The value of our volunteers

A study focusing on the value of volunteers supporting the Red Cross Sato-no-House for the elderly in Chiba, Japan

Japanese Red Cross Society

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How we work

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Saving lives, changing minds.

Strategy 2020 voices the collective determination of the IFRC to move forward in tackling the major challenges that confront humanity in the next decade. Informed by the needs and vulnerabilities of the diverse communities with whom we work, as well as the basic rights and freedoms to which all are entitled, this strategy seeks to benefit all who look to Red Cross Red Crescent to help to build a more humane, dignified, and peaceful world.

Over the next ten years, the collective focus of the IFRC will be on achieving the following strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises
2. Enable healthy and safe living
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace

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Table of contents

Executive summary 2

1. Introduction 4

   Methodology of the study 4

   Japanese Red Cross Society 4

   JRCS volunteer programs 5

   Kimitsu Volunteer, Chiba Prefecture 6

   Sato-no-House program 7

   Comments from the family of beneficiary 8

2. The economic value of our volunteers 9

   A. Total number of volunteer hours 9

   B. Full-time staff equivalent of the total number of volunteer hours 9

   C. Total volunteer investment 9

   D. Total volunteer value 10

   E. The VIVA ratio 12

   F. Per capita costs and contributions 13

3. The social value of volunteering 14

4. What other values does volunteering bring? 15

5. Conclusion 16

6. Recommendations 16

List of tables

Table 1. Total number of volunteer hours rendered by volunteers 9

Table 2. Total volunteer invested in 2014 10

Table 3. Total volunteer value 11
Executive summary

The Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) ranks third in volunteering programme among the 189 Red Cross and Red Crescent societies worldwide with 2,203,888 volunteers (2012 figure), according to “Everyone counts” report by IFRC.

Most of these volunteers are categorized as community volunteers who belong to 2,053 volunteer groups. The present study covers only one of the many activities of one of these volunteer groups. This activity is called Sato-no-House run solely by the volunteers of the JRCS Kimitsu branch in Chiba prefecture.

Sato-no-House is financially independent from other activities of the Kimitsu group. It serves a small number of beneficiaries who are over 80 years old, twice a month in each of the two project sites. Volunteers are assigned to one beneficiary each to ensure a close personal service.

In Japan, social care is provided by daycare centres or social welfare institutions that are run by private companies or the government. The JRCS also runs 29 social welfare facilities across the country that provide support to children, people with disabilities, and the elderly. These social welfare facilities are operated by professional staff such as nurses, caregivers, and psychologists.

Sato-no-House is not a business. Its social value is manifested on the psychological impact on the beneficiaries and support to their families and the community. From an economic point of view, this activity is to some extent self-supporting, as it is partially funded by volunteers and beneficiaries. A group of in-kind donors called the Sanjo members pay part of expenses of the Kimitsu volunteers, excluding their meals.

Due to the changes that are taking place in our rapidly ageing society, we are dealing with many new local welfare problems. In order to support elderly, we need people who can provide care and financial support.

Kimitsu city Health and Social Welfare Department Mr. Shinya Oouchi

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1 This number is from the newly published IFRC report Everyone Counts Key data from 189 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies – a baseline November 2014

2 This number excludes the Junior Red Cross School Volunteers composed of 3,102,804 school children from 13,290 schools
Key findings

- Total number of beneficiaries: 22 with a total of 4173 visits in Sato in 2014
- Total number of volunteers mobilized: 156
- Total number of additional volunteers called Sanjo members who donate funds to this activity: 134
- Total volunteering hours spent: 2,880
- Number of full time paid staff equivalent to the total volunteering hours: 1.5
- Total volunteer investment on this activity from JRCS: JPY 301,980

The JRCS doesn’t invest directly in this activity. JRCS also does not invest in the Kimitsu volunteers working in Sato-no-House. Sato does not also receive funds from the Kimitsu volunteers.

