

## “I want to have places where children can play more active roles”

(Sept. 7, 2012)

As a part of our program “Speaking Out From Tohoku (SOFT): Building Better Communities Through the Participation of Children,” Save the Children Japan (SCJ) conducted the “Hear Our Voice 7: Survey on Child Participation 2012” from June 19 to August 1, 2012. Those surveyed were students from 4th grade to senior high school grades living in Yamada-machi and Rikuzentakata City of Iwate prefecture, and Ishinomaki City of Miyagi prefecture.

### ■ Voices from almost 15,000 children ■

Following last year’s survey, this survey was conducted to grasp how children themselves perceive child participation in local reconstruction after the Great East Japan Earthquake. In addition, as support by adults is indispensable for children to participate in reconstruction, we conducted a survey of adults also. We received valid responses from 14,600 children and 5,296 adults, which clarified the following:



### “I want to be involved in the reconstruction of my town” – about 70%

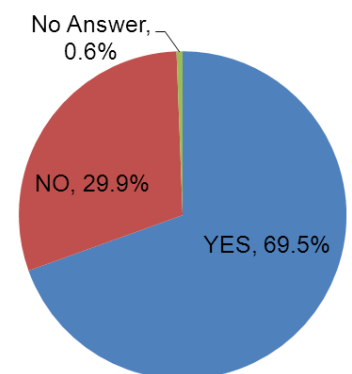
To the question, “Do you want to be involved in the reconstruction of your town?” 69.5% of children responded “Yes.” This shows their great willingness to be involved in reconstruction (see graph to the right).

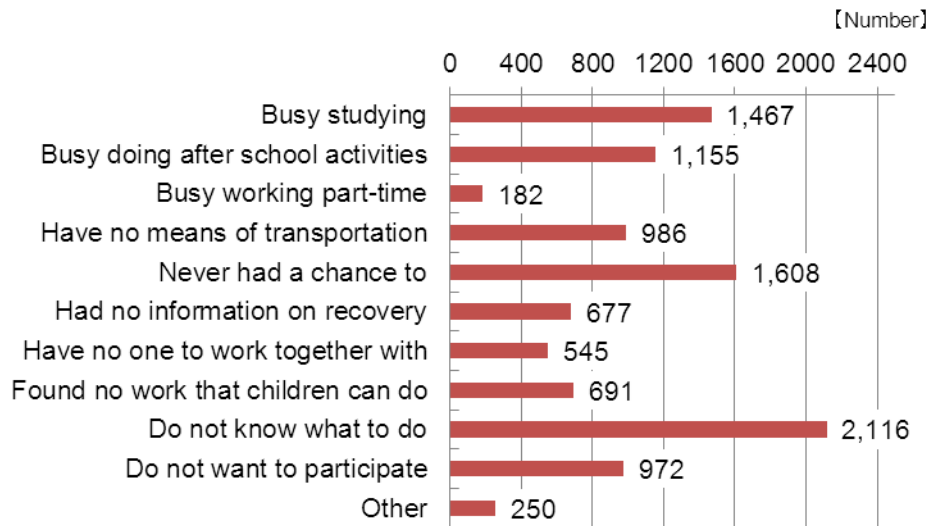
### “I did something for the reconstruction of my town” – about 58%

To the question, “Have you done anything for the reconstruction of your town?” 57.5% of children responded “Yes.” This, however, is lower than the proportion of children who answered that they wanted to be involved in reconstruction efforts.

### “I don’t know what to do”, “I have no opportunity to be involved”

Among those who responded “No” to the questions, “Do you want to be involved in the reconstruction of your town?” and “Have you done anything for the reconstruction of your town?” reasons such as “I don’t know what to do,” and “I have no opportunity to be involved” ranked high. Furthermore, responses like “I am busy with study/clubs” also ranked high, suggesting that their normal lifestyles from before the earthquake may gradually be recovering.





(Reasons of saying “No” to the question, “Do you want to be involved in the reconstruction of your town?”)

### Children’s voices (extracted from replies to an open question)

“I am so grateful for the people working for reconstruction. I am looking forward to seeing what my town has become after I grow up!” (Yamada-machi, 4th grader, male)

“Matsubara will come back.” (Rikuzentakata City, 5th grader, male)

“If adults understand children’s feelings and how children see reconstruction, and if adults and children work together, the things that we can do together should be limitless. So I want adults to trust us children and let us participate in your circle that aims toward reconstruction. (Ishinomaki City, 6th grader, female)

“I want to have places where children can play more active roles.” (Ishinomaki City, 10th grader, female)

“I want to cooperate in the reconstruction, putting away my feelings that we are also disaster victims. So if there is anything that I can do, please let me know.” (Rikuzentakata City, 12th grader, female)

“There are people who have no interest in reconstruction. I hope it is not you.” (Ishinomaki City, 7th grader, male)

“Is the current Yamada-machi really in the process of reconstruction? How will my future be? Will future children become able to convey and share their opinions?” (Yamada-machi, 8th grader, female)

### ■ Provide more opportunities for children to participate toward the reconstruction of their community! ■

SCJ thinks that adults should respond to the voices of children who want to be involved in reconstruction. Also, all the members of society should be unified as one, and further provide children with information on their local recovery and opportunities for participation. Therefore, while cooperating with authorities, parents and local people, we want to continue our activities to let children insist and be involved in the reconstruction of their communities through various means, including the Children’s Community Building Clubs.

We would sincerely like to thank everyone for cooperating in this survey. All voices received from children in this survey will be collected and compiled into a report. Please continue to listen to the voices of children from Tohoku. We thank you for your cooperation in advance.

(Reported by Yumiko Hasegawa, Tokyo Office)