



PENN IUR SPECIAL REPORT

US-Japan Grassroots Exchange Program: Citizen Participation in Community Building Post Disaster

Year 2 Report

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FEBRUARY 2017

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This report was created with contributions from the East West Center.

The US-Japan Grassroots Exchange Program is a three-year dialogue and exchange project designed to share experiences, challenges, and lessons-learned among four cities in the United States and Japan that are engaged in long-term recovery and rebuilding in the aftermath of a natural disaster.

A total of 20 delegates from New Orleans, Louisiana; Galveston, Texas; Miyako, Iwate Prefecture; and Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture, are taking part in the three-year program, sharing experiences, ideas, strategies, and visions for rebuilding their communities through exchange visits to each city. The program enables participants to take part in small group meetings, social gatherings, and other activities to discuss challenges, successes, and lessons learned from their efforts to address a wide range of recovery and rebuilding issues including housing, economic development, land use, safety and hazard mitigation, environment, health, and social and physical infrastructure needs of poor and aging populations. The program is funded by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership and the East-West Center.

In Year 1 (June 22 – July 1, 2015), 10 delegates from Galveston and New Orleans visited Miyako and Kobe, impacted by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami and the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, respectively. In Year 2 (November 26 – December 7, 2016), 10 Japanese delegates from those same cities visited Galveston and New Orleans to learn about the impacts and recovery process after Hurricane Ike in 2008 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005. This report relates the activities and lessons learned in the program's second year.



U.S. and Japanese delegates and project partners in historic Jackson Square, French Quarter, New Orleans.

INTRODUCTION

Natural disasters are community disasters. They present significant turning points by offering residents opportunities to reconsider the significance of community and the ways in which they can have a strong voice in rebuilding and creating more livable, sustainable, and inclusive environments. The crucial roles that civil society organizations play in the immediate aftermath of a disaster are widely acknowledged and understood. However, the role that grassroots and local nonprofit organizations play in the long-term rebuilding of communities in the aftermath of a disaster has not been widely studied or discussed until relatively recently.

A large body of cross-national, comparative research on post-disaster recovery and community planning practice now exists; it includes detailed case studies that point to the critical importance of active civil society involvement in the restoration and re-invigoration of a community's physical and social infrastructure, particularly in building community capacity to sustain success in the long run.

The research emphasizes that communities with informal but active civil engagement networks and organized grassroots organizations have recovered and rebuilt more quickly by mobilizing citizens to cooperatively participate in the rebuilding process. Programs that focus solely on physical infrastructure, without citizen engagement, do not guarantee resilience or effective recovery.

Civil society organizations in Japan and the United States can learn much from one another regarding strategies for enhancing citizen engagement, especially in long-term rebuilding efforts following a major disaster.

Deeply embedded in the national identities of both countries is a collective and generous response to fellow citizens in crisis, especially at the grassroots level. Both societies also have a long tradition of collaboration in addressing common issues and concerns. Many well-respected, successful grassroots and local nonprofit organizations operating in post-disaster cities in the United States and Japan today began as a direct response to the immediate needs of citizens in the aftermath of a disaster.



Celebrating people helping people with the Lighthouse Charity Team – a non-profit foundation feeding victims of disasters throughout the State of Texas since 1984.

These organizations learned from experience that, to undertake effective coordinated community problem-solving and advocate for citizen participation, they had to overcome many challenges to secure a legitimate and sustainable place in society and have a valued voice in addressing the community's changing social and infrastructure needs. They discovered that the biggest challenge was finding skilled leadership. These grassroots and nonprofit organizations have successfully utilized the knowledge gained from their experiences to strengthen, expand, and sustain their organizations and the value they bring to their communities.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. Share information, lessons learned, and best practices that encourage and promote meaningful citizen engagement in rebuilding efforts.

- *How do local government, local business, and grassroots/nonprofit/community organizations each use citizen participation to address recovery issues?*
- *What are these organizations' visions for the future sustainability of their communities?*
- *What are their roles and responsibilities in long-term planning and development?*
- *What are the strategies that they use to inspire residents to actively participate in policy- and decision-making?*
- *Have their experiences in post-disaster recovery been used to address other important issues facing their communities?*

2. Share information, lessons learned, and best practices that encourage and promote meaningful collaboration among government, business, and community groups in rebuilding efforts.

- *How do these three sectors of society work together to address the physical and social needs of local citizens?*
- *How have collaborative relationships been formed? Is there a process?*
- *What are the strategies used to maintain such relationships long term (beyond reconstruction)?*
- *Are such relationships important to creating more livable and sustainable communities of the future?*

3. Share information, lessons learned, and best practices that encourage and promote “next generation” leaders in local government, business, and community who can inspire citizens to participate in shaping development policies and activities that affect their daily lives.



Community leaders from the Takatori Community Center in Kobe; the Tarochan Cooperative Association, Taro District, Miyako; the Miyako City Council of Social Welfare; and Machi-Communication in Kobe.

GRASSROOTS EXCHANGE—YEAR 2

When the Japanese participants from Miyako and Kobe arrived in the United States for the program's Year 2 exchange, they brought with them unique and diverse experiences with two major natural disasters: the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and the 2011 Great East Earthquake and Tsunami. These 10 community leaders set off on a two-week trip to meet residents and local leaders of Galveston, Texas and New Orleans, Louisiana who have had similar experiences with disasters: the 2005 Hurricane Katrina and the 2008 Hurricane Ike.

Each participant experienced disaster differently. Each participant faced his or her own recovery process. Each city is currently in a different stage of recovery. All 20 delegates from New Orleans, Galveston, Kobe, and Miyako shared their unique experiences with the long-term recovery process and their current successes and failures and brainstormed how community-based groups can support recovery from a natural disaster at the grassroots level.

