



PENN IUR SPECIAL REPORT

U.S.-Japan Grassroots Exchange Program: Citizen Participation in Community Building Post-Disaster

Year 3 Report

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U.S.-Japan Grassroots Exchange Program Citizen Participation in Community Building Post-Disaster Year 3 Report

Written by the Penn Institute for Urban Research, with contributions from the East-West Center and the Applied Disaster & Emergency Studies Program, Brandon University, and funding from the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership

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INTRODUCTION

The U.S.-Japan Grassroots Exchange Program, “Citizen Participation in Community Building Post-Disaster,” was a three-year program that examined how four cities in the United States and Japan have engaged their local citizens in the long-term recovery and rebuilding of their cities in the aftermath of natural disasters. Throughout the program, a total of 20 U.S. and Japanese participants from New Orleans, Louisiana; Galveston, Texas; Miyako, Iwate Prefecture; and Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture, have shared experiences, ideas, strategies, and visions for rebuilding their communities. In exchange visits to each city, the participants took part in small group meetings, site visits, social gatherings, and other activities where they discussed challenges, successes, and lessons learned from their efforts to address a wide range of recovery and rebuilding issues including housing, economic development, land use, community planning, safety and hazard mitigation, environment, health, and social and physical infrastructure needs of poor and aging populations. For the final year of the program, the participants met in Philadelphia, hosted by the program partner, the Penn Institute for Urban Research from December 3rd to 8th, 2017 to bring their insights and reflections of the past years. The three-year commitment to this program required on-going understanding from their communities and organizations, and their families in order to take part in as it involved leaving their office and home for extended period of time. All the exchange participants have made painstaking efforts to be there—to be part of this exchange process. This grassroots exchange was made possible because of their endeavor and dedication. This report is prepared to highlight the activities taken place in Philadelphia, and reflect the past three years to conclude this program. The program was generously funded by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership and the East-West Center.

LEARNING FROM EXPERTS ON DISASTER RECOVERY

As part of the final year of the US-Japan Disaster exchange program, the East-West Center, in partnership with the Penn Institute for Urban Research, convened the leading academic and practitioners to discuss key lessons in disaster recovery. Their presentations and their proceeding discussions with exchange participants not only contributed to their knowledge base around best practices, but also allowed for participants to identify tenets of the research in their own practice and experience.

Etsuko Yasui, Associate Professor, Department of Applied Disaster & Emergency Studies, Brandon University, gave a presentation titled, “Community of Tomorrow: Roles of Community-Based Organizations in Meaningful Disaster Recovery,” which sought to open a discussion among U.S. and Japanese Grassroots Exchange program delegates to address knowledge gaps between research and practice in disaster recovery. Because many of the delegates are founders and original members of community-based voluntary organizations (CBOs or NGOs) or work closely with various CBOs and NGOs on a regular basis, they can most effectively identify gaps between research and practice. Disaster research asserts that CBOs are an essential requirement for the recovery of affected communities as they fulfil the unmet needs of these communities when the existing public services are overwhelmed by the disaster event. While many studies indicate the valuable contributions of CBOs, there are few opportunities to understand how CBOs preserve their accumulated knowledge and retain highly skilled staff members. These CBOs are often short-lived due to their limited access to funding, which restricts them from developing long-term plans and continuing to employ experienced staff members. The discussion prompted by Dr. Yasui’s presentation was a great opportunity to solicit input from delegates—many of whom might be currently working to achieve their long-term organizational sustainability. Dr. Yasui’s presentation introduced two case studies of community recovery from the 1995 Kobe earthquake, prompting U.S. and Japanese delegates to reflect on their involvement in their local communities. Her talk also posed a series of questions to encourage participants to think about their own experiences of how to transfer skills and offer accumulated practical knowledge to others during and after disaster.

