We invited some of our stakeholders to discuss the following questions from the perspectives of “learning” and “working.” “What contributions can KOKUYO make that are suited to the nature of its business and other characteristics as the Tohoku region moves toward the future? What scenarios can we write?”
What will an affluent life be like in the year 2030? What will we do to make this future life a reality?

Shimizu: Why should we be thinking of the recovery of the Tohoku region centered around the year 2030? One reason is that I think we want to look for ways to provide real assistance for the recovery by developing a long-term vision for the region. Another reason is the need to consider recovery from the perspective of constraints presented by the natural environment. Mr. Ishida, from your viewpoint as a specialist in environmental matters, could you elaborate on that point?

Ishida: At present, we are faced with a number of risks. These include the exhaustion of resources and energy, the decline in biodiversity, the allocation of water and food, a rapid increase in population, and climate change. If we do nothing about these risks, I believe that we will run into limits on all these risks around the year 2030. Therefore, I think it is extremely important to consider what we can do from the perspective of the natural environment. Also, Japan imports 60% of its food. There are only five prefectures and major cities that are 100% or more self-sufficient in terms of food. Four of these prefectures are located in the Tohoku region, and most of them have suffered severe destruction. Under these circumstances, what must we do between now and 2030? The most-important thing is to be affluent. How can we overcome environmental issues and constraints, not by relying on self-restraint but as we enjoy affluent and satisfying lifestyles?

Professor Ishida and KOKUYO have been discussing future work styles for close to a year. Our discussions have been compiled into a book entitled “Let’s Design the Work Style of the Future: The Eco-Conscious Work Style in 2030.”

Nakagawa: As I was listening to Professor Ishida’s comments, I began to think about what “affluence” will mean in the year 2030. I am providing support for recovery to schools and children under the theme of “education.” I think that the people of Tohoku thus far have had the feeling that they had to do everything for themselves. After the earthquake, however, they accepted people from outside the region, and, in some respects, they have realized the advantages of this. By looking outside and talking with people outside the region, they seem to have realized that good things can happen as a result. Maybe it has to do with raising children in the region, but when the earthquake occurred, it was necessary for the names and faces of children in the region to match. That was effective in the operation of the emergency shelters. I think that to create an affluent society, and this is not limited just to disaster-stricken areas, the education of children and providing places for learning must be reviewed and positioned as the duty of adults.

Ms. Nakagawa is a director of Project Yui (Project Connect) and, as a partner with KOKUYO in the “Great! KOKUYO Project,” has cooperated in providing help for schools in Tohoku.

Tamura: From now on, we have to proceed on the assumption that emergency shelters and towns will have to be built so that they will operate even if the only inhabitants are senior citizens. Compared with the time of the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake in 1995, at present the number of younger people has declined to about two-thirds of the previous level. In the case of
the Great East Japan Earthquake, the number of younger generation volunteers was not sufficient, and we called for additional help from the baby boom generation. If a disaster of comparable magnitude occurs in 2030, we probably will not be able to cope by drawing only on human resources in Japan. Also, at the times of the Great Hanshi Awaji Earthquake and the Niigata Chuetsu Earthquake, it was possible to recover using the interest on funds received. However, now that interest rates are extremely low, we are not able to use that recovery scheme. With Japan's shrinking population and economy, it will be impossible to rely only on government financial resources. In reviving the Tohoku region, I believe we will have to adopt different approaches. It will be necessary to review the roles of government, corporations, and citizens and find ways for them to work as a team. The people in the devastated areas will have to rebuild their towns with their own hands using their resources and working together with outside resources. Corporations will have to create ties with the stricken areas drawing on their main businesses. In other words, fulfilling corporate social responsibility (CSR) will be required.

