

THE OKINAWA TOURISM CRISIS MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Practitioner Paper

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ABSTRACT

Okinawa is the most popular island resort destination in Japan, located south west of the country. Tourism being the largest industry in the region, the local economy is heavily dependent on tourism. Business sustainability in tourism is most important for the entire island society. Although Okinawa has not experienced a major earthquake and tsunami in recent years, there have been a number of huge tsunamis with heavy casualties in the past. Urged by the catastrophe in East Japan on March 11, 2011, the Governor of Okinawa has launched a three-year project to make Okinawa the safest destination in Japan.

The project includes the following sub-components: seminars and symposium to educate tourism stakeholders about the importance of crisis management; a series of workshops to develop tourism crisis management plans fit to each local destination; creating evacuation maps for visitors in major tourist areas; posting elevation signage in major tourist destinations and facilities; and developing an emergency information delivery system for tourism stakeholders and visitors

This paper discusses further detail of the project sub-components, not limited to the outcome of the project, but also the challenges in creating a crisis management plan in tourist destinations and in activating the plan in the event of crisis.

KEY WORDS

Destination risk crisis management, Tsunami preparedness

INTRODUCTION

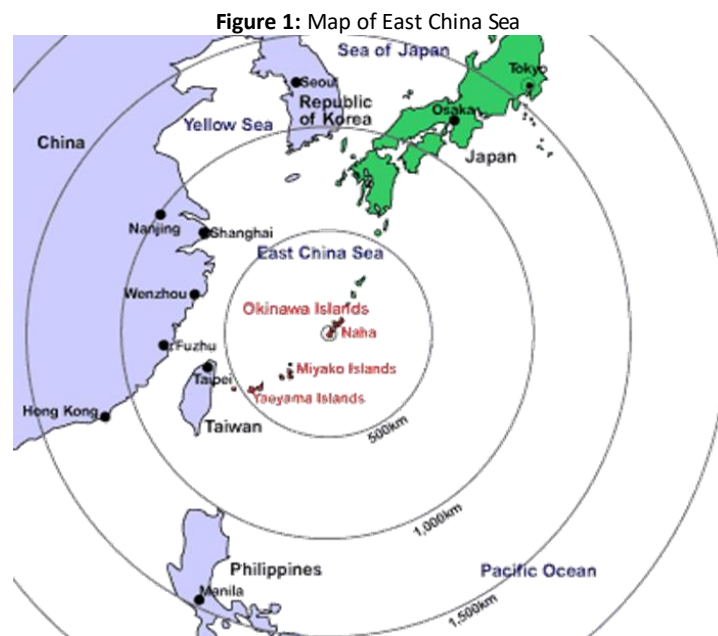
Background of Okinawa Tourism Crisis Management Initiatives

Okinawa is a group of 160 islands including 49 inhabited islands over a vast ocean area located in south-west of Japan's Main Island. With its sub-tropical climate, Okinawa enjoys the reputation as the most preferred resort destination in Japan and attracts more than 6 million visitors from both domestic and international source markets. The Okinawa Prefecture (the regional government body) aims to increase the number of visitors to ten million by 2021, including two million international visitors. Tourism is the largest industry in Okinawa, generating 12% of the gross regional product and 12.8% of total employment in the prefecture.

Okinawa has not experienced a major earthquake over the last century and, therefore, the region is believed to be free from concern for earthquakes and tsunami. However, the history of the

region indicates that there were major earthquakes and tsunamis once every 200 to 300 years. The most recent major tsunami occurred on April 24th 1776, which devastated 40% of the Ishigaki Island and neighboring islands, killing more than 12,000 people. Considering the fact that nearly 250 years have already passed since the last big tsunami, there is a rising risk that Okinawa could experience another huge tsunami during next several decades.

Besides earthquake and tsunami, Okinawa is struck by a number of typhoons every year. A strong typhoon causes major damages the region paralyzing the lifelines including electricity, water supply, land, air and sea transportation for periods ranging from a few days to a whole week. The travel and tourism industry is also severely affected by typhoons, resulting in cancellation of flight and hotel bookings, physical damage to the tourism facilities and tourism related infrastructure, closed operation of tourism attractions.



