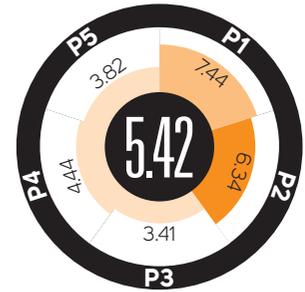


# JAPAN

Group **3**  
ASPIRING  
ACTORS

HRI 2011  
Ranking  
**16th**



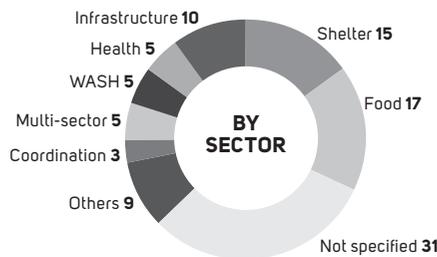
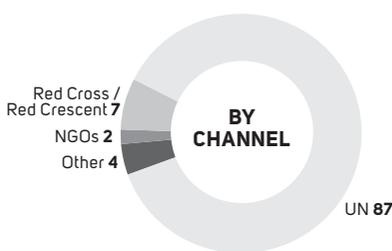
OFFICIAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
ASSISTANCE **0.20%**  
of GNI

HUMANITARIAN  
AID

**5.7%**  
of ODA

**US \$5**  
Per person

## HUMANITARIAN AID DISTRIBUTION (%)



### GENDER RATING

POLICY →

FUNDING →

FIELD PERCEPTION ↓

### STRENGTHS

Pillar	Type	Indicator	Score	% above OECD/DAC average
2	QT	Funding reconstruction and prevention	10.00	+123.1%
2	QT	Reducing climate-related vulnerability	8.47	+110.1%
2	QL	Prevention and risk reduction	5.18	+14.9%
1	QL	Adapting to changing needs	6.97	+11.0%

### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Pillar	Type	Indicator	Score	% below OECD/DAC average
3	QT	Funding NGOs	0.51	-88.8%
3	QT	Un-earmarked funding	0.91	-82.5%
5	QT	Funding accountability initiatives	0.93	-77.4%
4	QT	Human rights law	1.78	-71.2%
4	QT	Refugee law	2.67	-52.6%

## OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Japan ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in the HRI 2011, maintaining the same position as 2010. Based on the patterns of its scores, Japan is classified as a Group 3 donor, “Aspiring Actors”. Donors in this group tend to have more limited capacity to engage with the humanitarian system at the field level, but often aspire to take on a greater role in the sector. They generally focus on a few core strengths, such as in the area of prevention, preparedness and risk reduction, or on specific geographic regions. Other donors in the group include Australia, Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain.

Overall, Japan scored below the OECD/DAC and Group 3 averages. Japan scored below the OECD/DAC and Group 3 scores in all pillars,

with the exception of Pillar 2, where it scored well above both averages, and Pillar 1, where Japan fell slightly below the OECD/DAC average and above the Group 3 average.

Japan did best compared to its OECD/DAC peers in the quantitative indicators *Funding reconstruction and prevention* and *Reducing climate-related vulnerability* and the qualitative indicators *Prevention and risk reduction* and *Adapting to changing needs*. Its scores were relatively the lowest in the indicators on *Funding NGOs*, *Un-earmarked funding*, *Funding accountability initiatives*, and *Human rights law* and *Refugee law* – all quantitative indicators.

# AID DISTRIBUTION

In 2010, Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) comprised 0.20% of its Gross National Income (GNI), up from 0.10% in 2009. Humanitarian assistance represented 5.7% of its ODA in 2010, or 0.01% of GNI. The burden of responding to the Tohoku-Pacific Ocean earthquake and tsunami has forced Japan to cut international assistance in 2011: while its bilateral assistance will remain at previous levels, multilateral ODA will be cut drastically (JICA 2011a).

According to data reported to the United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS), Japan channelled 87.4% of its 2010 humanitarian assistance to UN agencies, 7.1% to the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, 1.7% to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and 1.0% bilaterally to affected governments. In 2010, Japan funded 20 crises in Asia, 16 in Africa and six in the Americas, with Pakistan, Afghanistan and Haiti receiving the greatest amount (OCHA FTS 2011).

# POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) oversees Japan's humanitarian assistance in conjunction with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The MFA directs emergency grant aid (MFA 2011a), and the Humanitarian Assistance and Emergency Relief Division (HA & ER), created within the International Cooperation Bureau of the MFA in 2009, manages Japan's humanitarian budget. The Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Division of the MFA's Foreign Policy Bureau is also involved with planning emergency responses. JICA directs bilateral ODA and technical cooperation. It was restructured in 2008 when the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) merged with JICA to improve coordination of humanitarian and development activities as well as technical and financial assistance.

