



Influence of the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Nuclear Power Station Accident over Foreign Residents in Fukushima Prefecture

**FIA's Response to the Disaster and
Testimonies of 100 Foreign-born Residents**

(This book is translated upon extractions from the Original Japanese version.)

Fukushima International Association (FIA)

Preface

We are in the third year since the Great East Japan Earthquake struck at 2:46 pm on Friday, March 11, 2011. The catastrophic, once-in-a-thousand-year earthquake devastated Fukushima Prefecture and many other areas in the country. In Fukushima, those many people who had to evacuate from their homes and hometowns due to the nuclear accident at Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station are still unable to return, and damages caused by rumors of radioactive contamination also remain unsolved.

Meanwhile, we have received from people across the country and the world some of the most valuable support and voices encouraging the people of Fukushima. Shortly after the earthquake, when our infrastructure and distribution system were no longer working and we were left in a severe situation with no adequate amount of supplies, information or human resources, it made us realize the importance of being connected to each other and the warmth of such bonds. Therefore, we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has sent us support, warmth and encouragements.

At the time of the earthquake, there were approximately 10,000 registered foreign residents in Fukushima, including those from China, the Philippines and Korea. It is often said that foreign-born residents* have a higher risk of becoming vulnerable in a disaster situation due to language barriers. So how did the members of Fukushima International Association, the various international organizations belonging to different municipalities, as well as Japanese language classes, universities and other related organizations support these foreign-born residents? What kind of situation did they face and what action did they take? In order to consider these questions, we have decided to keep a record of what really happened during the period between March 11, 2011 and March 31, 2012, and disseminate whatever findings we gained from these experiences to other parts of Japan and the world. Because we truly believe that this is part of our social mission, we have decided to keep a record of our activities and experiences in the form of a published report.

The report will also contain the results of our survey of 100 foreign-born residents in Fukushima Prefecture conducted between June and December 2012. Of the 100 respondents, we were able to conduct an in-person interview on 70 respondents, from which we found there are many important facts that cannot be recognized through the questionnaire. Although we realize that the results of our survey do not necessarily represent the opinions of all foreign-born residents in Fukushima, they are a documentation of the feelings and thoughts and the actions of each of the 100 foreign-born residents during the disaster, and we would like as many people as possible to read and imagine the tense situation they were in. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the 100 foreign-born residents who agreed to take part in this survey.

We hope that this report will serve to help set up adequate disaster measures for foreign-born residents in the future. By publishing this report, we would also like to show our gratitude to all the support we received from other parts of Japan and overseas.

July 2013

Fukushima International Association

* "Foreign-born residents" refer to those who were either born in foreign countries or bear foreign citizenship, including naturalized Japanese and those born in Japan and bearing foreign citizenship, and live in Fukushima Prefecture.



III 2012 Survey of Foreign-born Residents in Fukushima Prefecture in Relation with the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station Accident

1. Outline of survey

(1) Objective

The objective of this survey is to collect materials for the purpose of utilizing when examining what types of assistance, such as providing information, are necessary and how we can provide them during a disaster situation to the foreign-born residents (those who were either born in foreign countries or bear foreign citizenship, including naturalized Japanese and those born in Japan and bearing foreign citizenship, and live in Fukushima Prefecture). For this, we will study the situation these foreign-born residents faced at the time of the earthquake and nuclear accident at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station on March 11, 2011, as well as their present situation.

(2) Main body conducting the survey

Fukushima International Association

(3) Period of survey

June 2012 - December 2012

(4) Respondents of survey

A total of 100 foreign-born residents aged above 18, who lived in Fukushima Prefecture at the time of the earthquake on March 11, 2011.

(5) Method of survey

The survey was conducted by interviewing 70 foreign-born residents personally and sending questionnaires to 30 foreign-born residents.

(6) Languages used for the survey

[Interview] Japanese, English, Chinese and Tagalog

[Questionnaire] Simple Japanese with furigana, English, and Chinese

2. Outline of survey results

(1) Situation the respondents were in at the time of the earthquake

At the time of the earthquake, 7 of the 100 respondents lived in municipalities such as Tomioka-machi, Okuma-machi, Futaba-machi, Hirono-machi, and Odaka district of Minami-soma City, which became the evacuation zone, and 17 lived in Aizu district, where damages were comparatively light. This ratio between the different municipalities is practically the same as the ratio of registered foreign residents in general who lived in these municipalities before the earthquake.

When we looked at the nationality of the respondents, we found that 42% were Chinese, 14% were Filipinos/Filipinas, and 13% were Koreans. This ratio is also

similar to the ratio of registered foreign residents living in each municipality before the earthquake.

Also among the 100 respondents, 76% were female; more than half have lived in Japan for over 10 years. To a multiple-answer question on what language(s) they use in everyday, 84 respondents said they use Japanese. This shows that most of the respondents are using Japanese in addition to their native languages.

In regard to occupation, students and trainees were rather few with only 8% and 4% respectively. Nearly 80% consisted of company employees, housewives and househusbands, and business owners. And about 70% of the respondents lived with their families.

(2) Level of disaster preparedness before the earthquake

Most of the 100 respondents held knowledge of how to protect themselves by taking shelter under a desk, etc. As to evacuation shelters, however, only about half the respondents knew that schools and community centers can be used as evacuation shelters during the time of a disaster, foreigners can also be accepted in these shelters, and all evacuees can be provided with water, food, and information regarding the earthquake in these shelters. This is partly because some countries, including China, do not have such evacuation system.

About 60% knew about the relationship between an earthquake and tsunami, or the possibility that tsunami may hit coastal areas after an earthquake. However, it has been reported in a survey conducted in March 2010 by Earthquake Research Institute of the University of Tokyo that 95% of Japanese respondents had this knowledge. Given this percentage, it can be said that foreigners were lacking basic knowledge about tsunami.

In regard to the nuclear power station, only half of the respondents knew that nuclear power stations are located in Fukushima Prefecture.

(3) Methods used to gather information after the earthquake

Most of the respondents said they used television, which delivers information with images, whereas only about 30% said they used newspapers or radio. This is probably because it is difficult for foreigners to collect accurate information only through text or sound.

The number of those who used mobile phones, personal computers, or smart phones was 68, of which about 80% said they checked through websites via these

devices. About half said they also used e-mail and social network services, such as facebook. This shows that a kind of media that allow users to obtain and exchange information using different languages plays an important role at the time of a disaster.

Of the 63 respondents who said they contacted government institutions, 65% had contacted the embassies of their home countries, which was the highest among different contact points. On the other hand, only about 30% said they contacted the city or town offices, or international associations of their municipalities.

As for whom the respondents called or met after the earthquake, we saw no difference in the results according to their nationality. Regardless of their nationality, 70% said they contacted their families and relatives. 50% said they also contacted the communities of people of the same nationality, which shows that these communities are an important source of information.

