

Press Release

**Turning lessons from the disaster into proposals for the
Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
(Bangkok, Thailand)**

**Students from Tohoku speak out, looking toward the March 2015 United Nations World
Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai**

June 17th, 2014

The “Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction” will take place from June 22 (Sunday) to 26 (Thursday) of 2014. Global Fund for Education Assistance (Shibuya, Tokyo) will dispatch a group of students from Tohoku to attend the conference as part of “BEYOND Tomorrow.” They will take this opportunity to use lessons learned from the disaster to create proposals for future disaster risk reduction.

Five students from the Tohoku region who lost their homes and families during the disaster will come to talk about their experiences and proposals at this conference. During BEYOND Tomorrow programs over the last three years, many students have told their stories of the disaster and formulated proposals for addressing global disaster reduction education based on their experiences. They have also had opportunities during these program to deepen their understanding of this subject through discussion with experts in policy and education related to disasters. Five students were chosen out of the previous participants to attend the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Bangkok, and will present their own findings on the status of disaster reduction.

The proposals the participants present at this conference will be part of a larger initiative leading up to the March 2015 United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai.

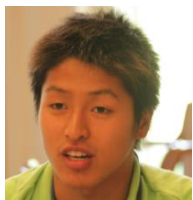
List of Participating Students

**Sayaka Sugawara (Robert Alan Feldman Special Scholarship Recipient)
Graduate of Leysin American School in Switzerland**



Sayaka was in Ishinomaki at the time of the disaster. She lost her mother, grandmother, and great grandmother to the tsunami. Six months after the disaster, she participated in the summer Davos Conference in China, and told her story in front of world leaders. A year after the disaster in March of 2012, she began studying abroad in Switzerland through the BEYOND Tomorrow High School Study Abroad program, and has graduated as of June, 2014. As an individual living in an earthquake-prone part of the world, and also a member of the younger generation that will become future global leaders, she would like to deepen her knowledge of disaster risk reduction, and express to people throughout Asia its importance at the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

**Shimpei Fujita
Department of Law, Kanagawa University (Graduate of Kishine High School)**



Shimpei was in Kesennuma, Miyagi Prefecture during the disaster, and because his home was destroyed, he was evacuated to Kanagawa Prefecture. He stayed there to attend high school, separated from his family. For 13 years swimming has provided emotional support for him. In September after the disaster, he participated in the national athletic meet as a representative of Miyagi Prefecture and placed 12th, a personal best. In 2013 he also advanced in the Intercollege Swimming Championship. In the future he hopes to grow up to become a leader that can move Tohoku forward, and he also hopes to return to Kesennuma to help with its recovery. He would like to work with his colleagues to find a way to encourage more young people to remain in the area. During this conference, he hopes to learn about disaster risk reduction in various Asian countries, and to bring this knowledge back to his hometown.

**Kokurin Saijo
Department of International Studies, Takushoku University
(Graduate of Kesennuma High School)**



Kokurin was born in Dalian, China. When she was a 1st year middle school student, she moved to Minamisanriku. From losing her house in the disaster, she has learned the importance of education and information. She hopes to help create opportunities for children in poor countries in Africa to receive education. Kokurin believes this program will be an opportunity to forge cooperation among youth through Asia so that they may be able to work together to address the issue of disaster risk reduction.



Ena Kanno (TOMODACHI Special Scholarship Recipient)
School of Commerce, Waseda University (Graduate of Sukagawatoyo High School)

Ena watched surrounding houses be swept away by the tsunami, but felt that the fact that he was still alive had some meaning. Ena was interested in using the internet to create a service that would have a global impact, and decided he would like to start a business in the IT field. Through the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, he hopes to learn how other countries deal with disaster risk management. Ena also sees this as an opportunity as a native of Tohoku to learn more about how people from other countries see Japan's view of disaster risk reduction.



Ryuji Kokuta (TOMODACHI Special Scholarship Recipient)
Department of Law, Tohoku University (Kesenuma High School graduate)

After the disaster, Ryuji realized the indispensable nature of cooperation during post-disaster restoration efforts after he witnessed the gradual recovery of his hometown Kesenuma, where the people independently identified uncompleted objectives and worked to make them achievable. He realized that young people leaving their hometowns has become an impediment to revitalization efforts, and so he hopes to help revive the local fishing industry in Kesenuma to make it an attractive field for youth entering the workforce. He would like to use his perspective as a young man from the area affected by the disaster to show to others at the conference how disaster prevention education is progressing in Japan, what discussions have taken place since the 2011 disaster, and how the results of these discussions will affect the way society deals with disasters from now on.

Activity Schedule during the Conference (*May be subject to change)

6/21 (Saturday)	Orientation, Conference Guidance
6/22 (Sunday)	Pre-meeting Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interacting with participating youth from other countries • Discussion about disaster risk management in each country • Exchange of ideas moving towards the conclusion of the meeting
6/23 (Monday)	Rehearsal for the next day
6/24 (Tuesday)	Participating in the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction “Children and Youth Form” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Forum • Discussion with government official • Presentation of Joint Declaration

Regarding Media Coverage

For persons interested in media coverage of this program, please use the contact information provided below. We are happy to take questions regarding the participating students in this program (on-site in Bangkok or in Tokyo), as well as future initiatives.

Person in Charge: Koji Yamaoka Phone Number: +81-80-7716-4884 Email: info@beyond-tomorrow.org

★About BEYOND Tomorrow★

As an initiative dedicated to helping raise young people affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, BEYOND Tomorrow provides comprehensive leadership training for participating students. This initiative helps students realize their dreams not only with financial support, but also through dialogue, designed to give students a broader global perspective. BEYOND Tomorrow strives to cultivate youth sensitive to the feelings of others, and provide them with opportunities to overcome the adversity and become independent and responsible members of society.