Though Japan does not have an overarching humanitarian policy, its actions are governed by a series of laws and policies that generally distinguish

between humanitarian assistance for natural disasters and conflict situations. The 1987 *Japan Disaster Relief Law* governs the dispatch of the Disaster Relief Team, while the 1991 International Peacekeeping Law covers responses to conflict-related disasters, allowing Japanese Self-Defense Forces to participate in international peace-keeping efforts. The *Official Development Assistance Charter* (2003), *Medium Term Policy on Official Development Assistance* (2005) and annual Official Development Assistance White Papers also govern Japan's approach to humanitarian action, in addition to these three laws. Japan's approaches toward disaster risk reduction (DRR), prevention and assistance in the aftermath of conflicts are well integrated with larger development goals such as poverty reduction and peace-building, emphasising seamless assistance spanning prevention, emergency aid, reconstruction and long-term development. JICA has 72 field offices throughout the world (MFA 2010).

## HOW DOES JAPAN'S POLICY ADDRESS GHD CONCEPTS?

### GENDER

Japan has incorporated gender equality into its larger ODA policies, and to a somewhat more limited degree in policies specifically concerning humanitarian action. Japan's ODA Charter declares the importance of using a perspective of gender equality, and JICA has a goal of "gender mainstreaming." In *Japan's Gender Mainstreaming: Inclusive and Dynamic Development*, JICA emphasises the importance of including gender in all of its activities, though it does not specifically highlight gender involvement in humanitarian assistance. The *Thematic Guidelines on Peacebuilding* do, however, highlight the importance of accurately responding to the different needs of both men and women. Japan's taskforce for the development of the *Thematic Guidelines on Peacebuilding* also included a group devoted to Gender Equality and Peacebuilding. Likewise, *The Initiative for Disaster Reduction through ODA* declares Japan's intention to apply a gender perspective in regard to all DRR activities (Government of Japan 2005).

### PILLAR 1

### RESPONDING TO NEEDS

Japan's 2003 *ODA Charter* declares that ODA should be tailored to the "assistance needs" of developing countries, and the 2005 *Medium Term Policy on ODA* further emphasises the importance of targeting the most vulnerable people. In addition, Japan requires needs and impact assessments to be completed at every stage of peace-building operations (JICA 2011b). Though the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence are not specifically articulated in a humanitarian policy, the HA & ER Division Director Setsuko Kawahara has outlined them as basic tenets of humanitarian assistance (Kawahara 2011). JICA's policies regarding assistance in both disaster and conflict situations also emphasise the importance of swift delivery. The 1987 *Japan Disaster Relief Law* established a comprehensive disaster relief system including a Disaster Relief Team comprised of rescue and medical specialists for rapid deployment to overseas crises, and in 2005, JICA introduced a Fast-Track System to speed the implementation process for post-disaster reconstruction assistance and peace-building support. Japan has also established special procedures to provide emergency grant aid for urgent needs in response to requests from governments and organisations working in countries affected by conflict or natural disasters; the MFA decides the amount and details of this emergency grant aid (MFA 2011a).

## PILLAR 2

# PREVENTION, RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

In 2005, Japan launched the *Initiative for Disaster Risk Reduction* to promote the inclusion of disaster reduction in development assistance and provide for implementation of the *Hyogo Framework for Action* (MFA 2011b). Through this initiative, experts in DRR are deployed in the immediate aftermath of a disaster to assist human capacity development that will enable an emergency response, and DRR assistance is used to link reconstruction to sustainable development (Government of Japan 2005). In 2007, JICA published its *Issue-specific Guidelines for Disaster Reduction*, and in 2008, it created the report *Building Disaster Resilient Societies*. It also stocks four warehouses with emergency relief goods to be prepared for the quick distribution of material aid (JICA 2010). The *Medium Term Policy on ODA* advocates engaging with beneficiaries in all stages of programmes from policy and project formulation through monitoring and evaluation. The *Initiative for Disaster Reduction* and *Thematic Guidelines on Peacebuilding* also highlight the need for supporting self-help efforts in developing countries and using local manpower. In 2008, Japan published the *Capacity Assessment Handbook: Project Management for Realizing Capacity Development* which emphasises the importance of capacity-building in a development context, though without specifically describing humanitarian assistance.