East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

The March 2011 East Japan Earthquake and tsunami, triggered the Okinawa Prefectural Government to think seriously about tourism safety. After the disaster, the Governor made a quick decision to voluntarily invite and host affected people from the damaged regions for a certain period of time. The prefectural government also dispatched a medical team to the devastated region to support the local medical staff.

In the meantime, a question arose how Okinawa can protect visitors and tourism industry from possible future crises. The prefectural government and Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau (OCVB) have already prepared measures to mitigate the impact of typhoons to the visitors and tourism sector, however, the region was not quite ready for mega earthquake and tsunami. The

author visited Okinawa in April 2011, a month after the disaster, to discuss with Yoshiro Shimoji¹, the Deputy Director General, Tourism Policy of the Prefecture the idea of facilitating a tourism crisis management program.

Governor's Decision

The Governor of Okinawa, Hirokazu Nakaima, was deeply concerned about the safety and security of Tourism in Okinawa. He firmly believed that Okinawa would take a great advantage in marketing by becoming the safest destination in Japan. It will raise the region's competitiveness in the post 3.11 environment. He had requested his tourism staff to create a plan to upgrade the Okinawa's image of a safe destination. This triggered the three-year Tourism Crisis Management Initiatives²; the prefectural government allocated 50 million yen (USD 500,000) additional budget to finance this project for FY2011.

Current Readiness for Tourism Crises

Even before the project was initiated, Okinawa had been well-prepared for crises affecting the visitors and the tourism industry. An industry observer, David Beirman pointed out during his visit to Okinawa in 2012, that many of the major resort hotels in Okinawa are situated on a higher ground 10 to 30 meters above sea level and not located right on the beach front. They still offer gorgeous ocean view and easy access to the beach³. According to Beirman, it is a distinct contrast to most of the beach resorts in Asia/Pacific. The first thing that guests in Okinawa find when they enter the guest room is a booklet titled, "Okinawa Tourist Safety Guidebook⁴". The booklet has safety instructions for visitors in four languages in such cases as typhoon, earthquake, tsunami and contact with poisonous creatures. The OCVB has created the booklet financed by the Okinawa Prefecture and delivered them to all the accommodations in Okinawa.

FRAMEWORK FOR OKINAWA TOURISM CRISIS MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES (OTCMI)

The OTCMI is designed as a continuous three-year project in three phases: There was an emphasis on making Okinawa well-prepared to 'Respond' to earthquakes and tsunamis, which was considered to be the most urgent after the disaster in north eastern Japan. The focus for the second year is crisis communication, followed by strategic post-crisis recovery of the affected destination for the third year.

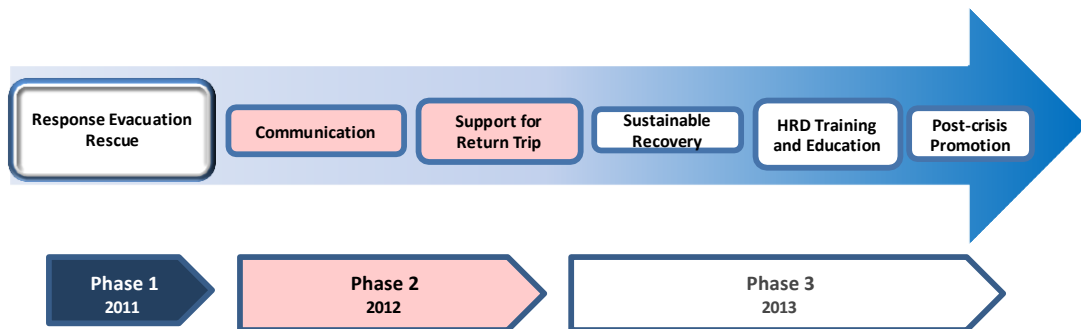
Each year, the project consists of the following sub-components: survey on crisis preparedness of tourism sector, workshops at designated destinations, tourism crisis management planning and creating TCM manual templates, designing evacuation maps, posting elevation signage at major tourist sites and facilities, developing the tourism crisis information delivery system, supporting the planning and implementing integrated evacuation drills, organizing educational seminars and symposiums and promoting and raising the awareness of tourism crisis management.

