

From Disaster to Sustainable Civil Society: The Kobe Experience

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Nine years after the Kobe earthquake in Japan, social issues are still prominent, and the rehabilitation process is still ongoing. The earthquake caused two major changes in Japanese society: an increase in voluntary and non-government activities, and the enhancement of cooperation between local government and the residents' association. People's participation in the decision-making process was a significant achievement. To sustain the efforts generated after the earthquake, the Kobe Action Plan was formulated and tested in different disaster scenarios. The current study suggests that civil societies in urban areas are sustainable if, first, the activities related to daily services are provided by the resident's associations; and second, these are linked to economic incentives. Leadership plays a crucial role in collective decision-making. Creation of the support system is essential for long-term sustainability of civil-society activities. These observations are exemplified in the case study in Nishi Suma, one of the worst-affected areas in the Kobe city.

Keywords: Japan, sustainability, social capital, urban earthquake reconstruction, civil society.

Introduction

'We are old. Even though we may die soon, we want to go back to Kobe. We hope to die in Kobe.'

Izumisano City temporary shelter/female in her 80s

'We live in a nice environment now, growing flowers this way. If we move to an apartment or public housing, we will not be able to keep doing so. I would like to stay here.'

Toyonaka City temporary shelter/female in her 60s

'I lived in an apartment before I moved here. The residents have not yet agreed on the rebuilding plan for our apartment building.'

Toyonaka City temporary shelter/female in her 60s

'My friends help me and I help them in turn. This makes me aware that those who help other humans and save them are the real human beings.'

Suma Ward temporary shelter/male in his 50s

'We cannot find a house where handicapped people in wheelchairs can live alone. But I have to find one.'

Hyogo Ward temporary shelter/female in her 60s

'I often hear that there is no time to participate in the volunteer work, however, in my opinion, they should manage to make time for voluntary work.'

Hyogo Ward temporary shelter /female in her 40s

'Transport to and from temporary housing is inconvenient. The number of buses needs to be increased.'

Nishi Ward temporary shelter/male in his 40s

'There is no consideration for mentally disabled people. Not to separate the disabled, but to have them in the local community.' *Chuo Ward temporary shelter/male in his 20s*
 'I think curry rice tastes better when we cook together. It tastes even better when we eat it together.'
Nishi Ward temporary shelter/female in her teens

These are some of the voices collected through interviews in the temporary shelters after the Great Hanshin Awaji earthquake of Japan (henceforth called the Kobe earthquake), which occurred on 17 January 1995. Location of the temporary shelters, age group and gender of the interviewees are shown in the quotes above. More than eight years after the earthquake, when the impact of the earthquake is assessed, it is apparent that the earthquake not only affected the physical, social and economic segments of Japanese society, it also forced behavioural changes in its members. As argued by many authors (Imada, 1999; Tatsuki, 2000): the Kobe earthquake defined the year 1995 as the 'renaissance' of voluntarism, rather than 'year one' of voluntarism. Although many of the 'earthquake-born organisations' disappeared with time, several organisations developed new skills for sustaining the efforts at grassroot levels, and have promoted a culture for a safer and sustainable future, owned and run by the communities.

Damage caused by the Kobe earthquake was concentrated on low-income old people living in the inner city, making this the first disaster that an ageing 'modernistic megalopolis' in Japan has faced (Miyamoto, 1996). Urban area reconstruction faces intricate problems because of its complex nature, and the social, economic and cultural context. After the event, both financial and human resources arrived in the affected areas, however, the challenge was to their sustainability. The rationale for community involvement or community-based activities is now well rehearsed (Twigg, 1999). Because community-based activities (and community-based organisations) are deeply rooted in the society and culture of an area, they enable people to express their real needs and priorities, allowing problems to be defined correctly and responsive measures to be designed and implemented. Twigg (1999) also argued that the existence of community-based organisations allows people to respond to emergencies rapidly, efficiently and fairly, and therefore the resources will be used economically. Maskrey (1989) pointed out that 'top-down' programmes in which communities are not involved tend not to reach those worst affected by disaster, and may even make them more vulnerable. Both in developed and developing countries, at the time of emergency, largely ad-hoc responses by loosely knit groups from within communities are observed, before formal organisations are able to mobilise. These groups play important roles in disaster response and reconstruction process (Raphael, 1986).

This paper attempts: to document the development of the civil society activities in one of the earthquake-hit wards of Kobe city; to describe the process and contents of the Kobe Action Plan; and to re-emphasise its application to wider geographic locations. The paper is divided into four major sections: the first describes the history and evolution of civil-society activities in Japan; the second analyses the impact of the earthquake in terms of social, physical and behavioural aspects; the third describes the development of civil society as a case study; and in the penultimate part, the Kobe Action Plan is described as the set of actions for sustaining civil-society activities in the long term. Finally, major issues, challenges and lessons learned are discussed.

Process of the current study

Different methodologies are used for different parts of this study. The Japanese experience of civil-society evolution was analysed based on existing papers and documents, aided by interviews with selective practitioners and experts from the field. Voluntary groups of Kobe carried out surveys in different places in the temporary shelters to understand the needs and priorities of people, and their perceptions about rehabilitation issues (Victim's Voices, 1998). More than 1,000 voice cards were collected. Listening to these voices, it is possible to understand the victims' hopes, dissatisfactions, complaints and despair. An analysis was made of the victims' voices, and the results are presented in the following section. A case study was conducted in Nishi Suma, one of the hardest-hit areas, to understand the dynamics of community organisations there. Interviews with ward offices, residents' associations and communities were conducted during the field survey. Data collection was done, followed by group discussions, and the results are summarised in the form of findings. Discussion sessions and seminars were conducted with the NGO forum in Kobe. This forum was actively involved in the reconstruction process, and formulated the Kobe Action Plan (KAP, 2001). Through the group discussions and personal interviews, the process of plan's formulation is analysed and summarised in the paper. Finally, through the study of the post-earthquake reconstruction process in Kobe, a set of recommendations is formulated for sustainable civil society, which can be applied to a wider context in different socio-economic scenarios.

Civil society and voluntary activities in Japan: trends and changes

The roles of civil society, NGOs and formal and non-formal volunteers have taken centre stage in pre-, during and post-disaster scenarios in different parts of the world. After the Mexican earthquake of 1985, the organisational response was dominated by a substantial amount of independent activity (Quarantelli, 1993). In post-earthquake north-east Peru in 1990, informal community organisations were quick to respond but then ignored by official relief agencies (Schilderman, 1993). However, a community-based reconstruction plan was successful in building more than 2,000 houses in two years because of the active participation of community members. Comfort (1996) observed the influx of voluntary actions after the Kobe earthquake, where there was little or no tradition of voluntary organisation or community self-help in the city. Such improvisation is valuable as well as ubiquitous, yet it may bother disaster managers because it is outside their plans, systems, and above all, control (Quarantelli, 1997). Shaw (2003) emphasised the coordination of NGOs and voluntary organisations in post-disaster scenario, and concluded that these activities are successful when they are rooted to the people and community. Moran et al. (1992) made an interesting attempt to characterise voluntary emergency responders, and observed that there were complex factors at work in these organisations, and the coping style, personality and psychological profiles of the volunteers are all important defining factors.

Japan's non-profit sector has a long history, starting from the Meiji era in 1898 with the enactment of the civil law code, which established regulations for public-interest corporations (Matsubara and Todoroki, 2003). The main aspect of the public-interest corporation system was that government would regulate these organisations.