## PILLAR 3

# WORKING WITH HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

Japan highlights the need for flexible coordination with UN Agencies, other donors, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and NGOs, among other entities (Kawahara 2011). Japan has developed methods for coordinating with Japanese NGOs, notably through the Japan Platform, a collaboration of NGOs that provide emergency aid focusing on refugees and victims of natural disasters. In 2010, Japan also established an NGO Advisory Group on the State of International Cooperation by Japan under the MFA to draw on opinions of NGOs working in the field (MFA 2010). Japan's 2003 ODA Charter highlights the importance of flexibility in assistance for peace-building, and according to "A Guide to Japan's Aid," Japan's emergency disaster relief strategy particularly emphasises flexibility and has simplified procedures for emergency relief funding (MFA 1998).

## PILLAR 4

# PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Japan clearly upholds the importance of human security and protection in the Medium Term Policy on ODA. JICA's *Handbook for Transition Assistance* explains the importance of upholding international humanitarian law and human rights law in humanitarian assistance for societies transitioning from war to peace (JICA 2006). Japan has strict regulations guiding the security of its humanitarian workers and their involvement in areas with limited humanitarian space. Before self-defence forces can be dispatched to participate in peace-keeping operations, five conditions must be fulfilled, including the existence of a cease-fire and the consent to the operation of the parties involved in the conflict (MFA 1997). Such documents as the *ODA White Paper 2010* and the *Thematic Guidelines on Peacebuilding* likewise emphasise the importance of guaranteeing the safety of personnel, and the MFA maintains that "securing humanitarian space is challenging but essential" (Kawahara 2011).

PILLAR 5

# LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Japan has repeatedly affirmed its commitment to maintaining transparency and promoting the public's access to information on its activities. *Japan's ODA White Paper 2010* expresses the intention to disclose information about ODA activities and publish reader-friendly evaluation reports, especially in light of faltering public confidence in ODA at the time of publication (MFA 2010). Furthermore, both JICA and the MFA have evaluation systems in place declared to foster accountability in operations. JICA's *Guidelines for Project Evaluation* (2004) emphasises the importance of accountability to taxpayers as well as to beneficiary countries. These guidelines also stress using evaluations to assess projects' efficacy, leaving the evaluations open to a public verdict and communicating with both donor and recipient sides at every stage of evaluation.

## FIELD PARTNERS' PERCEPTIONS

JAPAN'S FIELD PERCEPTION SCORES

Collected questionnaires: 32



SOURCE: DARA

Japan's average score 5.84 ← ..... → OECD/DAC average score 6.05

Colours represent performance compared to donor's average performance rating:

- Good
- Mid-range
- Could improve

## HOW IS JAPAN PERCEIVED BY ITS PARTNERS?

### GENDER

Japan, along with many other donors, was criticised for its failure to integrate gender issues into programming. Partner organisations conveyed the general idea that all donors superficially address gender, but in reality this is “not an issue.” One interviewee reported that “Japan has no concern for gender at all;” similarly, another said, “Japan is less concerned about gender.”

### PILLAR 1

### RESPONDING TO NEEDS

Most of Japan’s partners considered its humanitarian assistance to be neutral, impartial and independent, although several organisations disagreed. One placed Japan in a group with other large donors whose aid is “less neutral and affected by government policies.” Though some respondents mentioned the economic and political interests underlying Japanese support, another made sure to stress that “Japan respects humanitarian objectives.” Others cited Japan’s heavy focus on funding refugees and its “interest mainly in actions and outputs but not [the] ground situation.” Japan did especially well compared to other donors for ensuring the programmes it supports adapt to changing needs. One interviewee praised Japan’s assistance as free from conditions that impair the ability to deliver aid, and another commended Japan for being “especially strong on tracking needs and adapting to them.” One organisation complained that annual funding prevented funding from being altered to reflect the current situation, however, and others criticised Japan’s poor timeliness of funding, referring to nearly year-long waits to secure approval for programming.

### PILLAR 2

### PREVENTION, RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

Responses from interviewees reveal the need for Japan’s requirements from partners to ensure beneficiary participation in the programmes Japan supports. For example, one respondent noted that donors generally require beneficiary participation in design and implementation of programmes before claiming, “Japan is an exception, since they have never expressed any interest.” Japan’s field partners held varying views regarding Japan’s support for local capacity. One interviewee noted, “Japan is pushing to build capacity for sustainability,” though another organisation lumped Japan together with other donors, saying, “No donor requires or supports local capacity building, they only look at local capacity from a risk reduction point of view. Can local staff ensure aid reaches beneficiaries? How much is diverted by mismanagement in a remote control set up?” Field perceptions of Japan’s support for prevention, preparedness and risk reduction were somewhat mixed, though Japan outperformed many of its peers. One organisation proclaimed Japan to be the best donor for these issues although others considered the support insufficient.