- Investment per volunteer by JRCS: JPY 1990
- Total volunteer investment from within the activity (food and insurance for volunteers): JPY 301,980
- Total volunteer value: JPY 3,751,200
- Average value per volunteer: JPY 22,708
- VIVA ratio: 12.4

The Sato-no-House which is entirely volunteer-driven is a model Red Cross activity. It is founded by volunteers and participating beneficiaries and run by volunteers only.

“I have been volunteering for the Red Cross for 20 years” says Shigeko Nagatsuka, who is today already 72 years old but continues to provide her services at Sato-no-House. “I started working here because it gave such an attractive opportunity to communicate with the elderly. I come here twice a year and really enjoy for example our talk about gardening and farm products. We have a lot in common and a lot to give each other.”

At a glance!

22 beneficiaries reached in 2014
Total volunteer hours: 2,880
Equivalent full time staff for the total number of volunteer hours: 1.5
Total volunteer value: JPY: 3,751,210
Investment: JPY 310,520
VIVA ratio: 12

Recommendations

1. Analysis of the necessary preconditions for creating activities similar to Sato-no-House.
2. Survey among branches to identify the areas, and volunteer groups that are most suitable for the initiation of activities similar to Sato-no-House.
3. Information sharing and support meetings with volunteer groups in different areas.

For full list of recommendations, turn to page 16.

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3 小櫃公民館 Obitsuikuminkan 12人, 小糸公民館 Koitokouminkan 10人, 22 beneficiary members who come. But in total from Jan to Dec. 417
4 310,500/156
5 3,751,200/156
6 Volunteer value/volunteer investment = 3,751,200/301,980 = 12.42
1. Introduction

The Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA) model was developed by Katharine Gaskin to highlight the economic value of volunteer work. The model assesses the total value of volunteering by considering the ratio between the amount spent by the National Society on its volunteers and the economic value of the services they have rendered. The VIVA ratio shows the cost effectiveness of the project under review.

In addition to the economic value of volunteers, this study also considers the actual value to the beneficiaries in terms of the effectiveness of the services. This is conveyed through numerous quotes from volunteers and beneficiaries.

The activities of Sato-no-House are entirely managed and run by volunteers, making it an ideal candidate for the VIVA study. This social care activity conducted by the JRCS Kimitsu Red Cross volunteers was selected from the activities of the numerous different JRCS volunteer groups.

Methodology of the study

The study includes only Sato-no-House, involving 156 volunteers with 22 regular beneficiaries. The information gathered from many of the beneficiaries and volunteers interviewed which reflects very closely their general perceptions, includes both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data was collected on the number of volunteers and beneficiaries, working hours, comparative salary rates, etc. Qualitative data included interviews with both volunteers and beneficiaries designed to capture the general perception of the usefulness of the activity.

Japanese Red Cross Society

The JRCS was established in 1952 when the Japanese Red Cross Law was ratified. Its highest governing body is the Board of Representatives. Her Majesty the Empress of Japan is the Honorary President of the JRCS and other members of the Imperial Family serve as Honorary Vice-Presidents.
The JRCS is a very large organisation that runs a total of 442 medical, welfare and health facilities and employs around 65,000 people. This includes 92 hospitals that receive an average of 30,000 inpatients and 72,000 outpatients per day.

The National Headquarters is located in the heart of Tokyo and supports a nationwide network of chapters in all 47 prefectures of Japan. Each chapter has a Board of Councilors composed of elected members who supervise its activities. Below the chapter level are branches formed in association with government administrative units at the city, ward, town, and village levels.

**JRCS volunteer programmes**

The JRCS has two types of volunteer programmes, the Junior Red Cross (6-18 years old) and the Red Cross Volunteer Corp (19 and older). In March 2014, 13,290 Japanese schools had Junior Red Cross programmes, representing a third of all elementary, middle and high schools in Japan.

The JRCS volunteers (excluding junior Red Cross members) are divided into 2,863 different groups (corps) with a total of 2,217,963 volunteers belonging to five different categories of volunteers, namely, community volunteers (2,132,202), specialized volunteers (37,134), youth volunteers (6,957), individual volunteers (3,544) and registered disaster relief volunteers (38,126).