Daniel Aldrich, Professor of Political Science and Public Policy, and Director, Security and Resilience Studies Program, Northeastern University, presented his own research in a talk titled “Social Capital in Disaster Mitigation



Dr. Daniel Aldrich presents his research on the importance of social capital in disaster recovery and case study investigations into the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami to the U.S.-Japan Grassroots Exchange Program at a day-long workshop at the University of Pennsylvania.

and Recovery.” He posited, from his observations in various case studies in the United States and Japan, that communities with looser ties find rebuilding more difficult. He emphasized the importance of investing time and trust with neighbors; after a disaster, when the government is shut down, limited, or slow to respond, neighbors and community often prove the only source of assistance. Dr. Aldrich highlighted his investigation of the 2011 Tohoku Tsunami and Earthquake, which demonstrated that the best predictor of survival was the strength of the community bonds formed beforehand. In communities with higher crime rates, the interactions between community members were lower, demonstrating a correlation between crime and disaster vulnerability. He also, importantly, emphasized that what helps

people survive disaster are “horizontal ties,” while what helps people rebuild after disaster are “vertical ties,” or government support at the local and national levels. Dr. Aldrich concluded by identifying several universal, key elements to building social capital: gatherings, such as community, zoning, and/or school meetings help facilitate connections; the use of community currency increases volunteerism and cohesion; and the utilization of social media tools to indicate resources available and needed immediately after a disaster greatly catalyze recovery.

Robert Lane, Senior Fellow for Community Design and Development, Regional Plan Association (RPA), gave an in-depth investigation into Post-Hurricane Sandy recovery in a presentation titled “Still Rebuilding by Design?” Rebuild by Design was a public-private partnership funded by both the national government (the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Block Development Grants) and philanthropy (the Rockefeller Foundation). The initiative developed a worldwide competition of interdisciplinary teams to create a disaster recovery plan for the New York region. Of the 100 teams who submitted disaster recovery proposals, twenty made the finals. Final teams were then tasked with identifying local partners to work with, prioritizing community engagement and citizens’ participatory planning. Together these groups identified the most important components of disaster recovery for their communities. Ultimately seven disaster recovery plans were finalized and funded. Three non-governmental organizations assisted in executing the competition, including the Regional Plan Association (RPA) (with which Mr. Lane works), the Municipal Arts Society (MAS), and the Van Alen Institute. Mr. Lane then detailed the successes and challenges this multi-stakeholder partnership faced, noting that Rebuild by Design successfully married local governments with community groups and NGOs to create lasting relationships important to rebuilding. He also said that the requirements for groups to do research before coming up with designs and to explicitly engage with community organizations was very useful and proved more effective than top-down planning. However, though significant funding became available post-disaster, enabling communities to attract talent, the Trump administration might not have much money for post-disaster rebuilding so this may not be easily replicable. Additionally, New Jersey ultimately down-sized their projects to accommodate reduced federal funding, whereas New York raised the additional money they needed to realize their projects more fully. This dichotomy proves the importance of proactive local governments and the dependence of an initiative like Rebuild by Design on strong fundraising capacity in the face of limited national government support.

Cathy McCann, Former Chairperson, New Jersey Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NJVOAD), concluded the day’s presentations with a talk titled, “Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and the Four C’s”. The Four C’s—Cooperation, Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration—foster more effective delivery of services to communities affected by disaster, she argued. NJVOAD, where Mrs. McCann was chair for a total of 17 years, was formed in response to Hurricane Andrew in 1992 by the American Red Cross, the Community Foodbank of New

Jersey, FEMA Region II, the Governor's Office of Volunteerism, the Office of Emergency Management, and the Salvation Army. This multi-stakeholder partnership seeks to bolster organizations active in disaster assistance and offer more effective services to people and communities affected after disaster. By implementing the "Four C's" method, her organization has been able to streamline preparedness and response processes in New Jersey and leverage expertise across the state. Mrs. McCann also highlighted the importance of the emotional trauma around disasters, emphasizing how community advocates and faith leaders play a special role for community mental health during the recovery process. In 2001, following September 11, NJVOAD helped to create the New Jersey Interfaith Partnership for Disaster recovery to address the emotional and spiritual needs created by the tragedy and other disaster-related, long-term recovery needs for communities. She emphasized that the effective delivery of services following a disaster is critical to survival and that attending to emotional needs is just as important as addressing physical needs for community members to thrive again.