After the establishment of the code, during the last 100 years, the concept of NGOs and civil society has changed, although most of the time it was under the control of the government. Deguchi (1999) pointed out three different conceptions of civil society in Japan. Termed *shimin sakai* in Japanese, one meaning assigned to it is the modern society that emerged in the wake of the French Revolution as defined by Western liberal political thinkers. Thus, many Japanese associate this term with the French Revolution. The second usage was a by-product of Japanese political ideology after the second world war. During this era, Japan's leftist intellectuals believed that Japan was moving towards a socialist society in which the leading role will be played by the *shimin* or citizens. From the end of the second world war until the 1980s, the term *shimin sakai* was most commonly used in this sense. The third usage of civil society corresponds to a society in which voluntary organisations or non-profit organisations (NPOs) play an important role. This meaning came into existence in Japan only after the 1995 Kobe earthquake.

After the second world war, Japan experienced extremely rapid economic growth. Some people argued that this was because of the so-called 'Iron Triangle'; the three angles of which are politicians, business leaders and government officials. The triangle worked very well until the 1970s. It is called 'the 1940 System' by some scholars (Noguchi, 1995), which turned Japan into a highly centralised, bureaucrat-controlled society. However, the system began losing power when the government could no longer offer enough of the requisite social services and proposed their privatisation. Major grant-making foundations established in 1970s, such as the Toyota Foundation (1974), Suntory Foundation (1979) and the Nippon Life Insurance Foundation (1979) began to support volunteer activities. The Plaza Accord of 1985 brought a rapid appreciation of the yen, which obliged Japanese business corporations to establish production bases abroad, especially in the US. Through contact with community leaders in America, Japanese business leaders became acquainted with the concept of corporate citizenship (Imada, 1999). The period from the late 1980s was one of material abundance in Japan after long economic growth. As a result, Japanese people began to want more spiritual and human satisfaction rather than only material satisfaction. A combination of a gradual awareness among Japanese of community participation and exposure of Japanese business leaders to corporate citizenship, urged the Keidanren (Federation of Economic Organisations) to send a study team to the US in 1988. As a result, the '1 Per Cent Club' was established within Keidanren in April 1990. The 1 Per Cent Club was a voluntary association composed of corporations willing to donate 1 per cent of their earnings. By September 1997, individual membership in the One Per Cent Club reached 1,225, while corporate membership was 281. In 1990, the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry published a report on community foundations. A year later, the Osaka Community Foundation was established by an initiative from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In 1993, the Philanthropy Link-Up Forum was established in Osaka. The forum began training partnerships between business corporations and NPOs. Thus, 1990 is often called the year of philanthropy renaissance (Imada, 1999).

At this juncture, the earthquake hit Kobe city and adjoining towns in the Hyogo prefecture, which accelerated the process of civil society and voluntary activity in the affected area and gradually on to other parts of Japan. The extensive nature of voluntary efforts in this particular earthquake is attributed to: severity of the disaster; tremendous need among the victim population; intensive media reporting; and finally, the fact that the earthquake occurred during the local schools' winter break (Tierney and Goltz, 1998). More than one million volunteers from different parts of Japan and

abroad came to Kobe to serve the victims. Local governments were not prepared for this disaster, nor for the huge influx of volunteers. They had different types of relationships with these organisations: some city governments cooperated with these organisations effectively, some recognised them, but officially involved them in only limited capacities, and some even did not recognise them officially. Whether officially recognised or not by the local governments, the high spirits of volunteers were reported by the mass media extensively.

One year after the earthquake, Hanshin/Awaji Community Fund (HACF) was established in May 1996. The initial amount of the fund was 800 million yen (approximately US\$8 million), which was supposed to be spent in three years by three different categories of grant: community redevelopment programmes, philanthropic programmes and NPO activities. In the same year (1996), the Japanese NPO Centre was established to support NPOs all over Japan. Nowadays, many similar organisations have been established to support the activities of smaller NPOs. After the earthquake, a new law was enacted in 1998: 'law to promote specified non-profit activities'. While victims and citizens in Kobe after the quake did not have time to join in lobbying for this law, they were very interested in lobbying for the financial assistance, which in turn led to the enactment of another law: 'law to support disaster victims' in 1998. The spirit of civil-society activities, which gained high momentum in the immediate aftermath of the Kobe earthquake, continued to be strong in the environmental disasters which followed, like the oil spill in the Sea of Japan and Tokyo Bay of 1997, where thousands of voluntary groups helped each other to mitigate the environmental degradation of the sea.

Thus, there were two consequences of the Kobe earthquake: an emerging sense of self-governance, and stronger sense of community solidarity (Tatsuki and Hayashi, 1999). These two elements brought new dimensions to civil society in Japan.

Impacts of the Kobe earthquake: physical, social and cultural issues

Damage and post-disaster scenario

An earthquake with a magnitude of 7.2 on the Richter scale and a depth of 16km, hit the city of Kobe and surrounding areas in the Hyogo Prefecture on 17 January 1995 at 5:46 a.m. The total number of casualties rose above 6,400, with numerous injuries and victims of other collateral damages. Buildings and infrastructure were severely damaged, and more than 200,000 people had to find temporary shelter in different parts of the city. Within the Kobe city administrative area, 70,000 buildings collapsed completely, with 55,000 seriously damaged. Public facilities like offices, schools and hospitals were also damaged extensively, which paralysed city services for several days. Utility services were also interrupted: electricity service was out throughout the entire metropolitan area, 25 per cent of telephone services did not work, water and gas services were disrupted throughout the town. At several locations, severe fires broke out, and 7,000 buildings were completely consumed, resulting more than 800,000m² of burnt areas. The direct financial loss was estimated at 7 trillion yen within Kobe city. Secondary and tertiary losses in the city and other parts of the province were much higher.

Immediately after the earthquake, most affected people were helped or rescued by friends, families and neighbours. A case study in the Nishi Suma area by the authors pointed out that 60 per cent of residents were evacuated by their own efforts, and approximately 20 per cent were rescued by neighbours. These data indicate the importance of communities and neighbours in the immediate rescue operation. The main reasons local people are so effective in rescue activities, as reported from the interviews are: information and knowledge of the community; leadership within informal and formal community-based organisations; availability of small tools for rescue operation such as saws and crowbars. Wegner (1978) discussed the importance of the community response to disaster. Similar observations were also made after the Marmara earthquake of 1999 in Turkey and the Gujarat earthquake of 2001 in India (Jalali, 2002; Shaw, 2003).

After the rescue operation, the relief-and-rehabilitation phase began. In this, hundreds of volunteers gathered from different parts of Japan. Different voluntary groups had coordination centres focused on different parts of affected areas. Needless to say, the prefecture, city and local governments had their coordination centres as well. In some places, there was cooperation with the NGO networks, in some places they acted independently. Figure 1 shows the gradual change in a volunteer's role in post-disaster scenario. It is observed that while the role of outside volunteers gradually decreased in the temporary shelters, the local volunteer activities continued into the permanent housing phase. Changes were also noted in the nature of the volunteers. While non-technical activities continued until the move to permanent housing, technical and networking work emerged at later stages of the reconstruction process. The effectiveness of the coordinated NGO network has been observed in other countries like Turkey, where a rescue NGO called AKUT was turned into the coordination centre for relief distribution by the government. The same pattern was observed after the Gujarat earthquake of 2001 in India, where an NGO network called Abhiyan played a significant role in information dissemination among the government, NGOs and international organisations (Shaw, 2003).

