

**Excursion Report –
Community Based Car-sharing in Ishinomaki**

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This report is about housing in the east of Ishinomaki and the car-sharing project that was developed in these shelters after the tsunami on march 11, 2011.

After getting off the train at Mangokuura Station we went to one of the temporary housing facilities right next to the Mangokuura Junior High School. There we met Takehiko Yoshizawa the man who started the car sharing project in this temporary housing area.

Takehiko Yoshizawa's story of introducing car-sharing

When the earthquake happened Mr. Yoshizawa was in the city centre of Ishinomaki. He broke through the door of a warehouse with a truck to save himself and stayed there until the next morning. After staying in a elementary school for some days he moved to a temporary housing facility on march 14.

Important negative points about these facilities where that the people there did not know each other, that the places got dirty because people threw there garbage on the ground and that it was hard to get around because many cars where washed away by the tsunami. With the help of a friend he organised a few cars to be used by



Figure 1: The temporary housing facilities we visited

the inhabitants of the temporary housing facility. The cars arrived in July and from August the car sharing service was available. Mr. Yoshizawa realized that this car-sharing system did not only help with the lack of available cars but also helped people to get to know each other and by that improved the whole sense of community. From this point on people also started to organize themselves to solve there problems raise their voice for their needs together.

When people started to move to permanent houses the same problems emerged again. Because people again did not know each other the community in these buildings was not as good. Mr. Yoshizawa wanted to introduce the car-sharing systems in these buildings too. Here this was much harder because people did not need car-sharing because there was not such a lack of cars. But in Yoshizawa's opinion they needed it for the community spirit. A questioning with the people living in temporary and public houses showed that people with access to car-sharing have 20% more close friends within the community than people without access to car-sharing.

The car-sharing system

In the temporary housing facility that we have visited there are about 100 households with around 200 inhabitants have access to two shared cars. This is one of the largest settlements. In one container there are living one to four people and everyone has about 4 Tatami-mats of space. Not everybody can just use these cars on their own. Volunteers bring people to their destinations in their free time. Some drivers for example are retired or do not work for other reasons. The biggest community has 43 users.

The goal is not to make profit but to cover the costs. The fee and the rules are different in every community. If somebody needs a ride the drivers can be contacted directly on their mobil phones. The

main purposes of the car-sharing are to bring people to shopping facilities or to the hospital. Sometimes there are even excursions organised with the shared cars.

Until 2010 car-sharing was not allowed in Japan and people did not really know much about it. Especially in the county side people are very used to owning their own cars. Now there are no mayor legal problems because the drivers are volunteers and do not get any money.



Figure 2: One of the shared vehicles with "Suton" and "Roly" on it

Mitsubishi donated electric 6 cars for the organisation and the car maintenance services are provided by students voluntarily. Now there are already more than 100 shared cars. All of them were donated. Even spare parts are donated by different companies. The organisation is also supported by the prefecture of Ishinomaki. Each of the cars covers about 1000 km per month.

The two characters on the logo of the organisation like the whole design were also made by volunteers. Their names "Suton" and "Roly" stand for Ishi (stone) and maki (roll).

The goal of the organisation is to develop 10 to 15 communities. After that they want to start profitable businesses to earn money for the non-profitable offers.

Permanent public houses

After the meeting with Mr. Yoshizawa we took the bus to one of the permanent public housing buildings. It is situated at 1 Chome-7, Yoshinochō Ishinomaki-shi which is around 500 meters away from the mouth of Kitakami River. Because of that a big part of the surrounding buildings was destroyed by the tsunami. People in these buildings pay around 100€ rent per month, which is very cheap.

The public residential buildings are up to 8 stories high and function as evacuation spots because they are built to resist another tsunami. On the rooftops there are solar panels to charge the shared vehicles. There is even a truck with a mobile charging station to provide electricity in case of another disaster. One of the fully charged electric cars can provide 1500 kWh for one household for six hours. The truck can even fully charge two of these cars. But the solar panels on the rooftops are only for charging the cars but cannot provide electricity for the apartments directly.



Figure 3: one of the permanent public residential house with the sign that shows that it is also an evacuation building