(4) Evacuation to evacuation shelters

Of the 70 respondents who were personally interviewed, 7 respondents who lived in the evacuation zone from the nuclear accident said they fled to an evacuation shelter. There were also about 10 other respondents who fled to a nearby evacuation shelter.

(5) Temporary evacuation to another country or outside Fukushima Prefecture

We asked the 70 respondents whom we interviewed whether they left Fukushima temporarily after the disaster. More than 70% said they left Fukushima in some form or another. This presents a great difference from the situation which Japanese people were in. Of those 70%, more than 40% said they evacuated to their home countries.

(6) Changes seen after the disaster

① Changes in various aspects of life

1 out of every 4 respondents experienced changes relating to their jobs. It is estimated that foreigners have been affected by the disaster at a higher rate than Japanese residents. Also, 6% of the respondents said they moved to another place, and another 6% said a part of the family live in another place, both of which are the results of refuge from radiation.

Among those respondents who said there were changes relating to their jobs: 8 had salary cut; 9 had to retire; 5 were transferred to another location; 1 changed jobs; 1 had to temporarily stop operation of home business; 1 had to relocate the store; 1 saw changes in employment terms.

Of those respondents who saw changes in their places to live: 6 fled from radiation; 5 had to move to another rented house due to a long period of evacuation; 2 had their homes washed away by the tsunami; 2 had their homes destroyed; 3 gave reasons other than those mentioned above. Of those respondents who saw changes in their family structure: 6 said the families were separated due to evacuation from radiation; 3 said there were changes in the family structure due to the change of the place to live.

② Recognition of terms relevant to disaster

Foreign-born residents have better understanding of terms such as "nuclear accident" or "radiation" after the disaster. This is also true among Japanese in general. However, in regard to the term "emergency drill," only about 30% of the respondents recognized this and about 70% had not participated in the drill even after the disaster.

③ Change in action relevant to disaster prevention

Even after the disaster, there is no increase

in the number of foreigners who join the local community groups or organizations set up by people of the same nationality. On the other hand, nearly half the respondents have strengthened their disaster preparedness by "stocking food and water," "preparing an emergency bag," and "confirming evacuation route and location of evacuation center."

(7) Fear against nuclear accident

80-90% of the respondents were still anxious about the "reoccurrence of nuclear accident" and "health effects" even during fall of 2012. About 70% said they felt anxious about "the level of radioactivity in the environment" and about the "safety of water and foods." From this we can see that the fear and anxiety caused by the nuclear disaster haven't been dispelled much.

However, to the question "Should I evacuate?", more than 50% answered "Not very worried" or "Not worried at all". This results show that although the respondents still have anxiety, they seem to have decided that there is no need to evacuate.

(8) What they expect of the government and related organizations, including Fukushima International Association

The respondents were asked what they expect from the government and related organizations, including Fukushima International Association. About 80% said they expect us to provide information about radiation and disaster in English, Chinese, and simple Japanese. From this, we can see that even after more than one year from the disaster, there are still demands for such information in different languages.

Furthermore, more than 80% of the respondents expect that venues to study Japanese would be set up. This indicates that many foreigners felt anxious during

the disaster because they were unable to understand Japanese.

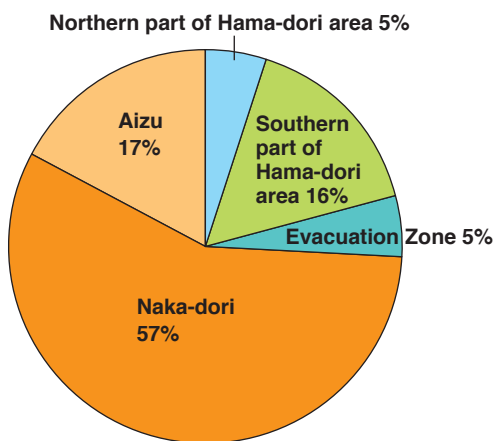
There were relatively a small number of respondents who felt the need for

counseling service in English, Chinese, or simple Japanese, which may be due to the fact that more than a year had already passed since the earthquake.

3. Survey results

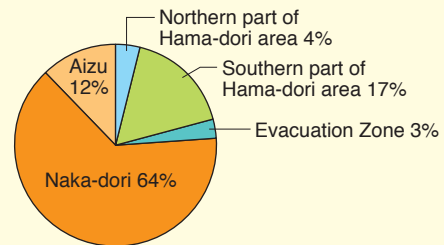
(1) Respondent's situation at the time of the earthquake

① Area of residence



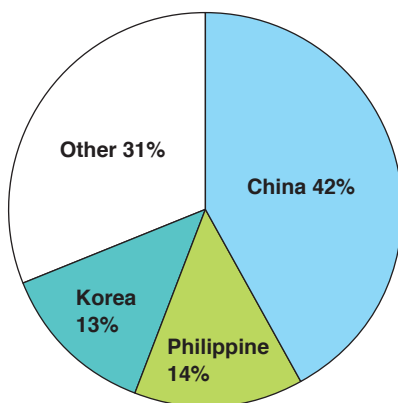
- Northern part of Hama-dori area (Soma City, Minami-soma City, Shinchi Town)
- Southern part of Hama-dori area (Iwaki City, Hirono Town)
- Evacuation Zone (Tomioka Town, Okuma Town, Futaba Town)
- Naka-dori (Fukushima City, Koriyama City, Date City, Shirakawa City, Nihonmatsu City, Sukagawa City, Tamura City, Kawamata Town, Miharu Town, Tenei Village)
- Aizu (Aizuwakamatsu City, Kitakata City, Inawashiro Town, Aizumisato Town, Shimogo Town, Minami-aizu Town)

Reference Number of registered foreign residents by municipality (as of the end of 2010)



Source : Present Situation of Internationalization of Fukushima Prefecture (Fukushima Prefecture International Affairs Division, March 2011)

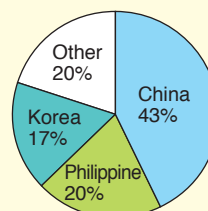
② Country of birth / citizenship



Countries included in "Other"

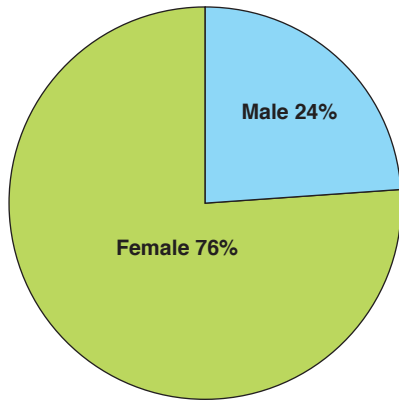
- Thailand, USA5 residents each
- Vietnam4 residents
- NZ3 residents
- Pakistan, Indonesia, Mongol, UK2 residents each
- Cambodia, India, Canada, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Australia1 resident each

Reference Number of registered foreign residents by nationality (as of the end of 2010)