Community volunteers usually take part in community-based activities that could include training and preparing warm meals for evacuees during disasters, or collecting donations on the street.

Individual volunteers (who are not part of particular groups) nationwide, support various activities at the Japanese Red Cross Headquarters and prefectural chapters, hospitals and social welfare facilities, and other institutions. Additionally, about 75,000 people are registered as volunteer disaster responders (including groups) across the country. Special skilled volunteers provide expertise or specialties which they have cultivated in their jobs or hobbies such as; rescue services, and welfare support to the most vulnerable.

Additional information about the JRCS volunteer groups (corps):

http://www.jrc.or.jp/english/activity/member/

Additional information about the Junior Red Cross:

http://www.jrc.or.jp/english/activity/junior/
Number of junior Red Cross schools and members (2014)  

| Kindergartens / Nursery Schools | 1,558 | 138,977 |
| Elementary Schools              | 6,555 | 1,761,499 |
| Junior High Schools             | 3,211 | 940,508  |
| Senior High Schools             | 1,839 | 255,539  |
| Schools for Children with Special Needs | 100  | 6,281    |
| **Total**                       | **13,290** | **3,102,804** |

Number Red Cross volunteers and corps (2014)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>People</strong></th>
<th><strong>Corps</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community volunteers</td>
<td>2,132,202</td>
<td>2,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized volunteers</td>
<td>37,134</td>
<td>655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth volunteers</td>
<td>6,957</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual volunteers</td>
<td>3,544</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered disaster relief volunteers</td>
<td>38,126</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As of March 31, 2014

Kimitsu Volunteers, Chiba Prefecture  

The Kimitsu Red Cross volunteer group was established in 1972. It has 662 members supporting fund raising activities and services including first aid, health, blood donation, disaster preparedness, and care for the elderly and children as well as facilitating the Sato-no-House programme. Sato-no-House was established in 2001 in Koito district and in 2008 it expanded to Obuitsu district.

Sato-no-House is supported entirely by volunteers, beneficiaries and individual donors. Each time they participate, volunteers pay 500 yen and beneficiaries 800 yen spent mostly for their lunch that day. The community centres are borrowed from the prefecture free of charge while other needs are supported by the rest of the donations received.

Sato-no-House was established through the initiative of Ms. Kazuko Kamata, a former chair of the Kimitsu Red Cross volunteers who had organized a “gathering for the elderly” once a year for 29 years. The Kimitsu Red Cross volunteers wanted to continue the activity, and on the initiative of Ms. Kazuko Kamata, they started Sato-no-House with trained volunteers running the activities. In 2003, Sato-no-House was selected as a “Model Volunteer Activity” and its activities were reported in the JRCS volunteer annual activity book.

After the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami in 2011, the Kimitsu Red Cross volunteers held ten lunch sessions in the style of Sato-no-House for the evacuees from Fukushima prefecture to the Koito Community Centre in Chiba prefecture, to make them feel more comfortable. A total of 18 families participated in each event, supported by around 20 volunteers each time. Many of the families who later went back to Fukushima continued to keep in touch with the volunteers. In 2013, the Kimitsu...
RC volunteers went to Fukushima prefecture to visit the affected areas and reconnect with the former evacuees.

*Sato-no-House* programme

- **Project/ incident details including period, targeted beneficiaries etc.:**
  
  *Sato-no-House* is open to participants twice every month in each location (Koito community centre and Obitsu community centre). Activities include recital of poetry, singing, origami (paper folding), and other games suitable for the elderly participants. The participants and the volunteers enjoy their meal together which they themselves pay and prepare.

- **Number of volunteers deployed and their roles/profiles**
  
  Every two weeks, around 10 out of 156 Kimitsu volunteers take turns to ensure that there are enough volunteers attending to each monthly 6-hour session at the *Sato-no-House*. Ms. Kubo, chairwoman of the volunteer group, is responsible for the overall management of the activity while the rest of the volunteers look after the beneficiaries. Both volunteers and participants are female, elderly, mostly coming from farming communities with similar professions, and economic status. These shared characteristics help to create a feeling of closeness and belongingness among participants and volunteers.