**Shirakawa:** The city of Sendai had just formulated a new comprehensive plan, but, following the earthquake, that has been partially revised. The thinking was that recovery will have to move forward not just in Sendai but in the Tohoku region as a whole. Compared with the Tokyo and Osaka metropolitan areas, incomes in Tohoku are low. However, there is an affluence in life that cannot be measured by GDP. There are ties within the region, agricultural products are grown nearby, and fish can caught in the nearby ocean. This kind of affluence, which does not require money, was evident in Tohoku prior to the earthquake. I think that economic affluence and the kind of affluence that will make the region develop are different things. I would really like to see both kinds of affluence advance at the same time. For example, if there are new kinds useful materials, systems, and other things, we can develop these globally and use them to generate economic profits. On the other hand, I think that if, through the collaboration of citizens of the region and NPO staff, it would be good if we could search for a new kind of community that would not return to the past but have a different kind of affluence.

**Okatake:** As local companies in the region, we are engaged in a range of support activities in collaboration with government organizations, NPOs, and other companies. One of these is co-sponsorship support for the Michinoku Future Fund for young people orphaned by the disaster to enable them to enter universities. The other day, when we were discussing the dreams of the future of young people who have received scholarships, I was shocked that there were very few opinions regarding returning to their hometowns in Tohoku. There were just a few with that desire, and they were mainly interested in medicine and nursing, food, and government service. There was no one who expressed an interest in setting up a company in their local towns. I suddenly thought that these young people were not being shown their dreams and felt some regrets as a local businessperson. If they cannot feel a sense of both affluence and excitement, these young people will probably not stay in the region.
If we change our standards of measurement, we can have new aspirations. Shall we try “a new measurement standard from Tohoku” that the world can look up to?

**Shimizu:** I think a number of issues that we must address have emerged in our discussion, such as education, population problems, the community, and aspirations.

**Ishida:** I believe that all of us have a common awareness that we want to build an affluent Tohoku within the constraints it faces. Normally, there must be constraints on an affluent life. Human beings have latent desires for convenience at the same time they want to enjoy various pleasures and the natural environment. Also, as they become one with society, they want to grow and develop. It is precisely because there are constraints that they have a sense of accomplishment and the happiness that accompanies growth when they achieve some of their aspirations.

I think the Tohoku region of the year 2030 could become the fabled “golden Japan.” Tohoku can create a new lifestyle that the peoples of the rest of Asia will emulate and say “we want to live like that.” Right now, there are many delicious foods available in Tokyo’s Tsukiji fish market. But, rather than go there, we want the people of Tokyo to think, “Before I die, I want to go the Ishinomaki port in Tohoku at least once and enjoy some of the delicacies from the sea it has to offer.” We want the people of Tokyo to long for a visit to Ishinomaki.

**Tamura:** Basically, Tohoku is a place that has an abundance of good food. The third-largest fishing port in the world is located there, and, rather than cook the fish, they are delicious when eaten raw, as sashimi. However, if we decided to boil or fry the fish, that creates new jobs. The “sixth industry” is the one that adds value through “time and effort.” If time and effort must be exerted, then work increases and the number of human beings involved also rises.

**Shirakawa:** Yes, what we want to do is increase work and jobs by adding time and effort. We want to do more than just attract factories to the region and increase work and employment; we want to find ways to add value through the exertion of time and effort.

**Ishida:** Even though hand-wound clocks are occasionally inaccurate, they cost more than extremely accurate quartz clocks. Even though they have to be wound up, and that means time and effort, people believe the value of hand-wound exceeds the time and effort needed to wind them. To create affluence within constraints, we have to change the standards of measurement.

**Tamura:** I think we have to change the standards of measurement for learning and working. Some examples are hiring females to work as firefighters to deal with the decline in the number of young people in the population, or introducing fire hoses that even senior citizens can use to extinguish fires. We have to change our ways of thinking.

In Osaka, there seem to be two standards of measurement (judging from the way friends greet each other): “Are you making any money?” and “Are you finding that interesting?” When there are multiple standards of measurement, there are many cases where this is a saving grace. I would really like to find another standard of measurement for Tohoku.