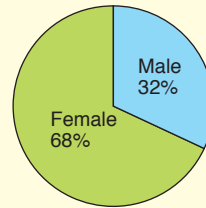


Source : Present Situation of Internationalization of Fukushima Prefecture (Fukushima Prefecture International Affairs Division, March 2011)

③ Gender

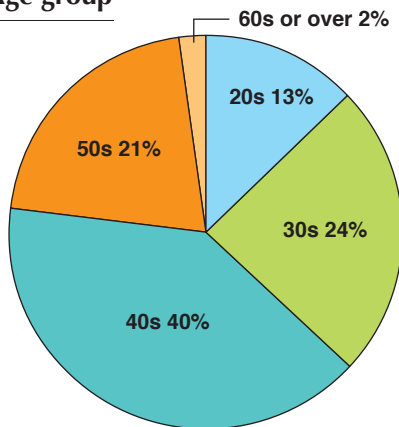


Reference Number of registered foreign residents by gender (as of the end of 2010)

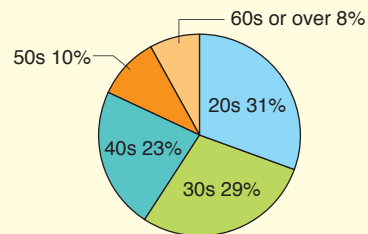


Source : Statistics on Foreign Residents in Japan 2011 (Ministry of Justice)

④ Age group



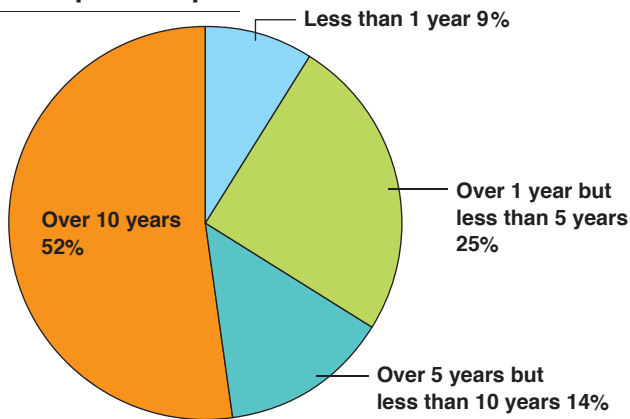
Reference Number of registered foreign residents by age group (as of the end of 2010)



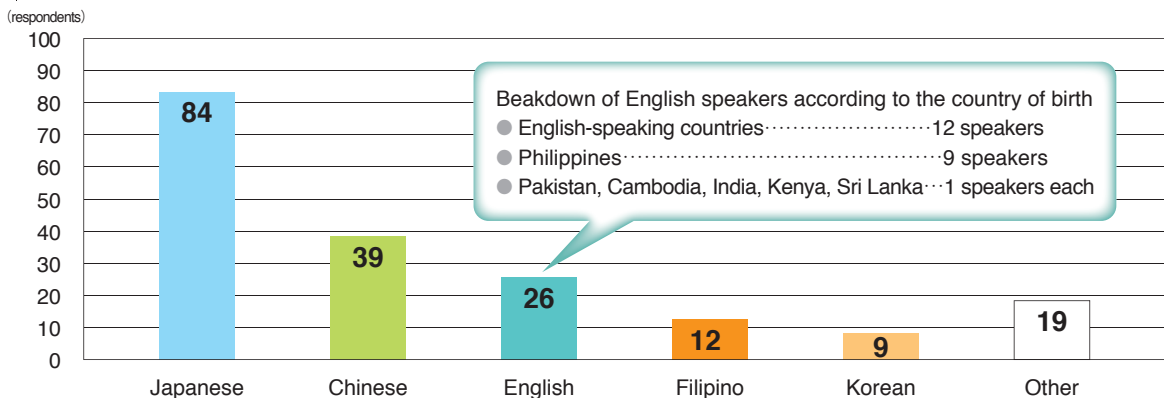
Source : Statistics on Foreign Residents in Japan 2011 (Ministry of Justice)

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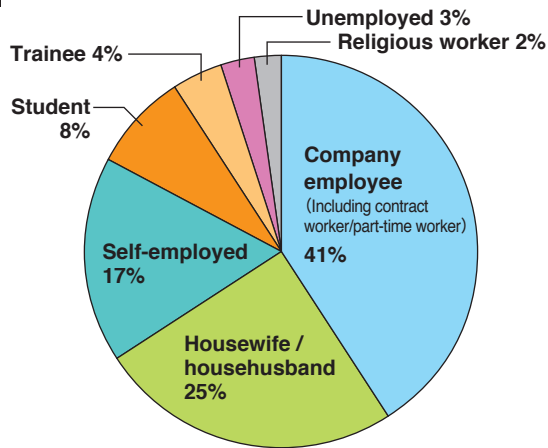
⑤ Years spent in Japan



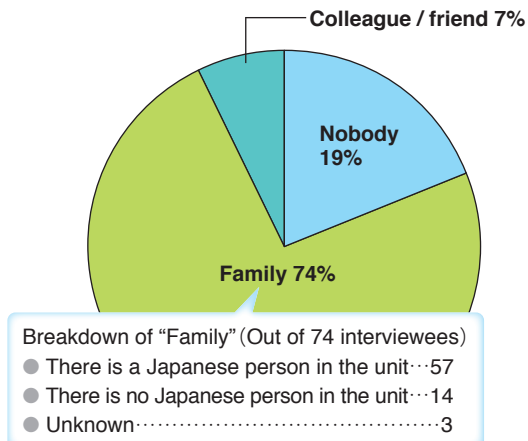
⑥ Language used in daily life (You can choose more than one answer)