- **How volunteers were recruited, trained, mobilized, protected and recognized:**

  Many of the volunteers have been working at *Sato-no-House* since it was founded. They were mainly recruited through introduction by friends or neighbours. Some were recruited from within the group of volunteers working in the branch.

- **Management of the volunteers in relation to the project under study:**

  The management of the whole project is in the hands of the volunteers themselves, headed by their chair, 70-year old Ms. Yuriko Kubo.

- **Total persons served:**

  Most of the elderly people visiting *Sato-no-House* are regular participants. Normally there are about 10 participants per session.

*We gave isolated people a place where they can feel at home.*

- Ms. Yuriko Kubo, volunteer
Comments from the family of beneficiary

My mother joined Sato-no-House when she was 90 years old. We were not sure if Sato would accept her because of her very old age, but they kindly accepted us. Before she joined Sato, she used to sleep a lot and did not go out as much. After she joined Sato, she learned how to play koto (Japanese traditional instrument) and recite shigin (Japanese traditional Chinese poem). She started playing the koto at home all the time and was looking forward to going to Sato-no-House. I was most surprised to hear from her roommate at the hospital where she stayed for a month because of her heart problem that she used to recite shigin and the traditional poems from Kimitsu that she learned at Sato-no-House. My mother passed away when she was 94 years old. We are truly grateful for the joy Sato-no-House gave her.

Mrs Tamayo Matsumoto was introduced to Sato-no-House by another volunteer and has been enjoying her voluntary work with the elderly. She received training in how to attend to the participants by first working in a home for elderly, but she still feels that her tasks are quite demanding. But, she says, “Volunteering is very natural for me. I feel that I should be doing what I can when I can, even if it is a bit strenuous. Also we are all having great fun. I am looking forward to the year-end annual lunch party every year.”
2. The economic value of our volunteers

A. Total number of volunteer hours

**Table 1. Total number of volunteer hours rendered by volunteers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of volunteers</th>
<th>156</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of volunteer hours rendered</td>
<td>2,880 hours/year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 156 volunteers provide their services through the Sato activity. On average, 10 volunteers attend each bi-weekly session in two locations. The total number of sessions per year is 48. Volunteers spend approximately 6 hours each time they attend. The number of hours per year is calculated as 48 weeks * 6 hours * 10 volunteers. The chairwoman is estimated to spend 6 hours per week for 48 weeks.

B. Full-time staff equivalent of the total number of volunteer hours

In order to carry out the work of the 156 volunteers, the branch would need the equivalent of 1.5 full time personnel. This was computed as follows:

\[
\text{Equivalent full time staff} = \frac{\text{Total volunteer hours}}{40 \text{ hours per week}} \times \frac{48 \text{ weeks per year}}{(2,880 \text{ hours})} = \frac{2,880}{40} \times 48 = 2 \text{ staff (round up)}
\]

C. Total volunteer investment

The total volunteer investment shows all the expenses associated with having volunteers. It must be emphasized that some expenses were incurred by the Kimitsu volunteer group because of the presence of the Sato-no House volunteers. If there were no Sato volunteers, it would not be incurring these expenses, but as the Kimitsu volunteer group is not receiving any contributions from the JRCS or its branches and chapters, it cannot be counted as volunteer investment. All expenses of the Kimitsu volunteers are paid for by internally generated funds.

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“Words like “here is the best place to be” is what motivate me the most.”

