

# 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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# 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

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



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

- u 2005 UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction
- u 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.
- u 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 ?

## u 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?

## u 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

- u 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?
- u 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

- u Disaster story telling is a significant enough issue to discuss
- u Knowledge to practice: combination of knowledge elements and emotional elements
- u Can the disaster story telling be useful in reconstruction?
- u 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
- u COVID-19 and disaster story telling
  - What stories can be preserved and passed on for COVID-19 countermeasures?

The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern and dynamic visual effect. The shapes are concentrated on the right side of the image, with some extending towards the left.

**Thank you**