

THE JTI FOUNDATION NEWS

In their own words

The Foundation supported a number of early recovery projects in 2013 – those that aim to meet the most basic needs of communities in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. These included the delivery of 504 tents to victims of flooding in Sudan with partner ShelterBox, and providing non-food aid to 502 families in the Philippines affected by Typhoon Haiyan, in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity International.

In addition, we continue to work with our partners to address the long-term needs of communities traumatized by natural and man-made disasters, or threatened by future catastrophes.

In this Newsletter, we look back at 2013 with a particular focus on the personal stories of those who have benefitted from our support.

Beneficiaries at the Ayuthaya community based disaster preparedness sessions



Participants of the CADRE training and Mr. Kantasak (second left from the back) gather at the BMA Training and Development Institute, Bangkok

Taking responsibility!

Training community's resilience to disaster

Since 2012, we have partnered the Bangkok-based Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, supporting the implementation of disaster preparedness programs for communities in the flood-prone Thai province of Ayuthaya. One of the key components of the project is the CADRE training aimed at providing community leaders and community based disaster professionals, the capacities to respond to disaster in order for them to transfer these skills locally. One of the officials trained was Somchai Kantasak, Ayuthaya sub-district officer.

"In disaster situations things rarely go as you've trained for," says Somchai, "so the important thing is to prepare and build those skills necessary to respond effectively to any and every situation."

Somchai explains how CADRE's approach improves on traditional courses. "What frustrates me most as a community-based disaster responder is

when a disaster strikes, and community members just wait for help to arrive. What I like about CADRE is that it emphasizes personal responsibility. By demonstrating basic skills that we can teach to other community members, CADRE encourages people to be more proactive in their own relief."

The CADRE course promotes this spirit of personal responsibility by teaching a broad range of disaster response skills, including preparedness, first aid, triage, search and rescue and dealing with water and fire-based emergencies.

"With these vital capacities, communities feel more confident to take responsibility for their own welfare at times of disaster," says Somchai. "And by taking personal responsibility, communities will not only help themselves, they will also support the efforts of government-led emergency response professionals – becoming valuable assets during times of trouble."

A sporting chance at recovery

WOMEN ON THE MOVE RECALL THEIR EXPERIENCE



Women participate to a psychosocial sport and play activity in Kajo Keji, South Sudan

Moving on in Kajo Keji

Our very first Newsletter introduced the psychosocial program developed by the Swiss Academy for Development to improve the life chances of South Sudanese women after many years of civil war in Sudan.

Rejoice Juan*, 25, and Alice Luba*, 32, two participants to the 'Women on the move' program, reflect on how sport- and play-based activities have changed their lives for the better.

"When I came to the playground on the first day, I was afraid because – like most women from Kajo Keji County – it was the first time I'd ever been involved in sporting activities," Rejoice remembers.

Through the program we learned life skills like setting goals and priorities

"After the first exercises I felt muscle pain – but at the same time, running and playing made me feel good, and my body felt fresh and relaxed. Exercising also helps you sleep the

whole night without being disturbed by bad memories. Before I joined the activities I felt weak – but after coming to the playground a few times, I started feeling stronger. I don't feel lazy anymore, and am more productive during the day". 'Women on the move' focuses on developing psychosocial, physical and practical skills, as Alice explains.

"Through the program we learned life skills like setting goals and priorities. The games also helped us to become more creative in finding solutions to our problems. At the playground, we were even taught about childcare and other things like breast-feeding, or how to prevent common illnesses."

Improved self-confidence and communication have been important outcomes for both. "I've learned a lot through drama about different situations, because you have to express yourself in front of others," says Rejoice. "It's important to share experiences with others because you know you are not alone, and can get solutions to your problems."

Alice agrees: "Today, talking about my troubles and having others listen to me is a relief. I no longer feel alone with my worries, because I know that I'm not the only one with problems."

"When a misunderstanding arises I know what to do, because we learned how to settle conflicts at the playground," says

Alice. I still have many challenges in my life, but now I have strategies to cope with them. In contrast, those who haven't joined 'Women on the move' don't resolve their problems, and fight among themselves. That's why it's also important that I provide guidance to others," she concludes.

In 2013, the JTI Foundation has approved a further 3 years of support to this project.



Beneficiaries participate in an all women football game

*names have been changed to protect the identity of the beneficiaries

Focus on REDOG

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROMAINE KUONEN PRESIDENT OF REDOG



Romaine Kuonen at the Search and Rescue and Emergency Relief Workshop organized by the JTI Foundation in 2013

Completely committed

We have partnered with the Swiss Rescue Dog association (REDOG) since 2011. Romaine Kuonen, REDOG's President, talks about how the volunteer-organization works – and how the Foundation's support has helped build its capacity.

When did you join REDOG?

I bought a Chesapeake Bay Retriever called Joy in 1988, and trained for four years before qualifying as a dog handler. Five years before I bought my dog, my city was completely destroyed by a natural disaster and rescuers had to look for people under meters of rubble. This experience triggered my motivation to join REDOG and develop this organization.

Can just anyone who owns a dog become a member of REDOG? Each physically and mentally healthy adult person can become a member. There are many breeds of dogs to choose from but they must not be too small nor too big. Most importantly, you should not be afraid, be willing to learn and have a passion and commitment to the search and rescue.

How does REDOG differ from other rescue dog organizations? REDOG is a leader in the field

of post-disaster training and search. REDOG can call on over 40 years of experience and around 700 members, including experts in location using acoustic and camera tracking. REDOG provides training to many countries including India, Morocco and Jordan – and works with Peace Winds Japan – another JTI Foundation partner. I would also add that REDOG, as a volunteer organization, provides a service to the population, which is not equaled by anyone else in this form in Switzerland.

How do you reconcile your life as both a professional and volunteer?

I commit almost 60% of my time to volunteering with REDOG, which is very time-consuming and often challenging. Fortunately, I'm a freelance dog-trainer and coach, and schedule my clients during off-peak times.

What have been your most memorable moments? Probably my first 'live' engagement with Joy. I realized that all the training was worth it – and that Joy had tremendous strength even under great pressure. Recent catastrophes in Indonesia and Japan also touched me. REDOG also makes a difference in Switzerland, for example, uniting families with their loved ones. While we obviously can't guarantee to find people alive, we try to bring support to desperate relatives.

The gratitude of people affected by our work motivates us all.

What has REDOG achieved with the JTI Foundation's support?

We're very happy to count the JTI Foundation as a partner. Thanks to its support, we've improved our new administrative office, which is an important part of our professionalization. In addition, JTIF supports us in areas including training and procuring equipment. We're very grateful for the interest and understanding the Foundation shows in our work.

What are REDOG's plans for the future?

REDOG wants to stay the leader in the training of disaster dogs. We plan to work closely with other organizations or example, Turkey's GEA – another Foundation partner – on joint operations in the event of major disasters. We'll also emphasize instruction on stress management and problem-solving. Training should continue to be exciting and personally rewarding for volunteers. Finally, we want to remain prepared for people in need, together with our four-legged friends – and be a significant humanitarian organization in Switzerland and across the world.

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