– Mieko Tsukizaki, volunteer

Mieko Tsukizaki, 69 years old, started working as a volunteer at Sato-no-House when it was founded 13 years ago. She has been to a total of 130 sessions.
The value of our volunteers

A study focusing on the value of volunteers supporting the Red Cross

Sato-no-House for the elderly in Chiba, Japan | Japanese Red Cross Society

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**Table 2. Total volunteer investment in 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Expenditure</th>
<th>Cost Detail</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Expenses on meals / snacks provided to volunteers</td>
<td>257,480</td>
<td>85.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Travel expenses made by volunteers to fulfill their duties.</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>00.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>Equipment provided to volunteers</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>00.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>Insurance for volunteers</td>
<td>44,500</td>
<td>14.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>301,980</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Money spent on the Sato-no-House activities in 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses of Sato-no-House</th>
<th>JPY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food:</td>
<td>592,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Fee:</td>
<td>48,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance:</td>
<td>19,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting fee:</td>
<td>11,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment:</td>
<td>52,525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity fee:</td>
<td>5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td>730,157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sato-no-House is financially independent. All expenses incurred at the Sato, including food, transportation and insurance of the participants and volunteers as well as the materials used for the activities are shouldered by the participants and volunteers themselves with the support of the community and individual donors. The JRCS does not contribute funds to the Sato-no-House.

**D. Total volunteer value**

This study analyses the functions carried out by volunteers and time spent on each activity, and matches it to the equivalent paid work at the market wage, which is what

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8 Amount spent on food 592,836 417 beneficiaries, 320 volunteers spent this money over the year. Food budget/number of people = amount per person = 804yen per time for food. 320*804yen 257,405 was spent by the volunteers

9 24700 Yen in Koito district and 19800 Yen in Obitu district. This is for beneficiaries and volunteers who participate in Sato-no-house.

10 24700 Yen in Koito district and 19800 Yen in Obitu district. This is for beneficiaries and volunteers who participate in Sato-no-House.
the National Society would need to pay if it were hiring staff to carry out the same work. The table below presents the equivalent positions or paid work a volunteer is doing during the course of their duties:

### Table 3. Total volunteer value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Role</th>
<th>Equivalent Paid Job</th>
<th>Hourly Wage Rate in JYP</th>
<th>Number of Hours/ Month</th>
<th>Number of Hours/ Year</th>
<th>Number of Vols in this role (average each session)**</th>
<th>Total Annual Volunteer Value JPY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairwoman</td>
<td>Care Manager</td>
<td>1541</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>443,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>Care Worker***</td>
<td>1276</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>2592</td>
<td>9/session</td>
<td>3,307,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>240</td>
<td>2880</td>
<td>10****</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,751,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All amounts in JPY, (Japanese Yen)*
**Total number of volunteers in the program is 156. 10 volunteers attend each session****
***798 is the minimum salary in Chiba prefecture for any kind of work. Based on http://nensyu-labo.com salary for workers in comparable positions a Care Manager receives 1541 and a care worker is 1276.
****The activity takes place in two locations, and there are 10 volunteers in each session in each place. So there are 2x2 sessions x 10 volunteers per month x 6 hours =240

The table above is a summary of the figures used to calculate the VIVA ratio, which shows the ratio between volunteer investment and volunteer ratio. By analysing the market value of the work contributed by the volunteers and comparing it with the cost incurred by the branch as a result of the volunteer services, the cost efficiency of the activity can be presented. This has to be based on a realistic evaluation of the JPY market value of the work. This can be done by comparison with equivalent professions and their average salaries in the Japanese labor market. In this study the work of the chairwoman was evaluated as equivalent to that of a care manager, as her role is first and foremost the management of this social care program. Her work contribution was estimated to be approximately four working days per month. The remaining volunteers prepare food, facilitate various recreational activities, and assist the elderly participants, many of whom have limited physical capacity. The work contributed by other volunteers is estimated to be similar to that of a care worker and the total work contribution is approximately four days per month for nine volunteers each session. This work is divided among the 156 volunteers who are supporting the project.

The number of volunteers in the table is not the actual Kimitsu volunteer number, but the number of volunteers attending each session. Many of the volunteers only attend a few times per year. They work depending on the needs and their own preferences. Thus the final input is the total contribution of the whole group of volunteers who participate in the activity.
E. The VIVA ratio

The VIVA ratio is computed using the formula:

\[
\text{VIVA ratio} = \frac{\text{Total volunteer value}}{\text{Total volunteer investment}}
\]

Using the values obtained during the VIVA exercise, we can reach the following calculation:

\[
\text{VIVA ratio} = \frac{\text{JPY 3,751,200}}{\text{301,980}} = 12.4
\]

The VIVA ratio calculation means that for every one Japanese Yen (JPY 1) invested on the volunteers, the Chiba Red Cross branch receives JPY 12 worth of services rendered by the volunteers.

