



Capacitar Letter from Japan



Dear Friends,

Special greetings to you from Japan where the pink and white cherry trees are in their glory. It is a joy to see the people enjoying the beauty of the flowers blooming everywhere, especially in places that have suffered from recent disasters. This past week we worked in Tohoku, the area impacted by the 9.0 earthquake and tsunami that hit five years ago on March 11, 2011. The tsunami killed over 15,894 people, with over 2500 still missing. A large part of the northeastern coast of Japan was destroyed and many people lost their loved ones, homes, businesses and livelihood. The tsunami also destroyed the Daichi Nuclear Powerplant and caused the meltdown of the reactors. Many people in the Fukushima Prefecture were evacuated and lost their homes because of the radiation that contaminated the area. With the disaster families were separated and relocated to different parts of Japan. A large number of people are still living in temporary housing and several hundred children now suffer from thyroid cancer.

Capacitar wanted to go to Japan shortly after the disaster, but this never worked out. Then in October, 2012 while on retreat at the Sea of Galilee, we met Maryknoll Sister Kathleen Reilly who asked us for a ride. On the road to Jerusalem we found out that Sr. Kathleen was a Zen Master who had lived and worked in Japan for over 40 years. She asked us why Capacitar hadn't yet worked in Japan and invited us to come to help with the healing efforts in the tsunami area. For many years, Capacitar has collaborated with Maryknoll Sisters around the world. So because of this synchronistic meeting with Kathleen, a very

April 2016

important collaboration developed out of which has grown Capacitar Japan. My first visit in June 2013, was organized by Kathleen and Yuko Endo, who served as translator and coordinator. Workshops were offered to over 350 people in the tsunami and radiation areas, as well as in Tokyo, to assess whether Capacitar's methods would be of interest and value for the people of Japan. Capacitar's simple popular education healing approach seemed to be what many people needed, so the work has grown.

This is my sixth visit to Japan and each time I am truly impressed with the interest, enthusiasm and commitment of the Japanese people. Much has been accomplished in less than three years. A Capacitar Japan team coordinated by Sr. Eiko Maki, CSJ, has developed that is



Capacitar Japan Team and Advisors: Coordinator Eiko Maki CSJ, Satako Iwatani, Yuko Oyama, Tsugumi Fujita, Masako Sako, Miura Fukiko and Shoko Monma



2016 Capacitar Multicultural Wellness Training with participants from 7 regions of Japan and representatives from many organizations.



Drum massage circle at a Capacitar training in Tokyo



Tsunmi survivors living in temporary housing, Ishinomaki



Kobe workshop for domestic violence survivors and staff

responsible for administration, program, translation, finances, promotion, website and Facebook development. Over 250 workshops have been offered to nearly 5000 people in many parts of Japan. A second cycle of training (4 modules of Multicultural Wellness Education) has just started in Tokyo with over 40 participants. Study groups are held on a monthly basis in 4 regions of Japan: Tokyo, Kamanashi, Yokohama, and Sendai/Ishinomaki. Outreach workshops are offered to address some of the systemic issues in Japan: gender violence, abuse, grief support, women's support, disaster relief response, and trauma healing in areas of disaster. Participants in trainings represent work in ministry, NGOs, organizations and institutions working in domestic violence and gender abuse, disaster response, grief work and bereavement, cancer support, elder day care, trauma outreach, schools, teachers, social workers, psychologists and counselors. Manuals and materials that are culturally appropriate are being translated into Japanese. There is the beginning of sustainable income through sales of materials (DVDs, CDs manuals), as well as fees from workshops and trainings, to generate a small but steady income for future development of program.

With all of this growth it has been wonderful to watch the change in people who have participated in workshops and trainings since 2013. Most have multiplied the Capacitar practices they learned with their organizations, families, friends, and communities. Their stories reflect the power of Capacitar and the resilient spirit of the people of Japan.

Sister Eiko Maki, CSJ, attended our first Capacitar workshop in Tokyo in 2013. Eiko is a psychologist who has worked with children and families for many years in Japan as well as in Chile. Right after the disaster she volunteered to work in Kamaishi, an area badly impacted by the tsunami. She visited poor elderly in shelters and temporary housing, giving support to the traumatized who had lost

family members and homes. When she first learned the Capacitar practices she realized that this was the missing piece in her trauma counseling. Culturally the Japanese people are not accustomed to talking about their feelings, so the body-based practices gave much relief, without a person having to verbalize their emotional pain and trauma. Eiko now serves as Capacitar International Japan Coordinator and continues her volunteer work in the tsunami zone.

Mr. Kaneta who lives in temporary housing in Tome came to our first training in Ishinomaki. He described himself as very angry and traumatized after losing his home, friends and possessions in the tsunami. He was very frustrated as he fought government bureaucracy to get a settlement for his losses. After learning Capacitar practices he decided that he wanted to help some of the poor elderly also living in temporary housing. He took a class in foot reflexology and now visits the elderly to offer them foot massage. As he listens to their woes, he also teaches them Capacitar Fingerholds and Emotional Freedom Tapping to ease their stress. He came to our workshop the other day with big smiles and gifts for us, a happy man who now has a purpose for his life.

In 2014 workshops we first met participants from Community Wave, Resilience and Satagaya Grief Support, organizations working with domestic violence and grief counseling in Tokyo. Masako Sako is a visionary leader of Community Wave, offering counseling as well as legal support to survivors. This was our third workshop with the organization that is now incorporating Capacitar practices in regular workshops and as part of their outreach and culture. Plans are underway to bring Capacitar to Okinawa in 2017 to offer trauma healing practices to older women who suffered gender violence from US military after World War II, as well as to women and children dealing with current violence.

Shoko Manmo from Sendai is a beautiful woman who supports women impacted by the tsunami, as well as women and children suffering from domestic violence (DV). When she came to our first training, she discovered that the practices were what had been missing in her talk therapy with individuals and groups. Supported by government and international funding, she now runs a center in Sendai for women. In addition, she visits juvenile offenders in several jails, runs ongoing support groups that include Capacitar practices and has a food project for poor children and mothers.

Terume Okaku is founder of Live-On, an organization for people whose family members have committed suicide. When Terume lost several members of her family to suicide, she wanted to do something to help others. Supported by a community of Buddhist monks, Terume runs ongoing support groups for those impacted by suicide. She also focuses on children orphaned by suicide. Live-On incorporates Capacitar practices in their grief groups, and support of persons struggling with suicide.



Mr Kaneta from Tome



Masako Sako with leaders of WAVE and Satagaya Grief Support



Shoko Manmo with staff and survivors of Mia Forza



Sendai tsunami survivor mother tapping with her daughters



Terume Okaku with monks of Live-On offering grief support



Closing circle at our new Capacitar training



There are so many other stories of healing and transformation that I could share. Each visit I learn so much from the people of Japan and their ancient culture—their beauty and grace, respect and honor, strength and courage, playfulness and great sense of humor. On many levels the people, especially the women of Japan, have struggled with so much—a history of violence and wars, the bombs and radiation, the earthquakes and tsunamis, the Fukushima radiation and government coverup in dealing with the disaster, and now the push to change the constitution to expand the military and the move of US military bases to an ecologically sensitive area. Capacitar is committed to walking with the people of Japan as our work here continues to take root and grow.

In peace and solidarity,

Pat Cane

www.capacitar.org



Capacitar workshop for families and elders from the Fukushima area who are living in temporary housing because of radiation—Chisoku an