A CASE STUDY: DISASTER RECOVER IN JERSEY CITY

The U.S.-Japan exchange delegates visited Jersey City, New Jersey, the second largest municipality in New Jersey with just under 250,000 people. Located across the Hudson River from New York City and home to Liberty State Park, Jersey City boasts panoramic views of the Manhattan skyline, the Statue of Liberty, and Ellis Island (the former immigrant gateway). During Hurricane Sandy, Jersey City suffered from flooding and damages as a result of storm surge and 90 MPH winds.

During the site visit, the participants heard from **Sergeant Greg Kierce**, Director, Jersey City Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Department of Public Safety, who described the damage and challenges in recovery. One major unforeseen challenge, discovered after the 2005 hurricane season, included sheltering animals who could not be evacuated. Recognizing that, if their pets and other animals are in danger, many individuals and families will not evacuate hazardous sites or will return to dangerous areas, communities now acknowledge the need to provide planning and resources to meet the needs of animals in crisis. Thanks to the passage of the Pet Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act signed into law in 2006 and the recognition that the human-animal bond will often supersede even



Above: Sergeant Greg Kierce discusses Jersey City's response to Hurricane Sandy and the city's disaster preparedness plans. Below: Sergeant Kierce shows exchange participants emergency response vehicles that promote safety and sanitation following a disaster.

evacuation orders, the Federal government is working with states and localities to ensure that planning for families with animals is incorporated into their disaster preparedness and management strategies. Sergeant Keirce's team has created an animal trailer capable of housing 19 animals to address this issue. In regards to human health and safety, he noted that the Department of Public Safety learned during Hurricane Sandy that a significant number of Jersey City residents are dependent on "oxygen therapy," or supplemental oxygen, so his team developed the capacity to refill oxygen containers during emergency situations. Additionally he highlighted the importance of sanitation following a disaster and showcased two combination shower/toilet trailers they can deploy to shelters to ensure personal hygiene needs are met and limit the spread of disease following a disaster. Another piece of technology he showcased was called the "Hydratek," which is a tank-like vehicle that can be deployed in inaccessible areas to provide a more stable platform for emergency responders to perform rescue duties. The ability to access this specialized equipment allows Jersey City to greatly reduce casualties and injuries to help residents prepare for a faster, less costly recovery.

Following the visit to the Department of Public Safety, participants met with four representatives from the Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH), which is a rapid transit system serving Newark, Harrison, Hoboken, and Jersey City in metropolitan northern New Jersey as well as lower and midtown Manhattan in New York City. **John Burkhard**, Superintendent of Way & Structures, **Damien McShane**, Program Director, **Oren Auslin**, Senior Policy Analyst, and **Juan Carlos Rojas**, Government & Community Relations, Port Authority of NY & NJ gave exchange participants a comprehensive tour of the Jersey City station, discussing the impacts of Hurricane Sandy and the resilience measures PATH has taken.

On the way to Jersey City Hall, **Brian Platt**, Chief Innovation Officer, City of Jersey City, Volunteer Responder, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and United Rescue Jersey City, led a short bus tour of the city. He explained that, as one of the first European settlement locations in the 1630s, and a home for immigrants and newcomers, Jersey City has a rich cultural history. He said that, like other cities, the industrialization that shaped Jersey City's early years led to ups and downs throughout its history but that, today, the city provides a reliable economic base for financial institutions and other business sectors. After WWII, Jersey City became an attractive location to live and work mainly due to its advanced transportation systems, which made it possible for Jersey residents to commute to New York City. Even though the 2012 Hurricane Sandy caused significant destruction, the city is stronger than ever before thanks to its proximity to New York City and overall affordability. He argued that this suggests that the resilience of Jersey City lies in well-balanced planning to sustain economic infrastructure and support diverse demands of local communities.

