

# Ibashi in Japan

Two years  
after its  
founding,  
Ibashi  
Café marks  
milestones





## Challenges

- In 2011, over 18,000 people were killed and more than 65,000 were displaced when a massive earthquake and tsunami hit northern Japan.
- Elders are generally sidelined, given little or no role to play within their communities. This is a loss at the best of times, weakening community ties and resilience.
- In the devastated coastal community of Ofunato, many elders saved younger people's lives during the initial period of the disaster by guiding them to higher ground and teaching them to survive with extremely limited resources in the aftermath of the disaster.
- As the community began the daunting task of rebuilding, elders wanted to continue to play a useful role, and aid organizations were seeking to maximize the impact of their investments.



*"I always thought that helping people in other countries was beyond what we could do. But we don't have to be in United Nations or international organizations to make difference. We received so much help from others. It is our turn to do something for the people in the Philippines. There is a lot I want to do with them and to learn from them. I hope we can help each other for a long time."*

—74 YEAR OLD MAN



## Solution

**In response, Ibasho worked with the Ofunato community to develop and innovative solution; The Honeywell Ibasho House.**

- Elders were acknowledged as community assets and included as a vital part of the recovery process.
- Ibasho and the community jointly created the concept of an "Ibasho house", staffed by elder volunteers, that would serve as a community hub and a focal point of the recovery effort.
- Community elders led the process and took responsibility for its ongoing operation while Ibasho provided expertise in architectural design and community engagement.
- The Ibasho Café functions as a sustainable business that builds social capital and community resilience while at the same time changing people's mindsets about aging.



## Return on Investment

The Ibasho Café maximizes recovery investment funds by accelerating the recovery process, and creating a sustainable asset of ongoing benefit to the community. It does this in three ways:

### Empowering the local community

The Ibasho Café was designed and built by the community, empowering them to drive their own recovery process. Research has demonstrated that playing an active role in disaster reconstruction can help to address psychological trauma caused by the disaster. In addition to building and operating the café, the elders took further initiative to establish a community vegetable garden, farmers market, noodle shop, and child day care service. Elders organized approximately 330 events and welcomed more than 11,000 visitors in the first two years.

### Reversing the Role of Elders

Elders are typically treated as a vulnerable group in need of assistance. The Ibasho Café leveraged the vast experience and knowledge of elders as an asset to support community recovery. For example, the timber roof of the café building was restored with traditional techniques that only elder carpenters had knowledge of. At Ibasho events, elders teach younger generations how to make traditional foods.

### Building Long-Term Resilience

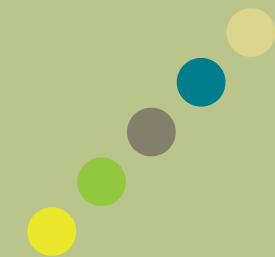
It is financially sustainable, and continues to strengthen the social capital of the community, making it more resilient to future shocks. Elders from Ofunato are now working with elders in the Philippines to help them recover from Typhoon Yolanda, which occurred in November 2013.



## Achievements

- Elders organized 330 events and welcomed more than 11,000 visitors
- Intergenerational activities with local schools and temporary housing communities
- To make their operation self sustainable, elders started an organic farm, a farmer's market, a noodle shop, and a child day care, and learned to apply for grants proposals
- Travel to Philippines to help setting up Ibasho project, and donated funds collected by elders in Ofunato.
- Peer to Peer knowledge exchange program: Invited Filipino elders to Ibasho House in Ofunato
- Elders from Ibasho participated in the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Media coverage: 6 lectures in international conference. Reports and articles published in: AARP, The World Bank, LeadingAge, RedCross, NHK, and Bloomberg.

**Ibasho sincerely thanks Honeywell Hometown Solutions, Operation USA, Tenjin-kai, the City of Ofunato, and other Hokkaido University, Ito-gumi and individuals for supporting this project.**



# Ibasha

## What does Ibasha mean?

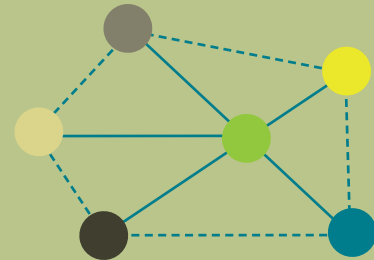
Ibasha means “a place where you can feel like yourself” in Japanese. At Ibasha we believe that every person deserves an Ibasha as they age – a place to experience safety, comfort, dignity, and the satisfaction of being respected as someone with valuable history and experience to share.

## Mission

A world that embraces the positive qualities of aging while addressing its challenges. We partner with local organizations and communities to design and create sustainable communities that value their elders, where elders can interact with and contribute to community members of all ages.

## Key Principles

- Elders as assets
- Multigenerational community
- Local participation and control
- Design based on community needs and cultural values
- Design guided by elders’ wisdom and experience
- Evidence-based practices
- Global exchange of knowledge and replication of what works



## Future Plans

- Replicating the Ibasha approach in identified communities in the Philippines and Nepal
- Promote the Ibasha approach in both developed and developing countries.
- Promote a peer-to-peer knowledge exchange program between communities that have been through similar disasters (e.g. natural disaster: Philippines and Nepal)
- Create a global Ibasha support network
- Continue to enhance the Ibasha model through vigorous research and evaluation

**This is not just an investment in people and places that are far away, but an investment in our own future. With your support, the Ibasha principles can become a reality. Please support us!**

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