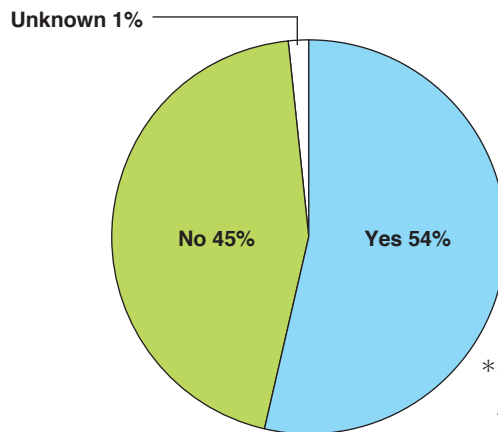
⑦ Occupation



⑧ Person who lived with the respondent



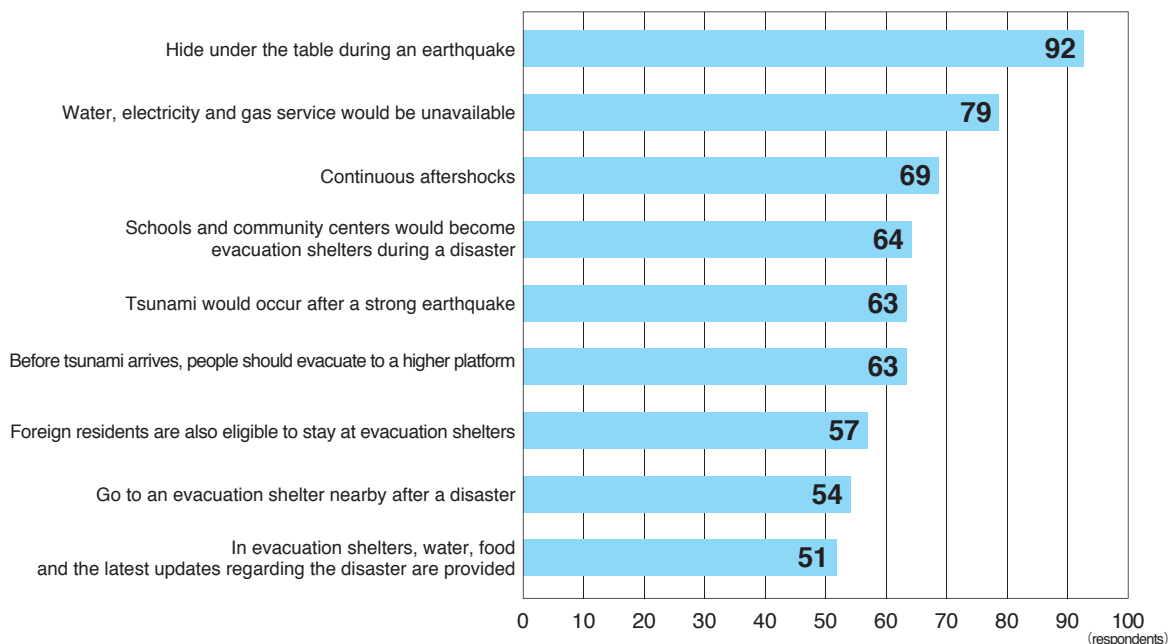
⑨ Did you know that FIA and city/town/village International Associations provide information and consultation services in English and Chinese?

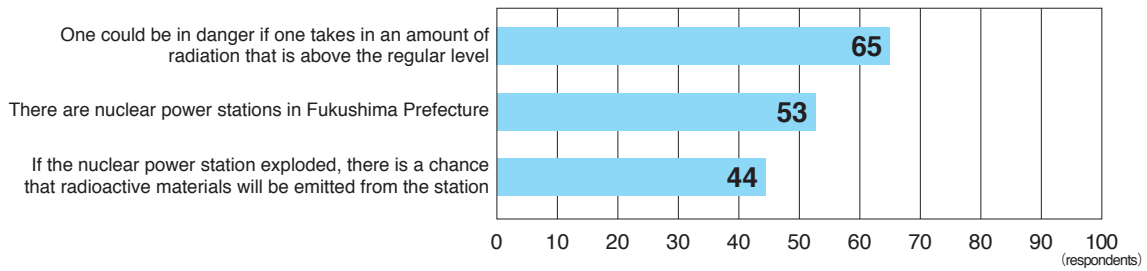


*82% of respondents answered that they have heard of FIA and city/town/village International Associations.

(2) Knowledge of disaster preparedness before the earthquake

Before the earthquake, did you know what to prepare when there is an earthquake and did you know what might happen during an earthquake? (You can choose more than one answer.)

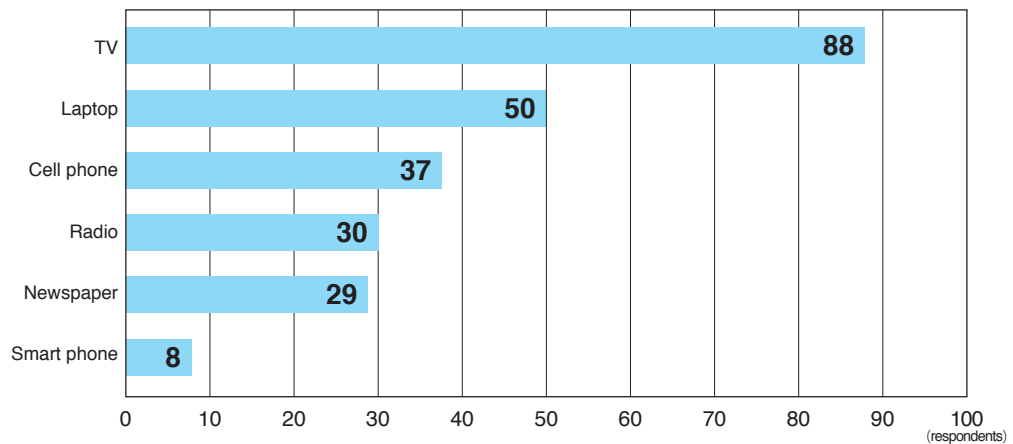




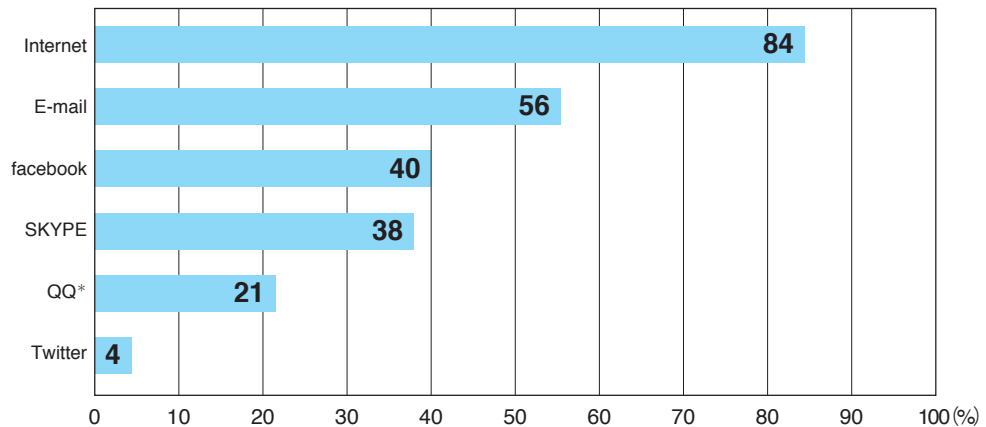
(3) Methods of collecting information after the earthquake

Right after the earthquake, how did you go about getting information and updates?
(You can choose more than one answer)