The relief phase was followed by the reconstruction phase, in which government took the leadership. Roles of voluntary organisations became minimised in certain areas, which was attributed to: lack of sustained resources; lack of motivation

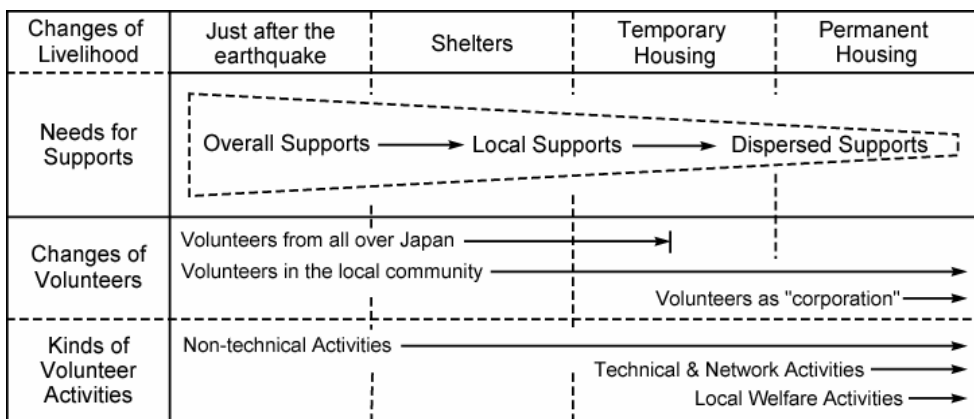


Figure 1 Changing roles of voluntary organisations as evidenced from the Kobe earthquake

to continue the efforts; changes in the organisational mandates (some organisations focused on rescue and relief only); and lack of technical skills to contribute to the reconstruction process. Among different activities, the creation of temporary shelters, identifying special zoning areas, restoring lifelines and infrastructures were the priority issues. From the government perspective, the reconstruction phase lasted for three to five years, until the housing and infrastructures were fully reconstructed. However, according to the people's perspective, the reconstruction phase is still continuing (PRP, 1998). This issue is described in following section.

Gap between the perceptions of people and administration

After the earthquake, rehabilitation projects were carried out, focusing mainly on restoring infrastructure. Individual requests were not met because the government claimed a 'no personal compensation' policy at that time. The restoration of lifelines, railways, roads and harbours were focused, and all restored to their previous states within three years. The fact that sufficient assistance was not provided to every victim, had harmful effects. Kobe has been stagnant at '80 per cent' recovery ever since three years after the earthquake. 'Eighty per cent recovery' (PRP, 1998) means that urban infrastructure has been fully rebuilt, however, victims' lives and livelihoods have not. This situation was aggravated by the fact that damages were concentrated in the weakest groups and the local communities were unable to be active due to unfavourable socio-economic conditions.

Downtown Kobe had many of old residences where people had lived for many years and had strong community bonds. Shifting this group of communities to temporary shelters posed a threat to the community links. Consequently, there were problems in adjustment with new clusters of people in the temporary shelters, and interpersonal relationships did not develop quickly. The relatively high percentage of older people contributed to this problem.

In many local governments, rehabilitation plans approved by the administration were not what people wanted. For example, only a single-track plan was prepared by the administration for housing: 'shelters → temporary housing → permanent housing'. However, there were many cases where victims were at the end of their resources. Such a gap in understanding between the administration and the people can be seen in unilateral decisions regarding urban planning during the chaos after the earthquake, and on the promotion of big projects such as Kobe airport. These decisions have resulted in distrust felt by people towards the administration. The reason for such a situation is attributed to lack of partnership between the administration and the people before the earthquake. On the one hand, administration was forceful in decision-making, and on the other hand, the people were too dependent on the administration.

Cultural context

Because disaster and its representations pervade so much in social life, many authors emphasise the cultural contexts of disasters (Webb et al., 2000). Disaster recovery is very dependent on cultural issues. A multiplicity of definitions of the term 'culture' are available, but here it is regarded as the collection of beliefs, norms, attitudes, roles and practices of a given group, organisation, institution or society (Toft and Reynolds,

1999). Safety culture is defined as those sets of norms, roles, beliefs, attitudes and social and technical practices within an organisation, which are concerned with minimising the exposure of individuals to conditions considered dangerous. In this context, although Japan is known for its high earthquake risk, Kobe had never been hit by any major earthquake in the historic past, which left residents with the belief that Kobe was somehow safe from earthquakes. This concept is reflected in the construction pattern of the area, which is strong for other hazards like typhoon, but did not allow for earthquake countermeasures.

Granot (1996) emphasises the term ‘disaster subculture’, and concluded that although the term was introduced in the 1960s and 1970s, disaster or emergency subculture does not seem to be an appropriate application of the wider sociological concept of subculture. Gheradi (1998) also analysed the culture and subculture issues, and made a summary of the evolution of the term. Britton (1992) focused on the sociological concept of disaster subculture, and termed it as a standby mechanism, that permits individuals who are faced with crisis to opt for an alternative normative structure. Britton also justified different sorts of social action by different segments of society by introducing subculture. In contrast, Granot (1996) concluded that disaster or emergency subculture represents an aspect of that dominant culture that only manifests itself under particular circumstances.

Japanese society was traditionally a closed one, with tight bonds and social norms as a part of its culture. However, after urbanisation, modernisation and gradual exposure to the outside world, these traditional cultural issues became dormant, and re-emerged as disaster subculture during the emergency period. In the old districts of Kobe city, the subculture issue was dominant, however, government was not in a position to perceive this critical aspect, and applied homogeneous regulations in both the new town and old districts, which created subsequent problems in terms of dissatisfaction among residents.

Listening to ‘victim’s voices’

The gap between the administration’s and people’s perceptions can be understood by listening to the victims in the temporary shelters. As evident from Figure 2, younger victims have relatively positive opinions and elder victims feel acutely worried about their future. In general, women have more optimistic outlooks than men. Because the victim’s voices mostly contain opinions from those who were not able to move out from temporary housing, the majority of voices are pessimistic. The two major problems for victims are: human relationships in their new communities and lack of support systems. Most of these problems arose from lack of communication between the victims and the administration, which resulted mutual distrust.

Summarising all these items, the emerging issues of the rehabilitation programme after the Kobe earthquake can be listed as follows:

- **Bipolarisation:** The disaster-stricken areas were divided into supported areas where human resources and public money were invested, and unsupported areas where rehabilitation was left to residents. Moreover, gaps in industry, employment and community rebuilding were expanding. New policies were required to reduce the gaps.

- Socio-economic rehabilitation: Many people and communities could not recover from the impacts of the earthquake. The only way to revive the community was to achieve socio-economic rehabilitation at an individual level.
- Community rebuilding: It was necessary to rebuild broken communities. It was essential for people to take action by themselves. To rebuild, much work and support was necessary. This should be achieved through the cooperation of people, administration and NGOs/ NPOs.

To address the main concerns described above, the People’s Rehabilitation Plan (PRP, 1998) was proposed three years after the earthquake. The plan was formulated to achieve the remaining ‘20 per cent rehabilitation’, that the administration had thus far been unable to achieve. The plan was based on three key concepts: ‘environment’; ‘living together’; and ‘civil society’ and was implemented according to three themes: ‘community building and planning’; ‘alternative livelihoods’; and ‘living safely in the community’. There were several main problems: problems of housing; discrimination between supported and unsupported areas; appropriate consideration of civic bonds and existing social capital; damage to the small-scale industries and resulting unemployment; loss of workplaces in the community; concentration of damages on the socially weaker parts; and changes in the roles of volunteers in the new society. Specific measures were suggested to incorporate these problems in the rehabilitation plan to treat these issues with more sensitivity. Thus, the People’s Rehabilitation Plan focused on community activity for livelihood recovery and creating a safer and more sustainable environment.

