

## Group to support communities devastated by the Great Hanshin and Awaji Earthquake

### Machi-Communication

#### What is Machi-Communication?

The Great Hanshin and Awaji Earthquake occurred on January 17, 1995, and about 80% area of Mikuradori 5-chome and 6-chome in Nagata ward, Kobe City was burnt down.

Machi-Communication (M-COMI) was established in April 1996. Two volunteers rushed to the devastated area from Kanto just after the earthquake. While developing support activities, they began to help with the office work of the Mikuradori 5-chome and 6-chome Community Creation Association in October 1995. They participated in the preparation of the joint memorial service for the victims in Misuga District in January 1996, helping with communications and coordination to hold the service. Through these activities, they noticed that the residents needed to return to their communities. Subsequently, they established M-COMI to provide continuous support for the communities. Most original members of this group, including the representative, have now been replaced, but the group has continued to provide intellectual and physical support for the communities.

#### Support for the Mikuradori 5, 6, and 7-chome Community Creation Association and the residents' association

M-COMI supports these associations by keeping records of the meetings, holding events, and promoting the implementation of projects.

#### Main actual results

- Joint memorial service for the earthquake victims in Misuga District
- Kawachi-ondo Summer Festival
- Acceptance of students on school trips
- Coordination concerning the construction of the Mikuradori 5, 6, and 7-chome Residents' Association Hall
- Holding a photo-exhibition entitled "Present and Past, Eight years after the Earthquake - Photo exhibition of the community"
- Creation of local karuta (a card game) "Misuga karuta" and the holding of a karuta festival and an exhibition of the original pictures



#### Research and studies

M-COMI conducts research and studies on vacant lots in the devastated areas and seeks to find means of utilizing them. The results are reported in a monthly newsletter "Machi-Comi (M-COMI)."

In partnership with Le Fauve, an NPO, events were held two times on a vacant lot in 2003 and 2004. The events were called the "Vacant Earth Exhibition," in which art works were exhibited on the vacant lots.

#### Staffs

Representative: Akira Miyasada  
 Advisors: Yasuzo Tanaka (Hyogo Shokai Co., Ltd.)  
 Katsuhiko Endo (Japan Securities Agents, Ltd.)  
 Full-time staff: 2 Voluntary staff: 10  
 Executives (Scientists, experts): 9

#### Support for community creation other than the Mikura District

M-COMI has also developed community creation activities other than the Mikuradori 5, 6, and 7-chome area.

#### Main actual results

- Creation of a video in which hearing people's experiences during the earthquake disaster in Shonai District, Toyonaka City were recorded
- Support for the creation of a local karuta in Ashiya City
- Support for the opening of the community creation association hall in Higashiosaka City

#### Machi-Comi, the monthly newsletter

This newsletter has been published once a month since July 1997 to provide information on activities by M-COMI, the conditions of the Mikura community, and the creation of the community.



#### Machi-Comi on the web

M-COMI has established a web site to provide people with information on this group and the creation of the local community. Please access this site.

<http://park15.wakwak.com/~m-comi>



#### Holding workshops and accepting trainees

Workshops called the Mikura School have been held to study earthquake disasters and the recreation of communities. The first workshop was held in August 1997 and since then it has been held twice a year. In addition, training has been provided to university students and other people who want to study these issues.

#### Main actual results

- July 24, 2004: Osaka University
- July 31, 2004: Kainan City Junior Chamber
- August 23, 2004: People and Disaster Prevention Future Center
- August 25, 2004: JICA (Indonesia)
- August 26, 2004: PTA of Tokushima High School



#### History

- January 1996  
The first memorial service for the earthquake victims in Misuga District was held (held annually up to the present)
- April 1996  
Machi-Communication, a group to support communities devastated by the Great Hanshin and Awaji Earthquake was established.  
Coordination of cooperative housing project began.
- August 1996  
Kawachi-ondo Summer Festival was held (continued up to the present).
- August 1997  
The Mikura School first workshop was held (held semiannually up to the present).
- January 2000  
The completion ceremony for Mikura 5, a cooperative housing project, was held.
- March 2000  
M-COMI and local residents visited an earthquake devastated area in Taiwan. (subsequently visited twice).
- May 2001  
Acceptance of students on their school trip began in order to provide opportunities for the study of earthquake disasters.
- January 2003  
A photo-exhibition entitled "Present and Past, Eight years after the Earthquake - Photo exhibition of the community" was held.  
The Minister's Prize of the 7th Disaster Prevention and Communication Creation Grand Prix (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications) was awarded.
- August 2003  
The Mikura Week Vacant Earth Exhibition was held to revitalize vacant lots.
- September 2003  
The Prime Minister's Prize for Disaster Prevention was awarded.
- December 2003  
Mikura karuta, a local karuta, was completed.
- January 2004  
The Mikuradori 5, 6, and 7-chome Residents' Association Hall was completed.
- September 2004  
The production of a magazine for the restoration of the Mikuradori 5, 6, and 7-chome area began.