



Blessed are the Peacemakers



Photo: Board Members for the 31st Quadrennial Term (2012-2015)

Annual Report

April 2012 - March 2013

YWCA of Japan

President's Message



First of all, I wish to express my deep thanks to our sisters and brothers from YWCAs and partner organizations and friends all over the world, who supported us in many different ways at the time of the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake in March 2011. This network has given us the power to continue our work as the YWCA of Japan until today.

In November 2011, we welcomed guests from the YWCA of Taiwan and Ms. Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, General Secretary of the World YWCA, to our National Membership Meeting in Nagasaki, who each gave us strong encouragement and inspiration. Building on the momentum, the YWCA of Japan elected a new board during the 31st National Council in November 2012. It is my honour to be re-elected to serve as the president on the new 31st quadrennial term.

With the staggering economy and political confusion as a backdrop, the Japanese lower-house election in December 2012 saw a landslide victory of the conservative parties. The new Prime Minister Abe seeks to change Japan into a military nation once again by altering the Japanese constitution which renounces war; he shows extremely hostile attitudes towards neighbouring states over territorial and historical issues, instead of pursuing dialogue and reconciliation; he pushes to build and restart nuclear reactors in spite of the terrible accident in 2011. It seems like our country is running in the opposite direction from the non-nuclear, nonviolent society that the YWCA is striving for, and sometimes we wonder where we can find hope.

Still, the close ties with our sister YWCAs are a true hope. Despite the current political tension, we were able to co-host the Japan-Korea Youth Conference in August with the YWCA of Korea, and the Nanjing Peace Pilgrimage in December with the YWCA of China, where participants from each country exchanged and discussed peace and the future we should seek. Moreover, in August, guests from the YWCA of India joined the Pilgrimage to Hiroshima for the first time, together with the guests from YWCA of China. Participation to global conferences and programs including the CSW and ITI were also a strongly empowering experience to our young members. Under the international tension within Northeast Asia, we are all the more reminded of the meaning of being a part of the Global YWCA movement. Treasuring this bond, we are committed to continue proceeding toward the realization of peace and empowerment of women.

The Bible says "Light shines in the darkness". In our troubled society, the YWCA's work is all the more important. We will look up at the shining stars as we proceed. Not all the stars shine on their own; some reflect the light from elsewhere. Perhaps we are a star in the darkness: not a big one, but firmly showing the way.

Naoko Matano
President, YWCA of Japan

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1. YWCA of Japan –Profile



- ◇ Local Associations.....25
 - Members.....2,523
 - Associate Members.....204
- ◇ Jr./Sr. High School YWCAs.....35
 - Members.....575
- ◇ Program Beneficiaries.....45200
- ◇ Friends of YWCA of Japan.....873

2. The 31st National Council

On 23–25th November 2012, the YWCA of Japan held its 31st National Council in Tokyo, where over 200 members gathered from the whole country. The Council elected a new board, led by the re-elected president Naoko Matano. It also decided to continuously uphold the theme “Blessed are the Peacemakers (Matthew 5–9)” from the previous triennial term, and renewed the YWCA of Japan’s commitment to continue working on the “Vision 2015” goals.



The program also included: 1) pre-Council sessions on youth and intergenerational leadership; 2) sub-sessions on individual issues including the protection of Japanese Constitution Article 9, military base issue, nuclear power plants and gender-based discrimination; 3) a lecture on the political situation surrounding the Japanese constitution; and 4) presenting of “Y’s Wonderful Women” Prize, launched in gratitude for senior members with long contribution to local YWCAs.

The appeal which was adopted during the council indicates the YWCA of Japan’s commitment in 5 aspects: **As a Young People’s Organization**, the YWCA of Japan values intergenerational cooperation and aims to secure a space for young people to freely speak out and get involved; **As a Women’s Organization**, we recognize the necessity to revisit the nature of our society as well as our YWCA from a gender perspective, and treasure new encounters; **As a Christian Based Organization**, the YWCA of Japan follows the Bible verse “Blessed are the Peacemakers”, stays beside marginalized women and children and seeks to regain “life” in society; **As an International Non-Governmental Organization**, we work closely with the World YWCA, YWCAs throughout the world and other partners, and engage in internal and international advocacy; **As an Empowering NGO**, we strive to enable women and children to make their own decision and step forward.