① Media you used after the earthquake

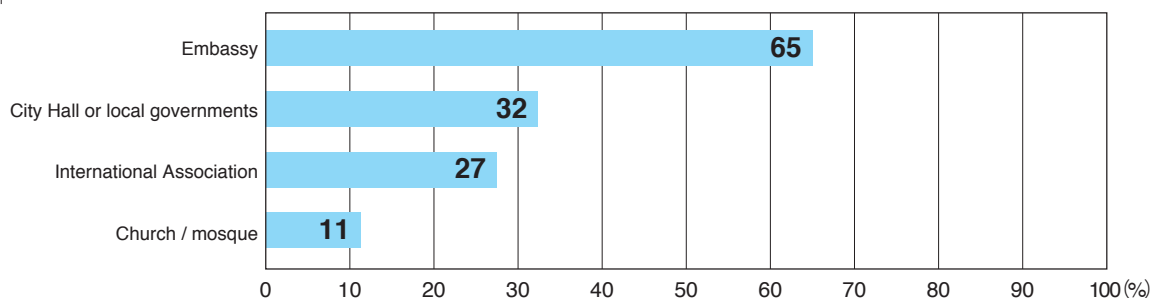


② The types of tools that the 68 respondents who chose Cell phone, Laptop, and Smart phone used

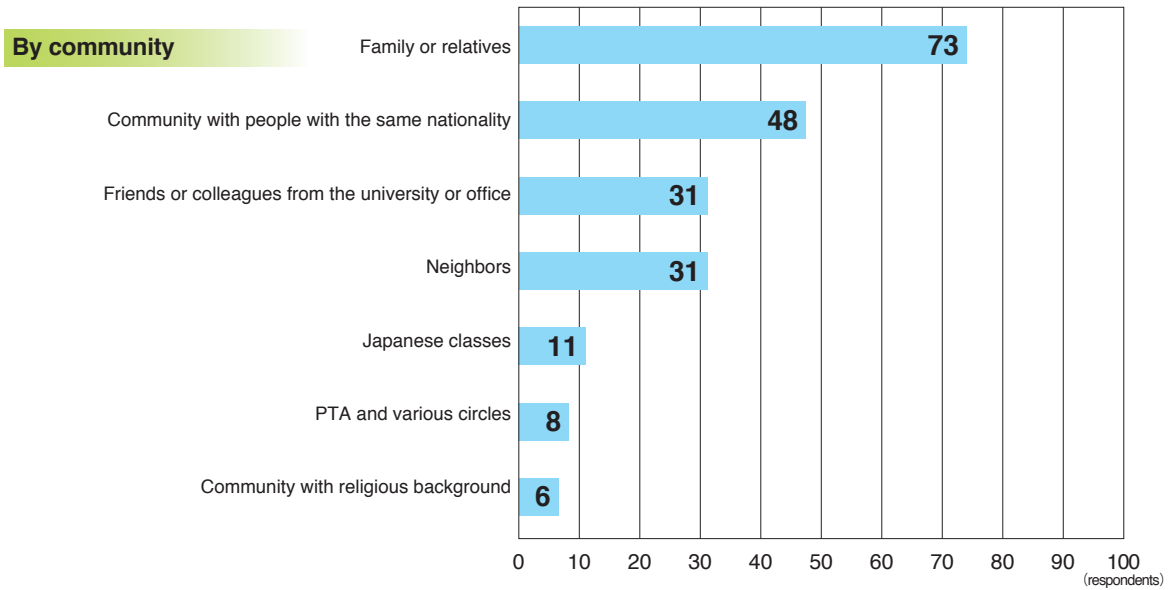
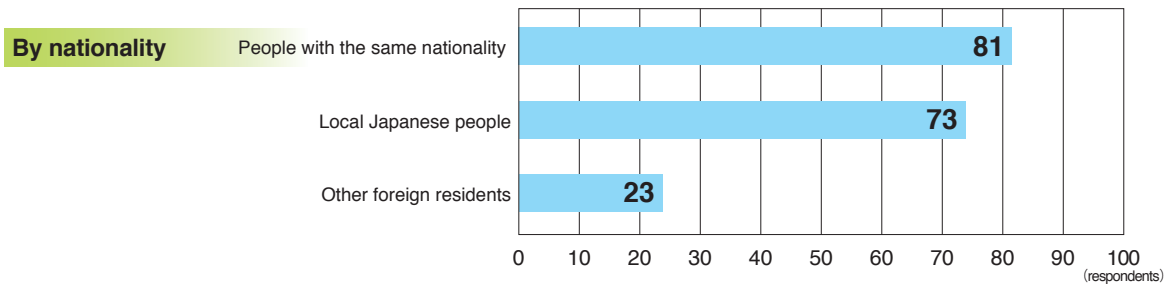


* QQ is a Chinese-language Social Network Service. Of 39 residents who are from the Mainland China, 14 persons (36%) were using it.

③ Breakdown of the institutions which were contacted by the 63 respondents who said they contacted government institutions, etc.



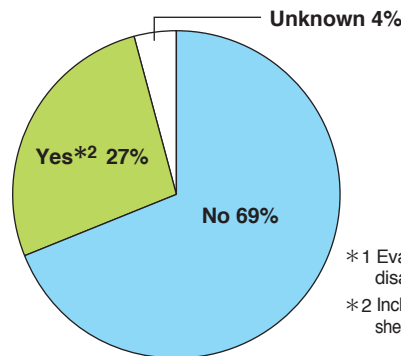
④ Breakdown of people whom interviewees called or met after the earthquake



* Of 70 interviewee, 1 resident were unable to collect information and got isolated.

(4) Evacuation to evacuation shelters*¹ after the earthquake (Of 70 interviewees)

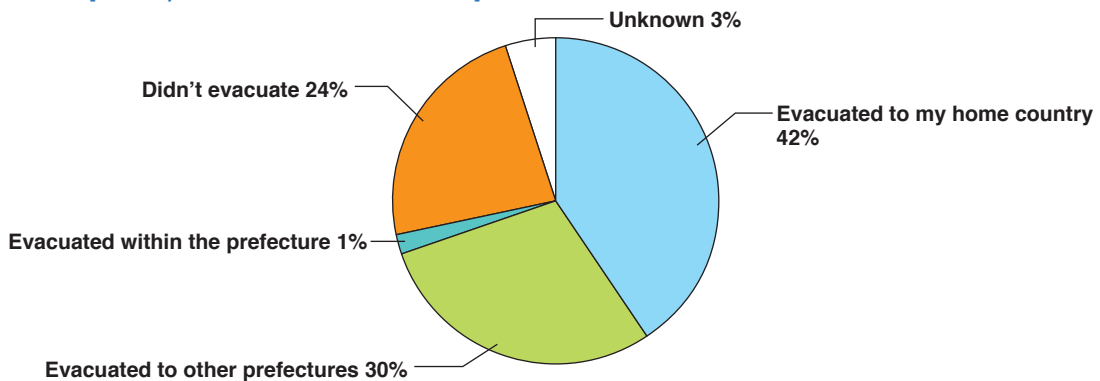
Did you evacuate to an evacuation shelter after the earthquake?



* 1 Evacuation shelters designated by the local disaster prevention plan.