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² <http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/site/bunka-sports/kankoshinko/ukeire/kankoukikikanri.html> (in Japanese)

³ David Beirman, 2012 "Okinawa's role in leading Japan in tourism risk management preparedness" eTN Global Travel Industry News (<http://www.eturbonews.com/28471/okinawa-s-role-leading-japan-tourism-risk-management-preparednes>)

⁴ http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/site/fukushi/yakumu/shippei/heatflyer/documents/okinawakankouanshinanzenguidebook_1.pdf



Survey

A survey on tourism crisis preparedness was conducted every year during the three year project. Respondents are local municipalities, DMOs, hotels and other tourism service providers. The first survey conducted in 2011⁵, prior to the commencement of the project, revealed that public sector was not as well prepared for the possible crises as private sector. Following are some of the major findings of the 2011 survey:

- 50% of local municipalities do not have a crisis management plan or evacuation manual for visitors.
- Hotels are well prepared for fire as a result of fire department's strict guidance, but less than a half of them have an evacuation plan for tsunami.
- A majority of local governments are prepared to safely evacuate the residents in case of a disaster, but not ready to evacuate international visitors.
- The survey results were released to the audience of the symposium in March 2012 and made public through newspaper articles and TV news shows.

Surveys conducted in the subsequent years have found progress and improvement in preparedness both in the public and private sector, as a result of 'promotion and education' through the OTCMI.

Workshops

(a) Organizing workshops

A series of workshops were held in three designated locations in 2011⁶ and ten locations in 2012⁷. The workshop sites include a ferry terminal, a hotel beach area, a convention facilities

⁵ Okinawa Prefecture, 2012 "Okinawa Tourism Crisis Management Model Project, 2011 (in Japanese)" p.3-12:
http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/site/bunka-sports/kankoshinko/ukeire/documents/1_h23houkoku_honbun.pdf

Survey questionnaire 2011 (in Japanese) is found at the following web page
http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/site/bunka-sports/kankoshinko/ukeire/documents/2_h23sankou1.pdf

⁶ Okinawa Prefecture, 2012 "Okinawa Tourism Crisis Management Model Project, 2011 (in Japanese)" p.22-36:
http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/site/bunka-sports/kankoshinko/ukeire/documents/1_h23houkoku_honbun.pdf

⁷ Okinawa Prefecture, 2013 "Okinawa Tourism Crisis Management Model Project, 2012 (in Japanese)" p.39-67:
http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/site/bunka-sports/kankoshinko/ukeire/documents/5_chap4_p39-80.pdf

area on the coast and a major shopping quarter of the city, where there is a high risk of crisis associated with earthquake and tsunami. Invited to the workshops were representatives from hotels, tourist service providers, shop owners, tour operators, transportations, fire department local municipalities, and port authority of the respective destinations.

(b) Crisis analysis

The first assignment for the participants was to identify the possible crises in each location of the workshop. The list of the identified crises includes natural crises such as typhoon, heavy rain, earthquake, tsunami, drought and pandemic of communicative disease as well as human-induced hazards such as fire, oil spill, airplane accident, political dispute, economic downturn and reputation crisis associated with the actual crisis.

(c) Risk assumption

The next assignment was to assume the maximum impact of the crisis. This is to avoid critical 'underestimation' when considering evacuation plan. The participants were confronted with a challenge of identifying the exact maximum number of the visitors; they have visitor statistics available at hand such as 100,000 visitors during the six-day summer festival. But there is hardly any specific data that shows how many people there are in the destination on each day during the festival, where they are, and what the peak time is. Hotel managers do know the maximum capacity of the guest rooms, but they had difficulty in identifying how many people are in the lobby when there is a big event in their hotel ball room.

