

Survey Report:

Education for Disaster Risk Reduction in Hyogo to Be Handed Down Through Generations

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Twenty-five years have passed since the Hanshin-Awaji earthquake. While Hyogo Prefecture and the city of Kobe have made a strong recovery, they also have a social responsibility to pass on lessons learned from the past to future generations. To retell the past, disasters are also well known for their war stories and peace education programs. Various peace education initiatives have been implemented around the world. While many people can talk about the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake based on their experiences, an increasing number of people have not experienced the disaster. In addition, the number of schoolteachers who cannot describe the disaster to children are increasing because they were born after the disaster. This paper introduces the Promotion Program of Education for disaster risk reduction implemented by the Kobe City Board of Education and investigates how education for disaster risk reduction has developed in schools. The authors involved and surveyed two elementary schools, one junior high school, and one high school. This survey points out the importance of continuous education for disaster risk reduction, and highlights the importance of dialogue and interaction with people who have not experienced the disaster, so that the story of the disaster can be narrated in their own words.

Keywords: education, school, earthquake, telling live lessons from the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake

1. Introduction

The 25th anniversary of the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake was celebrated on January 17, 2020. While the generations who experienced the disaster understand the importance of iterating the incident, the number of generations born after the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake is increasing in society. Under such circumstances, the stories from the victims are very significant. Further, there are increasing opportunities to discuss the importance of talking to disaster victims with the “non-disasters” (people who have never been affected by the disaster yet) who hand down stories from the victims to the next generation. In fact, at

the Memorial Action KOBÉ held in January at the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution, students who were unaffected by the earthquake, learn about it, and work with unaffected people from their own generation and those who have not lived in other areas; additionally, the students report on the stories to many people, including the victims every year.

Handing down is not just an act of telling a story you have heard. One of the important elements of the act of passing down experiences is the fact that we can learn about the incident directly from a person who experienced it and understand the resources that were available at that time, that is, we can learn about the events, the society, and people’s emotions during that time. This is no exception even for those who have survived the event, and even after a passage of time, they can face the time by talking and gain new awareness from the information handed down, and from new questions about the events from that time, which would include opportunities to interact.

In other words, the act of learning is necessary so that these stories can be handed down. Furthermore, disaster prevention learning may not always be carried out at schools. According to a survey conducted by the Kobe City Board of Education, in the fiscal year 2019 [1], the implementation rate of disaster prevention classes and childcare is 97% for kindergartens, 99% for elementary schools, 86% for junior high schools, 78% for high schools, and 100% for support schools. It is evident that even in Kobe, which was the center of the disaster area, not all schools are working on spreading disaster awareness. This article reports on the efforts of the Kobe City Board of Education and schools in areas where the author is involved as a Kobe City School Disaster Prevention Advisor, and the efforts of the Hyogo Prefectural Maiko High School Environmental Disaster Prevention Department where the author is involved as a special part-time lecturer.

2. Peace Learning and Story Telling in Japan

“Storytelling” in peace learning has been widely used in Japan after WWII. However, in recent years, there have been reports that there is a tendency to intentionally use



the word “tradition” instead of “inheritance.” According to Murakami, “tradition” includes activities to convey what you hear from a third party, and in general, “inheritance” is used in reference to information gained from people who have experienced war and for communicating that information in many cases [2]. In recent years, Murakami states that “inheritance” is often used intentionally as a term to indicate succession by those who have not experienced war. Both “tradition” and “inheritance” are methods of storytelling, however, it should be noted that the word “inheritance” may be intentionally used in the practice of storytelling.

Ran points out that the narrator and the listener may be aware of new information in the process of listening about the war experience by an interactive method rather than a one-sided narrative. The interactive method guides mutual awareness (independent and interactive learning) [3].