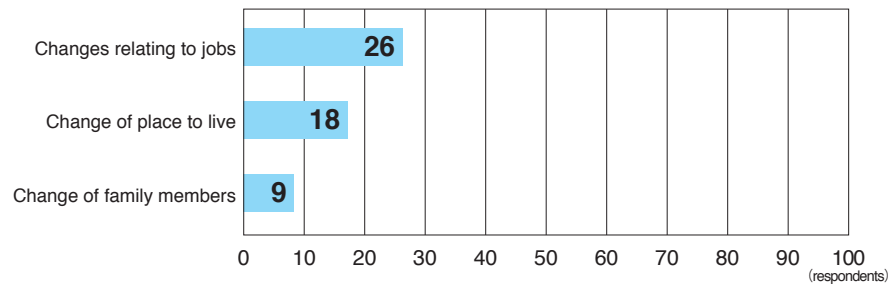
* 2 Includes 1 respondent who stayed an evacuation shelter which a local supermarket opened voluntarily.

(5) Temporary evacuation to other prefectures/countries (Of 70 interviewees)

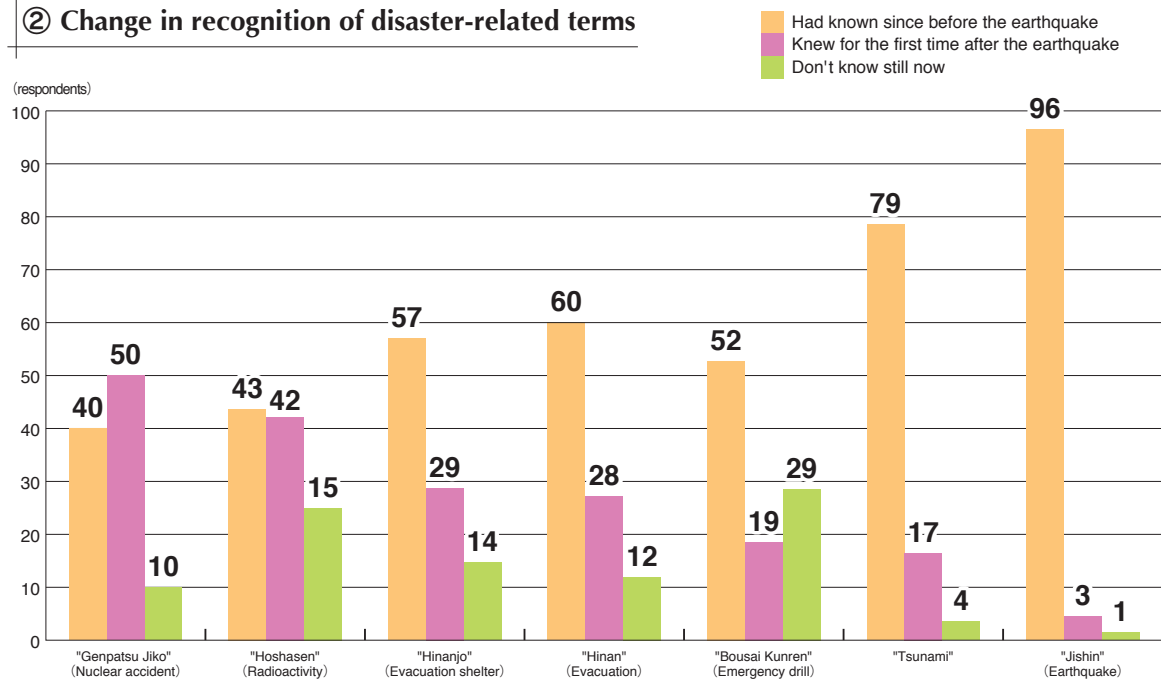


(6) Changes after the earthquake

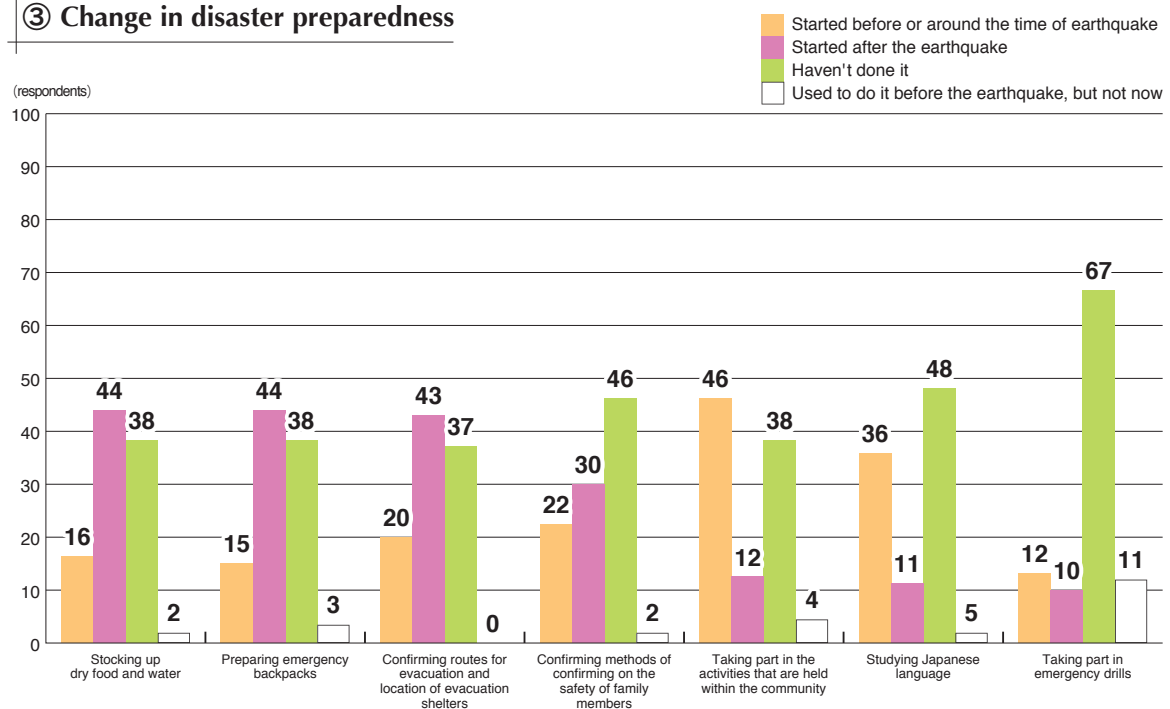
① Changes in various aspects of life (You can choose more than one answer)