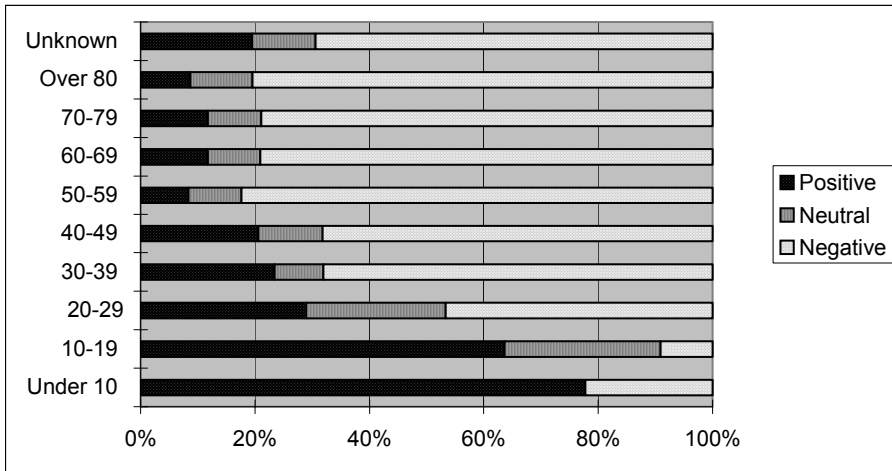


Figure 2 Opinions of the residents of temporary shelters from different locations after the Kobe earthquake. The vertical axis shows the age group

Case study in Nishi Suma: towards a community-building initiative

Background and issues

To understand the real situations, problems and issues affecting the rehabilitation process, it was decided to conduct a case study in the Nishi Suma area in the western part of Kobe city (see Figure 3). The case study area was a small neighbourhood of 2km², with an estimated population of 28,000. It had long been known for its importance as a critical location for traffic connection between eastern and western part of Kobe city. Within a small width of 1km, it is surrounded by mountains in the north and the sea in the south, also two railway lines and one national road passed through the neighbourhood. Thus, the area was divided into pieces by many roads and railways. Roads were considered to be major problems for the Nishi Suma residents not only in terms of health and environmental pollution but also in terms of community and civic movements. The area suffered a tremor with an intensity of 7.0 on the Japanese seven-stage seismic scale (which is equivalent to intensity X and XI on the MMI scale) and sustained severe damage. In densely built-up wooden districts, 80 per cent of houses were completely or partially destroyed. Collapsed houses blocked the narrow alleys and this delayed the rescue operation and restoration. In spite of the serious damage incurred, the Nishi Suma area was labelled as an ‘unsupported area’ except for the main road project carried out by the city government. Two issues

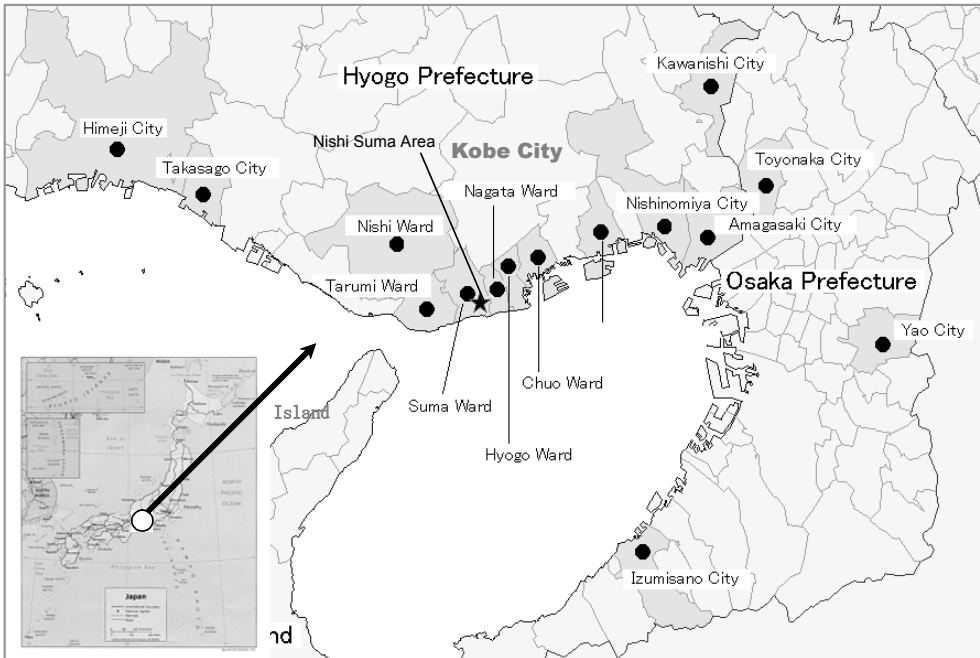


Figure 3 Map showing the locations of temporary shelters in Kobe and adjoining cities of Hyogo prefecture in Japan (inset: map of Japan showing the location of Hyogo prefecture)

became prominent after the earthquake in this area. The first was the concentration of a specific age group in the neighbourhood: the proportion of elderly people and children was higher in the area.

The neighbourhood was considered to be a safe place because cars could not go into residential areas because of the narrow roads. For the younger generation, however, the infrastructure was not convenient. The area was also not equipped with social infrastructure appropriate for its ageing society. The second main issue was urban infrastructure versus community bonds. After the earthquake, the repair of urban infrastructure for transport became a pressing problem in the old downtown area. Although rehabilitation projects focused on re-zoning were implemented, these ignored the existing community and so had negative effects on community building and planning.

Civic movements in the Nishi Suma area

Before the earthquake, issues related to urban-planning projects focused on re-zoning and main roads in the Nishi Suma area was an outstanding problem for Kobe city. Civic movements came into existence to oppose the city's attitude regarding main-roads projects, which the city proposed to implement before the earthquake. Since the neighbourhood was located at a critical junction to connect the eastern and western parts of town, the city government first proposed to construct major roads through the neighbourhood in 1968, and attempted to start the project in 1989. However, the construction was stopped after strong opposition from local residents, and a relationship of distrust existed between the city government and residents. In 1991 residents became involved in the main roads project by Kobe city. Since then three residents' associations in the Nishi Suma area have demanded major changes to the project to consider local communities and the environment. Kobe city then set up an 'official residents' forum' but this was forced to a standstill by residents indignant at the city's attempt to railroad them. At this stage, relations were bitter between residents and the administration.

Amid this confrontation, the Kobe earthquake occurred and the main roads project in the Nishi Suma area was decided upon as one of the rehabilitation projects in just two months. Residents continued their protests and set up the Nishi Suma Community Building and Planning Assembly (hereafter Nishi Suma assembly) in October 1995. This organisation used the strategy of cooperation with the administration. Through a voluntary environmental impact assessment (EIA), held in 1995 and 1996, residents were able to strengthen their hand. Although the Nishi Suma assembly opposed the administration over the 'main roads' problem, it achieved cooperation with the administration and NGOs/NPO in other works. For instance, a welfare community business started by the NPO satisfied the needs of the community. In addition, residents' proposal for the renewal of the local park was accepted by the city government. With regard to the 'main roads' problem, discussions were held between residents and the city and some residents' proposals were accepted as part of the final plan.

