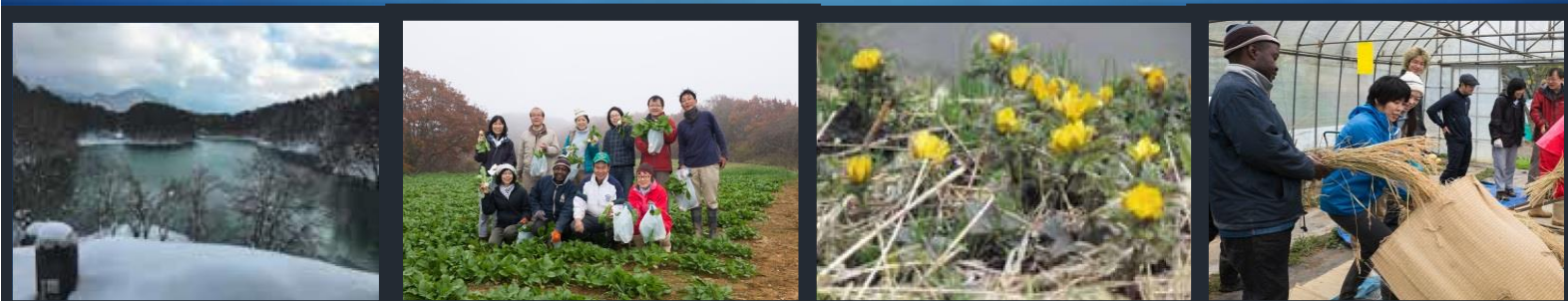


Community Power Assessment Tool

WORK BOOK



Community Power Assessment Tool

For Endogenous Development of Community by utilizing Regional Resources

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About Community Power

There are quite a few farming villages that are using their own natural, environmental, and human resources to engage in the creation of a vibrant community, where this is done not by outsiders but by the very people who feel a sense of attachment to their community. The more challenging the geographic conditions in which the community is situated, the more wisdom, ingenuity, and drastic measures that seem to come out of these efforts. When you visit these communities, you find richness in the relationship between people and nature as well as among the people, extending well beyond the confined world of economic growth or the money economy. It may well be said that a solidarity economy is being borne, where the objective is not simply to make profit but where mutual aid is valued.

What is needed the most now is to learn from these communities, find the common factors among them, and to make these factors universal. After all, there is much to learn from these communities that have successfully created new jobs while still valuing the primary industry (i.e. farming, forestry, fishery, etc.) and livelihood-generating meaningful occupations, protected lives and livelihoods, and communicated their region's attractiveness to the world with a flexible sensibility.

The Four Common Factors

- 1) These communities have utilized their regional resources, shed light on them, developed small- and medium-scaled jobs rooted in such resources, and have increased employment.
- 2) These communities have leaders who are rooted in the community, whose ideas and tastes are not bound by precedents, and can move everybody forward without being inconsiderate of fellow community leaders' and members' opinions. These leaders may belong to various entities including the private sector, agricultural cooperatives, forestry unions, or the local municipal government.
- 3) These communities have the so-called "I-Turn" outsiders who moved there with no previous local ties, as well as "U-Turn" returnees who had previous local ties. Those outsiders who grew up in urban areas tend to discover the community's charm and appeal that are rooted in the values of the restoration of the primary industry and conservation of the environment, and they can communicate their discovery to the rest of the nation. This, in turn, draws additional newcomers into the community.
- 4) These communities have many people who earn their cash income from their main line of work while they also grow their own food and place value on the self-sufficiency aspect of life. They are also part of the local farming community that grows safe food, and function as the seawall to prevent the excesses of the commodity economy to flood into their community, thereby creating the basis for a life that can be maintained without an enormous amount of disposable cash at hand.

[Adapted from the introduction chapter of the previous published book, *Community Power: Food, Agriculture, and Regional Development*.]

Rural Return Migration and Endogenous Development

The values of today's younger generation are changing. They are more inclined toward a society that is kinder to people and the environment, and they believe in living at a slower pace. This has led to the beginning of the population shifting from the cities to rural areas, i.e. rural return migration and the part-time-farming part-time-doing-something-else lifestyle. According to the public opinion poll by the Cabinet Office where the respondents were asked, "Do you have the desire to live permanently in farming, forestry, or fishing-based communities?" 20.6% of the respondents in 2005 said "Yes" or "Closer to a Yes than a No" while the same for 2014 was 31.6%. In the last ten years, the increase has been a surprising 11 percentage points. The greatest increase could be found among men in their 20s through their 40s and women in their 30s and 40s, while for men in the 20s, 47.4% or almost half of the respondents gave positive answers in 2014.