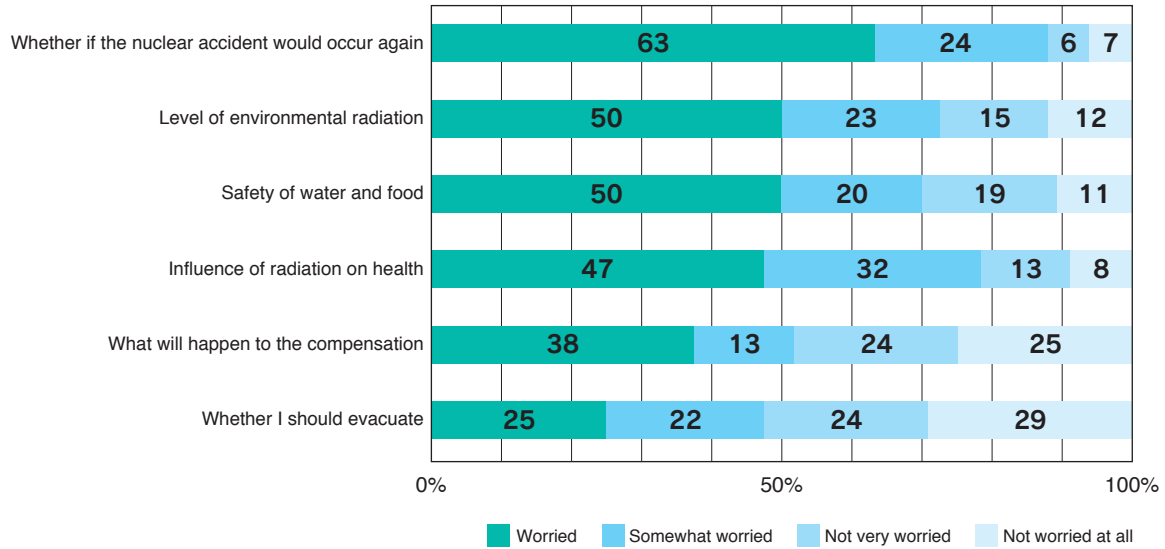
② Change in recognition of disaster-related terms



③ Change in disaster preparedness



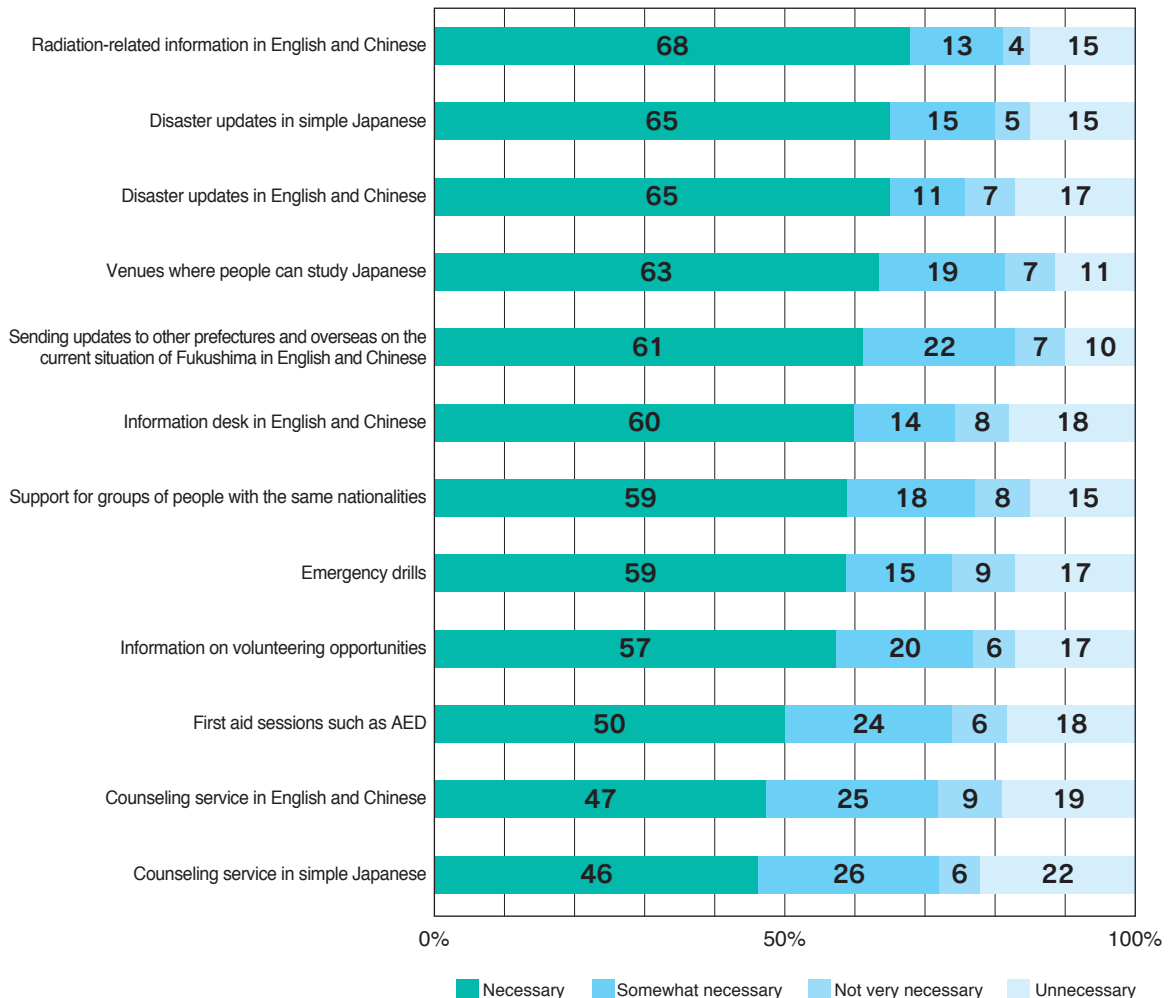
(7) Worries concerning the nuclear accident (and radiation exposure)



◆In addition to the above, there were worries about the influence of radiation on children's health (13 respondents), the policy and attitude of the government and TEPCO (3 respondents), and damage caused by harmful rumors (2 respondents).

III

(8) What the government and related organizations (including FIA) are expected to provide





IV Testimonies of 100 Foreign-Born Residents



The results below were collected from the in-person interviews with 70 foreign-born residents, and from the free response section of the questionnaire with 30 foreign-born residents. They are classified into 7 categories: (1) Situation immediately after the earthquake; (2) Situation immediately after the nuclear accident; (3) Anxiety about the future; (4) Collecting information; (5) Things gained from experiencing the earthquake disaster; (6) Things expected of the government in the future; (7) Support action they took. These are a valuable documentation that reveals raw emotion and experience of foreign residents in Fukushima Prefecture who had to face the great earthquake and nuclear disaster.

1. Outline of testimonies

It is said that there are three barriers ("language barrier," "system barrier," "emotional barrier") that foreigners living in Japan often face, and that these barriers become even higher during a disaster, which raises the risk of these foreigners becoming vulnerable to disaster. From the testimonies we collected from the 100 foreign residents, we can observe how this has actually become a serious issue.

The "language barrier" faced by those who cannot speak Japanese is especially serious. For example, they may not be able to receive adequate information from their neighbors at the time of lifeline disruption or understand evacuation orders or tsunami warning. They may experience extreme anxiety from not being able to understand the situation, or get hurt when they cannot express themselves whenever they get into trouble in the evacuation shelter. However, among the respondents of this survey, however, there were only a few who actually had these problems. Many were able to overcome the language barrier with support from their families, colleagues and neighbors. Some of the respondents actually began taking Japanese lessons because they realized the importance of being able to speak Japanese during a disaster. There were other cases where a

participant decided not to evacuate to his/her home country because the child was unable to speak the language; or where a participant had to return to Fukushima shortly after leaving the country because of the child's language problem.