They conducted an exercise to assume what damages and impacts that a major earthquake and tsunami would cause to the destination and to the tourist facilities including hotels. They also discussed what risks and dangers the visitors and the tourism industry in the affected area would face at the occurrence of the natural disaster. The workshop was a good opportunity for the participants to accurately estimate the scale of the risks associated with the crises that may take place in the destination, a first step for crisis management planning.

(d) Evacuation planning

The evacuation planning began with making a list of locations and building that can be used as tsunami shelters.⁸ Traditionally, the emergency shelters designated by the local authority are mostly public facilities such as school gymnasiums and public halls. These shelters, usually located on the ground floor of a building are suitable for accommodating a large number of residents for a several days or few weeks after a crisis, but not the best shelters from tsunami because of low elevation. The workshop members were assigned to search for high grounds and high-rise buildings that are close enough from the sea to be reached by the tsunami evacuees in an extremely limited period of time after the earthquake.

They went through the list of the prospective shelters, examined whether they have enough capacity to accommodate the expected number of the evacuees, whether they are located higher from the ground than the estimated depth of water of the largest tsunami expected in the area.

⁸ Okinawa Prefecture, 2012 "Okinawa Tourism Crisis Management Model Project, 2011 (in Japanese)" Attachment p.21

They also checked whether the building has an easy access for the evacuees from outside to directly go up to the higher floor of the building. After the shelter list was confirmed, the members chose the best evacuation route to each shelter from the various locations. They take into consideration the capacity of the each shelter in choosing the routes so as to avoid an overflow at the shelters.

(e) Inspecting the planned routes

After the evacuation routes were chosen on the map, the workshop members walked along all the routes to make sure they were safe for evacuees. They inspected whether there were no brick walls en route that could collapse during the earthquake, or an oil or gas tank nearby that may catch a fire. They also checked that the entrance to the shelter buildings are easily found by the evacuees and it is wide enough not to become a bottleneck for the crowd who rush to the safe shelter.

(f) Communication Workshop

For the second phase of the project, workshops focused on crisis communications. A series of workshop sessions provided an opportunity for the participants to review the existing communication plan, if there is one, with the guests and visitors, employees, industry stakeholders, source markets and media. Then, the workshop members discussed: 1) who to communicate 2) what information 3) how to collect necessary information 4) from what sources before and after the incident. They came up with a matrix chart of crisis communication (Chart 1).

They also discussed how to communicate when the ordinary communication networks are not available because of the damage to the system, loss of electricity or automatic shut-down resulting from excessive communication traffic. Ideas for alternative communication tools include: satellite phone, wired internet access and Wi-fi, wireless phone and taxi radio. They recognized the importance of a battery-powered portable radio that is useful in collecting information when the electric power is down.

They further discussed effective communication to reduce the risk of reputation crisis, which tends to have even a larger negative impact to the affected destination and tourism industry than the actual crisis event. Lastly, the workshop members exchanged their ideas of effective communication for the rapid recovery of tourist traffic to the affected destination. They concluded that keeping the source market updated with accurate status quo of the destination is a key to recovery communication and that organizing a familiarization tour to invite tour planners and travel agents and make them confident of the safety in the destination would also be included in the recovery communication plan.

Table 1: Crisis communication matrix chart (sample)⁹

Who to communicate	Updated situation	Shelter location	Safety of guests/visitors	Lifeline	Transportation	Lodging
Employees						
Guests/visitors & their families						
Municipality office, Police department						
Fire department						
Tour operators						
Business partners						
Media						
Foreign embassies						

(g) Challenges

Each location experienced diverse challenges during the course of organizing and running the workshops. Some of the challenges observed in common are firstly, the difficulty in balancing the participants from public and private sector. In some locations, officers from the local municipality office dominated the workshop, while in other locations, there were very few people representing the public sector; and secondly, a communication gap among the stakeholders, particularly between private service providers and the municipality office. In the event of a major crisis, local municipality, prefectural government agencies and other public organization share an emergency reporting system, while hotels and tourist attractions are not included in the regional emergency network chart. As a result, the private service operators are at a loss who to communicate the information they have while the municipal office do not have the updated information about the visitors.