The frontlines of rural return migration can be found in Shimane prefecture. The Japanese term for depopulation (*kasō*) was first created in the 1960s in then Hikimi Town (now Masuda City), Shimane, but there have been a social increase in the population of five municipalities of Ama Town, Ohnan Town, Iin Town, Misato Town, and Chibu Village. Comparing the population of elementary school and community center districts* of 2009 and 2014, there has been an increase in the population of women in the 30s in 42% (or 96) of the districts, and an increase in children under four in 30% (or 69) of the districts. Population increase is prevalent especially in rural of the most rural areas that are away from the center of the prefecture, with no main or even branch government offices. For example, between 2005 and 2013, five of total eleven towns and villages have seen an increase from outside the prefecture, with Yoshika Town seeing the most increase. Among the cities, Izumo is the only one that has seen a population growth.

Additionally, according to the National Survey of Lifestyle Preferences (FY2011), only 14.3% responded that "Society is moving in a more livable direction," which is significantly lower than what it was in the 1980s and 1990s. Even though there has been growth in real GDP, many people cannot find hope for their futures. This is all the more reason why we must change course on how our society is and how we live: from the economic growth route, which overemphasized the cities and the secondary and tertiary industries, to the endogenous development route, which sees farming and fishing towns and the primary industry as valuable and important.

Masaaki Oe

Chair of the Community Power Forum Committee, President of *Commons*, and Journalist
January 27, 2016

(*Average population size for an elementary school or community center district is 504 households, 1,370 persons, and 14.7 neighborhoods.)

The Community Power Assessment Tool

1. Background

The Great East Japan Earthquake and the nuclear accident that ensued prompted all of us to contemplate what sustainable society ought to be. However, even before this earthquake, efforts had already been made all over Japan to promote sustainable regional revitalization that protects the environment, the ecosystem, and the lives of residents. Among the regions that had been making these efforts, many have gone through regional endogenous development as a result of utilizing regional resources, the primary industries gaining economic independence, and the interactions among residents and city dwellers becoming active.

Between 2013 and 2015, we have visited local communities that have been working on sustainable regional revitalization so that we learn from them. We are calling the common factors among these communities “*community power*.” Having analyzed what exactly this entails, we have come to a conclusion that it is this community power that heightens the sense of happiness among the residents, draws outsiders into the region, and ultimately leads to sustainability.

In recent years, efforts have been made to create various happiness indexes as a means to evaluate life in a given community, such as in the front-running case of Arakawa Ward, Tokyo. Giving consideration to this trend, the Community Power Assessment Tool is our endeavor to present community power driven by the local residents as an index in a clear and accessible form. It is our hope that this index be used as a measurement stick among those who are building endogenous communities, so that they can assess their own regions, make new observations, and discuss further efforts to be made.

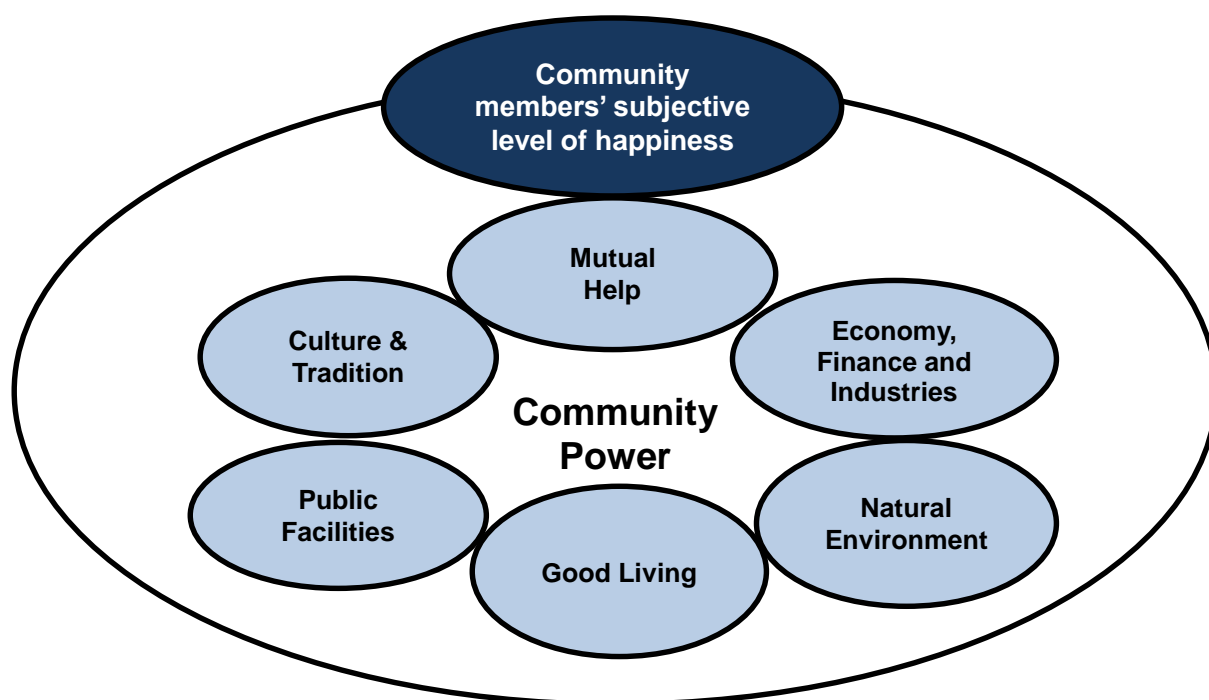
2. Objective and Target of the Assessment Tool