The Japanese participants spent four days in Galveston and five days in New Orleans reconnecting with the U.S. participants they had met in Japan the year before. Through small group meetings, site visits and social gatherings, the Japanese visitors and the U.S. hosts continued the discussions about community rebuilding that they had begun in Year 1, focusing on housing, economic development, land use, safety and hazard mitigation, environment, health, and the social and physical infrastructure needs of poor and aging populations. They also continued to examine best practices and lessons learned in creating and nurturing meaningful and collaborative relationships among local governments, local businesses, and community organizations.



Kobe delegates discuss the roles that their organizations played in rebuilding after the 1995 Earthquake and how they continue to serve their communities today.



In front of the Galveston Sea Wall Mural, created by local artists to promote sustainability and conservation of sea life in the area.

GALVESTON

Located on a barrier island in the Gulf of Mexico, Galveston served as one of the United States' largest ports and the second largest immigration hub outside of Ellis Island during the 19th century. At that time, it was also the largest city in Texas. However, in 1900 the island was devastated by the Galveston Hurricane, a category four storm that produced storm surges 8 to 15 feet high, inundating the entire island and killing over 8,000 people (20 percent of the island's population). This storm is still considered one of the deadliest hurricanes in U.S. history. Galveston never regained its position as port city and immigration hub, with much business circumnavigating the island to Houston, which is more protected by the Galveston and Trinity Bays. However, as the city redeveloped, its economy shifted towards tourism, healthcare, and finance and, though much of the oil and gas industry business relocated to the Houston ports, Galveston still serves as a major cruise ship terminal for Caribbean cruises. Before Hurricane Ike in 2008, Galveston boasted a population of approximately 55,000 people. Most recent estimates place the population at around 48,000 today.

HURRICANE IKE

Galveston is no stranger to tropical storms, suffering damages from all major Gulf Coast hurricanes (including Hurricane Andrew in 1992 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005). The most economically damaging hurricane to hit Galveston since the 1900 Galveston Hurricane, however, was Hurricane Ike in 2008. It began as a category four hurricane, wreaking havoc on Cuba and Puerto Rico, before hitting the Texas-Louisiana coast. Hurricane Ike made landfall in Galveston in September 2008. The category two hurricane caused significant damage to the island city with 100 mph winds and a 20-foot storm surge destroying most the city's coastal infrastructure.



In front of the Galveston Sea Wall Mural, created by local artists to promote sustainability and conservation of sea life in the area.

Damage from Ike extended past Galveston to Houston, Corpus Christi, and other suburbs in the greater Galveston-Houston metropolitan area. Ultimately, Hurricane Ike became the third costliest natural disaster in the U.S., behind Hurricane Katrina and the 2012 Superstorm Sandy. Damages from Hurricane Ike in U.S. coastal and inland areas were estimated at \$30 billion.



Families rummaging through debris left behind by the damages of Hurricane Ike along Interstate 45 near Galveston, Texas.

Hurricane Ike damaged not only homes but also port services, medical services, and other key island infrastructure. Immediately after the hurricane, Galveston residents faced mental health and trauma issues, controversies related to rebuilding public housing, difficulty enticing former residents to return, and economic stagnation.

A lack of effective mechanisms for rebuilding housing stalled Galveston's recovery. Many coastal residents insisted on rebuilding on their land, despite future risks, and government agencies struggled to create a single recovery plan or designate specific policy around the allocation of funds for rebuilding. The Houston-Galveston Area Council ultimately created the Housing Recovery Program, which provided funding for individual homeowners to rebuild. Lack of support for public housing left many families homeless for extended periods of time, without the resources to rebuild on their own.

POST-IKE RECOVERY

BUSINESS/ECONOMIC RESPONSE TO HURRICANE RECOVERY

After Hurricane Ike, the corporate sector established in Galveston recognized the need to make infrastructure more resilient, not only to protect their own services, but also to facilitate faster recovery for residents after a disaster so that they would have access to financial stability, social support, and basic services. The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) first located on Galveston Island in 1891 when Galveston was the largest and most productive port town in the state. Today, UTMB provides critical and specialized services to patients in two-thirds of the 254 counties in the State of Texas. During Hurricane Ike, UTMB was forced to evacuate 461 patients from their main hospital and safeguard biological hazards located in their research facilities.

More than 3,500 families in Galveston alone were made homeless by Hurricane Ike, and more than a year after the hurricane hit over 16,000 families throughout the Galveston-Houston metropolitan area were still living in temporary shelters. The destruction caused by Hurricane Ike was unique: the initial storm damages, as the hurricane passed over Galveston Island, were not severe. However, as the storm passed over Galveston Bay, Ike caused significant flooding and storm surge that came from the northern, bay-side of the island. This island's bay-side was not protected by the ocean-side sea wall and many homes on this side were not elevated as much as those on the sea-side. Hurricane Katrina



Many residents of Bolivar Peninsula, a coastal community minutes from Galveston Island, have rebuilt their homes to withstand the next hurricane and storm surge.



The Port of Galveston is critical to local business and tourism sectors as it handles all types of cargo as well as serves as a year-round homeport to major cruise vessels.



Japanese delegates at the Galveston National Biocontainment Laboratory, one of the few non-military facilities in the US that studies highly infectious and newly emerging diseases.