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## PILLAR 3

# WORKING WITH HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

Several organisations commented that Japan was more flexible than other donors, but one did mention the “extensive administrative process” when flexibility was provided. One interviewee asserted that Japan, among other donors, does “not support any sort of organisational capacity building.” While one implementing partner placed Japan in a group of donors “keen on supporting coordination among actors” and following up with clusters, another claimed Japan was “very government oriented” with an “upstream focus.”

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## PILLAR 4

# PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Japan’s field partners largely felt that Japan did not actively advocate for local authorities to fulfill responsibilities in response to the humanitarian needs, though one organisation mentioned Japan as one of a group of donors who advocates indirectly through OCHA. On a similar note, one organisation reported that Japan, together with other donors, does not facilitate access, believing it to be the responsibility of OCHA. In terms of the protection of civilians, interviewees were generally more positive regarding Japan’s funding of protection than its advocacy for protection.

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## PILLAR 5

# LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Feedback from the field suggested a need for Japan to improve accountability towards beneficiaries, with interviewees claiming Japan required only “limited accountability to beneficiaries.” Once again, there was some disagreement, as one interviewee praised Japan’s “strong exit strategy based on accountability towards affected populations”. Others complained of Japan’s lack of support for implementing recommendations from evaluations. One organisation mentioned that Japan was honest about its true priorities, and another said Japan was “not very heavy on reporting.”

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## ● FORMALISE COMMITMENT TO HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES IN A COMPREHENSIVE HUMANITARIAN POLICY

Japan would do well to create an official humanitarian policy which explains its commitment to *Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles* and unites the information from various web pages and documents into a common humanitarian policy.

## ● STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR CAPACITY BUILDING, AND BENEFICIARY ACCOUNTABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

Japan received low scores for the qualitative indicators related to its efforts to ensure beneficiary participation, accountability towards beneficiaries and local capacity building. Its policy appears to take these issues into account more in development contexts, without specifying their equal importance in humanitarian crises. Field partners' low scores seem to confirm that greater emphasis is needed. Japan received the third-lowest scores for *Strengthening local capacity* and *Beneficiary participation* and the second-lowest score for *Accountability towards beneficiaries*.

## ● ENHANCE SUPPORT FOR NGOS, UN AND RC/RC APPEALS, COORDINATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES AND POOLED FUNDS

Japan provides the majority of its funding to UN agencies. As a result, Japan received a low score for its funding to NGOs - only 1.7% of its funding compared to the OECD/DAC average of 15.3%. Although Japan channels most of its funding through UN agencies, it is short of providing its fair share to UN appeals. Japan received a low score for *Funding UN and RC/RC appeals*, which measures the extent to which donors provide their fair share<sup>3</sup> of funding to UN and Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC) appeals, coordination and support services and pooled funds. Japan scored well below average in all components that comprise this indicator. Japan provided 33.6% of its fair share to UN appeals, compared to the OECD/DAC average of 41.0%; 24.4% of its fair share to coordination and support services, compared to the OECD/DAC average of 47.5%; 15.5% of its fair share to Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC) appeals, compared to the OECD/DAC average of 117.1%; and 2.0% of its fair share to pooled funds, compared to the OECD/DAC average of 298.0%.

## ● RENEW COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND REFUGEE LAW

Japan has signed 19 of 36 human rights treaties and has not established

a national human rights institution. It could also improve its funding to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which comprised 0.00001% of its Gross Domestic Product, while the OECD/DAC average was 0.00065%. It also has room for improvement in *Refugee law*, which measures signature and ratification of international treaties, participation in refugee resettlement and related funding. Of the six treaties, Japan has signed two treaties and ratified others. It could also improve its participation in refugee resettlement.

## ● RENEW COMMITMENT TO ACCOUNTABILITY

Japan received a fairly low score for its participation in humanitarian accountability initiatives.<sup>1</sup> However, its financial support of humanitarian accountability initiatives<sup>2</sup> was especially low – only 0.08% of its humanitarian aid was allocated to these initiatives, while the OECD/DAC average was 0.43%.

## ● ENSURE AID MEETS THE DIFFERENT NEEDS OF WOMEN, MEN, BOYS AND GIRLS

Japan's partners indicate the need for greater emphasis on gender-sensitive approaches and follow-up to ensure it is properly integrated into humanitarian programmes.