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Mr. Tamura is working on a wide range of support efforts at the Reconstruction Agency and is also participating in the Joint Creation Reconstruction Promotion Project Research Committee. Starting immediately after the earthquake, he has advised KOKUYO regarding its recovery supply activities.
Ishida: That is what CSR is all about. We have started to measure corporate value using standards of measurement other than economic value. If we are given new standards of measurement, industries as we have known them thus far could be completely transformed. For example, what about a measure of work and life together? In Japan in years gone by, people used the time between their agricultural chores to raise their children and prepare their meals. We do not want to return to those days, but we need to evolve our lifestyles.

Yatsuka: “Work” and “life” are different things, but viewed from the perspective of “lifestyles,” they are the same, right? Once I spent four days in a Zen temple. Every day, over and over, we cleaned the temple, meditated in the Zen cross-legged position, and read from the Buddhist sutras. Vegetables were grown on the temple grounds and we obtained rice from local farmers. When we visited someone, we took rice along. This lifestyle, which was largely self-sufficient and complete and flowed in a cycle, had been going on for more than 1,000 years.

Ishida: The lifestyle at a Zen temple and our daily lifestyles are completely separate today, but, if we think of them on the same foundation, that becomes a new sense of values. If we put work and life together, then it becomes necessary to do away with the idea of an age-limit system for retirement. There is no age limit in the primary industries, and, as you know, there are many people over 70 years of age who are still working and in good health. My own work style has been to change occupations every 10 years, unrelated to any age limit. Even if you reach 60 or more, that does not mean that life is over.

Tamura: Under standards that have been used so far, people were only required to work in full-time jobs. However, one method would also be to create small jobs that take up only two or three days a week or require short working hours and pay the employees several tens of thousands of yen. There are workplaces that could create work like this, even in the region affected by the earthquake. People who want to make more money can take several of these jobs. The more sources of income they have, the greater their peace of mind. I would really like to create new frameworks for this new work style, where working people would feel they were not losing something, and it would be realistic from a business perspective.

Nakagawa: That would make it easy for women to work and raise their children, wouldn’t it? That might turn into a new Japanese-style work sharing arrangement.

Okatake: There would be merits from the company’s point of view, too. Since there is considerable land in the Tohoku region; even in Miyagi there are greater distances than in Iwate and Fukushima. By signing employment contracts with people in the region, it would be possible to develop businesses that are close to their regions, just as such businesses have developed in milk-based products and cosmetics in other parts of Japan.
We want to create a “place for learning” and a “city for learning” that will broaden our possibilities as we enjoy ourselves.

Shimizu: To create a workplace of that kind, what sorts of places for learning and education are necessary?

Nakagawa: I think I would like to have the kind of place that would draw on the basic academic skills we learned in school. Schools are like second homes. I want to create the kind of environment that is a place for living and not just studying. To do that, it will be important to first create a model school. Then, so that members of society can create their education and make choices freely, I think we should change the country’s educational system.

Ishida: We need schools for adults, don't you think? Schools for cooks and schools where people can learn technical skills.

Tamura: It would be good, too, if adults could attend the schools at night. If we can provide such schools, the nature of the blackboard and desks will change. Also, we would like to think about new kinds of houses and ways of living. In the United States, where I paid a visit at the end of the 1990s, in housing for low-income persons, there were rooms set aside on the first or second floors for job-training purposes. If the residents did not attend the program that was offered, they lost their qualifications for living in the housing. In Tohoku, public reconstruction housing has been built in various parts of the region, but all that has been done is to provide low-rent dwellings, and there are no further plans going forward. I think it would be a good idea to also build “schools for adults” in the housing projects. However, in reality, separate projects are under way with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in charge of “learning,” the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in charge of “working,” and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transportation and Tourism taking charge of “living.”

Shirakawa: That is exactly the reason why we are looking to corporations. For example, if it were KOKUYO, we would like to see them create school-like spaces where people who are interested in stationery and related items would congregate together, conduct their activities, and study about these items. Because of the effects of the earthquake, nothing has been done related to the “Museum City” plan originated by the city of Sendai. This Sendai proposal was to have places for learning in various parts of the city, not limited to art or other kinds of museums. The idea was to locate places of learning in parks, in post offices, and in one corner of shopping areas. In other words, just about everywhere, the city would be a place for people to broaden their knowledge and possibilities while enjoying themselves. I would like to see this plan put into action. With every one of the same mind and heart, the reconstruction will proceed and the future of Tohoku will come into being through collaboration among citizens, government agencies, and private companies.
Recovery is proceeding as people have a unity of intentions, and residents, government organizations, and companies are collaborating to build Tohoku's future.