After the storm, the damages from the 6.5-foot storm surge caused most of the campus's 100 buildings to be shut down for months and rendered the trauma center inoperable for nearly a year. The campus suffered a loss of 20 percent of its employees due to post-storm diaspora. With 1 million square feet of the campus located on floodable land, UTMB used Hurricane Ike as an opportunity to reassess storm preparation and resiliency practices, adjusting the physical and social practices of the campus. Since Hurricane Ike, UTMB has invested \$1 billion in campus infrastructure.

The campus was redesigned for maximum protection of sensitive practices, with the healthcare core in the center of campus, circled by a ring of academic and research buildings, followed by support activity on the periphery. To expedite the recovery process, UTMB assembled diverse teams of contractors, specialty consultants, architects, and others to focus on specific projects. They followed strategic plans to speed recovery by conducting thorough damage assessment, developing scope for repair and mitigation, aligning scope for expedited completion, establishing funding approval, and executing the project. Through this process, a building could be repaired, mitigated to reduce future damages, improved to better serve current purpose, completely repurposed, or demolished. During this process, UTMB also proactively redeveloped their campus master plan and established a mitigation plan that now is updated annually.

Since Hurricane Ike, UTMB has grown 40 percent and anticipates the same future growth in the coming decade so its investments have been targeted to integrate resilience with expansion, focusing on important lessons learned from the hurricane's damages. Because infection was a high concern after the water was shut down for weeks post-storm, UTMB integrated safeguards to prevent the spread of post-disaster air and waterborne disease. UTMB has also spread its research practices across its campuses to mitigate risk if biological samples are compromised in a disaster.



Discussing post-Hurricane Ike recovery with the director of Economic Development for Galveston County.

The Chamber of Commerce in Galveston, the oldest chamber in Texas, also played a pivotal role in the economic revitalization of Galveston after Hurricane Ike. In the immediate-term, the Chamber didn't know how to reach out to its constituents and had difficulty establishing protocol for helping rebuild businesses, so its members engaged in boots-on-the-ground work to redevelop a communications network and provide localized

recovery assistance. The Chamber created a database that cataloged the needs of each business, e.g. a tow truck or a generator, and then identified other businesses that could supply those items or services to speed the recovery process.



Young entrepreneurs promote networking opportunities for next generation professionals in the local business community.

During the years following Ike, the country faced a recession and the island faced over 10 percent population loss, so the Chamber of Commerce focused on attracting new businesses to the area not only to improve the economy but also to increase jobs and livelihood. The members focused on rejuvenating the youth populations,

who tended to move away from Galveston for better economic opportunities in Houston, by forming a group of active and committed young professionals and entrepreneurs who hold monthly luncheons and other social gatherings to facilitate interactions with seasoned members of the chamber of commerce and exchange knowledge and experiences. Today, this group consists of 165 members and has created its own economic revitalization campaign called “My Galveston,” a social media campaign that seeks to change others’ perceptions of Galveston and spread positivity, increase community engagement, and promote tourism.

Prominent nonprofit organizations, such as the Moody Foundation, contributed significantly to the economic revitalization of the city. Moody Gardens, an educational tourist destination that uses nature to educate visitors about wildlife conservation, was inundated with nearly eight feet of storm surge but worked tirelessly over a few months to reopen its doors in hopes that a source of recreation could bring positivity to a downtrodden community.



Planting grass seeds at a coastal heritage preserve owned and operated by Artist Boat, a local non-profit organization offering public education programs to preserve the unique coastal and marine environment of Galveston Island.

Other community institutions, like the Grand 1984 Opera House, executed similarly expedited recovery plans to speed the revitalization of downtown and to provide inspiration for the community. Families felt more compelled to return to Galveston when it felt like the town they left, so emphasizing the city’s rich history became a fundamental tenant of post-Ike tourism and community engagement. Local nonprofit and charitable foundations funded by historic Galveston families contributed to the recovery of Galveston historic sites while also providing local recovery funds; organizations included, for example, the Moody Foundation, the Mary Moody Northen Endowment, and the Permanent Endowment Fund of Moody Memorial First United Methodist Church.

SOCIAL RESPONSE TO HURRICANE RECOVERY

The social support that rose out of the devastation of Hurricane Ike proved fundamental for bringing back disproportionately disadvantaged populations. One of the first organizations back up and running on the island was St. Vincent’s House, a social service provider for marginalized populations. Though the entire first floor of the organization’s building, which housed its childcare center, was flooded, its facilities were operating within the week, providing emergency shelter for residents stranded on the island; it became the official Red Cross First Aid Center for the weeks following the disaster. In the years following Ike, the services St. Vincent’s House provided evolved to meet the changing needs of the most indigent populations; for example, it reduced its focus on childcare and education as the educational landscape in Galveston changed and increased community health services, growing its clinic and addressing urban health disparities.



Japanese delegates and new friends from St. Vincent’s House, a community service organization serving the underprivileged and working poor in the Galveston area. St. Vincent’s House played a major role in the community’s recovery after Hurricane Ike and today offers residents low-cost childcare programs, free health and dental clinics, a food pantry, and transportation for the disabled and elderly.

One successful local undertaking in the months following Hurricane Ike involved recruiting community members to become citizen scientists to test the soil around residents' homes, schools, and other community gathering places for toxins and potential hazards to human health. The "Citizen Science Sediment Sampling Project" formed when residents presented acute skin reactions, such as rashes, from the storm surge sediment. Heavy metals, such as lead, were of primary concern. Results showed elevated levels of lead and chromium with specific health disparities and land use concerns within public housing and playgrounds, increased exposure during activity (i.e. cleanup, groundskeeping, etc.), and the cumulative risk (including general physical and mental health stressors due to the post-disaster environment) for vulnerable populations. This project proved to be tremendously important for the City of Galveston because, unlike the toxin sampling conducted by the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality that only addressed the island as a whole, it focused on neighborhood-level risks. The results of this study were shared with the community to facilitate local cleanup activities, which were necessary since most funding programs did not adequately address remediation needs. The City of Galveston also played a key role in facilitating recovery in the years following Hurricane Ike and received \$622 million in direct assistance from state and national governments for this purpose. This amounted to nearly five times the city's annual budget, so generated great hopes for creating equitable, efficient, resilient redevelopment for the city.



