

Volunteers in 39 Countries Raise Funds for Japan

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Tzu Chi volunteers in 39 countries, including some of the poorest in the world, are raising funds for the victims of the devastating earthquake and tsunami which struck Japan on March 11. They are donating money and helping people to express their good nature.

So far Japan's National Police Agency has confirmed more than 13,000 deaths, nearly 5,000 injured and over 14,000 people missing, as well as over 125,000 buildings damaged or destroyed. The government has estimated the cost of the disaster at US\$309 billion, making it the world's most expensive natural disaster on record.

In response, Tzu Chi volunteers in 39 countries on five continents have stepped forward to raise funds to help the survivors, a way not only to donate money but also to bring out the goodness of people. Among them are the volunteers of Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas, which was itself rocked by an earthquake of 7.0 on the Richter scale on January 10 last year. They went onto the streets and found people, poor and needy as they are, willing to donate. It is the same story in Myanmar, the 20th poorest country in the world, where volunteers led people in donations and deep praying.



In South Africa, Zulu volunteers from Durban, who learnt about the disaster from Da Ai (Great Love) Television, went to Pretoria and Johannesburg to raise funds. "Even poor black people can help Japan too," said Fikile Mzobe, one of the Durban volunteers. In the Philippines were a special pair of fund-raisers – Rachel and Lea, who were born Siamese twins and separated in a long operation at the Tzu Chi Medical Center in Hualien in 2003. They joined in, to show their gratitude for what they had received, and felt the happiness of helping people.

The regions and countries who participated in the fund-raising were: Taiwan, Japan, Britain, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, the United States, Canada, Dominican Republic, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Guatemala, Chile, Netherlands San Martin, Haiti, Ecuador, South Africa, Lesotho, Malaysia, Singapore, China, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Brunei, Jordan, South Korea, Turkey, Cambodia, Australia and New Zealand.