Tamura: Reconstruction is a series of meetings. Reconstruction will move ahead when we can reach a consensus. If we cannot reach a consensus, houses will not be built, towns will not be constructed, and reconstruction will not happen.
As you know, depending on the positioning of tables and chairs, the flow of meetings can change. Real results are needed and that will require support for meetings to enable participants to reach a consensus smoothly and some kind of framework that makes it possible for people in remote areas to participate also.
What companies can provide is not confined to things and labor. Every company should provide support based on their respective main businesses. Sometimes they should experiment with ideas and plans that are new to Tohoku as they draw on their businesses.
In towns where the residents have held discussions, reached a consensus, and been successful in reconstruction, former residents come back to live there. You know, their attitude is that “we made this reconstructed town ourselves, and we will clean it up ourselves, too.” Rather than leaving things up to the local governments, the residents must build the towns, even if it is laborious and takes time.

Nakagawa: In New Zealand, after the major earthquake there, governments acted only as facilitators and did a thorough job of collecting the opinions of the town residents. As a result, the opinions of the residents were reflected in the reconstruction. Therefore, people were persuaded and gave their active cooperation to the reconstruction.
However, in Japan, even if comments of the public reach the government, it is usually only about 100. In New Zealand, about 100,000 comments reached the government's ears. It seems that either governments in Japan have no skills in facilitation or they think it is unnecessary. I believe companies should play the role of facilitators.

Yatsuka: If we change our perspective and make “working” and “learning” a part of “lifestyles,” I think more possibilities will spread out before us.
Some people have the impression that adopting new things and new values means creating something that does not yet exist. However, we can make things interesting and fresher by making new combinations of existing things and values. For example, let us think about combinations of time and space. I think that if the good things about Tohoku that have been handed down through the ages are combined with new standards of measurement, this will help to realize lifestyles that are affluent in the true sense of the word.

Okatake: In listening to everyone's comments, I had the feeling that we have come up with new perspectives and concepts in our dialog today. As was mentioned regarding support for meetings, there are other ways of offering assistance than providing desks and notebooks. It will be important for us to tackle new challenges, as we apply new standards of measurement and feel a sense of excitement and enjoyment. As we move toward the year 2030, I would like for us to create new values so that the children who will inherit the Tohoku of the future and the adults of Tohoku can have hope.
In Conclusion

“What contributions can KOKUYO make that are suited to the nature of its business and other characteristics as Tohoku moves toward the future? What scenarios can we write?”

For KOKUYO, which is a company that continues to create tools and spaces for “people who are working” and “people who are learning,” this is a major theme. Based on the comments made during the dialog, I believe that the participants taught KOKUYO some things about what contributions it can make. These included “This is an opportunity to create new standards of measurement,” “This is the stage of challenge when we should think about what Tohoku-life affluence should be, as we rethink “working” and “learning” from the perspective of “lifestyles.”

Going forward, as we move toward a future characterized by a Tohoku-like affluence, we will continue to think about this major theme as we gather many opinions and views. In closing, I would like to express my thanks for these excellent opinions and hints.

Masako Teramoto  CSR and Environment Management Group
Corporate Administrations  KOKUYO Co., Ltd.
A Single Notebook Puts Smiles on Children's Faces

With the collaboration of many people from stores in the Tohoku region, education committee members, newspapers, and NPOs, KOKUYO is holding a continuing series of Deco-Notebook Workshops. More than 1,000 children have participated in the workshops, and all have shown us smiles of delight.

The Power of Notebooks

After the earthquake, we visited local government offices and schools and offered various articles, such as notebooks, writing materials, and furniture. During these visits to earthquake-stricken areas, we came into contact with an unexpected way of using notebooks. Notebooks have been made available in volunteer centers, emergency shelters, public facilities, and elsewhere. People who experienced the earthquake and volunteers who came to the stricken areas wrote down their thoughts, including what their real experiences and feelings were, messages of encouragement, thanks for the assistance of volunteers and others, in a single notebook. This made us realize once again the power of notebooks and writing paper.

