

# Disaster Story Telling and TeLL-Net

A Webinar of RCEs of Asia-Pacific Region to mark celebration of  
'International Day for Disaster Reduction' (IDDR) 2020  
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Nishi Nippon Railway Co., Ltd.

# Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995

Fire in the urban Area



Collapsed houses



- 7.3 Richter scale
- 6,434 dead
- Damaged houses 250,000
- Modern urban / densely populated areas directly hit

Damaged railway track



Damaged office buildings



Collapsed viaducts of expressway



# Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution (DRI) in Kobe, Japan

- Records of the EQ such as documents, photos, artifacts, etc. i.e. 160,000 items collected from ordinary citizen, public sector, volunteers, etc.; 800 items exhibited
- Exhibited are how the people of Kobe reacted to, coped with and overcame the EQ. ⇒ exhibiting people's hearts and emotions ⇒ very powerful message
- Story Telling volunteers
- Many other initiatives of story telling in Kobe: preservation of damaged remains, monuments, commemorative ceremonies, artistic works such as songs, painting, etc.



# Various Story Telling Activities in the World

- **Pacific Tsunami Museum in Hawaii: Tsunamis in the past in Hawaii**
- **Ache Tsunami Museum in Indonesia: 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami**
- **International Tsunami Museum in Thailand: 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, etc., etc.**
- **3.11 Densho Road in Tohoku, Japan: Networking of 2011 Tsunami memorial facilities, monuments, individuals, etc.**
- **Asama Disaster Ruins, Remains, Relics and Memories: 1783 Mt. Asama eruption**
- **Various commemorative events, ceremonies, festivals, etc.**
- **Large, small; Public, private, volunteer; songs, paintings**



# International Network of Telling Live Lessons from Disasters (TeLL-Net)

- **2005 UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction**
- **TeLL-Net founded in 2006**
  - **International network of the individuals and institutions in different parts of the world**
  - **Those who are engaged in, or support various activities for preserving the memories and/or stories of what happened at the time of natural disasters**
  - **And passing on such stories to the next generations as well as to other places than the disaster-hit areas.**
- **To cross-learn and to collectively promote disaster story telling**

# 2020 TeLL-Net Forum



- Jan 24-26, 2020 in Kobe, Japan
- In commemoration of 25th anniversary of the 1995 Eq.
- 71 experts incl. individuals, museums, researchers, govt officials, volunteers, NGOs, companies from 21 countries / area
- Overarching theme: passing on disaster memories

# Points discussed - why disaster story telling ?

## u Strong power of disaster story telling

- **Psychological healing for story tellers themselves; and humble recognition of those who resist to preserve memories**
- **Profound empathy and resonance between story tellers and story receivers; message / information conveyed at heart-to-heart level**
- **Not only useful know-how in a practical term, but rather something deep in our heart: the way we should live our life, the meaning of co-existence with the nature**
- **Engine to translate theoretical knowledge into actions (fulfill the “last mile”); disaster education at two levels: theory / knowledge and heart / emotion**
- **Can the power of disaster story telling be turned to the power for reconstruction?**

# Points discussed - why disaster story telling ?

## ▫ Condition for disaster story telling to emerge

- Level of activeness of disaster story telling varies from an area to another, why?
- Delicateness of the local debate as to whether a disaster remains should be preserved or removed
- Can the exchange between different disaster-hit areas help?

## ▫ Various methodologies of disaster story telling

- Artifacts / monuments can talk very eloquently when they are associated with stories of what actually happened
- Disaster story telling can learn a lot from the art in that the both are a heart-to-heart communication
- ICT as potentially very effective media; but still story matters, fact matters, place matters?

# Points discussed - why disaster story telling ?

## u Important role of museums in disaster story telling

- A disaster story is powerful; however it is fundamentally subjective about a specific point
- A mere collection of disaster stories is not enough to describe a disaster, which is a complex social phenomenon / process with a large time and space dimension
- Museum curators can carefully combine systematic knowledge elements and emotional elements in designing a disaster exhibition
- Museums can be economical; not necessarily high-price equipment is required

## u Addressing the fading of disaster memories

- The fading of disaster memories cannot be avoided; yet, many past disaster sites continue even over centuries; what is the secret?

# COVID-19 and Disaster Story Telling

- **Similarity of pandemic and natural disasters**
  - **Each Individual needs to practice necessary countermeasures; disaster stories can push us to do so**
  - **What stories to preserve and share for COVID-19 countermeasures at a personal level?**
- **Harsh societal lesson from the pandemic of COVID-19**
  - **The urbanization must always be prepared for sudden onset of pandemic; countermeasures at a societal level play a big role?**
  - **How can the lessons at a personal level play a role in mobilizing the public support to societal countermeasures?**

# Conclusion

- **Disaster story telling is a significant enough issue to discuss**
- **Knowledge to practice: combination of knowledge elements and emotional elements**
- **Can the disaster story telling be useful in reconstruction?**
- **International Network of Telling Live Lessons from Disasters (TeLL-Net)**
  - **Network of the individuals and institutions who are engaged in various types of disaster story telling**
- **COVID-19 and disaster story telling**
  - **What stories can be preserved and passed on for COVID-19 countermeasures?**

**Thank you**

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