*Sato-no-House is financially independent and its activities do not result in any additional expenses for the Kimitsu volunteer group nor the Kimitsu branch. Hypothetically the activity would save JPY 301,980 in contributions to food and insurance if staff were hired to do the same work as the volunteers. The volunteers taking part in the activity donate funds to Sato to cover their own food expenses and insurance fee.*

*Making paper cranes.*
F. Per capita costs and contributions

Calculations on the hours, value and expenditure for each Sato-no-House volunteer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per capita hours*</th>
<th>=</th>
<th>Total number of volunteer hours</th>
<th>Total number of volunteers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,880</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>= 18 hours per volunteer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per capita expenditure*</th>
<th>=</th>
<th>Total volunteer investment</th>
<th>Total number of volunteers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>301,980</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>= 1,935.77 JPY per volunteer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per capita value*</th>
<th>=</th>
<th>Total volunteer value</th>
<th>Total number of volunteers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>JPY 3,751,200</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>= JPY 24,046 per volunteer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Annual for the average volunteer

The total per capita hour’s contribution of volunteers was calculated by dividing the total number of volunteer hours with the total number of volunteers. The 156 volunteers contributed 2,880 hours’ work, which gives an average of 18 hours per volunteer.

The total per capita expenditure should be calculated by dividing total volunteer investment with the total number of volunteers. Although there is a per capita expenditure of JPY 301,980, this expenditure is actually covered by the volunteers themselves and does not put pressure on the financial requirements of the branch.

The per capita value of volunteers was calculated by dividing the total volunteer value by the total number of volunteers. The 156 volunteers contributed JPY 3,751,200 JPY, which give an average per capita value of JPY 24,046 per volunteer.

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11 The per capita contribution refers to the “volunteers mobilized in 2014.”

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Akiko Kajiwara, 85 years old, has been attending the monthly activities at Sato-no-House for more than 10 years.
3. The social value of volunteering

Ten volunteers and eight participants were interviewed for the VIVA study. With regard to what motivated them to continue working at Sato-no-House, a common theme expressed by the volunteers was the pleasure of being of service to the elderly in their community. They perceived the assistance and activities as useful in breaking the social isolation of the elderly who are living alone. The volunteers also continued their work for the pleasant social relations with the beneficiaries and other volunteers.

Measuring the actual effect of the project is not very easy, but it is quite clear that to a significant extent, it succeeds in bringing new life, dignity and a feeling of security and belongingness among the elderly who are living alone in the community. Sato-no-House ensures that they have an opportunity to meet people and enjoy various social activities twice every month. Those who were interviewed also pointed out that the programme strengthened social ties among people in the community and encouraged general helpfulness and mutual care among all neighbours.

Like the participants, the volunteers also said they come to Sato-no- House for the enjoyment of meeting other volunteers and the participants, with whom they have many things in common. Several of the volunteers mentioned that through their volunteering work they met many new people, widening their network of friends and acquaintances.

Seventy-year old Mrs. Takeko Watanabe said that she felt a deep concern for every single individual who attended the sessions and was always worried when someone did not show up. This, in addition to several other similar comments from other volunteers, shows that the interaction among volunteers and participants creates and maintains a very strong bond and further deepens volunteers’ devotion to their work.

The chairwoman of the volunteers at Sato-no-House, 70-year old Ms. Yuriko Kubo, also chair of Kimitsu volunteers, said that while Sato is well appreciated by both the volunteers and participants, she admitted that the low turnover of volunteers is likely to have some impact on the project in the long run.. Full efforts to intensify volunteer recruitment, especially among the youth have not been very successful as many of the youth are often working full-time while some are already looking after their old parents who need full time attention themselves.