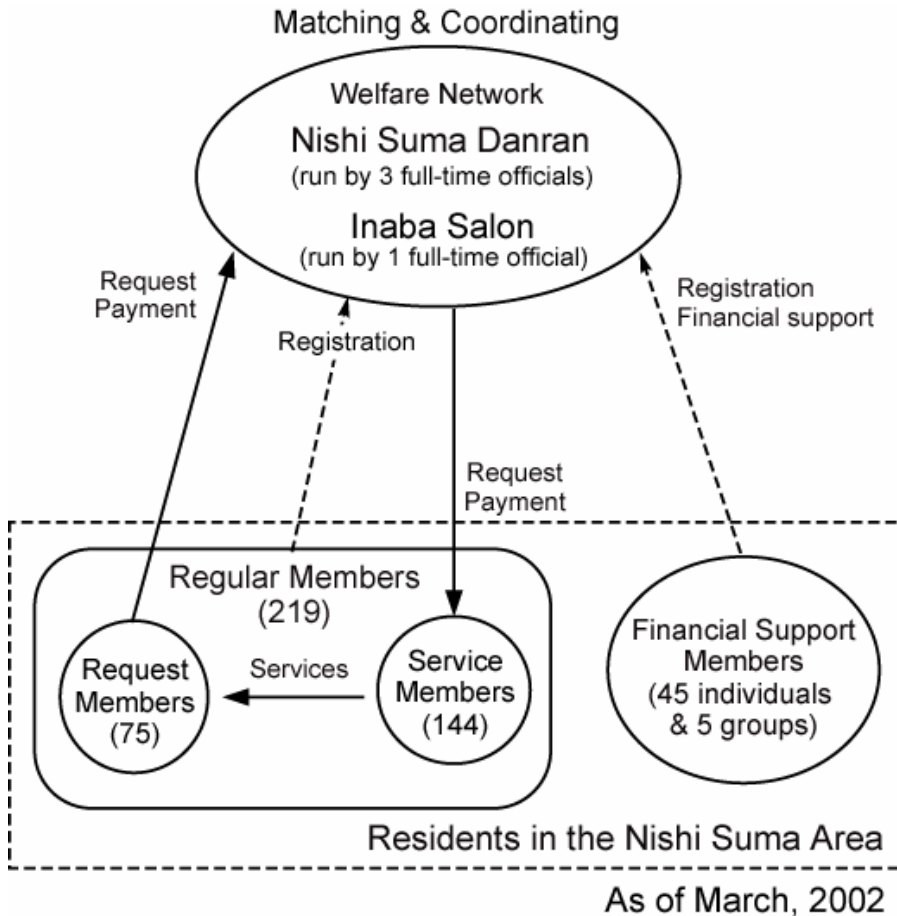


Figure 4 Membership scheme of Danran in the Nishi Suma area.

Sustainability of civic movements: creation of NPO

To sustain efforts at community level, the residents established the Nishi Suma Danran (hereafter called Danran) as a welfare network authorised as a NPO corporate organisation. Danran adopted a membership system and a deposit system of working points (see Figure 4). To use the services of Danran, it was necessary to be a member; these were divided into three types: service member, request member and financial support member. The deposit system was a system for service members to deposit their working points. This ensured that Danran would keep a stable source of revenue. To provide sustainable services in the community, it was important to achieve financial independence.

Danran's activities were targeted at three main areas: a community mutual support system; creation of a plaza to continue different activities; and a community network system. The community mutual support system was composed of home welfare services (to be paid for by users), free volunteer services, training and courses, all focused on dealing with common problems in the community. The home work assist services and home welfare services included cleaning, nursing and chatting,

gardening, accompanying old people to the hospital, cooking and shopping, helping people with meals and so on. Thus, it was possible to generate many more jobs in a community business by assessing the needs of the 5,000 elderly people in the Nishi Suma area.

The plaza project focused on the management of the 'Inaba salon' which operated as a meeting place for community activities. Inaba salon was used for community seminars, cultural classes, communication rooms, dinner parties and so on, which were entrusted to the Danran as day-service community businesses by Kobe city. The salon worked to meet not only the needs of the aged and the handicapped but also those of working and non-working mothers.

The community network system focused on building closer networks with other areas, promoting community bonds through an annual festival and cooperating with the administration and NGOs/NPO. It was especially remarkable that the Danran had entrusted community businesses at the salon in place of the administration. Since 2000, Nishi Suma town meetings were held annually and the members discussed different problems and proposals. This created new networks and reinforced older ones in the community.

Expanding the field of activities

In the Nishi Suma area, civic movements began with the main-roads problem before the earthquake and were expanded to other fields through creation of sustainable civil society.

It was important to strengthen people's influence in the government's decision-making process. As the changeover from confrontation to cooperation between residents and the administration happened, the voluntary EIA and its legal moves played a crucial role. The EIA was implemented by residents for existing highways and proposed main roads, with assistance from researchers, experts and volunteers. The significance of this event is not only in the results of the EIA but in the cooperation between researchers, experts and volunteers. Through the EIA, residents gained indispensable experience in building an equal partnership with the administration.

There was also cooperation in other fields. With the exception of the main roads problem, cooperation between residents and the administration was achieved in other government-sponsored proposals. The Tenjyougawa park renewal project is a good example of this. The park was used as a storage place for construction materials used by the Hanshin Highway. At that time, many residents regarded the park as a bad environment in terms of sunshine, air pollution, noise and vibration. The majority of residents wanted it to be improved into a real park for the sake of better environmental quality. Through cooperation with Kobe city, the restoration work started. They built a new assembly hall for the residents' association to use as a meeting place for civic projects. Now the Tenjyougawa park festival is held annually and growing numbers of people attend. The main aim of the festival is to create new, closer human relationships in the community and to provide a chance for local people to interact.

There has been a more equal partnership between people and administration. The present state of community building and planning in the Nishi Suma area is at a stage where residents can have an equal partnership with the administration and make progress on community building and planning. At this stage, the issue is collective

decision-making and common agreement among residents. However, the major achievement was to become a part of the government decision-making system.

Figure 5 shows how the Nishi Suma residents' association (Tsukimiyama is cited as an example) is keeping links with the communities, through cooperation with community-based organisations and the city government. The community-planning section in the residents' association is linked to three specific issues: nature, environment and livelihood, and the welfare section is linked to day-care services for the aged and keeping communication going by arranging group meals and other events in the community hall (Inaba salon as described above). As required, the residents' association seeks help and expertise from different community-based organisations, which are linked to respective departments of the city government. Thus, the case study provides a unique example of civic activities in Kobe which resulted from opposition to the government and turned out to be effective during the earthquake. The opposition turned itself into a non-profit organisation to work closely with the government and other NGOs/NPO to promote sustainable livelihoods.

Action for sustainable civil society: the Kobe Action Plan

The Kobe Action Plan was formulated by the people of Kobe six years after the earthquake, to resolve problems in community and to achieve an improved civil society (KAP, 2001). The most important thing was its emergence from the civic activities all over the disaster-stricken areas. The Kobe Action Plan was based on the findings of the People's Rehabilitation Plan, described above.

