**In Japan, football star Makoto Hasebe appeals for support for the world's children**

By Hiromasa Nakai, quoted from <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/japan_66027.html>

TOKYO, Japan, 3 October 2012 - “This will become the symbol of our town’s recovery,” said mayor of Minami-Sanriku Cho Jin Sato of the town’s new kindergarten. Minami-Sanriku Cho is a coastal town. It was almost entirely washed away by the tsunami of 11 March 2011. The town lost nearly half of its 18,000 residents, some of whom are still missing. In Minami-Sanriku Cho, recovery has been slow. ①***Rubble*** is still visible in the now-open spaces where the train station, shops, hospitals, town offices, schools and kindergartens once were. Most of the families who lost their homes live in small, temporary structures.

With the support of world-class Japanese football player Makoto Hasebe and the Japan Committee for UNICEF, a new kindergarten has been built from 300-year-old trees, which would otherwise have been ②***discarded*** because of salt damage. Mr. Hasebe, who has been playing for VfL Wolfsburg in the German Bundesliga since 2008, started supporting UNICEF in 2007. In 2006, he had joined the Japan national team and started having more and more opportunities to fly overseas for international matches. It was then that he made his ‘first touch’ with UNICEF through a pamphlet he found in an airplane seat pocket.

At first, Mr. Hasebe donated anonymously to UNICEF. But, as his fame grew, and at the Japan Committee for UNICEF’s request, Mr. Hasebe started providing additional support as UNICEF’s messenger. “As I had started establishing a responsible position and earning, I thought I should start something like this,” he explains.

In 2010, Mr. Hasebe appeared in a UNICEF public service announcement in which he called for others to join him in supporting UNICEF through a monthly pledge programme. At the time, he was writing his first book and had decided to donate the royalties to UNICEF.

A few days before the book’s release, the Tohoku region of Japan, where Minami-Sanriku Cho is located, was severely hit by the 3.11 earthquake and tsunami. Mr. Hasebe responded by donating some USD165 million to the Japan Committee for UNICEF. The funds came from royalties, and from a charity event he organized in his hometown of Fujieda City in Shizuoka. Some 10,000 spectators attended the event, and the donation funded construction of the Minami-Sanriku Cho kindergarten.

Earlier this month, Mr. Hasebe released another public service announcement. In it, he appeals to young Japanese people to make the first step towards changing the world for children. The title of the piece is First Touch. The first touch is the football players’ first action on the football field to start a game. In one part of the announcement, ‘Donating is embarrassing’, Mr. Hasebe addresses a possible reservation some Japanese people – particularly male ones – might feel about donating money. In Japanese culture, donating money can be seen as ‘③***showing off***’. By addressing this ④***perception*** directly, Mr. Hasebe hopes to overcome ⑤***reservations*** his viewers and fans might have. Mr. Hasebe recalls that he used to be too shy to make a donation, and that he felt that his donation would be too small to change the multitude of problems children face globally. The pamphlet he picked up on a plane shifted his outlook. He hopes that more and more people, especially young people, will overcome their reservations and sense of hopelessness, as he did, and believes that new donors’ First Touches might help improve the world for children.

1. **Rubble** : broken stones or bricks from building or wall that has been destroyed or damaged.
2. **Discard** : to get rid of something that you no longer want or need.
3. **Showing off** : a person who tries to impress other people by showing how good he or she is at doing something.
4. **Perception** : an idea, a belief or an image you have as a result of how you see or understand something.
5. **Reservation** : a feeling of doubt about a plan or an idea.

About his book**:**

**SOCCER/ Hasebe book marks 1 million copies printed**

August 11, 2011

One million copies have now been printed of a book written by Japan international soccer player Makoto Hasebe, a Tokyo-based publishing house announced Aug. 10. "Kokoro o Totonoeru" (Maintaining peace of mind), published by Gentosha Inc., reached the million mark in its 21st reprint. The first run of the book was released March 18. The 27-year-old Wolfsburg midfielder, who captained Japan to its fourth Asian Cup title in January, wrote that it is important to keep a clear mind in order to accomplish your goals. He also said in the book that one should not get too worked up if the situation calls for calm. "We think a lot of people, who may have been shaken up emotionally by the (March 11) earthquake, want to adjust their mind-set to help overcome their difficulties," said a Gentosha staff member. All royalties from the book will be donated to reconstruction efforts in areas affected by the March 11 quake and tsunami through UNICEF.

Questions

Ⅰ. Have you ever known Mr. Hasebe? If, yes, what have you known about him?

Ⅱ. Do you know the fact that Mr. Hasebe published his own book last year?

Ⅲ.Have you ever donated to something? If, yes, for what and why? If, no, why not?

Ⅳ.Do you think that donating can be seen as show-up in Japan?

Ⅴ.If you were a world-class sport player, what would you do using your huge money and fame?