* Related information: Making Children Smile through Writing and Drawing

Relieving Stress by Writing and Drawing

KOKUYO's “Deco-Note Workshops” have the theme of encouraging the children of the Tohoku region to become cheerful again through writing and drawing (“Hang in There Children of Tohoku. We Hope You Will Cheer Up by Writing and Drawing”), and they involve having children use marker pens and seals to decorate the covers of their Campus notebooks. These workshops started from the idea that creative activities, such as “writing down words” and “drawing pictures,” help to relieve stress and from the desire to have the children write down their present feelings in their diaries and exchange notebooks and use this as a basis for future growth and development. Children who attend these workshops use such materials as many types of seals, colorful marking pens, and masking tape with cute patterns to exercise their creativity and decorate the covers of Campus notebooks that then become a kind of work of art. Children become absorbed in decorating their notebook covers, and the one hour spent in the workshop goes by very quickly. As the children leave with their very own “one-of-a-kind notebook in the whole world,” they smile radiantly saying things like “that was fun” and “please have another workshop.” Some of the children turn around several times on their way home to say “thank you” over and over. Some of the children also made new friends at the workshops.
Boys also participate in the workshops. Even the faces of sales personnel just naturally break into a smile. Everyone has completed their own “one-of-a-kind notebook in the whole world.”

An Opportunity to Think about Why Employees Are Working

Beginning in August 2011, KOKUYO began holding workshops, first in Sendai and then later once every two to three months in Aizu Wakamatsu in Fukushima Prefecture, Yamada-cho in Iwate Prefecture, Minami Soma and Nihon Matsu in Fukushima Prefecture, and Natori in Miyagi Prefecture. These workshops are conducted by KOKUYO employees acting as volunteers, who are hoping to express their gratitude to the people of the Tohoku region and assist them in some way. Through these activities, KOKUYO personnel are experiencing firsthand the its Corporate Philosophy statement, “Enrich the world through our products and services,” and this activity offers them the opportunity to discover why they are working.
Children exclaim “Eh!?" when they hear the announcement “you have five minutes left" from the workshop staff. However, we staff members are relieved because, judging from the enthusiastic reaction of the children, we think “they really enjoyed the workshops.” I know there are difficulties we face that the children cannot know about, but the children we meet in these workshops are energetic and their eyes are almost shining as they grapple with their notebooks. This is an activity we are conducting because we want the children to be energetic and happy again, and we receive renewed energy ourselves.

Just after the earthquake, I heard several comments that impressed me. “Even when children seem to be bright and happy, they may just be putting on a show before adults, and actually stress is building up in inside them.” “There are cases where writing and drawing can relieve stress.” These comments gave us the idea for starting the “Deco-Notebook Workshops.” Especially in Fukushima, where children could not play outdoors, stress was building up. Many children stayed at home and spent much of their time playing games. The Deco-Notebook Workshops delighted children because they allowed children to stay indoors and play with their friends. All that is needed is a notebook. Expressions of gratitude from parents and guardians included “It has been a long time since I saw my child so happy and completely engrossed in something.” “We feel apologetic that, for our own reasons as parents, we cannot take refuge somewhere else with our children; that is why we are truly grateful for the support of you people from KOKUYO.” Just one notebook can make spirits brighter, communicate thoughts, and warm hearts. And it is so in keeping with KOKUYO's main business.
Consideration of a Multipurpose School for Tohoku Recovery

In response to the issue posed, “What can KOKUYO do to help in the recovery?,” KOKUYO decided to sponsor this workshop with Waseda University which had been conducting a number of activities related to recovery in Tohoku. In the process of devising solutions from the students' perspective to the various issues related to recovery, KOKUYO offered its know-how and supported the students with advice based on its experience.