At City Hall, participants heard from a variety of speakers discussing community-based emergency responses and the role of emergency medical services in disaster recovery, as well as how the region's Chamber of Commerce sought to rejuvenate business in Jersey City after Hurricane Sandy. Following Mr. Shorey's presentation, five emergency medical responders including **Joshua Ortero**, Program Manager, United Rescue Jersey City, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Field Supervisor, RWJBarnabas Health-Jersey City Medical Center; **Paula Hollenback**, EMS Supervisor, Jersey City Medical Center; **Shina Goodin**, Community-Based Emergency Care Giver, United Rescue; **Greg Kyle**, Member, United Rescue Governing Board, Community-Based Emergency Care Giver; and **Brian Platt**, Chief Innovation Officer, City of Jersey City, and Volunteer Responder, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), described their experiences working in the community. CERT exists in over 2,400 communities nationwide, with 1.3 million trained members who are tasked to train and organize volunteers that can augment full-time emergency responders in the event of overwhelming natural or manmade disasters when the full-time emergency responders may not be able to quickly assist all those affected. The goal of the CERT program is to provide the private citizens who complete the course with the basic skills needed to respond to their community's immediate needs in the aftermath of a disaster when emergency services are not immediately available. By working together, CERTs can assist in saving lives and protecting property. Within Jersey City, the CERT program operates under the Command and Control of the Jersey City Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEM&HS). Approximately 120 citizens are currently on the Jersey City CERT roster. The

team recognized, however, that for a city with a population of approximately 300,000, CERT needs a significantly higher number of trained volunteers and are currently recruiting more community members to engage.

United Rescue Jersey City was established in 2015, operated by volunteers who are medically trained and equipped with pre-ambulatory emergency medical care skills. This unique initiative—the only one its kind in the United States so far—was modeled after the group United Hatzalah of Israel to increase fast and effective emergency medical responses to save lives and provide appropriate medical attention before an ambulance arrives. Often, an ambulance cannot arrive fast enough to save lives. So, in Jersey City, when the emergency call comes in, a smartphone app is set to alert the nearest United Rescue CBECs (Community-Based Emergency Caregivers), notifying them the location and incident. Because a 911 call-response time takes on average about 20 minutes, the arrival of CBECs in three to five minutes can make a significant difference. Although CERT can provide triage, CBECs can provide additional medical attention to a person who needs immediate care. The team provides fast and reliable medical assistance for various levels of health-related incidents, such as automobile accidents, drug overdoses, falls, severe asthma reactions, etc. They receive about 200 calls a month. Currently, United Rescue Jersey City has over 140 trained volunteers.

Maria Nieves, President and Chief Executive Officer, Hudson County Chamber of Commerce, concluded the day's site visit with an informal discussion of the role of the Chamber of Commerce in Jersey City during and after a disaster. Because the city has a significant financial sector, it must ensure important work isn't lost during a disaster and that businesses can access their work again quickly following a disaster.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE US-JAPAN EXCHANGE PROGRAM: A THREE-YEAR REVIEW

During the day-long workshop for the exchange participants, which focused the role of citizen participation in community-building post-disaster, the group emphasized the need for volunteerism, communication, and widespread participation. By sharing experiences, challenges, and lessons learned from post-disaster recovery, participants suggested that, in order to produce effective results, participatory actions must come from the bottom



Above: U.S.-Japan Grassroots Exchange Program participants visit the Jersey City PATH station to learn about resilience practices developed following Hurricane Sandy. Below: U.S.-Japan Grassroots Exchange Program participants meet with representatives from emergency response groups and community volunteers in CERT.

up—from an organized, grassroots level. However, the specific mechanics of implementation was not obvious, with each group and breakout session asking: How will this happen and what will it look like?