For the full text of the appeal, please see our website:

<http://www.ywca.or.jp/pdf/20121125e.pdf>

3. Vision 2015 of the YWCA of Japan

The YWCA of Japan renewed its “Vision 2015” at the 31st National Council in November 2012, which consists of the following six movement priorities. Our goal is to achieve peace in society through non-violent and non-nuclear strategies and with women’s leadership.

Six Priorities:

1. Develop peace in society by nonviolent/ nuclear-free approach.
2. Retain Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution that renounces war and possession of military forces, and promote its principle globally.
3. Create a society without nuclear power plants.
4. Build peace in Northeast Asia through civil network and solidarity.
5. Protect women and children’s rights
6. Develop young women’s leadership

➤ **Protect women and children’s rights: Disaster Response Updates**

Mid to Long Term Support: From “Support” to “Empowerment”

Two years after the triple disasters in March 2011, the tsunami affected communities are facing a sluggish rebuilding progress and fear that the memories and concern about the disaster may fade from people’s minds.

Communities affected by radiation including Fukushima are seeing scarcely any change in the situation and people are stressed out by uncertainties of low-dose radiation exposure. The YWCA of Japan’s disaster response project, which was launched immediately after the disaster in March 2011, continues with mid to long term support even after the immediate relief phase is concluded, and carried out the below activities aiming to strengthen solidarity with women and children affected by tsunami and radiation.



♣ “Second House” Program for evacuees

Local YWCAs throughout Japan provided vacant houses/ homestay opportunities for evacuees, providing shelter for 46 people from 13 families during the reporting period.

♣ “Refresh” Program for Detoxification / mental stress care

Local YWCAs provided short stay “Refresh” programs including camp, sightseeing and friendly exchange with volunteers, so that the mothers and children who have no choice but to continue living in radiation-contaminated areas can be free from worries and fear even for a short while, and sustain their health. In the year 2012, more than 330 people benefited from such programs carried out by 13 YWCAs.

♣ "CARO Fukushima"

On 10th October 2012, the YWCA of Japan established "CARO Fukushima", an activity space for women in Fukushima who are unable to evacuate due to various reasons, including foreign women remaining in Fukushima. During the reporting period, CARO Fukushima provided programs including a seminar on radiation and a travel tour for detoxification / mental stress care for mothers.



♣ Other Support Activities

- Video counselling
- Study support, Life-skill and communication skill classes for students
- Christmas gathering
- "Mental Care" classes for disaster- affected women and volunteers
- Establishment of a "Support Centre for Supporters"

♣ Publishing of Students' Testimonies

In order to preserve the memory of the earthquake as well as the lessons learnt from the experience to survive natural disasters, The YWCA of Japan translated the testimonies by all students of Shohei Junior High School in Shinchi-Machi, a coastal town in Fukushima, and published a booklet in Japanese and English language.

➤ **Build peace in Northeast Asia through civil network and solidarity**

♣ Japan-Korea Youth Conference 2012

Theme: "Nuclear Power Plants"

Venue: Minamata city, Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan

Schedule:

August 30th – September 2nd, 2012

Participants: 41

(20 from Japan, 21 from Korea)

In this Joint program between YWCAs of Japan and Korea, participants shared and



discussed the situations surrounding nuclear power, took a field trip to Minamata city to learn about the famous industrial pollution-caused disease case and its shared issues with the nuclear disaster. They created "actions" to realize a nuclear-power free society and a world with justice, by creative expressions such as drama, campaign poster design, dancing and music. Japan-Korea Youth Conference 2012 was funded by Mitsubishi UFJ Foundation, Japan Fund for Global Environment, and Japan-Korea Cultural Foundation. More details can be found at:

<http://www.ywca.or.jp/english/news20120905.html>

❖ Pilgrimage to Hiroshima 2012

Theme: “Global Hibakusha”

Venue: Hiroshima, Japan

Schedule: August 7th – 9th, 2012

Participants: 54

(Including 1 guest from the YWCA of China, and 3 guests from the YWCA of India)



More than a year after that massive disaster in 11th March, 2011, the theme for this annual peace program this year was “Global Hibakusha”. The participants addressed Japan’s new situation as a “Radiation-exposed society” and the damages from radiation experienced throughout the world, and stressed the importance to learn about it together with about “that day” in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, including the historical background where the Japanese nation had victimized its Asian neighbours. The participants visited sites that remind of the atomic bomb dropped in Hiroshima on August 6th, 1945, and listened to testimonies by survivors of the bombing. Then they shared thoughts and impressions of the trip with each other, and discussed ways for a peaceful future.