Manual Templates and Planning Guide

Evacuation Manual

The evacuation plan of each workshop site was thoroughly considered and edited as an outcome of series of serious discussion sessions. The detailed evacuation action plans of individual workshop sites are standardized by the consultant and put together as evacuation manual templates. Following are the contents of the manual template.¹⁰

1. Why tourism crisis management
2. Tourists' psychology and behaviours in crisis situation
3. Possible disasters and crises in the area
4. Estimating the scale of crises and risks
5. What to do first, when a crisis occurs.
6. Decision to evacuate: who decides on what information
7. Formation of a crisis management team
8. Escorting visitors to the shelters: roles of employees
9. Helping visitors who need assistance for evacuation.

⁹ Okinawa Prefecture, 2013 "Okinawa Tourism Crisis Management Model Project, 2012 (in Japanese)" p.69: http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/site/bunka-sports/kankoshinko/ukeire/documents/5_chap4_p39-80.pdf

¹⁰ Okinawa Prefecture, 2012 "Okinawa Tourism Crisis Management Model Project, 2011 (in Japanese)" Attachment p.6-106

10. Rescuing and supporting injured visitors.
11. What to do at the shelters
12. A list of emergency contacts

The manual templates have been posted on the Prefectural Government's website¹¹ for the municipalities and businesses in the destinations that were not invited to participate in the workshops. They are encouraged to customize the template to better reflect the risk environment of individual destinations and facilities.

Communication Manual

Through the workshops during the second year of the project, two types of tourism crisis communication manuals were created¹²: one for hotels and tourist facilities and the other for local governments and DMOs. Following are the contents of the manual template:

1. Fundamental rules of crisis communication
2. Communication team and chief communication officer
3. Collecting information
4. Communication with guests and visitors
5. Communication with stakeholders
6. Communication with the public and media
7. Preparation for crisis communication
8. Monitoring
9. Reaction to reputation crisis
10. Effective communication for recovery

Planning Guide

Along with the manuals, the project prepared Tourism Crisis Management Planning Guide. The planning guide helps the organizations make their own tourism crisis management plan by offering a list of key elements to be included in the plan and some examples of successful procedures. The planning guide is also available for free download through Prefectural Government's web site.

Evacuation Maps

An evacuation map is an effective tool to guide the visitors safely to the shelters and safe places in the event of crisis. Workshop members discussed and created a useful evacuation map for each workshop location. Since the maps are mainly used by visitors who are unfamiliar with the local geography, the evacuation maps were designed with the following concept:

- a. Maps are so designed that visitors can easily locate themselves on them.
- b. Regardless of a point of compass, the top of the map shows the direction for evacuation.
- c. Shelters and landmark buildings on evacuation routes are easily identified on the map.
- d. International visitors can use the map without being troubled by the language barriers.

¹¹ <http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/site/bunka-sports/kankoshinko/ukeire/kankoukikikanri.html>

¹² Okinawa Prefecture, 2013 "Okinawa Tourism Crisis Management Model Project, 2012 (in Japanese)" p.139-232

Evacuation Map



The maps have been distributed to the local hotels, ferry terminal and municipality office of each workshop location. A new challenge has emerged: how can we ensure that visitors have the evacuation map with them during their stay at the destination? The maps are useless if the visitors do not have them in the event of a crisis. It is obvious that evacuation maps are something that the visitors do not want to carry, unless it is useful as a tourist map. Currently, we are trying to create a tourist map with evacuation information by overprinting evacuation routes and shelters on an existing tourist map without disturbing the original image of the fun map for visitors. Another alternative solution for the issue would be to develop a digital evacuation map downloadable to smart phones and tablet PCs that a majority of the today's tourists have in hand during their business trips and holidays. The project will organize a team of digital map experts to research the possibility of developing an application to display evacuation route on the mobile terminals.

Elevation Signage

Signage to show the elevation from the sea-level is extremely helpful when evacuating from tsunami. Visitors who are unfamiliar with the geography of the destination have almost no idea what the elevation of the place where they are, and how further they should run up to escape from the tsunami.