The Mayor of Galveston shares his views on city efforts to recover and rebuild after Hurricane Ike.

Initially, the City of Galveston hoped to create a special dike to prevent bay flooding—termed the "Ike Dike"—but the estimated billions of dollars needed to complete the project would have required appropriations and approval from the U.S. congress, in addition to local funding, so the City pursued other recovery projects. It focused instead on other infrastructure projects, specifically water, sanitation, roadways, and remediation of abandoned buildings. It developed a County Buyout Program in which it purchased 61 buildings on the west end and 700 flood-prone properties on Bolivar Peninsula to prevent development in hazardous areas. It also established a long-term redevelopment plan, the Hazard Recovery Plan, which addresses issues of global warming and rising sea levels in addition to direct recovery efforts. The City incentivized individual communities to engage in participatory planning by making Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding contingent on local, updated community recovery plans. Because the City of Galveston feels that community participation is critical to resilience, they also established many committees within various government entities, such as the City Council, the Planning Commission, and more, to engage the public. As the 10-year anniversary of Hurricane Ike approaches, the City of Galveston aims to finish all major recovery projects, including improving beaches, updating its hazard mitigation plan, and promoting individual responsibility for resilient behavior.

The Galveston Housing Authority used funding from the City of Galveston to rebuild a mixed-income housing development project in a neighborhood located close to downtown. This housing development proved critical to low-income families because Hurricane Ike destroyed all four of the Housing Authority's family public housing developments in 2008. The new homes, built with resiliency features, helped to kickstart equitable development in Galveston.

Other organizations advocated for indigent community members by organizing local congregations and organizations that help or consist of poor and minority populations. Gulf Coast Interfaith, for example, held "house meetings" to demonstrate how community organizations can work together to address critical social service issues of concern to all; at these meetings, members identified resources and prioritized their best use. These meetings brought together diverse organizations, including but not limited to the following Galveston institutions:

- Faith United Methodist Church
- Galveston Coalition for Justice
- Galveston Northside Taskforce
- Holy Family Parish
- Holy Trinity Church
- The Islamic Center
- League of United Latin American Citizens
- Moody Methodist Church
- Mt. Olive Baptist Church
- National Association of the Advancement of Colored Persons
- Queen of Peace-La Marque
- Shrine of the True Cross
- St. Vincent's House
- Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
- Temple B'nai Israel



Japanese delegates join members of Gulf Coast Interfaith—a coalition of local religious congregations and community organizations—to discuss strategies for building leadership and advocating for common concerns such as equitable access to housing, healthcare, employment, and education.

Gulf Coast Interfaith acted in concert with St. Vincent's House to ensure the voices of marginalized populations were heard in the months following Hurricane Ike. It utilized its network of community groups to locate and facilitate the return of less-mobile populations, cataloging their needs and educating them about recovery funding and resources.

What follows are lists of community members who met with Japanese delegates and of sites throughout Galveston that Japanese delegates visited.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

- Mr. Dustin Henry, Facilities Planner, Portfolio Management, University of Texas Medical Branch
- Ms. Betty Massey, President, Board of Directors, Artist Boat
- Mr. John Zendt, President and Chief Executive Officer, Moody Gardens
- Dr. Sam Brody, Director, Center for Texas Beaches and Shores, Texas A&M University-Galveston
- Colonel Len Waterworth, Executive Professor, Department of Maritime Administration, and Senior Research Associate, Center for Texas Beaches and Shores, Texas A&M University-Galveston
- Dr. Ben Raimer, Senior Vice President, Health Policy and Legislative Affairs, University of Texas Medical Branch
- Mr. Michael Shriner, Vice President, Business Operations and Facilities, University of Texas Medical Branch
- Mr. Steven LeBlanc, Assistant Vice President, Business Operations and Facilities – Risk Management, University of Texas Medical Branch
- Dr. James Le Duc, Director, Galveston National Laboratory, University of Texas Medical Branch
- Mr. Patrick Root, Program Director, Research Property Services, University of Texas Medical Branch
- Mr. Marcel Blanchard, Assistant Vice President, Business Operations and Facilities – Utilities Operations, University of Texas Medical Branch
- Ms. Viola Moore, Visitor Services Manager, Mary Moody Northen Endowment
- Ms. Vivian Pinard, Executive Director, Permanent Endowment Fund of Moody Memorial First United Methodist Church
- Reverend Freda Marie Brown, Executive Director, St. Vincent's House

- Mr. Michael Jackson, Lead Advisor, YES! Advice Services, and Director Emeritus, St. Vincent's House
- Ms. Mona Purgason, Executive Director, Galveston Housing Authority
- Ms. Deyna Sims, Director of Real Estate and Development, Galveston Housing Authority
- Mayor James Yarbrough, Mayor, City of Galveston
- Mr. John Simsen, Recovery Program Director, City of Galveston
- Mr. Joe Compian, Community Organizer, Leader, Board Member, Gulf Coast Interfaith
- Gulf Coast Interfaith members (50 representatives from 15 member organizations)
- Ms. Maureen Patton, Executive Director, The Grand 1894 Opera House
- Mr. Dwayne Jones, Executive Director, Galveston Historical Foundation
- Ms. Gina Spagnola, President, Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Mr. C. B. "Bix" Rathburn, Director of Economic Development, Galveston County
- Ms. Erin Yarbrough, Executive Director, Galveston Independent School District Educational Foundation
- Mr. Jason Hardcastle, Senior Laboratory Biosafety Trainer, University of Texas Medical Branch
- Ms. Lauren Suderman Millo, Senior Vice President – Marketing Director, Moody National Bank
- Ms. Karla Kay, Executive Director and Founder, Artist Boat
- Mr. J.P. Bryan, Founder, The Bryan Museum