❖ Nanjing Peace Pilgrimage (China)

Theme: Together, Let Us Sow the Seeds of Peace

Venue: Nanjing, China

Participants: 40 (26 from China, 14 from Japan)

This joint peace education program between the YWCA of Japan and the National Council of YWCAs of China is held in order to remember the horrible history experienced in the Asian region, due to the atrocities by the former Japanese military. In Nanjing, as many as 200,000 to 300,000 people are said to have been massacred in December 1937. The participants visited sites where the massacres happened, as well as a memorial museum where they witnessed the records and testimonies of the horrific events, and shared among each other the profound impressions of the experienced and discussed where we could find hope for the future. Based on this sharing, the participants created an action plan based on the determination to work for a future without war. Through this program, participants from both countries nurtured close bonds as sisters and friends, which is a tremendously important achievement which can be gained only between civil organizations. The program this year was enabled by the tireless and efficient efforts of the YWCA of China, which gained permission from the authorities despite the extremely harsh diplomatic relationship between China and Japan due to territorial disputes.



4. Programs by Local Associations

Local Associations in Japan provide services to meet the needs of local populations particularly of women, children, elderly people, and foreign nationals in communities.

< Main community services of YWCAs in Japan >

- Classes: peacemaking, Bible study, language courses, volunteer works, environmental issues
- Health and physical education and programs, including day care services, counselling
- Outdoor education and camps
- Peer educator programs for youth
- Support group and activity for/with: foreign nationals, international students, women with small children, survivors of domestic violence

➤ **Kobe YWCA: Charity Live for Fukushima!**

Kobe YWCA organized the charity event “Alalat” in July as a space to raise funds and think together about Fukushima and the nuclear issue. The event consisted of dance and music performances, as well as talk sessions and reports on the situation in Fukushima. As many as

201 participants enjoyed the event. It took place on the same day when a nuclear reactor in Fukui prefecture was restarted for the first time after the Earthquake in 2011 amidst furious protests, and the participants also heard a report from one of the performers who had participated in the protest in front of the particular plant.



➤ **Kofu YWCA: Atomic Bomb Art Exhibition**

The year 2012 marked Kofu YWCA's 30th "Atomic Bomb Art Exhibition", held every year since 1981. The special anniversary exhibition of this year included: 1) paintings of atomic bombing by citizens of Hiroshima, 2) "Nagasaki" and "Atomic Desert" by Iri and Toshi Maruki (<http://www.aya.or.jp/~marukimsn/english/indexE.htm>), 3) handmade posters for peace, 4) paintings by Atomic Bomb survivors residing in the local area, 5) photograph exhibition "What happened in Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant on 3.11" by photo-journalist Ryuichi Hirokawa, 6) photographs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 7) banner "Choose Life" designed by Fukushima YWCA, among other works of art. 400 handmade posters with messages for peace were submitted by young people from toddlers to high school students, and there were 500 visitors to the exhibition. With renewed commitment, Kofu YWCA is determined to continue its work for peace and nuclear abolition.



6) photographs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 7) banner "Choose Life" designed by Fukushima YWCA, among other works of art. 400 handmade posters with messages for peace were submitted by young people from toddlers to high school students, and there were 500 visitors to the exhibition. With renewed commitment, Kofu YWCA is determined to continue its work for peace and nuclear abolition.

5. Junior & Senior High School YWCAs

35 school YWCAs participated in annual Regional Summer Conference in collaboration with local YWCAs. The school YWCAs will have a National level Conference in 2014, where all the schools come together.