Community Power Assessment Tool is intended for residents living in the community to take ownership of assessing how their own community is sustainable. Through this assessment process, the objective is for the residents to understand the status quo of their region and to connect their understanding to improvement measures.

We hope that the Community Power Assessment Tool can be used by those who are working hard to revitalize their regions while grappling with depopulation, the ageing of the population, promotion of sustainable primary industry, conservation of the natural environment, cyclical local economy, and other issues in communities in which residents have taken ownership of the revitalization efforts. Therefore, the definition and range of “region” or “community” differ from community to community; whatever unit the local people are working on would be considered a “region” or a “community” for the sake of this tool.

3. Overview of the Assessment Index

Community Power Assessment Tool consists of the following six dimensions: Mutual help, Economy, Finance and Industry, Natural Environment, Good Living, Public Facilities, and Culture and Tradition. Through checking off items in the index, tallying by dimensions, and creating a hexagonal radar chart, you will get a clear visual presentation of the status quo of your community. In addition to these six dimensions, individual community member’s subjective measures of satisfaction with the community is also assessed, which then can be compared with the six dimensions. The index items for the six dimensions are expected to be reviewed and modified as needed in the future.



4. How to Use This Assessment Tool Workbook

As a general rule, the assessment will be conducted using this workbook in a workshop format with community members as facilitated by a person with a good understanding of this tool. The workshop facilitators will use the “Description of the Assessment Index” chapter as a reference in explaining the assessment index to the participants, who will be asked to use the survey attached as an appendix to provide answers for each dimension of the index. The results will be compiled and drawn as a chart to be shared with all participants, based on which the discussion will follow.

List of Assessment Index Items

Dimensions	Sub-dimensions		Indicators
1. Mutual Help (Participation and Cooperation among Community Members)	Local management organizations (self-governing resident organizations, nonprofit organizations etc.)	1	How many local management organizations (self-governing resident organizations or nonprofit organizations) are actively involved in your community?
		2	Are women and young people actively participating in the local management organizations (self-governing resident organizations or nonprofit organizations)?
	Volunteer activities and mutual assistance	3	Are regional community activities (such as volunteer activities) active in your community?
		4	Do you have people you can go to for help or places you can consult with when you are in trouble?
	Cooperative relationship between government and resident organizations	5	Do you think your local municipal government has a mechanism to receive demands from residents and to reflect them in policymaking?
		6	Do you think the mechanism to receive demands from residents gives enough consideration to the diversity among residents (such as from women, people with disabilities, migrants and foreign residents, etc.)?
		7	Do you think the residents are actively raising demands to the local municipal government?
	Regional security and safety	8	Do you think your local neighborhoods are safe?
		9	Do you think the volunteer firefighters are active?
	Interaction with, reception of, and communication with those outside of the community	10	Do you think there is active interaction with people who live in the cities (or in farming and fishing towns, if your community is in the city)?
		11	Is there a coordination mechanism or a coordinator for incoming residents from outside of the region?
		12	Are the local municipal government or community organizations actively communicating to outsiders regarding local initiatives?
2. Economy, Finance and Industries (Regional Cyclical Economy)	Economic inequality	13	How large is the income inequality in your community?
	Financial institutions	14	What kind of financial institutions do you use? (How much do you use local financial institutions?) 1) Large national banks, Japan Post banks, internet banking 2) Local financial institutions (local banks, agricultural union banks, local credit unions)
	Employment and sustainable revenue	15	Are there a lot of employment opportunities in your region?