SITE VISITS

- American National Insurance Company
- Galveston Seawall
- Moody Gardens Visitor Center and Rainforest Pyramid
- Texas Seaport Museum
- Texas A&M University Center for Texas Beaches and Shores
- University of Texas Medical Branch Galveston National Biocontainment Laboratory
- Moody Mansion
- St. Vincent's House
- Cedars at Carver Park Housing Development
- Galveston City Hall
- Mt. Olive Baptist Church
- The Grand 1894 Opera House
- Historic Galveston's East End and the Strand Districts
- Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Artist Boat Coastal Heritage Preserve
- The Bryan Museum
- Bolivar Peninsula



Japanese delegates enjoy a farewell dinner at The Bryan Museum with their counterparts from Galveston. The museum houses one of the world's largest collections of historical documents and artwork related to Texas and the American West.

NEW ORLEANS



U.S. and Japanese delegates and project partners under the football goal posts at the Superdome in New Orleans. The largest fixed domed structure in the world with a seating capacity of over 75,000 people, the Superdome housed thousands of people seeking shelter from the massive flooding after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

A major port city since the 16th century, New Orleans has long been the largest metropolitan area in Louisiana. Founded by the French, the city's early residents comprised a unique ethnic mix of French, African, Indian, and White European residents. As the city developed, the term Creole arose to describe residents who descended from the colonial settlers of Louisiana. The term reflects a unique blend of cultural practices and was used to denote native-born Louisiana residents, whether Black or White. Today, the Creole culture remains strong and evident throughout the city.

New Orleans boasts several large universities, including Tulane and Loyola University of New Orleans, which are one major component of the city's economy. Other sources of economic activity include tourism and hospitality, oil production, maritime activity, and healthcare. Though the Louisiana Gulf suffered damages from number of hurricanes and tropical storms over its duration as a port city, the 2005 Hurricane Katrina proved to be the most costly, deadly, and eye-opening natural disaster to date. Not only did Hurricane Katrina cause extensive damage to the city, it brought to light environmental, social, and economic issues plaguing New Orleans. Residents of New Orleans firmly state that Hurricane Katrina was a "man-made" disaster, not a natural disaster, since the majority of the death, disease, and chaos immediately following the actual hurricane came from the levee structures breaking and flooding the city; the disorganized response from city, state, and national organizations; and the disproportionate impacts on already disenfranchised populations due to major health, environmental, and social disparities stemming from a long history of institutionalized racism.



Japanese delegates with a few Mardi Gras Indians at the Golden Feather Mardi Gras Indian Museum and Gallery.

HURRICANE KATRINA

Hurricane Katrina cost the United States \$125 billion and directly impacted 15 million Americans in 2005. The category five hurricane demolished New Orleans's levees, killing 1,836 people and submerging 80 percent



Aerial view of a flooded Ninth Ward three days after the 2005 Hurricane Katrina.

of the city's land area for weeks. The city suffered from delayed emergency response by government agencies; environmental justice issues plaguing poor communities with disproportionate death, disease, and damage; and the longest anticipated economic recovery of any natural disaster to date. Community-based planning, however, played a significant role in the city's rebuilding and recovery, with much of the community effort stemming from discontent with various aspects of the recovery plans presented by government organizations.

Prior to Katrina, New Orleans had many disadvantaged neighborhoods that lacked various resources and infrastructure needs. This issue, though overlooked prior to the hurricane, became unavoidable during the recovery process due to the extreme disparities in damages and recovery resources. Over 80 percent of African American New Orleanians faced flooding, while just 54 percent of white New Orleanians faced the same issue. In parts of New Orleans floodwater stayed for as many as 30 days, while other areas experienced only one to six days of standing. Coupled with extreme differences in quality of housing stock and resiliency measures in homes, the damages varied quite widely by neighborhood.

POST-KATRINA RECOVERY

BUSINESS/ECONOMIC RESPONSE TO HURRICANE RECOVERY

Businesses in New Orleans in the years following Katrina played an important role in restoring the city's reputation following the negative press coverage of emergency response and subsequent looting, violence, and racism. The New Orleans Chamber of Commerce worked tirelessly to restore the convention center, since millions of dollars a day were lost with its closure. Because the negative media also harmed tourism, the Chamber focused on restoring the image of New Orleans as a premiere leisure destination and convention destination through massive national media campaigns. Recovery milestones for the city included the decision to host Mardi Gras in February 2006 (immediately following the disaster), host Jazz Fest in April 2006, and reopen the Superdome—an iconic image in the immediate days following Katrina—in September 2006. The Chamber, with a variety of local businesses, even hosted more than 700 journalists from across the globe to dispel myths about New Orleans still being “under water” and in an “apocalyptic” social state.



The Port of New Orleans handles about 62 million tons of cargo and 50,000 barges as well as over 1 million cruise passengers each year.

Reopening the Port of New Orleans, a historic port and one of the largest sources of prosperity for the city, was also a priority. Each day that the port was closed, \$300 million of business was lost. The port hired displaced workers and established a floating dormitory for workers in the weeks following to expedite its reopening. In the past 10 years, \$500 million has been invested in the port, including \$300 million in public funds, with \$100 million of that specifically for infrastructure.