Presentation to residents of Matsushima Town

The Theme: Creating Futuristic Multipurpose Facilities Centering around Schools from Tohoku

In response to the issue posed to KOKUYO, namely, what can it do to contribute to "Recovery in Tohoku," we thought solutions from a broad perspective were called for and not just solutions from the perspective of citizens of society. Working together with the "Professional Workshop," which is an activity at Waseda University and involved having companies (citizens of society) and university students take initiatives in devising solutions, we took the students’ perspective into consideration and considered and made proposals for multipurpose facilities centered around the schools in the recovery areas.

As a result of the Great East Japan Earthquake, the roles of schools in regional communities and as bases for preventing disasters were recognized, and what is required is to upgrade their functions not only as schools but their other functions as well. Working together with six students in two teams and looking forward to their ideas based on flexible thinking, we prepared a proposal for a model facility at the Matsushima First Elementary School in Matsushima Town in Miyagi Prefecture. We went beyond desk research and performed fieldwork as well, and
As a result of this workshop, we were able to learn about the state of the stricken areas and a portion of the issues they faced. Looking ahead, the ideas we developed will be used in making proposals to schools in the recovery areas. We would like this to lead to the implementation of facilities that match the realities of the stricken areas.

Proposal 1: Title: “Everyone’s Health Plaza”
Under this proposal, facilities, principally for food and health, would be established in the same location. Cafeterias and sports facilities would be given additional functions as headquarters for dealing with disasters. Since people of many generations would use these facilities together, interchange would take place on a daily basis, and the aim would be to develop relationships that would facilitate mutual assistance in time of emergencies.

Proposal 2: Title: “Matsushima Children’s Kingdom”
Under this proposal, an interchange center mainly for children would be added to the facilities. With space mainly for interchange among children and senior citizens, the proposal calls for the participation of residents in teaching situations. In time of emergencies, this space would serve as a first aid center and as housing for senior citizens.

Implementing Proposals that Match the Realities of the Stricken Areas

As a result of this workshop, we were able to learn about the state of the stricken areas and a portion of the issues they faced. Looking ahead, the ideas we developed will be used in making proposals to schools in the recovery areas. We would like this to lead to the implementation of facilities that match the realities of the stricken areas.

Person in Charge

Standing Face to Face with Customers
Many students participated in the workshop, from various university departments and from different classes. As we listened to the students’ ideas carefully, we developed an interface with the stricken areas and thought in detail about how we could convey our proposals persuasively. In the end, we were able to provide persuasive proposals to Matsushima Town, the students, and KOKUYO. Through the single-minded initiatives of the students, we again felt firsthand the importance of standing face to face with our customers.

Satomi Aizawa
TCM Marketing Strategy Department
KOKUYO Furniture
The Future of Tohoku

IINE! Project2012

Through the KOKUYO Fair 2012, volunteer members launched the “IINE! Project2012,” and after about a year, in October 2012, we provided “a place for learning” to the Ishinomaki City Ayukawa Primary School.

We Want to Deliver the Many Words of Sympathy Received from Customers.

The “IINE! Project2012” was launched by volunteer members from among KOKUYO employees with the aim of “maintaining the high motivation of employees, communicating value accurately, and having customers enjoy themselves” at the 2012 KOKUYO Fair.

After making our way through various concerns and issues, we decided to take the approach of communicating the value by having staff members using iPads to actively give explanations to customers and receive (mileage) points as their expressions of sympathy. Then, on the day of the fair, to be sure we caught all the expressions of sympathy, we deployed iPads in 38 locations, and had a total of about 80 “Great! Man” KOKUYO staff promoters attend the fair. Some of the comments we received from customers were, “The staff members giving the explanations did a good job, and I enjoyed it” and “The atmosphere created by the staff members was friendly, and the enjoyment was communicated to the participants.” We received a total of 103,915 points and converted these to cash, and then began activities aimed at providing “a place for learning” to the children of Tohoku.

