

**“It was good to know about other temporary housing areas” – An information exchange session held at a meeting place in Rikuzentakata (March 24, 2012)**

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Utilizing a meeting place or lounge established in each temporary housing area, Save the Children has been providing places for the children, who are the residents of such temporary housing, to play, learn and grow.

Meeting places and lounges are established in the temporary housing areas built mainly in the coastal area of Iwate Prefecture. In many cases, such places would be set up by administrative bodies; however, since August 2011, Save the Children has established them in the temporary housing areas accordingly to the people’s request, by cooperating and coordinating with Iwate’s Bureau of Reconstruction, and the Construction and Housing Section. Up to now, Save the Children supported the establishment of eight of them in Rikuzentakata City and one in Kamaishi City.



[Temporary meeting place in Rikuzentakata City #1]



[Temporary meeting place in Rikuzentakata City #2]

These meeting places are used for children: elementary school students and junior high school students share the place according to the time schedule allocated for each of them. The places

are often used for events as well and welcome both adults and children. Children-friendly furniture provided is also used by all.



[Temporary meeting place in Rikuzentakata City #3]

During the winter vacation, the places were made open to the public as a children's study room.

One day, someone from the neighboring association, which operates one of the meeting places that Save the Children supports the establishment, asked a question: "How do other housing areas manage their meeting places? How do they ensure places for their children?" To find the answer, we organized an information exchange session on March 5, 2012 (Monday) in Rikuzentakata City. Nine representatives from several temporary housing areas, which Save the Children had been involved in the establishment of their temporary meeting places, gathered at the session.

At the information session, the participants shared information related to people's daily living and the management of meeting places, and discussed about places for children to play or spend their time. They were particularly active in sharing information on their daily living such as how to pass around a notice and how to distribute supplies. Furthermore, they also talked actively about how children are usually doing and how they can create meeting places where children feel comfortable to stay.



### **Comments from the representatives**

We could receive various comments from the representatives:

“It is helpful to hear the opinions of other representatives who stand in the same position.”

“It was really good to have information about other temporary housing areas. I was satisfied.”

“It was good to hear about various topics.”

“I want to have another information exchange session.”

“I hope we can continue to provide such places where children can naturally gather together and become absorbed in something.”

By exchanging information about other housing areas, it seems that the participants could solve their concerns and worries that they used to have daily, making this occasion meaningful for them.

Save the Children will continue to organize information exchange sessions for the representatives of temporary housing areas. In the next session, because it is one year after the earthquake now, we want to set a place for a deeper, necessary discussion on establishing places for children.