In regard to "emotional barrier," there were no testimonies on actual conduct of discrimination; however, there was a respondent who said that he/she became extremely tense when remembering the incident that occurred during the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923 and became concerned that the same type of rumor might spread. Another respondent was dubious about whether the evacuation shelter would accept foreigners. Another respondent says that he/she was upset when he/she heard a rumor that the amount of compensation is different for foreigners. Another respondent was worried if Japanese people would gladly accept donation from a person coming from a developing country, but this respondent later found the donation was accepted with much appreciation, and the respondent owed this to the kindness of Japanese people. There were many testimonies about the kind and supportive attitudes of the Japanese people during a disaster situation.

In regard to "system barrier," there was a mention of a delay in the payment of compensation money from TEPCO compared to Japanese, which is most likely to be due to the foreign resident registration system.

Many respondents mentioned the difference between information coming from Japan and that from abroad. These respondents said they received vast amount of information from their home countries through international telephone service and e-mails and also collected information from other foreign countries through the Internet. However, because these pieces of information were so different from one another, many became confused not knowing what is really true. Furthermore, many respondents felt suspicious about the Japanese government hiding information from the public, and because of the lack of information, they turned to their home country for more information and tried to take action based on it.

The Chinese government was the first to announce an official recommendation of evacuation to its people in the disaster-hit area on March 15, 2011. From there on, other countries took similar measures and many of the respondents actually left Japan for their home countries. The testimonies of respondents who left Japan and those who did not, both expressed their feelings about their decisions. From the responses, we can also see how their situations differed depending on the reaction of their home countries and financial situation. From the testimonies, we can also see that among those who left Japan and were welcomed by their relatives, many came back after a short time period despite the relative's opposition, because they felt guilty for leaving other family members behind in Japan.

At the time of this huge earthquake disaster, the foreign residents may have been vulnerable in some aspects; however, they were also the members of their own communities, and gave assistance to other people as well. From the testimonies, we can see there were respondents who took part in a drive in their home countries, and those who sent aid money and relief supplies from their home countries. Some respondents also helped serve free meals at evacuation shelters. Other respondents mentioned that although they wanted to join the volunteer force to help the disaster-hit area, they were unable to do this because of lack of information.

Lastly, in regard to attitudes of Japanese people, the following opinions were mentioned in the testimonies: they (the Japanese people) tried to create an atmosphere where everyone can work together instead of each person doing his/her own things; they were patient and obedient to the government and tried to help the government; they were very calm; there was a spirit of mutual aid. On the other hand, some respondents said the Japanese people need to send messages to change the government, and that Japanese people need to change as well.

What we learned from the survey

As we have entered the third year since the Great East Japan Earthquake, what did this one-in-a-thousand-year disaster mean to the foreign residents of Fukushima Prefecture? The following is a sum-up of what we learned from our survey.

About the situation the foreign residents were in at the time of the disaster

- Compared to a normal situation, the "language barrier," "emotional (cultural) barrier," and "system barrier" became even higher during disaster; therefore, many were placed under severe condition.
- Foreign residents who chose to evacuate to their home countries experienced a kind of dilemma between the two countries.
- The foreign residents also played the role of a supporter by helping and giving assistance to their local communities.

Problems in the way Fukushima International Association (FIA) handled the disaster situation

- Immediately after the earthquake, FIA was unable to provide adequate amount of disaster information in multiple languages because of the limit in human resources and time, and the disruption in communication infrastructure.
- FIA was unable to provide effective assistance to foreigners who did not speak Japanese and were isolated.
- Although embassies and other similar organizations of many different countries had set up buses and other means to help their own citizens evacuate, FIA was unable to give any assistance because we were unable to grasp the situation.

Current situation of the foreign residents

- They are concerned about the huge amount of complicating paperwork and procedure that need to be dealt with in order to apply for compensation.
- They feel stress from having to leave their home town to evacuate and live in a new and unknown place.
- Regarding the effects of radiation, they feel troubled by the difference in value between husband and wife, parents and children, and family members living in home country.

Five unexpected problems that became evident from the 3.11 earthquake disaster

1. During the event of the disaster, a system for providing necessary information in multiple languages could not be set up because both human resources and time are limited.
2. During the event of the disaster, a system for providing information through the Internet or mobile phones could not be set up because of the failure in power and communication infrastructure.
3. During the event of the disaster, assistance for foreign residents provided at evacuation shelters was not effective because there were foreigners who could not or would not go to the evacuation shelters.

4. During the disaster, many organizations and people who are responsible for supporting foreigners also became victims of the disaster; therefore, there was a limit to the assistance that could be provided.
5. The disaster not only shattered and washed away buildings and homes, but also contaminated the area with radiation from the nuclear accident, and also created damage caused by rumors. These damages are still continuing to affect the area and people.

Challenges for the future

During the 3.11 disaster, Fukushima International Association carried out various activities to help foreigners living in Fukushima, but they were not enough. Nevertheless, we were able to learn from this experience the importance of knowing the key foreign persons and to maintain contact with them so that when an emergency occurs, we could ask them to become the base station for sending out information to other foreigners living in Fukushima. We also learned of the importance of keeping in contact with embassies on a regular basis.

We must also point out that we actually had not expected FIA itself to become affected by the disaster and become unable to provide adequate assistance.

Because access to FIA office became limited after the earthquake, we were unable to offer services using the phone and fax numbers and e-mail address, which had been used for counseling for foreign residents. Our staff member, who was responsible for the counseling service for foreign residents left the area temporarily due to the nuclear accident. Transportation and communication infrastructure also failed and we were short of gasoline as well; and under such a situation, were unable to get a clear understanding of the situation Fukushima was in.

This is the real picture of a disaster: a situation where things far beyond what was expected actually occur. Since we are now aware of this, people like us, who work in support of other people, must be prepared at all times to move quickly and appropriately in case an emergency occurs. We must maintain a flexible mindset and develop the ability to make the right decisions, and work to build a network where we can actually see the faces of the people we are helping.

As both foreigners and Japanese people all work together to overcome this hardship caused by the disaster, and work also to rebuild our community, we believe that many people have come to feel a real sense of solidarity that goes beyond nationality. And the issue of how we can make use of this momentum of human cooperation in the future is something we must think about.

We would like to conclude this report by presenting the above as a lesson we learned from the earthquake and nuclear accident this time.

**Influence of the Great East Japan Earthquake and
the Nuclear Power Station Accident over
Foreign Residents in Fukushima Prefecture**

**FIA's Response to the Disaster and
Testimonies of 100 Foreign-born Residents**

(This book is translated upon extractions from the Original Japanese version.)



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Voices
From Fukushima,
Future
From Fukushima