In Nagasaki City, conventional education was criticized for being specialized in inheriting the experience of the atomic bombing and was consequently a “one-way” interaction for children and students. Due to the emphasis on the misery caused by the war and stories by the atomic bomb survivors themselves, the memory between generations could not be conveyed completely, and the peace education that all elementary and junior high schools in the city were working on in the fiscal year 2018 was reviewed. A new “Peace Creation” has been added to the traditional pillars of peace education, “inheriting” the experience of the atomic bombing and “disseminating” peace, consequently there will be an increase in the number of younger generation teachers [4]. The challenges that the story of the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake will face in the future have been suggested, and the importance of telling the story of Hyogo and Kobe has been achieved as a powerful reconstruction of the misery.

Jiang analyzes the inheritance of air raid memories in Kagoshima, and various air raid memory groups were formed in the 1970s. Among them, the memories of each group are mutually confirmed in the activities where the air raid memories are recorded, which I have confirmed are shared and saved. However, in the succession activities from the latter half of the 1970s, it is pointed out that although each group still exists, it is not necessarily an open environment. In other words, each succession activity is basically open to anyone, however, the problem is that the participants of the leading organizations from the 1970s to the present have been almost fixed [5]. In order to pass down memories and to tell stories, it is important that activities are open and that new participants are involved in the development.

3. Kobe City’s New Disaster Risk Reduction Learning Program

The Kobe City Board of Education established the “New Kobe Disaster Prevention Education Review Committee” in 2012 as the importance of disaster prevention education was reaffirmed in the wake of the 2011 Great

East Japan Earthquake. The committee compiled a proposal on the direction of disaster prevention education called the “Promotion of Disaster Risk Reduction Education by Forming Force to Live” in Kobe. Since 2013, schools have been designated to promote practical research on disaster prevention education, and the committee has been working on practical research, dissemination, and enlightenment of disaster prevention education.

The direction of disaster prevention education in Kobe can be summarized as follows:

- Utilize aspirational original teaching materials developed by the faculty and staff, such as the supplementary reader “Let’s carry happiness”
- Develop a unique “disaster prevention education curriculum” at each school
- Promote efforts to further raise awareness of disaster prevention education among the faculty and staff
- Continue to develop distinctive practices such as earthquake memorial events and disaster prevention drills
- Designate a practical model school and disseminate the results widely
- Continue to develop support and exchange activities in areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake
- Promote volunteer activities and participation in community events among children
- Inherit the practice and know-how of “mental care” by teachers in charge of education and reconstruction
- Promote disaster prevention drills in collaboration with local organizations such as PTA and disaster prevention and welfare communities
- Enhance disaster prevention manuals and tsunami countermeasures while maintaining consistency with regional disaster prevention plans
- Strengthen the cooperation with related organizations, universities, NPOs, etc., and strengthen disaster prevention education network
- Dispatch researchers involved in disaster prevention education to school sites as advisors
- Continue to disseminate the efforts of “disaster prevention education to nurture the power to live” from Kobe to the whole country.

In the fiscal years 2018 and 2019, a total of eleven schools, including one kindergarten, four elementary schools, four junior high schools, one high school, and one special support school that promote disaster prevention education were designated as promotion schools for disaster prevention education.

Furthermore, in Kobe City, after the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, “disaster prevention and welfare communities” have been established in each elementary school district, and many areas have actively collaborated with schools as voluntary disaster prevention organizations [6, 7].

4. Specific Examples in Schools

4.1. Yamada Elementary School

At Yamada Elementary School in Kita Ward, Kobe City, a program related to disaster prevention education has been developed under the title “Disaster Risk Reduction Education Focusing on ‘Mental Development’ and Community Cooperation” to connect to the future.

4.1.1. Practical Aim and Cooperation with the Community

At the beginning of the aim of practice, the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake is never forgotten by anybody living in Kobe, because there is a responsibility to connect (transmit) not only “knowledge (information)” about the earthquake disaster but also “people’s thoughts and feelings” from that time to the future. In other words, connecting (transmitting) “people’s thoughts and feelings” to the future is nothing but “passing stories down.” At Yamada Elementary School, “Month for Disaster Risk Reduction” was conceptualized, and education for disaster risk reduction was conducted for many hours while the “growth of children’s hearts” was examined through disaster prevention learning. Further, regarding disaster prevention, the local residents’ group (Yamada Disaster Prevention and Welfare Community) and schools collaborated to conduct disaster prevention drills twice a year; in addition, by building and maintaining relationships on a daily basis they could help each other in the entire community during a disaster. Education for Disaster Risk Reduction would be introduced and carried out during the “Month for Disaster Risk Reduction” as a practice in the school, while various efforts were carried out throughout the year.