Some themes and lessons pervaded all groups. Below are the most important lessons learned from the three-year exchange program as identified by the exchange participants.

Participants acknowledged the importance of multi-sector collaboration in the recovery process. Grassroots citizen groups and local government and business organization connections are most important in the recovery process, especially for vulnerable populations in the community. Such organizations should have a shared community vision and establish close working relationships with local and state government agencies to ensure that their concerns (e.g. affordable replacement housing) are taken into account during the recovery process.

In Galveston, research institutions (such as the Galveston National Laboratory at the University of Texas Medical Branch) meet regularly with citizen groups to discuss how they can work together to address disaster recovery and preparedness. The Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce also works closely with citizen groups as well as local businesses on disaster recovery and preparation programs. In New Orleans, professional sports associations (e.g. the New Orleans Saints football team) and cultural groups (e.g. New Orleans Black Mardi Gras Indians) work with communities throughout the city on recovery. In addition, many food-related organizations operating in the community (e.g. Liberty's Kitchen, Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine/Tulane University School of Medicine, and Whole Foods Market) work together to build resiliency, food security, and employment opportunities.

It has been over 20 years since the 1995 Kobe earthquake. The citizens of Kobe made a strong effort to memorialize the disaster and continue to hold memorial anniversaries every year on January 17th. Many community-based organizations also offer various opportunities for visitors—from young school students to community leaders, academic researchers, government officials, and emergency managers—from across Japan and the world to learn about their disaster management approaches. The survivors and volunteers who were involved in the recovery play crucial roles in these activities, providing their stories as anecdotal evidence to keep this disaster remembered. The Kobe delegates to the U.S.-Japan Exchange host and direct trainings, workshops, presentations, lectures, and field trips to disseminate their experiences of the Kobe earthquake recovery and long-term capacity-building approaches to enhancing local resilience to future disasters.

Exchange participants agreed that building consensus around community-rebuilding priorities is fundamental. While specific rebuilding objectives might differ from community to community, establishing an overall vision for what a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable community should look like it is important in order to plan effectively. Along this line, communication across sectors is critical. Good examples of organizations building community consensus are the Long-Term Recovery Committee in Galveston and the Central City Renaissance Alliance group in New Orleans, which conduct community needs assessments and direct community participation in their planning processes. The community of Mano, a neighborhood within Kobe, Japan, also focuses on engages neighborhood associations, and residents, conduct community development. This organization proved integral in successful community-based planning in response after the 1995 Kobe Earthquake.



U.S.-Japan Grassroots Exchange Program delegates from Miyako and Kobe discuss lessons learned between their respective communities and from U.S. cities during the three-year exchange during a day-long workshop at the University of Pennsylvania.

Exchange participants identified the need to promote citizen participation and decision-making to ensure successful rebuilding efforts. Grassroots organizations, in collaboration with local governments and



businesses, should actively engage residents in all disaster recovery activities to build local decision-making capacity, promote independence, and ensure that all voices are heard (because, at the end of the day, citizens need to figure out answers for themselves). In Galveston and New Orleans, there are many citizen participation models that demonstrate the critical importance of public engagement in the community-rebuilding process (e.g. Artists Boat and St. Vincent's House in Galveston; Community for a Better New Orleans and Lower 9th Ward Neighborhood resident groups in New Orleans). In the case of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, affected communities face a slow recovery process due to lack of local government initiatives, reduced economic opportunities, and extreme aging of the population. Under these circumstances, vulnerable populations suffer the most. In order to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, volunteers emerged in the Tohoku region to assist those who have no means to achieve recovery. During the Kobe earthquake recovery, minority groups were invisible and their diverse voices were not included in decision-making to influence recovery process. Today, there is an increased understanding and awareness of existing ethnic minorities and oppressed groups in Japan whose vulnerable conditions and diverse needs were revealed by the 2011 disaster. While many of these voluntary groups are new, and it's too soon to evaluate their outcomes, they play a critical supporting role at the individual level in assisting immigrants, foreigners, the disabled, the young and the elderly, women, small business owners, and the poor.