Achieving a more complete civil society was the ultimate goal of the Kobe Action Plan. To do so, it was necessary not to be overdependent on the administration. It was also important to put more emphasis on social values rather than material ones. The formulation of the Kobe Action Plan was completed by the Civic Revisit Forum,

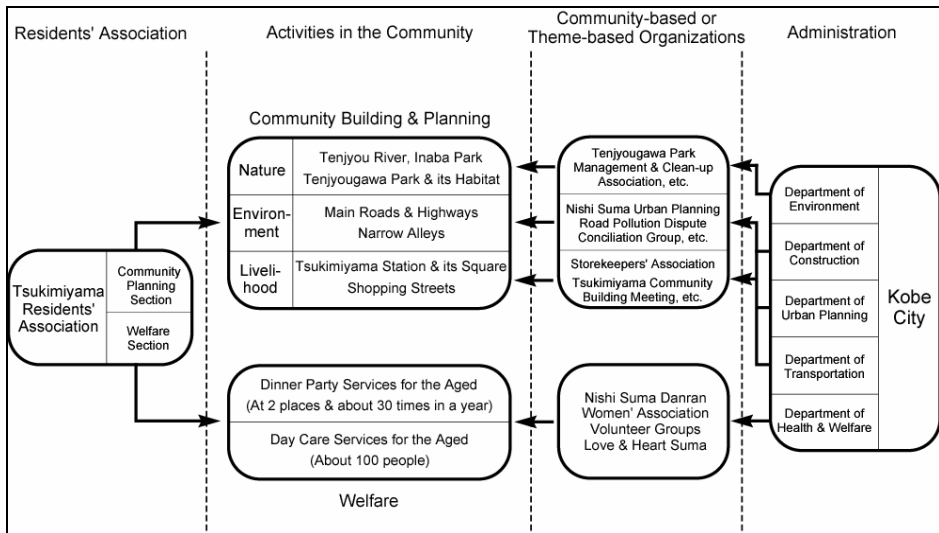


Figure 5 Cooperation scheme of residents' association, community, CBOs and the local government, as observed in Tsukimiyama in the Nishi Suma area

which was established in 1999. The forum consists of volunteers, journalists, researchers and victims who were all involved in the rehabilitation process. The surveys and verifications were conducted from the standpoint of the residents, based on quotes and experiences. Ten principles were set up for the Kobe Action Plan. There were three themes: community building and planning; alternative livelihood; and living safely in the community. Each theme had three factors: people and the administration; change of livelihood and community; and potential of people and activities. Finally, all proposed action plans were divided into three categories: an action plan to unify livelihood and community; an action plan to develop people’s activities; and an action plan to achieve a sustainable civil society. Figure 6 shows a schematic diagram with the different steps incorporated in the formation of the Kobe Action Plan.

One goal for the action plan is to unify livelihoods and community. Many people in Kobe live in urban areas and have weak links with the larger community. This is because their livelihoods are not rooted in the community. Immediately after the earthquake, community bonds were very important and had an enormous influence on the speed of recovery. These action plans were developed to enhance the capacity of each community and to ascertain sustainable and self-help livelihoods in the community. The action plans are divided into three sub-themes: community creation, community welfare and community business (see Annex 1).

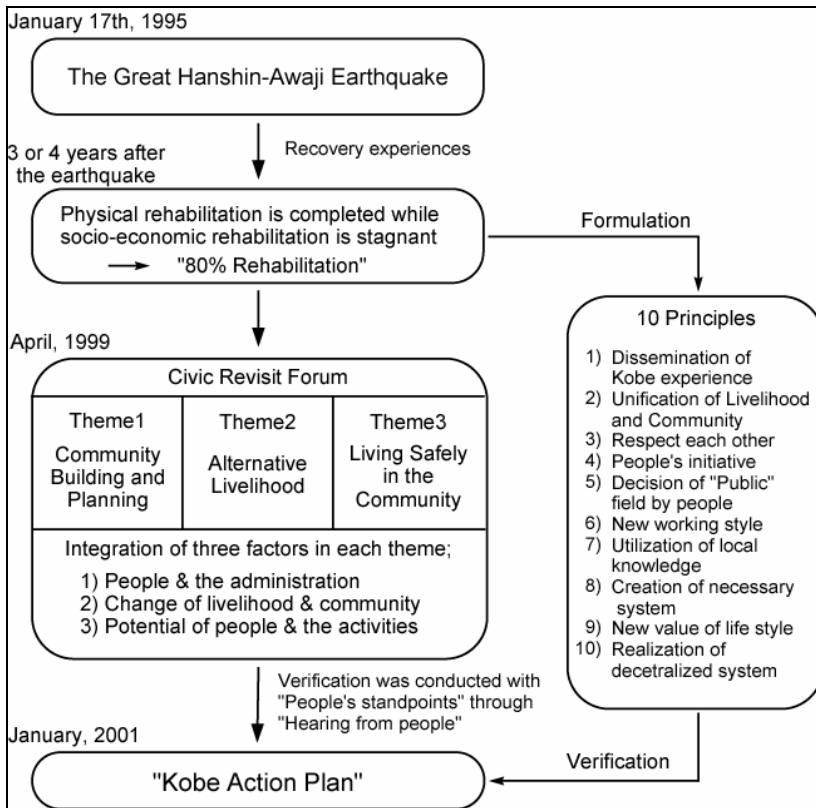


Figure 6 Evolution of the Kobe Action Plan through different forums and themes

Another goal for the action plan is to help to develop people's activities. Seven years after the earthquake, the role and contents of civic activities have changed from general support to local and expert support. Under such changes, the social significance of people's organisations, which have played a great role in civic activities, is questioned. These organisations continue their activities without sufficient funds and human resources. The action plans are to enhance the capacity of people's organisations and to provide necessary support systems, so that people's organisations can satisfy needs in the community. They are divided into two sub-themes: capacity building and sustainability (see Annex 2).

A third important goal for the Kobe Action Plan is to achieve a sustainable civil society. To achieve the ultimate goal, people have to be independent and carry out social reforms. For this, it is essential that people take on more roles and responsibilities for themselves. It is also essential to transfer power and funds to the people. These action plans give more strength to equal partnerships under a new autonomy system. They are divided into three sub-themes: community governance, administration reform and cooperation/partnership (see Annex 3).

Future needs

The history of city planning shows that safety has always been a primary concern for citizens, although the concept of safety has changed over time. In the case of Japan, the Great Kanto earthquake of 1923 provided many lessons for city planning. A much-publicised disaster relief plan against the theoretically imminent Tokai earthquake has also spurred public awareness. Unfortunately, these exercises were not useful in the reconstruction following the Kobe quake, because these previous disasters had not been similar enough (Komori, 1996). Several authors suggest that reconstruction should be partnered community development, with a specific focus on the formation of metropolitan areas through the networking of self-supporting, decentralised cities (Takada, 1996; Kamino, 1996). Wisner et al. (1977) argue that vulnerability in risk-prone regions can be reduced by initiating informed actions at local level. Local initiatives and participation can be facilitated by training, capacity building and resource transfers, and be sustained through networks of organisations engaged in economic, social, political and scientific activity and inter-organisational learning.

There are different concerns in reconstruction process after earthquakes in urban areas, a few critical ones are:

- To focus on community needs and priorities with a specific emphasis on socially vulnerable groups.
- To bring communities into the decision-making process for reconstruction.
- To reach collective opinions with communities.
- To keep pace with the speed of the reconstruction and manage unseen factors like political pressure.

In most cases, the metropolis is characterised by at least two distinct types of communities: one living in the old districts, and the other in newly developed areas. The community of old districts is characterised by its social capital, which is a function of mutual trust, bonds, social norms, community cohesion, leadership and networks.

The other type of community consists of people from different areas, who

often have loose connections between members (Nakagawa, 2003). An analysis of the reconstruction process as it took place in Kobe and Gujarat, India (Nakagawa and Shaw, forthcoming) showed that social capital can play an important role in the reconstruction process in terms of speed and satisfaction. The community with social capital is proactive in collective decision-making and contributes to a speedy recovery. The community is also found to be satisfied with the reconstruction policy, since there has been effective negotiation between community and local governments. In contrast, the newer-developed areas often suffer from poor community decision-making and lack of strong leadership. This is found to be universal, irrespective of the development stage of the community and the country. The current study, as exemplified by the Nishi Suma experience serves to emphasise this observation, and suggests that future community initiatives should aim to develop social capital through their activities.

