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[Abstract Title]

Utilizing Japanese language class for children from multicultural background as a metaphor for disaster relief. -from the perspective of both foreign residents and members of the local

[Abstract]

When the Great East Japan Earthquake happened in 2011, many foreign residents who had immigrated to Japan by international marriage were also exposed to severe life conditions. In addition to that, technical interns engaged in food production, textiles, garment manufacturing, agriculture, etc. also suffered from the disaster. However, despite their damage of disaster, many foreign residents in Japan volunteered in disaster areas. As a result of their effort, foreign residents in Japan could promote a sense of mutual solidarity with Japanese residents. However, during the non-disaster periods, they are thought not contributing to the community activities simply because they are foreigners. Why can people work together only in disaster relief? What is the cause of solidarity? This paper analyzes the process of building a sense of mutual solidarity during the disaster period of COVID-19 by focusing on a foreign residents' support group called "Ciranda no Kai", in Handa City, Aichi Prefecture, Japan. The research involves interviewing by phone and collecting information via social media. Due to the pandemic of COVID-19, all the activities including Japanese language school were suspended from February until May, 2020. Foreign residents in the



community lost their jobs because many of them worked for automobile manufacturing companies. They were living in extreme poverty and had no money to buy basic human needs including food and sanitation facilities. Ciranda's group leader launched food bank and started food donation within the community. Shortly, students of the Japanese language class, teaching volunteers and local community members who heard the information donated food. Social media played significant role spreading information of help among members of the Japanese language class. Then, they started to help for children and families from all countries regardless of their nationality.

From the observation, two things can be said to promote a sense of mutual solidarity under the pandemic of COVID-19. Firstly, local community members considered it as a matter of their own and aimed to solve the problem as local issues, rather than foreign-specific issues. Secondly, the activities of the Japanese language class were utilized as a metaphor for disaster relief from the perspective of both foreign residents and members of the local community. Through dialogue, it is significant to focus on the dynamics when local parties think about disaster relief.

[Keywords]

disaster relief, COVID-19, foreign residents in Japan, solidarity