Most importantly, participants agreed that young people must be included in strengthening resilience practices. Community-rebuilding efforts should include outreach to the younger generations (e.g. through schools, youth groups, sporting associations, etc.) and encourage their participation in planning and decision-making. Both the groups from Japan and America agreed that this generation of leadership must be developed but they portrayed their support differently due to differing cultural values. The Japanese emphasized the value of respect from their constituents to ensure that, generationally, people are listening and learning. The participants affirmed the need to build good generational leadership to preserve the vitality of their communities going forward. These efforts should be well organized and coordinated to have maximum impact. Good examples of efforts to include the younger generation are the Chamber Crewe and Lemonade Day, programs of the Galveston Regional Chamber of Commerce in Galveston, and the ReFresh Project in New Orleans. After learning about the Chamber Crewe and Refresh programs in Year One of the U.S.-Japan exchange, residents in Miyako decided to replicate the program. To combat the exodus of young people after the disaster, a group of Miyako citizens also created a nonprofit organization called Youth Miyakkobase to encourage the city's young people (primarily high school students) to come up with new ideas to facilitate disaster recovery within their own communities. One young woman described her ideas as dots that needed to be connected into a line and explained that Youth Miyakkobase had given her the space and resources to plan and implement community-rebuilding activities. The members emphasized that the disaster created an opportunity to motivate youth to learn and improve on the past as a way to honor those who suffered and were lost.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

As part of the final year of this exchange program, the East-West Center sought to learn from participants their important takeaways from the program to ensure they fulfilled the program objectives, which are as follows (and discussed below):

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 use citizen participation to address recovery issues?
 - What are these organizations' visions for the future of their communities?
 - What are their roles and responsibilities in long-term planning and development?
 - What strategies do they use to inspire local 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 citizens?
 - How have collaborative relationships been formed?
 - What are the strategies used to maintain such relationships in the long term (beyond reconstruction)?
 - Are such relationships important to creating more livable and sustainable communities in the future?
 3. Share information, lessons learned, and best practices that **encourage and promote “next generation” leaders** in the local government, business, and community who can inspire citizens to participate in shaping development policies and activities.

ASSESSING PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND STRENGTHENING MULTI-CULTURAL EXCHANGE

The exchange participants also engaged in a constructive discussion about the program's strengths so that the East-West Center and its partners can improve on its learning exchange programs and understand the strengths of multi-cultural exchange. All exchange participants agreed the strength of this program lies in the multiple tiers of knowledge exchange. **First, U.S. and Japanese participants learned from the exchange of knowledge between the two countries.** Because the countries' government systems and cultures are so different, exchange participants learned radically different ways of executing disaster recovery and were able to compare and contrast their own situations. By learning what they had in common how they differed, participants drew important lessons.

The Japanese delegates highlighted that the United States demonstrates that democracy and diversity together lead to greater cooperation. They acknowledged that in the United States, each citizen can practice and contribute to a democratic society from the bottom up whereas, in Japan, people follow “democracy” from the top down. The U.S. delegates, on the other hand, found that Japanese society tolerates conflict, is willing to compromise, and prefers collective benefits in order to reach consensus. One of the U.S. participants pointed out that “we are constantly looking for things to disagree with” to prove our differences while Japanese people are very amenable and seem to let go of their varying views and ideas easily. The exchange participants also identified a clear difference between U.S. and Japan government and private sector financial commitments to rebuilding communities post-disaster. For example, Japan's national government has a strong, almost singular, role in facilitating recovery, whereas in the United States, financial recovery expenses are born by the federal, state, and local government, as well as by private businesses and organized and personal philanthropic donations (e.g. foundations, chambers of commerce, churches, individuals). In general, nonprofit and philanthropic groups are more diverse and play a stronger role in recovery in the United States. For example, in Galveston, various religious groups organized into multi-faith associations to work together on disaster recovery (Gulf Coast Interfaith) and, in New Orleans, one large non-government organization (Committee for a Better New Orleans) works with a wide variety of citizen groups to engage them in participating in visualization exercises addressing how to use local tax revenues to pay for community-building activities. The presence of a strong centralized government in Japan constrains flexibility and opportunities for community organizations to meet specific needs of the disaster survivors. Such restrictions forced volunteer groups in Japan to be creative about working with the government. Kobe Support Centre received approval from the local government because they proved that their projects could increase employment opportunities and stimulate the local economy. Also, although volunteerism is a relatively new phenomenon in Japan, there is a long history of religious affiliations and neighborhood associations in the communities and these played critical roles during disaster in Japan. Takatori Community Center has close