The signage has an icon which represents a tsunami, the elevation level and instruction for evacuation in Japanese, English, simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese and Korean. The sign boards are in coloured either in red (below 5 meters from sea level), yellow (5 - 20 meters) or blue (above 20 meters) to indicate the elevation level from a distance.¹³ Signs have been posted at various locations of major tourist facilities and tourist sites, major streets and on the buildings that are designated as a tsunami shelter¹⁴. Signs are posted on the staircases of some shelter buildings, so that evacuees who come the building and run up the staircases would easily know whether they are high enough or still need to go up higher.

¹³ Okinawa Prefecture, 2012 "Okinawa Tourism Crisis Management Model Project, 2011 (in Japanese)" p.57

¹⁴ Okinawa Prefecture, 2012 "Okinawa Tourism Crisis Management Model Project, 2011 (in Japanese)" p.57-62

海拔表示 図1



海拔表示 図2



海拔表示 図3



(Entrance of a tsunami shelter)



(Emergency staircase)



(Resort map stand)

Tourism Crisis Information Delivery System

Timely dissemination of the alert information to the tourists and tourism industry in the event of a crisis is critical in reducing the negative impact of the crises. In Okinawa, most of visitors travel individually by rent-a-cars or stay on the beach during the day, where they have limited access to the emergency information when a crisis occurs or is likely to occur. The prefectural government decided to develop an emergency information system to provide crisis alert to the visitors and tourism service providers through their mobile phones, in order to ensure that individual tourists and service staff get the emergency alert regardless of the location and time of the day.

The system¹⁵ provides emergency information in four foreign languages; English, simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese and Korean in addition to Japanese, so that international visitors who are likely to have difficulties getting emergency alert in their own language, are equally informed of what is happening and going to happen shortly.

¹⁵ Okinawa Tourism Risk Management Information Site <http://okinawa-crisis-mgt.info/en/>

1. Automatic dissemination of alert information

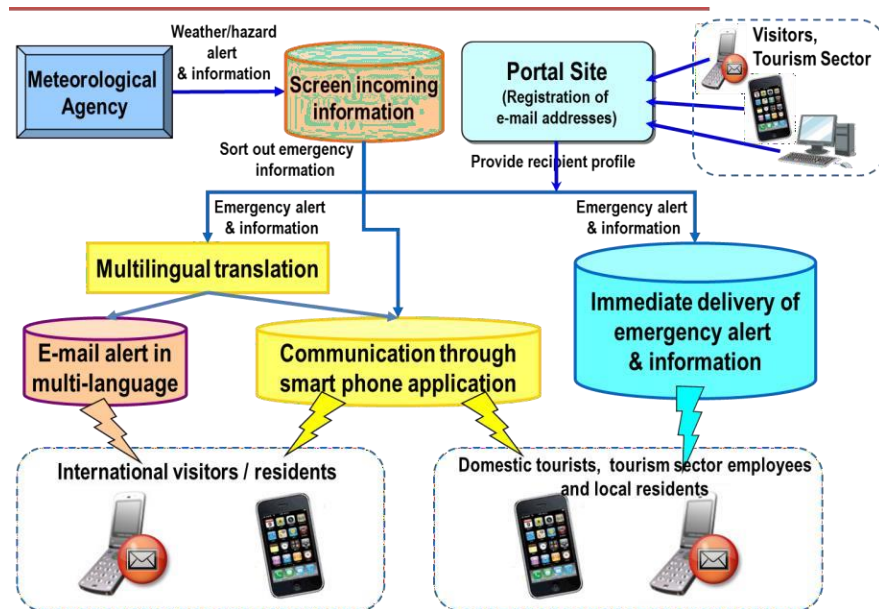
Once the Meteorological Agency issues an alert for unusual weather or hazard, such as typhoon, storm, heavy rain, earthquake and tsunami, the system server receives the alert message. The message is screened by the system, and if it is an urgent alert, the system automatically generates the alert text message and delivers to the registered recipients.