The other set of challenges are: first, how to incorporate disaster-related issues in livelihood alternatives in urban areas; and second, how to sustain efforts of community initiatives in the form of civil-society actions. This is not only financial sustainability, but also organisational, personal and behavioural. Past experience shows that immediately after the disaster, there are a 'utopia of voluntary activities', which get settled as time passes. The next disaster strikes after the memory of past disaster events has faded. Cooperation with other sectors, especially to establish links between community organisations and professionals is an essential feature.

Buchanan (1996) points out the difference between the roles of NGOs as outside agencies, and those from the perspective of community associations or membership associations. He also comments that although NGOs may see themselves as genuine partners of the local community and its organisations, in many cases the same view is not shared by the people. This is a critical issue, which is related to partnership and accountability (Edwards and Hulme, 1995). Community participation requires shared understanding between community members and the specialists from outside (including the NGOs and the disaster professionals) who aim to assist them (Twigg, 1999). Inui (1996) provides examples from the Mano district in the affected areas of Kobe which exemplify the above factor in the form of a support network with the following activities: surveys of building safety, advice on buildings, building repair and cooperation in a professional joint reconstruction plan. The key issues for success are cooperation with the local community and an increase in the capability of the recipient community. The Nishi Suma case study, through the formation of Danran is an example of how to institutionalise the efforts at community level. The case study exemplifies how the community organisation can generate its own resources through proactive participation in new community business. The problem of an ageing society may be unique in Japan, but the issues and processes of community involvement are universal, and can be applied elsewhere.

This paper examined the rehabilitation process of the Kobe earthquake from the people's viewpoint and the path for formulation of the Kobe Action Plan. It is necessary to learn fundamental ideas from the collapse of contemporary society to developing a sustainable civil society through the Kobe experience. The key issues that emerged from the development process of the Kobe Action Plan are: first, to incorporate the community into the decision-making process; second, to re-examine the values and traditions rooted in community and culture; third, to find the source of business opportunities in the community and thereby enable community-based organisations to sustain their efforts; and fourth, to promote community leaders to take action. A recent study of schoolchildren from different parts of Japan (including the affected areas of Kobe) suggest that while 70–80 per cent of them participate in disaster

education and 60–70 per cent of them have high perceptions of earthquake risk, only 10–15 per cent of them actually take any action to reduce risk (Shaw et al., forthcoming). In the model of knowing, realising and acting, there is always a gap between acquiring knowledge, perception and taking action. The results of the study also suggest that it is not the earthquake experience, but the community and family education, which are more effective in motivating a person to take risk-reducing action. Thus, future community participation should be aimed at teaching people effective risk-reduction measures.

The gap between policy and practice is a critical issue that affects the needs of people at an individual level. Blauert and Zadek (1998) have termed this process as the ‘art of mediation’, and emphasise the use of wide range of civil-society organisations, including CBOs, NGOs, NPOs as technical instruments for promoting the growth of policy from the grassroots. The sustainability of civil-society action is another major factor which needs careful attention. Figure 7 schematically shows the observed scheme of sustainable civil society, as evident from the experience of the Kobe earthquake. The residents’ association supplies an important interface between

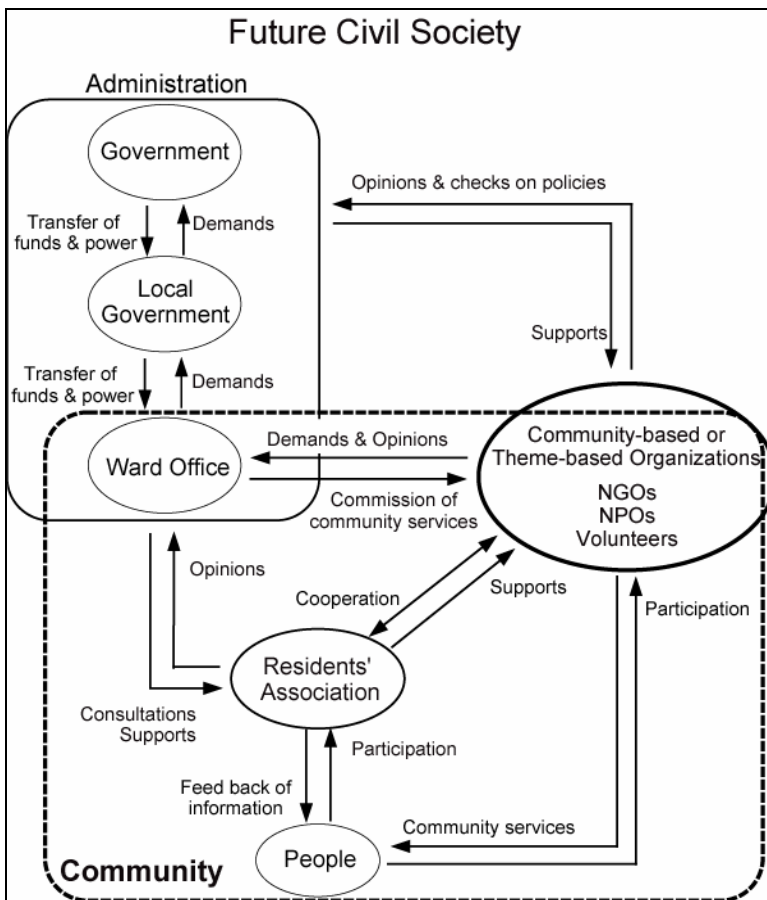


Figure 7 Scheme of future civil society with interaction of administration, community and residents’ association

community and administration with the help of professional and non-professional organisations like NGOs, NPOs and CBOs. Since this scheme generates its own resources within itself, the process is found to be sustainable. The association is also found to be effective in collective decision-making, and to represent the voice of the community. During the disaster events, this scheme is found to be useful, as exemplified by experience from other areas with different disasters in Japan, including flood and typhoon (Atsumi and Suzuki, 2003; Sugiman et al., 2003).

In the process of creating the Kobe Action Plan, a very important problem is left unsolved, which is 'who' and 'how' to implement the action plan. This is related not only to 'leadership' and 'responsibility' but also to 'support systems'. In addition, in the changing world, the relevance of the action plan will be changed, and needs to be updated. It is when a whole chain of systems with clear initiatives and updated functions are in place, that the challenge of achieving a sustainable civil society will progress. To realise a safer society, it is essential that more people share fundamental ideas in common.

Naidoo and Tandon (1999) in their book on civil society remind us that current society evolved from civil society. Long ago, in most parts of the world, power was with the people, and governance was with the community. It was a time when social organisations depended on a very deep sense of community, and responsibilities were shared with community members. As time has passed, the scenario has changed, the state came to existence, the government was formed and argument over the role of civil society has emerged. Clearly, it is not possible to turn back the clock, but it is possible to remind ourselves about its origin, and perceive the values of humanity and sustainable civil society.