The New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA), a government organization created by state statute following Katrina, sought to catalyze revitalization by creating strategic housing, commercial revitalization, and land stewardship developments with a special focus on maintaining New Orleans's unique neighborhood fabric and culture. Central City, a historically very poor neighborhood in Central New Orleans, received \$29 million



The legendary Candlelight Lounge, a beloved neighborhood bar in the historic Treme district, features a traditional brass band every Wednesday night.

from the federal government for recovery, with \$8 million specifically for housing. The authority used these funds to create a neighborhood stabilization plan and worked with Enterprise Community Partners, a national nonprofit organization, to provide grants for capacity building. They also addressed many previously existing issues during revitalization, including general disinvestment in the neighborhood's commercial corridor.



Young leaders of local non-profit organizations talk about health, housing and gentrification issues facing their communities.

The multi-stakeholder partnerships between grassroots organizations, larger nonprofit organizations and foundations, and government entities aided New Orleans's recovery. Ten years later, the city still lacks affordable housing and faces inequality and institutionalized racism, but it has made significant progress in disaster recovery. Hurricane Katrina brought to light many systemic issues the city faced—economical, social, and physical—and the city has sought to instill equality and resilience in the redevelopment process.

SOCIAL RESPONSE TO HURRICANE RECOVERY

During the recovery planning phase, the City of New Orleans struggled to establish a plan that would satisfy the needs of its residents and address future resiliency issues. With some neighborhoods entirely demolished, many planners did not want to rebuild.

One of the first proposed plans, called the “Green Dot Plan,” slated previously inhabited areas for greenspace and wetlands to build resiliency to future storm events, but was incredibly controversial, as many residents of these areas sought to return home. These early redevelopment plans—which called for selectively rebuilding the city, and specifically not rebuilding disenfranchised neighborhoods, such as the 9th ward—highlighted racial tensions within the city. Some argued that these neighborhoods were especially susceptible to future flooding, due to their location and altitude. However, many residents viewed discussion of redevelopment as greenspace as a means of exclusion and the term “shrinking the footprint” as a euphemism for efforts to make New Orleans a whiter, more affluent city or as a means of ethnic cleansing. When citizens felt proposals restricted displaced persons from rebuilding and returning to their homes, public involvement dramatically increased



Discussing community-based workforce and economic development programs that provide healthy and affordable food to underserved neighborhoods.



In total, five citywide recovery planning schemes were created in the two years following Katrina (Bring New Orleans Back, New Orleans Neighborhoods Rebuilding Plan, the Lambert Plan, The Unified New Orleans Plan, and the Office of Recovery and Development Administration Plan), though many faced intense scrutiny and were discarded throughout the recovery process. Despite the absence of a formalized process, neighborhoods, acting on their own, continued to organize and plan. Citizen participation naturally gained a voice through community partnerships among various local organizations focused on individual neighborhood needs. Because of the slow response of government organizations, particularly FEMA, neighborhood organizations took it upon themselves to provide community members with the necessary resources to survive in the short term and to promote volunteerism and recovery initiatives in the longer term.



Touring the French Quarter, the oldest neighborhood in the city of New Orleans.

they make to the tax pool; the dearth of resources for families to return to these neighborhoods in the first place; limited funding available to rebuild homes in these neighborhoods without insurance or with limited knowledge of the government aid process; rampant corruption during the rebuilding process; and general community disenfranchisement that leads to lower engagement, mobility, and social capital.

Another tension between the community and government planning organizations arose over the desire to rebuild quickly versus the need to create effective programs and policies. For effective, lasting planning efforts to improve the urban fabric of a city, equity must be created in the economic recovery process. Though land readjustment strategies worked in the case of the 1995 Kobe Earthquake, where families were given new



Japanese delegates talk with several community organizers in the Lower 9th Ward about efforts to encourage citizens to more actively participate in shaping city government policies, including planning and budgetary decision-making.

Communities began organizing and many nonprofit and advocacy groups sprung up as the controversy inequitable recovery grew. Organizations such as the Lower 9th Ward Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development, lowernine.org, and the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association developed or expanded to ensure the voices of the most disenfranchised were heard. These organizations still play an active role in implementing housing and infrastructure plans despite dwindling resources over time. Long-term recovery in low-income neighborhoods has proven to be much slower (as much as three to four times) than in other neighborhoods due to low-income neighborhoods' relative lack of influence on city government, a result of the smaller contribution



Central City, a historically African-American neighborhood, has experienced a substantial renaissance led largely by leaders from within the community.

housing under the pretense that they relocated to other parts of the city, such strategies proved to be culturally sensitive to New Orleans residents and an alternative approach had to be found. Citizens used the creation of a recovery plan as an opportunity to address preexisting problems, including crime, food insecurity, and other inequities, by incorporating new services and initiatives into the creation of the recovery plans.



Moderate-income housing on the Lafitte Greenway, a bicycle path and trail designed with extensive input from neighborhood and civil groups and funded by disaster community development block grants.

Ten years after Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans still faces an uneven recovery. At a certain point, residents acknowledge, differentiating recovery issues from general city issues is difficult. For example, before Katrina, New Orleans struggled with affordable housing and access to sustainable housing; after Katrina, it continues to struggle. Many families—especially lower income ones—inherited their homes; many of these families could only afford to pay property taxes, but could not pay for optional (though needed) insurance, and so were unable to rebuild following the disaster. Since 2005,

New Orleans's rental rates have doubled, preventing lower income families from returning at all. The Housing New Orleans project began rebuilding public housing developments in the year following Katrina, but it has only completed 700 of the 1,400 desired units to date. The organization ultimately hopes to help their tenants become owners by facilitating their purchase of land, establishing community centers in the public housing developments to increase access to mobility-related resources, and establishing subsidized rent-to-own programs, but it continues to face challenges.