The themes of disaster prevention month for each grade are as follows:

- First grade: “What is the earthquake?” (To understand the extent and kind of damage)
- Second grade: “Knowing disaster mitigation” (How to evacuate, disaster prevention backpack, etc.)
- Third grade: “Importance of lifeline” (based on the life at the evacuation center)
- Fourth grade: “People’s connection” (for example, disaster prevention, welfare community, and mutual help)
- Fifth grade: “Damage from natural disasters” (about secondary disasters such as tsunamis and landslides)
- Sixth grade: “Reconstruction history” (about people’s needs by discussing the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake.)

It is worth mentioning that at the beginning of the Month for Disaster Risk Reduction, one of the advisors from the Kobe City School Disaster Prevention spoke to all the students and faculty members about the damage caused by the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and their activities and emotions at that time. Not only was it a great opportunity for children to learn about what happened in Kobe in 1995 and what the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake

was, it was also a good learning opportunity for the young faculty and staff who had not experienced the earthquake; it was also considered to be a good time to start education for disaster risk reduction. It also offered a great chance to the faculty and staff who had experienced the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake to learn about it from a different perspective.

Finally, education for disaster risk reduction is turned around to achieve the goals set for each grade theme.

4.1.2. Practice, Results, and Problems

When a school operates as an evacuation center in Kobe city, schoolteachers are responsible for the work at the center. Therefore, the school functioned as an evacuation center four times (10 days in total) in the fiscal year 2018 alone. At that time, the efforts of daily cooperation were exhibited when a typhoon approached, specifically, the Yamada disaster prevention and welfare community carried out the initial response together with the faculty and staff. In addition, I have faced the reality of the people’s feelings during the earthquake, valuing the “growth of children’s hearts” throughout the year. Although it is not possible to completely understand not only the “sadness” and “suffering” of the people at that time, it is also difficult to understand the “connections and bonds between people,” “gentleness and warmth of the people,” “the need to help and support each other,” and “the need to work positively,” etc. It is considered that the desire of schoolteachers to think about the feelings of people and to raise children who understand those feelings has been achieved.

In addition, with the passage of time since the earthquake, the number of teachers who were young at the time and who had no memory of the earthquake will increase, and at the same time, the number of teachers who have experienced the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake will decrease. They considered the challenge of communicating to the young teachers as a problem to be solved, however, through the efforts of the “Month for Disaster Risk Reduction,” both experienced and inexperienced people cooperated when the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake occurred. It is reported that they were able to survive it with each other’s help. Currently they want the children to narrate these stories in the future by telling these stories to other children while telling each other the stories as well [6].

4.2. Seitoku Elementary School

Nada Ward where Seitoku Elementary School is located is an area that was severely damaged by the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. For the last two years, fifth graders have been disseminating information in the city by investigating the school disaster prevention equipment, investigating local disaster prevention organizations, and making presentations at the school and in the region. Last year, under the theme of “Reconstruction and disaster prevention in the town of Seitoku,” the various ways in which the town of Seitoku was reconstructed after the Hanshin-

Awaji Earthquake were researched and we used the time for a comprehensive study.

By overcoming the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and achieving the restoration and reconstruction, there was a lot of information on the earthquake in the school district, and the staff who were working at the time of the earthquake are now on site. Further, many photographs and materials from that time have been left behind, and people who have experienced the earthquake now live in the school district. With the theme “how to survive in Japan, where there are many disasters,” a learning plan was drawn up with “life” as the keyword from the perspective of disaster prevention and mitigation.