relationship with local church groups, which is another way to organize volunteer activities and strengthen their organizational capacity.

In the United States, minority populations (e.g. poor black or Hispanic groups) often have to work harder to have their concerns met (e.g. issues of equal opportunity and outcomes of recovery process), while in Japan, the delegations emphasized that they are still in even earlier stages of giving a voice to minority groups. The exchange program allowed for meaningful discussions about the different challenges in each country and promoted innovative thinking and an opportunity to abstract lessons from diverse scenarios.

Second, groups within each country learned from one another (e.g. Miyako delegates learned from Kobe delegates and vice versa, and New Orleans delegates learned from Galveston delegates and vice versa). Delegates from each city would not otherwise have had the opportunity to connect with each other; participants highlighted the value of learning from other cities within their country. Because each city within the United States and Japan dealt with the same government organizations and response protocols, such as FEMA in the United States, participants could share their frustrations and brainstorm solutions for more effective recovery support. Additionally, participants within the same field could engage with one another (e.g. planners in New Orleans met with Galveston planners to discuss tactics for resilience planning, and community leaders and advocates met with other likeminded individuals to share their experiences). Machi-Communication, in Kobe, worked closely with communities affected by the 2011 disaster, but never met Miyako delegates before the exchange program. Since the program's inception, they have visited Miyako and shared their recovery experiences. Participants agreed that these new professional and personal relationships built new partnerships and greatly expanded the network of support and expertise.

Third, and most unexpectedly, exchange participants learned from others within their own cities.

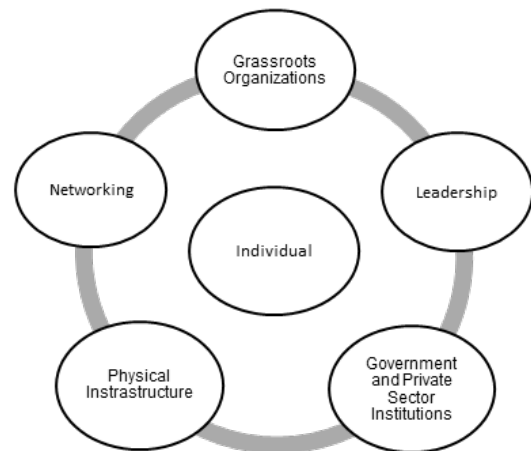
Participants had the opportunity to think about their own experiences in a new context and see things from a different angle. While many participants already knew (or knew of) each other professionally, the unique exchange environment—including the discussion of their challenges with new audiences—helped refresh perspectives and



U.S.-Japan Grassroots Exchange Program participants discuss the program's objectives, strengths, and areas of improvement for future learning exchanges at a day-long workshop at the University of Pennsylvania.

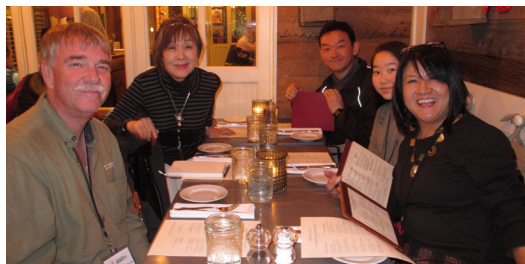
created new connections, in addition to bolstering old acquaintances. In between trips, many participants within each community met to discuss professional challenges to recovery and to engage socially. This “social capital” is the very thing Dr. Aldrich emphasized as critical to faster recovery post-disaster.

