

Approach to creating a “field” for disaster reduction at the community level

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If local residents collaboratively create an action plan for disaster reduction in their local community level, commitment to implement the plan by local residents is significantly improved. Workshop methods in disaster reduction have helped to improve risk awareness for disaster in Japan.

The Disaster Imagination Game (DIG) is a workshop method developed for disaster drills, based on the know-how of the Commanding Post Exercises of the JSDF (Japan Self-Defense Forces) by Komura and Hirano in 1997. It uses local maps and transparent overlays. Participants of DIG will be appointed by the members of the virtual commanding post of disaster relief activities. By recording various details on maps, participants can easily grasp the situation of affected areas, and also be able to discuss how to command relief activities. Exchange of ideas and views of the participants of DIG will deepen their understanding on relief activities. The Objective of this workshop is to identify the potential hazards in the area, and to identify and recognize the action that are required to take in post-disaster phase. The workshop particularly focuses on individuals' personal views and perceptions.

However, such workshops have the limitation that risk awareness does not lead to action plans in disaster prevention activities. Risk awareness should be improved to implement actions to optimize the capacity of a local community in disaster situations (Na, Okada and Fang, 2008). The participants acquire knowledge about hazards and disaster reduction,

express their own opinions and hear opinions of other participants about disasters through workshops. Expansion of such interest could lead to implementation of disaster reduction activities in the future. So, the reason why is important that a “field” to exchange opinion and transfer knowledge.

The DIG is conducted in Shiga prefecture very actively by local government. Among this area, Muraida district(385 people, 111 households, 1.December 2011) got good results after DIG.

Before DIG, the community leader and 8 group leaders conducted 3 important roles to residents in Muraida district. ①Distributed the community news paper including DIG open.②Called about DIG at each household(From group leaders). ③Declare over the community wireless system in DIG day morning. And then, residents decided to participate in DIG as representative of each household in the group meeting. As a result, 49 community residents(or representatives of each household) were participated in DIG. (approximately 13% of the total population, if they were all representative of each household, approximately 44% of total households). So as a result, an example, they installed 'marugoto-machigoto' hazard map for the first time in Shiga prefecture.

This study suggests how to create a “field” for disaster reduction in community level though Muraida district case.