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Annex 1 Action plan to unify livelihood and community

Community creation

Action 1.1	Locate the base of livelihood within the community	Residents' associations and local NGOs/NPO should create opportunities to promote cooperation within the community. Public-relations activities are also useful to enhance community participation.
Action 1.2	Train coordinators	Coordinators who have specific knowledge or expertise are essential within each community. It is necessary to continue training people who will take the initiative in community activities. Periodic training seminars are also useful.
Action 1.3	Manage places for community activities	To conduct daily activities, there should be a place which can be used freely and managed by the community through trustworthy organisations. This should be done on a permanent basis, so that they will be a core place for community activities.
Action 1.4	Use core community facilities like schools	Schools are located in the centre of communities and have well-equipped facilities. It is effective to make schools open for community activities. It is important to keep schools open even in normal situations.

Community welfare

Action 1.5	Create a place in the community for welfare activities	A comfortable place is required which will promote interaction and where residents can gather freely. It is possible to promote a sense of community among local residents, and expand to activities related to the whole community as the next step.
Action 1.6	Proposed by NPO — decided and implemented by the community	It is important to promote business plans in cooperation with the community. The plans should be decided and implemented by the community even if they are proposed by NPO. This is the key for success.

Action 1.7	Create welfare community businesses	By creating community businesses to solve issues within the community, the community will be revitalised, and there will be interaction with NPO.
Action 1.8	Network welfare communities	To expand the welfare community businesses, it is important to create networks within and outside communities. The aim is to share the problems of families and individuals.

Community business

Action 1.9	Create an appropriate system for community business	It is effective to share information on how to launch and manage new community businesses. This information should be available for public reading. It is also necessary to create systems to secure a certain income.
Action 1.10	Encourage housewives and the aged to take part in community businesses	The middle-aged or older residents have much more interest in volunteer activities and community business. For the sustainability of community businesses, human resources are vital. This can be systematised by using housewives and the aged.
Action 1.11	Make good use of participants' specialties	It is important to welcome participants warmly and at the same time essential to extract their specialties from them. Grouping people with specific knowledge is a good way to extend community businesses.
Action 1.12	Supply an attractive environment and working conditions	Most of the participants must be aware that they cannot expect big salaries in community businesses. However, considerations to supply an attractive environment and working conditions besides salaries are required.
Action 1.13	Train staff	It is important to join seminars to learn practical know-how. Interaction between different sectors help people recognise each other's role for future cooperation towards building a sustainable civil society.
Action 1.14	Luxury services to run funds	Welfare community businesses often face a big problem of continuing its business due to lack of funds. One option might be to provide luxury services to wealthy people, and earn money through those services.
Action 1.15	Enrich social systems for community businesses	Community business should be given a chance to receive grants taking into consideration its important role. Furthermore, making an appropriate approach to the administration through networking is necessary to enrich those social systems in cooperation with consultants, experts, lawyers and accountants.

Annex 2 Action plan to develop people's activities

Capacity building

Action 2.1	Establish a service centre to support people's activities	A service centre that provides necessary information will be helpful. It is essential to have good public relations with local residents, to network with the administration/private sectors and to coordinate activities. To achieve this, a full-time officer should be employed.
Action 2.2	Training programme through people's activities	The most critical issue is to bring up community leaders. Thus, it has been proposed to conduct training programmes in collaboration with other organisations by bringing together each issue and theme found in each daily activity.
Action 2.3	Set up a standard for self-evaluation	For the sustainability of people's activities, self-evaluation is essential. It is also necessary to enhance the quality of activities in order to meet social needs. The standard for periodic self-evaluation should be set up through actual experiences.
Action 2.4	Introduce a tax system for NGOs/NPOs	In order to secure funds for civic movements, the efforts of both the administration and local NGOs/NPO are essential. At the administrative level, the establishment of a tax system will support their sustainable activities.
Action 2.5	Create a community fund	Seven years after the earthquake, civic movements face serious financial problems. Under these circumstances, the Community Fund of Kobe was established for the people themselves to raise funds. The donations gathered through fund-raising campaigns are used for grants in order to support civic activities.
Action 2.6	Establish a community think tank	A community think tank is essential to sustain civic movements. Its roles are to provide know-how, propose a long-term strategies, propose cooperation between people's activities and the administration and to enhance the capacity of coordinators and community leaders.

Sustainability

Action 2.7	Reform local residents' associations	Local residents' associations can play a role at the core of community activities. For that it is necessary to reform and reinforce them. It is required to develop activities of the associations, such as public relations, holding community festivals, etc.
Action 2.8	Cooperate with local shopping centres and markets	Local shopping centres and markets are the core of livelihood and interaction in the community. It is necessary to share ideas for local businesses. For example, proposing shopping-help service for the aged and holding events in order to activate the community can be suggested.
Action 2.9	Create opportunities of 'Education for All'	In order to become familiar with community activities and create opportunities for them, it is advisable to hold various seminars. Practical activities should be conducted by people, and the administration should provide support to prepare the groundwork.

Action 2.10	Carry out public relations in order to interact with residents	It is effective to publish community bulletins in collaboration with the media, or take part in the community radio. It is advisable to focus on two-way communication by setting up opportunities for residents to speak in the bulletins or on the radio. It helps to have close interaction and to get residents involved in community activities.
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Annex 3 Action plan to develop sustainable civil society

Community governance

Action 3.1	Establish community sovereignty per school area	After the earthquake, a demand to transform authority and the source of revenue of the local administration to small communities was raised by the people. Consequently, it is necessary to establish community sovereignty per school area, and to transform the authority and source of revenue into each community.
Action 3.2	Take a tough role to make a community consensus	In order to find a consensus in the community on planning or the implementation of activities, it is essential to share any information and to understand any problems. It is also effective to seek consultation with experts who are familiar with the local context.
Action 3.3	Have better perspectives in cooperation with residents' associations	It is necessary to search for the real meaning of community initiative to meet community demands. As residents' associations usually grasp wider general information on the community, it is helpful for outside NGOs/NPO to develop their activities in cooperation with the associations.

Administrative reform

Action 3.4	Put all administrative windows into one	The administration is requested to act as advisers to back up civic movements. However, its structure is divided into several departments and often obstructs the people's activities. It is urgent to set up a comprehensive window in order to support community activities.
Action 3.5	Promote the interchange of personnel among the administration, NGOs/NPO	It is advisable to promote the interchange of personnel positively among the administration, NGOs/NPO. It is also necessary to shift the source of revenue, information, as well as personnel from the administration to the people. It will be a great opportunity for both of them to understand and absorb each others' perspectives.
Action 3.6	Involve local residents in decision-making	It is important to consider well in advance and decide together in which field of work initiative should be taken by the people. It is far more important to understand what sustainable civil society is, and how to promote it. In the case that community consent cannot be reached, it may be an option to secure fairness by a local referendum.
Action 3.7	Enhance the capacity of community management	It is required for local associations to enhance their capacity for community management. It is important to devise methods to promote cooperation between residents' associations, who have community ties, and outside NGOs/NPOs, who have experience and knowledge, with whom they can conduct community activities.

Action 3.8	Start afresh from scratch for public fields	Although there are many activities that should be highly regarded as public fields, they are still considered as voluntary ones. This inconsistency should be resolved. First, to start cooperation among people and the administration, starting afresh from scratch must be useful in order to define people's fields.
<i>Cooperation and partnership</i>		
Action 3.9	Increase the number of third agents	The roles of third agents are now changing from emergency support to the creation of a new social system. Those third agents are necessary in order to promote cooperation between people and the administration. Even if third agents get funding support from the administration, they should maintain a neutral position.
Action 3.10	Propose people's policy and research agenda	A community think tank is required to have the following roles and responsibilities, such as: comprehensive research and analysis of community issues, proposal of practical policies, and support for people's activities. Its characteristic feature is to implement the plans with their expertise and function as programme officers.