During the discussion of the program’s objectives (see below), individuals agreed that the connections made between business owners, government employees, and local leaders, both within and between communities, provided invaluable knowledge exchange that will continue to promote meaningful citizen engagement and collaboration around disaster recovery. The site visits each year specifically contributed to understanding best practices and better envisioning these groups working together to address community needs. Participants noted, however, that something missing from the program was the promotion of “next generation” leadership, since the majority of the exchange participants were already well-established in their careers. This missing component proves that more learning exchanges are needed and the discussion of encouraging young leaders must be a priority. After much discussion of the East-West Center’s three-year U.S.-Japan Grassroots Exchange, the groups produced a diagram illustrating what they feel are the most important components of a successful post-disaster community-building effort. They emphasized that the components cannot be prioritized as they are interconnected and are integral parts of a whole.



CONCLUSION

During the three years, U.S.-Japan Grassroots Exchange participants learned a vast amount about different approaches to community recovery after a disaster, including how each of their experiences with disaster proved both unique and universal. Despite cultural, economic, and governmental difference between the disaster-affected communities, delegates connected over the importance of community buy-in and support, fostering young leaders, the vulnerability of aging populations, and of improving preparedness and resilience in a world of changing climate. Fundamental to all of this, participants agreed that people’s lives and livelihood must be prioritized. As one participant said after the first year of the exchange, “despite being a half a world away, there are great similarities in our communities and how we responded to disaster. It is evident that local leadership matters. It’s the most critical piece of the puzzle.”



Above: U.S.-Japan Grassroots Exchange Program participants reunite for a welcome dinner during the final year of the program.



CITY DELEGATIONS

MIYAKO

Mr. Shuichi Daibo, Board Chairman and Chief Director, Tsunami Taro

Mr. Tsutomu Obata, Owner, Torimoto Yakitori Restaurant and Curry Tei Restaurant; Chief Director, NPO Iha Tov Torimoto

Mr. Masato Sasaki, Vice Principal, Ichinoseki-shi Ohara Junior High School; General Manager, Oceans Miyako International Club; and Director, Iwate International Association

Mr. Washichi Tanaka, President, Taro District Revival Urban Development Investigative Committee; Vice Director, Taro-chan Cooperative Association; and Chief Volunteer Fire Fighter

Ms. Reiko Watanabe, Section Leader, Miyako City Council of Social Welfare

KOBE

Mr. Koyo Fukagawa, Community Planning Advisor, Mano-Machizukuri District Council; Kyoto Machizukuri Advisor

Mr. Hisanori Nakayama, Professor, Kobe Gakuin University Contemporary Social Studies of Disaster Management; Former Director-General, Urban Redevelopment Department, Kobe City Government

Dr. Akira Miyasada, Director-in-Chief, Machi-Communication

Dr. Shizuyo Yoshitomi, Management 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, Chair, Board of Governors, Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance; Vice President for Homeownership and Community Development, Providence Community Housing

Mr. Keith Twitchell, President, Committee for a Better New Orleans

GALVESTON

Reverend Fred Marie Brown, Executive Director, St. Vincent's House

Mr. Joe Compian, Community Organizer/Leader/Board Member, Gulf Coast Interfaith

Mr. Dustin Henry, Project Manager, Industrial Development Corporation, City of Galveston

PROGRAM PARTNERS

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

Dr. Etsuko Yasui, Associate Professor, Department of Applied Disaster and Emergency Studies, Brandon University, Manitoba, Canada

Dr. Eugénie Birch, Co-Director, Penn Institute for Urban Research; 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

Ms. Laura Barron, Program and Communications Manager, Penn Institute for Urban Research, University of Pennsylvania