* “Iine” in Japanese expresses approval of actions and words

Words of Sympathy for the Children Who Will Create the Ishinomaki of the Future

Selection of Ishinomaki City Ayukawa Primary School

After the fair was over, we held many discussions among those staff members who were stationed in Tohoku and the staff of KOKUYO Tohoku Sales to determine what kind of assistance was needed and what KOKUYO could do to assist. What was important and emphasized in these discussions was that the assistance should not be one-sided, but that we should get close to the people of Tohoku and provide assistance that they really need. To do this, we conducted interviews with NPOs and other organizations that were engaged in providing hands-on assistance in the region. In total, we talked to about 13 organizations over a period of three months. As a result, we came to the conclusions that the most-urgent and most-important theme for recovery in the Tohoku region was “providing places where the children can learn and play.” We thought that providing places where the children, who will become responsible for the recovery of the region, can feel at ease as they study was just the mission that KOKUYO could perform. In providing these places, we received backup from...
the Ishinomaki City Education Committee, and, together with Project Yui (a general incorporated association), went on to provide hands-on assistance to schools in the region by redecorating two rooms in the Ishinomaki City Ayukawa Primary School.

Establishment of the Classroom Concept

What we emphasized when creating the classrooms was to design spaces just the way that everyone at the Ayukawa Primary School thought was necessary. To do this, when we drew up the space plans, we carefully selected the issues to be addressed and placed emphasis on exchanging opinions with the primary school teachers and students as well as the people living in the region. As a result, we identified three issues the Ayukawa Primary School faced.

1. There were no spaces in the existing school for interfacing with the people of the region.
2. There were no multipurpose spaces that were available for use by anyone.
3. There were no places for optimal learning where children of different classes could study together.

The concept that was developed to address these issues was “create spaces where adults and children of the region and school can come together as they wish as part of their daily lives.”

Creating Classrooms together with Children

When renovating the classrooms, we paid particular attention to one other point. Even in the phase of activities where the classrooms were being designed, we emphasized working together with teachers and students. At the end of September, we held a workshop for painting the walls and shelves together with the children, KOKUYO members of the project, and members of Project Yui. This was in part because we felt that, if the children participated in the process of creating the spaces, they would develop a fondness for them and make active use of them.
Completion of the New Places for Learning

First Floor: Conference Room
We created a “multipurpose space” where tables, chairs, whiteboards, cabinets, and other furniture could be placed and could be used flexibly for different purposes and with differing numbers of participants. We also created “lounge spaces” that included sofas and kitchen shelves and could be used for relaxing.

Third Floor: Living Environment Room
We created a “work space” where the young children could assemble and was large enough to use for various activities. We also created a “floor sitting space” where people could spread mats where people could sit down, relax, read, and listen.

Opening Ceremony

At the end of October, we held an opening ceremony in the Ayukawa Primary School gymnasium for the completed learning spaces. Students from all the schools gathered for the ceremony, and we received thanks from the principal of the school and the students. Afterwards, we gave explanations to the children and teachers about how we thought the rooms should be used.

Comments from School Principal Yamamoto
“There are many things that human beings cannot do alone. We must thank many people from our hearts for helping and encouraging us. KOKUYO representatives have spent much of their time discussing with everyone from the Ayukawa Primary School and the residents of this region about how to create these places for learning and make them easy to use. As a result, they have designed magnificent learning spaces. KOKUYO has strongly cheered us onward. As good evidence of our thanks to them, everyone, let's use them as much as we can!”
Continuing Tohoku Recovery Assistance

We will maintain the valuable relationships that we have built with the Ayukawa Primary School and Project Yui as part of our "IINE! Project2012." Looking ahead, as a sign of thanks to the people who attend KOKUYO's fairs, we think that we would like to give new shapes to our desire for recovery in Tohoku. We want to begin by using the Ayukawa Primary School learning spaces and holding workshops and events together with everyone in the region.

Groping Our Way along in Project Activities

The IINE! Project2012 lasted for a full year, and we made progress by groping our way along. People from KOKUYO with many talents and strengths assembled to do everything from planning and publicity to operation and design. When we finally consummated the project through a series of discussions and visits to the regions, it was already October. Going forward, we want to treasure the relationships we have built, and, with an even stronger membership in our group, we want to be even more useful to society and express our gratitude.