The children began learning by researching about the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. As they progressed, their interest in finding out more about the lifelines and shelters in the town increased. At the time of the earthquake, I was working at Seitoku Elementary School, and after working at another school, I heard from another teacher about the school and shelter at that time. With this as an opportunity, children asked questions like “How was life in the evacuation center?”; “Did you have any problems in the evacuation center?”; and “When you evacuate, I think that such an evacuation center is useless.” I studied the problem, collected information, and organized the analysis for a solution.

By listening to the stories from schoolteachers who experienced the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, storytellers from the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution, the locals, and the children learned about the situation in detail at that time. Moreover, from this unique initiative in elementary schools 70 hours of disaster prevention can be learned throughout the year.

For a teacher, who in 2018 was in the 4th grade of elementary school, the remnants of the earthquake will remain, however the number of storytellers will decrease. That is why they point out that it should be a unit so that they can learn the importance of storytelling. Based on this, in the fiscal year 2019, it was decided to consider whether the disaster risk reduction program fit the characteristics of the community from the perspectives of “physical preparation” (hardware side) and “thoughts of local people” (soft side). Based on the information learned and gathered, it was organized from the perspectives of “self-help,” “mutual help,” and “public help” to lead to learning my own actions. Through children’s learning, a schoolteacher needs to broadly deal with various natural disasters other than earthquakes. The schoolteacher will need to learn disaster risk reduction in advance as a culture, and that deep knowledge of the teacher will lead to deep learning for children [7].

4.3. Nagisa Junior High School

Nagisa Junior High School was opened in 1998 in the eastern Kobe City Center. “HAT Kobe,” which is undergoing urban development as one of the “Kobe City Reconstruction Plans,” aims for reconstruction after the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. Since the school district is

divided into a residential area in Nada Ward and a residential area in Chuo Ward, it is difficult to create a sense of unity in the area. Nagisa Junior High School that initially started with 25 students has more than 500 students in its 20th year. Partly due to the declining birthrate, there are currently about 420 students who have enrolled.

Since the fiscal year 2015, “Junior Leaders for Disaster Risk Reduction” have been recruited and activities have started in the area. Since 2016, they started “community information exchange meeting” with local residents, related organizations, and companies. Since the fiscal year 2017, people and the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution have taken the lead in conducting disaster prevention drills in which the community is united. Throughout the year, the leaders have performed various activities and participated in them, but in this article, the leaders would like to mention participation in the regional disaster prevention information exchange meeting and memorial action KOBE.

At Nagisa Junior High School, the aforementioned “Regional Disaster Prevention Information Exchange Meeting” is held twice a year with the junior high school as the secretariat and venue. Since it is considered as a school district with the Nada Ward and Chuo Ward, there is almost no interaction between the regions. There are many public housing projects and condominiums including reconstructed housing, however, neighborhood relationships and community exchanges are weak. In addition to various companies such as Kobe Steel, there are organizations related to disaster prevention such as Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution, Kobe Meteorological Observatory, etc., in the school district, but they had not utilized and exchanged for disaster prevention education etc. before. Therefore, the meeting starts with the aim of gathering representatives from each group to exchange information on disaster prevention efforts and to strengthen the solidarity of various organizations. In 2019, it was decided to carry out HAT Kobe joint disaster prevention drills and evacuation shelter opening drills.

In general, most of the evacuation shelter management training conducted in collaboration with the junior high school and the community is carried out by the local voluntary disaster prevention organization, with junior high school students participating in the training. The management training is conducted mainly by junior high school students in collaboration with the University of Hyogo in HAT Kobe. In its implementation, it is combined with various types of experiences and examines various materials while understanding the experiences of the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake from family members, local residents, and schoolteachers. Then, local residents participate in the evacuation center management training conducted mainly by junior high school students. This initiative was reported at the Disaster Memorial Action KOBE 2020 held at the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution.

At Nagisa Junior High School, the initiative to open an evacuation center promoted cooperation with the local

community, leading to a more specific exchange of opinions in the event of a disaster. In addition, the students became more aware that they had to learn and hand down the stories to prevent the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake from being “weathered” [7].