Large foundations and nonprofit organizations in New Orleans also contributed to the recovery process and helped increase the impact of local businesses and grassroots organizations. The Greater New Orleans Foundation paid special attention to the voices of the community when funding recovery projects by creating a series of congresses to elicit the input of various local and national stakeholders. Other organizations, such as the Data Center, contributed by utilizing their expertise to facilitate efficient allocation of resources and other methods of speeding recovery.



Japanese delegates and new friends from the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority, a public agency established by the State of Louisiana. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the authority has worked with devastated city neighborhoods to rebuild affordable housing, revitalize commercial sectors, and promote parks and other green gathering spaces for residents.

What follows are lists of community members who met with Japanese delegates and of sites throughout Galveston that Japanese delegates visited.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

- *Mr. Paul Cramer, Planning Administrator, New Orleans City Planning Commission*
- *Ms. Jeanette Delery, Deputy Director, Canal Street Development Corporation*
- *Ms. Leslie Alley, Deputy Director, New Orleans City Planning Commission*
- *Mr. Elliot Perkins, Executive Director, New Orleans Historic District Landmarks Commission*
- *Mr. Steve Villavaso, Chief Executive Officer, Villavaso & Associates*



- Ms. Andreanecia Morris, Executive Director, Housing NOLA and President/Chair, Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance Board of Governors
- Mr. Keith Twitchell, President, Committee for a Better New Orleans
- Mr. Arthur Johnson, Chief Executive Officer, Lower 9th Ward Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development
- Ms. Laura Paul, Executive Director, lowernine.org
- Mr. William Waiters, President, Holy Cross Neighborhood Association
- Ms. Kelsey Foster, People's Budget Campaign Coordinator, Committee for a Better New Orleans
- Mr. Jeffrey Schwartz, Executive Director, Broad Community Connections
- Mr. Dennis Bagneris, Program Director, Liberty's Kitchen
- Ms. Emily Mickley-Doyle, Executive Director, SPROUT NOLA
- Ms. Leah Sarris, Director of Operations and Executive Chef, Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine, Tulane University School of Medicine
- Ms. Kim Turner, Community Relations Team Leader, Whole Foods Market
- Ms. Sophie Harris, Executive Director, Friends of Lafitte Greenway
- Mr. Fred Johnson, Chief Executive Officer, Neighborhood Development Foundation
- Ms. Nicole Barnes, Executive Director, Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative
- Mr. Gregg Fortner, Executive Director, Housing Authority of New Orleans
- Mr. Matt Morrin, Development Director, Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.
- Chief Shaka Zulu, Co-Owner, Golden Feather Mardi Gras Indian Restaurant Gallery
- Ms. Sabrina Mays-Montana, Coordinator, New Orleans Black Mardi Gras Indian Co-Op
- Ms. Vaughn Fauria, Executive Director/President, NewCorp, Inc.
- Mr. Bryan Block, Director, Vieux Carré Commission
- Mr. Ethan Ellestad, Executive Director, Music and Culture Coalition of New Orleans
- Ms. Sandra Lindquist, Vice President, Operations and Business Development, New Orleans Chamber of Commerce
- Mr. Kristian Sonnier, Vice President of Communications and Public Relations, New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Mr. Ben Johnson, President and CEO, New Orleans Chamber of Commerce
- Mr. Paul Matthews, Community Affairs Manager – External Affairs, Port of New Orleans
- Ms. Isabel Barrios, Program Officer, Greater New Orleans Foundation
- Mr. Richard Martinez, Program Officer, Greater New Orleans Foundation
- Ms. Ellen Lee, Director of Housing Policy and Community Development, City of New Orleans
- Mr. Kyle Wedberg, President, New Orleans Creative Center for the Arts
- Ms. Sandra Reed, Program Coordinator, Livable Clairborne Corridor Initiative
- Ms. Ashleigh Gardere, Executive Director, The Network for Economic Opportunity, and Senior Advisor to Mayor Mitchell Landrieu, City of New Orleans
- Ms. Tanya James, Executive Director, Central City Renaissance Alliance
- Ms. Brenda Breaux, Executive Director, New Orleans Redevelopment Authority
- Mr. Neal Morris, Founder and Principal, Redmellon
- Mr. Gerard Duhon, Executive Director, Café Reconcile
- Mr. Stephen Caputo, General Manager, Hotel Monteleone



- *Mr. Gregory Feirn, Chief Executive Officer, Louisiana Children's Medical Center (LCMC)*
- *Ms. Robin Keegan, Director, Community Resiliency, GCR, Inc.*
- *Mr. Jerry Bologna, President and Chief Executive Officer, Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission*
- *Mr. Alex Owen, Nola Swing and Jazz Education Program*

SITE VISITS

- *Saenger Theater*
- *Lower 9th Ward Neighborhood*
- *Sanchez Community Center*
- *St. Roch Market*
- *Treme-LaFitte Neighborhood*
- *ReFresh Project*
- *Liberty's Kitchen*
- *Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine, Tulane University School of Medicine*
- *Lafitte Greenway*
- *Sojourner Truth Community Center*
- *Golden Feather Mardi Gras Indian Museum and Gallery*
- *Historic French Quarter*
- *Superdome*
- *New Orleans Chamber of Commerce*
- *Greater New Orleans Foundation*
- *New Orleans Creative Center for the Arts*
- *Lakefront and Lakeview Neighborhood*
- *Central City Renaissance Alliance*
- *Café Reconcile*
- *Greater New Orleans, Inc.*

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Both Hurricane Ike and Hurricane Katrina created unique issues and required unique responses from the Cities of Galveston and New Orleans, and both revealed important underlying issues in U.S. policy and society.