1. Northern region

Date: 30th July– 1st August, 2012 Theme: Environmental protection

Participants: 36 students, 12 teachers and staffs

Program: Lectures on indigenous people/ nuclear power, field trip, "Yuva Hubba" report (India), etc
Support: Sapporo YWCA

2. Eastern Region

Date: August 2nd – 4th, 2012 Theme: Light of Life

Participants: 36 students, 7 teachers and staffs

Program: Lectures, field trip, Bible study, discussions on environment, craft-making, welcome party, etc

3. Western Region

Date: August 1st – 3rd, 2012

Theme: The World is God's Creation: MOTTAINAI

Program: Lectures, field trip, welcome party, etc

Participants: 107 students, 9 teachers, staff members

Support: Osaka YWCA

6. Global Solidarity



Members of the YWCA of Japan including young women under 30 years old have enjoyed exposure to various global movements including International Training Institute (ITI) and Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) organized by the World YWCA, and youth program for environment “Yuva Hubba” hosted by the YWCA of India.

In these events, the YWCA of Japan particularly highlighted violence against women in the context of nuclear energy generation including radio activity to reproductive health, implementation of nuclear plants and deterioration of local economy where more women than men usually take part in, and potential for nuclear armament which ultimately sacrifices unarmed women and children under conflict situation. VAW and the U.S. military base in Japan has also been addressed.

Photo: Kimiko Terashima



In the light of military power and VAW and grassroots peacemaking, the YWCA of Japan has been keeping its eyes particularly on the situation in Palestine. Appeals demanding Israeli, the US, and Japanese governments practical measures to end conflict have been made. YWCA of Japan also has developed closer relationship with YWCA of Karachi, Pakistan through mutual concern on natural disaster, conflict resolution and peacemaking from

grassroots women’s perspective.

(To read the appeal: <http://www.ywca.or.jp/pdf/20121120e.pdf>)

In addition, the YWCA of Japan is one of affiliated bodies in End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography And Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes Japan (ECPAT Japan) and collaborates with UNICEF Japan.

7. International Contributions (in JPY)

[Contributed during the reporting period]

| China Earthquake relief actions | Palestine Support Fund | Olive Tree Campaign |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 100,000 | 367,520 | 346,000 |

[Received during the reporting period]

For the support and relief operations for the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami, total of 4,959,461 JPY was kindly contributed from a number of organizations outside Japan. We express our gratitude for these kind contributions, which are a great help for our mid to long term support programs for the affected areas. The names of the contributors are as follows: Evangelische Kirche in Hessen und Nassau, Japanische Evangelische Gemeinde Köln/Bonn E.V, Evangelisches Werk Fuer Diakonie und Entwicklung E.V(In no particular order).

8. Board Members and Staff

Board members

<2009-2012>

President: Naoko MATANO, **Vice-President:** Ritsuko MIBAE, Chie YOSHIIMURA **Secretary:** Chikage TEJIMA

Board Member: Rieko AMEMIYA, Noriko ARAKI, Yuriko FUKUSHIMA, Satoko FUJITANI, Reiko FUJIWARA, Sayaka HIGUCHI, Mariko KIMURA, Ayako OHNO, Midori SUGIMURA, Junko TERASHIMA, Yumiko YOKOYAMA

<2012-201511>

President: Naoko MATANO, **Vice-President:** Yumiko YOKOYAMA, Chie YOSHIIMURA **Secretary:** Satoko FUJITANI

Board Member: Seiko OKUBO, Nagisa SAKAMOTO, Chikage TEJIMA, Mayumi TSUDO, Yukiko TOKUDA, Sachie NAGASAWA, Atsuko HANZAWA, Minami HARADA, Emiko MATSUBARA, Yasuyo MIKI, Masuko YAMATAKA, Aki YOSHIDA

Secretariat

General Secretary: Mikako NISHIHARA

Staff: Sumie OGASAWARA (International Relations/Advocacy (since Nov. 2012), Chiko OGAWA(Media and Fundraising),Reiko KABURAKI(PR & Fundraising(until Nov. 2012)/ Administration(since Nov.2012)), Reiko HAMADA (Finance & Accounting), Izuho HAGIO(Communications & Networking(until Nov.2012)/Programmes and advocacy(since Nov. 2012)), Tomoko NEGISHI (Advocacy/ International Relations (until Nov.2012)/ Communications, PR & fundraising (since Nov. 2012), Hiroko NITTA (Administration & Advocacy)



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