4.4. Maiko High School

In March 2000, five years after the earthquake, the Department of Environmental Disaster Prevention decided to establish the Maiko High School in Hyogo Prefecture. Then, two years later, in April 2002, the first semester was welcomed. The educational goals for establishing the Department of Environmental Disaster Prevention are as follows.

- By making use of the lessons learned from the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and promoting education for disaster risk reduction from the perspective of relationships with the natural and social environments, people should think about how they should act and how to live in a symbiotic society.
- Close cooperation with universities, other research institutes, related institutions, etc. deepen the understanding through practical and experiential learning, and take the initiative in solving various issues related to the “environment” and “disaster prevention.” It strives to develop the ability to think and act voluntarily.
- People, who can “Think Globally, Act Locally” by deepening their understanding of the various environments surrounding accidents, acquire the ability to respond to disasters by learning about the mechanism of natural phenomena and the relationship between disasters and human society, thereby striving to nurture.

It can be said that the educational goal tries not only to be a traditional disaster prevention education for survival, but it also helps in the effort to become a supporter and a better citizen. I cannot cover all of Maiko High School’s efforts, however, what should be mentioned here is the text collection called “Storytelling” [8]. Starting from the first group of members, the 3rd grade from the high school has interviewed parents, grandparents, and local people, and the experience at Maiko High School is summarized in the booklet, “Storytelling” [9].

In 2019, written by the 16th graduates, “Storytelling 16: Lessons, memories, and feelings are told and left in the future – For being the narrator of ‘That Day’” describes what the students learned. It is published in the student nomination in “order of alphabetical vowels (a, i, u, e, o),” however, the first manuscript mentions the importance of storytelling and what can be learned from it. Listed below is an excerpt.

I don’t know how much people who don’t have disaster prevention today will be interested in disaster prevention, but if we give up, who will tell us about the tragic disasters that happened in the past? We should never give up

on telling. That is our mission. I think that self-help is the most important thing because I am interested in disaster prevention and preparing for the next disaster. If you are not interested in disaster prevention, you will not be able to tell the local people and you will not reach the next mutual assistance of self-help. It is said that regional ties are important for disaster prevention, but the most important thing is to be interested in disaster prevention. Therefore, I want to convey that it is important to protect your own life. If you don’t help yourself, you can’t help others. Therefore, it is important to know and convey how important your life is.

Thus, with the impression received from the students, the students want to help someone in the future. They want to help not only those suffering from misery but also each other through their own learning, and they realize the importance of talking and want to continue the culture of storytelling. In addition, at the memorial ceremony for the 25th anniversary of the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake held on January 17, 2020, students of the third grade at Maiko High School mention how they were hesitant to convey the story when they first entered the school. However, after learning for three years at Maiko High School the students recognized the importance of storytelling and say that they would like to continue storytelling in the future.

5. Future Challenges and Summary

The survey focuses on Kobe’s efforts 25 years after the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. Even now, a quarter of a century later, it is possible to listen to stories about the earthquake directly from someone who experienced it at that time. However, it is an unavoidable fact and a challenge that the number of people who do not know the details from that time will increase in society. Therefore, it is important to talk about other communities and younger generations who have not experienced disasters. As mentioned in this paper, while various efforts are being implemented, it is necessary for the faculty and staff themselves to be able to learn and communicate to continue implementing these efforts at schools.

Many people are reluctant to talk about events that they have not experienced, however, it is important for them to learn and pass down these memories even if they have not directly experienced them, and it is necessary to hand them down to the next generation. This is clear from the precedents of peace education. To that end, we can connect the lessons of past disasters to future disasters by touching upon various stories from around the world, through forums such as the World Storytelling Forum. In other words, the act of “handing down” not only provides an opportunity to learn about past disasters, but it also enables people to think about disasters that they may face in the future.

It is necessary to have an opportunity to come into contact with the storytelling to realize its importance. In the future, it is expected that distinctive narratives and disaster prevention education activities will be developed in various regions, and that they will create cultural dynamism through exchanges and that lessons will be utilized in the future.

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