rebuilding their lives.



The day of the disaster, Ken and Naoyuki evacuated Fukushima to a nearby school as both of their homes were located just miles from the shore where catastrophic tsunami waves were breaking. After a week of living there with minimal resources, they were transported to Gunma Prefecture and since have been relocated four times to various temporary shelters -- with little more than the clothes on their backs. The two evacuees met at their third shelter and agreed to share a room once they were able to access a subsidized housing complex. They credit International Medical Corps with helping rebuild their lives. Our teams provided them with a kotatsu – a source of heat during the cold winter -- as well as with cooking supplies.



“International Medical Corps’ generous contribution has allowed us to distribute essential household supplies to families that have had to evacuate from Minami-Soma City. They are currently living in subsidized housing across various prefectures outside of Fukushima with none to very little of their personal belongings. The relief supplies have not only been valuable for these evacuees to rebuild their lives in unfamiliar territories, but have also enabled them to survive through the harsh winter climate in the Tohoku region.”

- Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR JAPAN)

## PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

“Individuals affected by disaster often witness horrific events and lose loved ones, or become separated from family members. They also suffer severe and inter-related stressors such as losing their homes, livelihoods, material belongings, and community or social support systems. Such severe events and chronic stressors can cause significant suffering among the affected population.”

**Dr. Inka Weissbecker, Global Mental Health & Psychosocial Advisor,  
International Medical Corps**

In addition to supporting mental health and psychological first aid programs in Japan, we also partnered with local organization, Shapla Neer, to create a community space for evacuees living in temporary housing. The space provides evacuees with a central place where they can interact with peers, seek counseling, and receive critical information on assistance programs and other related topics.





“When I was living in Usuiso District, I had my fellow fishermen around anytime I went to sea. I always had someone to talk with. Since I moved to the apartment, I don't have any friends around the area and I didn't know how to spend my days. Since I began to visit this community space, I am glad that I can talk with the staff members. I will continue to visit here. I recommend that anyone like me come here.”

Takao, a fisherman and 60-year resident of the coastal district of Usuiso, lost all of his belongings and his home in the tsunami. After staying for three months at an evacuation center, he moved to an apartment in Joutou District. He has been visiting an International Medical Corps-supported community space and sharing his experiences with the staff.

International Medical Corps is also expanding our partnership to establish community spaces for evacuees with local Japanese organization, The People. Since November, The People has been providing evacuees with a space to interact with others affected by the disaster, participate in recreational classes, receive counseling and referrals for appropriate services, and participate in a range of social events. Through this community space, International Medical Corps is supporting The People to continue its community outreach and to empower survivors to rebuild their lives.

## MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

As a leader in mental health response in emergency settings, International Medical Corps worked to improve access to and quality of mental health services by strengthening the capacity of local organizations in Japan and first-responders:

- Trained 85 counselors and 93 frontline workers in Psychological First Aid (PFA) in partnership with accredited nonprofit Tokyo English Life Line (TELL).
- Hosted a psychosocial conference in partnership with Tohoku University and TELL titled, “Healing a Community: What We Can Do for Our Children” aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of Japanese mental health professionals with regard to PFA during disasters.
- Promoted standards and best practices such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings, created by the World Health Organization.
- Organized a workshop about guidelines for local mental health professionals in partnership with Japan's National Institute of Mental Health.

# REBUILDING LIVELIHOODS



Prior to the disaster, coastal communities relied primarily on fishing for income. The tsunami destroyed boats, equipment, and processing facilities. In addition, the Fukushima nuclear crisis sparked fears of tainted fish, lowering the demand for seafood from the region. As a result, unemployment is high in areas where fishermen traditionally supported their immediate and extended families. Those living in temporary housing do not have substantive cost-of-living support and there are few job opportunities. Without accessible livelihood options, many are unable to support themselves and start the process of rebuilding their lives.







International Medical Corps partnered with the Japanese organization International Volunteer Center of Yamagata (IVY) to provide cash-for-work opportunities in Miyagi Prefecture, where 16,000 people were killed and another 40,000 displaced as a result of the tsunami. The jobs focus on reconstruction activities, such as mud and debris cleaning, which will help many people return to their homes.

Through our partnership with IVY, International Medical Corps also helps lessen the strain on the elderly living in Miyagi Prefecture by delivering lunches and performing daily chores and errands. International Medical Corps also helps IVY make farmer's markets accessible to people living in remote temporary housing sites. The markets make food shopping more readily available to the displaced, as well as provide social settings for the elderly and economic opportunities for local farmers.

“IVY has been successfully contributing to reconstruction and care of the local community through the work of the local residents themselves. This could not have been realized without International Medical Corps’ continuous support. . .they take the time to listen carefully to our perspectives and concerns and to think along with us how to solve problems. We greatly appreciate their helpful advice.”

- International Volunteer Center of Yamagata (IVY)

## PARTNERSHIPS

In the past year, International Medical Corps has worked closely with a range of national organizations in Japan to continue to identify and address needs post-disaster. Key partners include:

- Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC)
- International Volunteer Center of Yamagata (IVY)
- Association for Aid and Relief Japan (AAR)
- Shapla Neer
- The People
- Fukushima Prefectural Government
- Kojima Co. Ltd.
- Japan's National Institute of Mental Health
- Kamaishi Emergency Response Center
- Kesenuma Emergency Response Center
- PeaceBoat
- Tohoku University
- Tokyo English Lifeline





“Whatever happens, I’ll do my best. We’ll work hard to get back our beautiful country. Thank you for all your support. Let’s each do our best. Thank you for encouraging us.”

Translation from child’s drawing – part of an exchange between students at Ridge Elementary in New Jersey and Kesenuma Elementary School in Japan

# THE ROAD AHEAD

International Medical Corps is working with the Salvation Army Japan, CARITAS Japan, and Kojima Co., Ltd., a Japanese home electronics retailer, to support a winter distribution of essential items to vulnerable families that have evacuated from Fukushima. Reaching up to 5,880 households (14,700 individuals), our distribution will provide items such as heaters, portable stoves, and other household items to evacuees who have relocated throughout Japan.

Much has been accomplished since the devastating earthquake and tsunami, but survivors and evacuees are still dealing with the long-term effects of the disaster. Through the generosity of our supporters, International Medical Corps will continue to develop programs with local partners to address ongoing humanitarian needs and support communities in their effort to become more resilient.



**THANK YOU TO THE THOUSANDS OF INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS THAT DONATED MONEY AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT RELIEF AND RECOVERY EFFORTS IN JAPAN.**



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