Very commonly, volunteers are introduced to Sato-no-House by their friends or relatives. In this respect, Mrs. Watanabe serves as a good example, as she was asked
by her husband to take over his role as volunteer at Sato-no-House when he became physically disabled and could not continue.

Japan is an aging society and in many communities, especially in rural areas, there are few younger people to take the place of volunteers who become too old to continue to provide their services. One volunteer, 73-year old Mrs. Chie Ishii mentioned that she had been forced to give up volunteering during her own fight with cancer. Now she can only manage to go to Sato-no-House sometimes. A very large part of the volunteers are elderly women like Mrs. Ishii who will perhaps be still able to continue to Sato-no-House, but no longer as volunteers, but beneficiaries.

4. What other values does volunteering bring

- The activities of the volunteers at Sato-no-House also result in improved cooperation in the community in general which greatly improves the quality of life of the elderly.
- Except when there are major disasters Japan is a very a stable country that has good basic infrastructure and housing and people are in general, financially well off. However, these factors by themselves cannot secure the elderly a good life. What is more important to ensure a high quality of life for the elderly is the human factor such as friendship and support. Thus, the most important value that Sato-no-House brings to the aging society it serves is the spirit of volunteerism.
- The objective of Sato-no-House to generate cash or in-kind income from the community in order to be sustainable, encourages resource mobilization among volunteers, participants and individuals.

Sato-no-House has been covered several times in the media, but not enough to highlight the social significance of its activities and promote volunteering. It is expected that the result of this VIVA study and the associated production of media materials will gain more media hype and boost further Sato-no-House and encourage more volunteers, participants and members to join the activity. More importantly, it is hoped that the full promotion of Sato-no-House will showcase JRCS as a volunteer-based organisation that is part of a universal humanitarian Movement that serves the most vulnerable.

The major challenges according to Ms. Kubo, is that the number of volunteers participating in this activity is decreasing and they need to incorporate both men and women of the younger generation to promote gender balance. They also need to reach out to wider communities (not just the farming communities) with more diverse backgrounds.
5. Conclusion

The results of this study show that the volunteers working for the Sato-no-House are adding tremendous value without requiring any direct inputs from the Chiba Red Cross chapter. The activity also does not require human resources in terms of staff as the chairwoman of the volunteer group is responsible for all management issues and donates all her work free of charge like the other volunteers. Hypothetically the volunteers contribute work equivalent to JPY 3,751,200 per year, while their direct costs (volunteer investment) of JPY 310,520 are covered by the volunteers themselves.

In all, the study gives a very encouraging picture of voluntary work in JRCS, as the cost efficiency is very good and does not incur any identifiable extra cost on the JRCS or the Kimitsu volunteers. Through the study, excellent material was gathered on the benefits of the project for both the elderly participants and the volunteers, indicating that the activity is indeed succeeding in breaking the isolation of elderly people in the community. Additional benefits are the increased social relations that volunteers enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from serving their community.

6. Recommendations

1. **Analysis of the necessary preconditions for creating activities similar to Sato-no-House:** Efforts should be made by the Kimitsu JRCS branch to identify what factors constitute the right foundation for similar volunteer led activities. The needs of the aging communities and the possibilities for recruiting volunteers with the necessary motivation and resources therefore need to be thoroughly explored with the view of expanding volunteer activities of a similar kind.

2. **Survey among branches to identify the areas, and volunteer groups that are most suitable for the initiation of activities similar to Sato-no-House:** In order to get a clearer picture which areas and needs to focus on, the JRCS should cooperate with local authorities and organisations to initiate a survey of aging rural and semi-rural communities to identify priority communities. This includes survey of prevailing social conditions, such as level of isolation and support and also an evaluation of the volunteer base and the possibility of organising campaigns specifically designed for this purpose.

3. **Information sharing and support meetings with volunteer groups in different areas.** Based on the information gathered, Headquarters and Chiba chapter will be able to suggest meetings between Sato-no-House volunteers and suitable volunteer groups in other areas. Ideally, the subsequent process of starting a new activity would be entirely volunteer-driven.
Humanity  The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality  It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality  In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence  The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service  It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity  There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality  The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.
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