

Volunteer program of falling down prevention of furniture in cooperation with local residents and its social and educational effects

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1. Introduction

The department of geography and the department of housing studies of Oita University jointly execute the activities for disaster prevention and mitigation by the university students continuously in cooperation with the self-governing body of Fukiura District at Saeki City, Oita Prefecture. The departments researched the consciousness and preparation for disaster prevention and mitigation of the district by the questionnaire for all households in 2013. As a result, they confirmed the realities of its awareness, and also confirmed that there were a lot of households could not accomplish the preparation by themselves. Therefore the both departments jointly planned in 2014 the volunteer program by the university students that fixing the work of furniture in the room for the household that could not practice the disaster prevention and mitigation measures, in consideration of the problem of the district of securing an escape route for many households.

2. Feature of the program

This program is not a mere social contribution activity that the student fixes furniture of the household, such as aged and living alone as mentioned above, but it has several advantages as below.

The first was to have executed it by cooperation with other departments of our university. Unfortunately, there are neither an education nor a research organization related to the disaster prevention and mitigation in our university. This program mobilized the technology and the knowledge that related to this program like the natural disaster, the residential design and the woodworking, etc. by cooperating with other departments.

The second is that the participating student has to be obligated to take the lectures in the university campus before and after the volunteer. The lectures included the contents such as the necessity of the disaster prevention and mitigation activity, the possibility of the natural disaster of Fukiura District and so on by the university staffs and NPO staff outside the university. Therefore, the student widely acquired related knowledge and skills necessary for the furniture fixation in advance.

The third is that each activity for the furniture fixation volunteer was basically executed by the group in a lateral department. The students had their own role in the activity based on their characteristic of each academic field, and they accomplished the activity in cooperation with each other.

The fourth was to receive the local residents' cooperation in the volunteer activity. Each group had one local resident, and they jointly took action in the preparatory research and the furniture fixation work.

3. Social and educational effects of the program

A provision in the region of the natural disaster is one of the major problems of modern Japan regardless of the city region or rural regions. This program was a small practice for our university and the local resident, but it contains an important key concept of as an international research program Future Earth, such as interdisciplinary approach that exceeded the fence in the academic fields of a natural science, the social science, and engineering and so on. And it also includes the concept stakeholder, and this program executed by the university student, the university staff and the local resident.

Questionnaire for the participating student at the start and the end of the program says that the program has improved the knowledge acquisition of natural disaster and the awareness for the natural disaster prevention and mitigation based on the actual region. In the post-program questionnaire, the targeted household mentioned the information about the program to their relatives and neighbors with their gratitude to the student. This program was connected with the durabilities of the awareness and activities of the disaster prevention and mitigation to each stakeholder's.

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