In relating their experiences with disaster and recovery, the delegates from the United States stressed the importance of starting early, remembering the gravity of the disasters, not letting time create complacency, and pursuing not only economic recovery but also social and spiritual recovery. Both Galveston and New Orleans boast unique cultures and histories and, with tourism a main economic driver for both cities, the delegates from these cities stressed the importance of enabling their residents to regain their livelihoods by perpetuating their cities' positive cultures.



The Japanese delegates learned much, not only about the disaster recovery process in the United States, but also about the United States' unique "melting pot" social system. Democracy and diversity present very differently in the United States than in Japan, resulting in distinctive issues during the disaster recovery process, both positive and negative. Unlike in Japan, institutionalized racism, social disparities, and economic

gaps complicate quick and equitable recoveries in U.S. cities and states. However, nonprofit organizations and large foundations—which are more prominent in the United States than in Japan—aid in capacity building. In Japan, the entire recovery funding and support comes from the national government, while the United States builds multi-level, multi-stakeholder partnerships to revitalize neighborhoods.

The Japanese delegation acknowledged the special sense of attachment Americans have to their homes and hometowns and recognized the difficulty of mitigating future disaster risk. With the climate changing and sea levels rising, both Galveston and New Orleans face a growing risk of flood and other natural disasters. The Japanese, who face more frequent tsunami and earthquake incidents, expressed excitement about exchanging preparedness strategies and assisting the U.S. delegations in improving their preparedness.



As in the first year of the exchange, all delegates acknowledged the importance of human capital and local leaders in spearheading the recovery process. Further, delegates from both countries, which have aging populations, recognized that their vulnerable aging populations must receive special attention in disaster recovery and response. All delegates also identified youth engagement and community capacity building as high priorities and agreed that, despite the many social, economic, or governmental differences, people's lives and livelihoods must be prioritized. They agreed that people who feel pride in their history and culture will put more effort in rebuilding. History, culture, and community must be integrated along with preparedness and resilience for a successful recovery process.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Please see the attached program agendas for a detailed listing of Year 2 exchange activities, including dates, specific events, and sites.

COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

Please see the attached program booklet.



Enjoying an authentic Texas meal at Queen's Bar-B-Que in Galveston, a 50-year family-owned establishment operated by second and third generation Galvestonians who weathered Hurricane Ike, repaired the damage to the restaurant, and continue to offer traditional food and warm Texas hospitality to locals and visitors alike.



CITY DELEGATIONS

MIYAKO

- *Mr. Shuichi Daibo, Board Chairman and Chief Director, Tachiagaru zo! Miyako-shi Taro (Stand Up Taro!)*
- *Mr. Washichi Tanaka, President, Taro District Revival Urban Development Investigative Committee and Vice Director, Tarochan Cooperative Association*
- *Mr. Masato Sasaki, General Manager, Oceans Miyako International Club, and Director, Iwate International Association, and Vice Principal, Ichinoseki-shi Ohara Junior High School*
- *Mr. Tsutomu Obata, Owner, Torimoto Yakitori Restaurant and Curry Tei Restaurant, and Chief Director, NPO Iha Tov Torimoto*
- *Ms. Reiko Watanabe, Section Leader, Miyako City Council of Social Welfare*

KOBE

- *Mr. Koyo Fukagawa, Community Planning Advisor, Mano-Machizukuri District Council*
- *Mr. Hisanori Nakayama, Professor, Kobe Gakuin University Contemporary Social Studies of Disaster Management and former Director-General, Urban Redevelopment Department, Kobe City Government*
- *Dr. Akira Miyasada, Director-in-Chief, Machi-Communication*
- *Dr. Shizuyo Yoshitomi, Executive Director, Takatori Community Center*
- *Ms. Junko Nakamura, President, Community Support Center Kobe*

NEW ORLEANS

- *Mr. Paul Cramer, Planning Administrator, New Orleans City Planning Commission*
- *Ms. Sandra Lindquist, Vice President, Operations and Business Development, New Orleans Chamber of Commerce*
- *Ms. Andeanecia Morris, Executive Director, Housing NOLA, and President/Chair, Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance Board of Governors*
- *Ms. Sandra Reed, Program Coordinator, Livable Clairborne Corridor Initiative*
- *Mr. Keith Twitchell, President, Committee for a Better New Orleans*

GALVESTON

- *Reverend Freda Marie Brown, Executive Director, St. Vincent's House*
- *Mr. Joe Compian, Community Organizer/Leader/Board Member, Gulf Coast Interfaith*
- *Mr. Dustin Henry, Facilities Planner, Portfolio Management, University of Texas Medical Branch*
- *Ms. Betty Massey, President, Board of Directors, Artist Boat, and former Chair, Galveston Long-Term Recovery Committee*
- *Ms. Gina Spagnola, President, Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce*

PROJECT PARTNERS AND RESOURCE PERSONS

- *Ms. Meril Fujiki, Seminars Development Coordinator, East-West Seminars Program, East-West Center*



- *Dr. Etsuko Yasui, Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Disaster and Emergency Studies, Brandon University*
- *Dr. Eugénie Birch, Co-Director, Penn Institute for Urban Research, and Nussdorf Professor of Urban Research, Department of City and Regional Planning, School of Design, University of Pennsylvania*
- *Ms. Amy Montgomery, Managing Director, Penn Institute for Urban Research, University of Pennsylvania*



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