Registering as a recipient is quite simple. Anyone who wants to receive emergency information only needs to access to the registration page of system's web site and enter the e-mail address of his/her mobile phone. A smart phone user can download the application that is activated immediately when it receives an alert message. This application is automatically given a top priority, therefore, no matter what other application is used on the smart phone, the message pops up on the screen.

2. Multilingual translation

The multi-lingual translation system immediately translates the alert text in Japanese into four different languages using the templates. It takes less than a few seconds to for the system to deliver the message in the registered language.

A useful system has been developed; however, the challenge now is how to promote the registration and use of the system. Unless the visitors register their e-mail address or download the smart phone application, they do not receive necessary alert information in the event of crisis. The prefecture government is now making every effort to make this alert system known to the incoming international visitors.



Integrated Evacuation Drills

1. The Purpose of an Integrated Drill

Fire drills and evacuation training have been regularly conducted by hotels, transportation services and municipalities. However, most of these drills and training have been organized separately and rarely conducted jointly by public and private organizations in a community. Therefore, if a crisis occurs that affects the entire destination, collaborative operation of crisis management is hardly expected among the tourism sector.

The OTCMI encouraged the destinations in Okinawa to organize an integrated evacuation drill, where both public and private sector participate. In some communities, the city government took the initiative and invited the private sector to join the drill, while in some other communities, hotels and store owners primarily organized the drill and the fire department and municipality office cooperated in it.

2. Evacuation Drill in Ishigaki

On April 24, 2012, a tsunami evacuation drill was planned and conducted at the ferry terminal of Ishigaki Island. This was the 241st memorial day of giant tsunami in 1776 that swept away the whole island of Ishigaki, killing more than 8,000 residents. The City of Ishigaki has designated April 24th as Disaster Prevention Day when the entire community participate in an evacuation drill. Until 2011, the drill was organized only by the public sector, city, fire department, police and coast guard. After the city officers of disaster prevention department and tourism department participated in the OTCMI workshop, they decided to include private entities such as ferry boat operators, tour operators and hotels that do business in and around the city's ferry terminal. The drill was prepared on an assumption that a major earthquake hits the island and an alert for huge tsunami is issued when about 1,000 passengers of the ferry boats are waiting in the lobby of the terminal.

The drill started with an emergency siren and an announcement that the passengers should crouch to the floor and protect themselves from falling objects. After a few moments, there was another announcement that tsunami alert was issued and everyone should be evacuated immediately. By this time, all the employees of ferry boat operators and tour companies were posted at their designated positions ready to evacuate all the passengers to a nearby hotel and higher ground. They also assisted the injured passengers on a stretcher to go up to the 7th floor of the hotel in front of the terminal.



(Evacuating injured passenger)



(Escorting evacuees to the shelter)

Promotion and Education

OTCMI is not only for the limited number of designated destinations where the workshops were held, but for the entire prefecture. In this regard, promoting the outcome of the project to the every corner of Okinawa is of the greatest importance. Following actions have been planned and implemented to let the population of Okinawa know about the significance of tourism crisis management.

Seminars

Seminars and symposiums are good occasions to draw attention of more people to the idea of crisis management in tourism. The prefectural government invited local authority officers, police and fire department officers, managers of hotels, tourist facilities and transportations as well as press reporters to the seminars. Seminar agenda includes a key note presentation on tourism crisis management, summary report of OTCMI and a panel discussion with people who actually plan and exercise crisis management.

The symposium held in March 2013¹⁶ began with an evacuation drill participated by the entire audience. The drill plan was kept confidential to the participants until they heard an alarm siren and emergency announcement. This was a good opportunity for the audience to experience what would happen to a crowd in the event of an unexpected hazard and to realize that crises may take place anywhere anytime. Seminars were reported on newspapers and TV news shows so that citizens of Okinawa have a chance to learn the key messages of the speakers.



(Keynote presentation, 2013 symposium)



(Panel Discussion, 2013 Symposium)

¹⁶ Okinawa Prefecture, 2013 "Okinawa Tourism Crisis Management Model Project, 2012 (in Japanese)" p.90-96



(Surprise evacuation drill during the 2013 Symposium)

Education

There were more than 50 workshops at 10 locations in the past two years which more than 100 people participated in. In order to extend this initiative to the rest of the destinations in Okinawa, adding more workshop locations and sending experts to all of them is not realistic because of the limited number of tourism crisis management experts. The prefectural government is currently preparing a tourism crisis management education program for individuals. The program is to be so designed that local government officers and company and DMO managers who are responsible for crisis management can acquire necessary knowledge and skills to plan and exercise crisis management for their organizations and for the destination.

The program is based on Tourism Crisis Management Course developed by the University of Florida, Tourism Crisis Management Institute. The original course materials in English will be translated into Japanese and modified to be better understood by Japanese students. Some of the reference cases of North America will be replaced by those of Asia and Japan which the Japanese students are more familiar with. The prefectural government is also planning a train the trainer program to educate several people in tourism sector in Okinawa, who are expected to be leaders and trainers of tourism crisis management within their organization and for the entire Okinawa Prefecture.

CONCLUSION

The OTCMI is the first step toward making Okinawa the safest destination in Japan. There have been a lot of changes and improvements made in Okinawa's crisis management as a result of the project and the tourism stakeholders' awareness about tourism crisis management has been raised remarkably. However, what has been done over the last two years is still a small part of the tourism crisis management, primarily focused on earthquake and tsunami. Okinawa needs to be better prepared for other crises that affect the tourism sector, such as terrorism, pandemics, oil spills, typhoons and economic downturn. In the meantime, it is critically important to spread the outcomes of the project to the destinations that were not included in the list of workshop sites in order to make the entire Okinawa prepared for crises. There are also a number of other considerations:

1. Continuous effort to upgrade the plan and system

There is no end to pursue the 'best' and 'better' in crisis management planning. New findings and revised estimation of crises, new technology that can be employed in the crisis management

procedures, establishment of new organizations and changes in the market; all these will require the prefectural government and relevant organizations to review and audit the existing crisis management plan and upgrade it to better fit the new environment. There needs to be a scheme and budget to ensure sustainable efforts to constantly upgrade the crisis management plan and system both in the public and private sector.

2. Collaboration is a key factor for success

To successfully manage the crises, public sector and private sector, and all the tourism related organizations and individuals in a destination need to collaborate with each other. In order to encourage the collaborative planning and execution of tourism crisis management, the Prefectural Tourism Crisis Management Master Plan should clearly declare the necessity of collaboration and include private sector in the crisis management team.

3. Train until the muscle memory learns

Daniel Liddell, Manager Group Business Resilience, Qantas Group said in his presentation at 2nd International Integration of Tourism and Emergency Management Forum (2012) that Qantas repeats the emergency drills until the muscles memorize the procedure. Brain memory doesn't work in an emergency but muscle memory reacts immediately.

An evacuation drill once every year is still better than nothing but not enough for the muscle memory learns the procedure. It is a challenge for the prefectural government and for the entire tourism industry in Okinawa to make sure that local government offices and tourism service providers collaboratively train their employees until their muscle memory learns.

4. Next phase

OTCMI has so far touched upon the three R's out of four R's of tourism crisis management, namely, Readiness, Reduction and Reaction, leaving Recovery nearly untapped. The third phase of the project will focus on recovery part of the tourism crisis management plan, which is quite important for the tourism business in the destination affected by a crisis. Post-crisis recovery requires prefectural government's initiative in various fields; financing affected business for repairing the facilities, securing jobs of tourist service company's employees, promotion of the entire destination to the source markets and travel companies, etc.

A committee dedicated to discuss and draft the framework of prefecture's tourism crisis master plan will be organized this year. The master plan will define the roles of public and private organizations in the event of crisis and the responsibility of tourism division vs. disaster prevention division of prefectural government. It is also expected to stipulate the responsibility of the prefectural government and local authorities in recovery of tourism sector.

The framework will be recommended to the prefectural government, and the Okinawa Prefecture's Master Plan for Tourism Crisis Management will be finalized and confirmed in 2014.

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