		16	Is there a good environment for entrepreneurship and other new business opportunities in your region?
		17	Do merchants, industrial enterprises, and the service industry usually have their successors lined up?
	Regional cyclical economy	18	Do you usually go shopping at local stores (that are not national chain stores)?
		19	Is there good coordination among agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing sectors within your region? (Do you locally process and sell local agricultural produce?)
	Women's economic activity	20	Is women's economic participation active? (Are women directly involved in local economic activity?)
	Local branding and local specialty items	21	Is there a lot of resident-led local specialty product development?
	Industry taking advantage of natural capital	22	Are there mechanisms or efforts to protect agricultural businesses in the region?
		23	Do agricultural, forestry, and fishing enterprises usually have their successors lined up?
		24	Does your municipal government have a unique mechanism to support people who are newly entering agriculture, forestry, or fishing?
		25	Are there any unique regional approaches that take advantage of regional resources and attract outsiders (such as green tourism, marathon races, etc.)?
3. Natural Environment (Preservation and Conservation of the Regional Environment)	Sustainable primary industry	26	Are organic farming and environmental conservation farming (or farming that is friendly to the ecosystem) actively done?
		27	How many people are familiar with and/or grow their own food in home gardens and community farms?
		28	Are there active conservation efforts for the woodland areas?
		29	Are there sustainability efforts in forestry, such as processing thinned wood or planting broad-leaved trees?
		30	Are there sustainability efforts in fishing?
	Natural environment	31	Are there active development of renewable energy that use regional natural resources effectively (such as wind, solar, or geothermal energy)?
		32	Are there efforts to preserve the landscape (such as planting flowers, conserving historic buildings, etc.)?
	Land and soil	33	Are recycling and reusing actively done?
		34	Are there active efforts to enrich the soil (such as creating fertilizers that use local resources, reducing chemical fertilizer usage, etc.)?

		35	Are there efforts to reduce abandoned farmlands?
4. Good Living (Health, Education and Care for Disadvantaged)	Health	36	Are there mechanisms or places for the elderly to be employed or be actively involved?
		37	Are there persons or mechanisms to watch over elderly residents who live alone?
		38	Are there facilities that can respond to everyday illnesses and injuries?
		39	1) Is the average life expectancy in your region higher than the national average? (If answer to this question is uncertain, go to question 2 below.) 2) Are there active efforts in the region to prevent illnesses and injuries?
	Education	40	Are there enough opportunities and facilities for voluntarily engaging in learning, such as in lifelong (continuing) education?
		41	Do you think elementary schools are being consolidated in your city, town, or village?
		42	Do you think there is a good environment for raising children?
	Socially vulnerable persons	43	Are regional development efforts made to be more inclusive of people with disabilities?
	Movement of people	44	Are there any I-Turners (or those who moved from outside the region who were not originally from the region) around you?
		45	Are there any outsider staff who are involved in regional development (such as community revitalization troops, neighborhood support staff, etc.)?
		46	Besides municipal government efforts, are there mechanisms or do people exist who can give advice to new farmers about agricultural skills or farm life?
5. Public Facilities (Support for Sustainable Living)	Public transportation and modes of transportation	47	In terms of transportation, how much has public transportation been developed and how much has it been used?
		48	Do you think there are mechanisms or mutual support efforts for those who have difficulty with everyday shopping or outings?
		49	How often do you ride your bicycle? (*Question for urban communities)
	Regional bases	50	Are there facilities close by that can be used for residents' voluntary activities?
		51	Are public facilities such as libraries, community centers, and children's centers actively used?
		52	Are there facilities that serve as the hub for regional activities?

	Energy	53	Are there efforts made in the region for energy self-sufficiency? Has there been discussion to move in that direction?
	Irrigation	54	Are there mechanisms or organizations that maintain or build structures to secure water for agricultural use, such as irrigation channels or reservoirs?
	Disaster management	55	Are there resident-led disaster prevention efforts?
	Other	56	Is there a mechanism for ascertaining the conditions of vacant houses and to promote their use?
6. Culture and Tradition (Preservation and Continuation of Culture and Tradition)	Preservation and continuation of cultural heritage	57	Are there preservation efforts for tangible cultural properties (such as buildings or facilities)?
		58	Are there active efforts to pass down intangible cultural properties (such as folktale storytellers or dances)?
		59	Are there active local festivals and cultural events?
	Sports and the Arts	60	Are there sports and arts facilities and organizations for residents to participate?
		61	Are there sports, arts, or food events and organizations where people from outside the region can participate and interact with each other or with the residents?
	Culinary culture	62	Are there efforts to preserve and to pass down the local food culture such as traditional ingredients and local cuisine?
	Customs and everyday wisdom	63	Are handiworks and wisdom, which have been rooted in people's everyday lives from generations ago, preserved and passed down?
		64	Are there spaces for people to interact and to communicate across generations and industries?
	Education and Communication of Culture and Tradition	65	Are there efforts to spread, educate, and share local resources such as nature, traditional knowledge, or traditional skills within the region?
		66	Are there efforts to communicate local history, culture, and tradition to those outside of the region? (Information dissemination)
7. Subjective Measures of Happiness (Satisfaction with life and hope for the future)		67	Currently, how satisfied are you of your life in your region?
		68	How attached do you feel to your region?
		69	How proud are you of your region?
		70	Do you want to continue to live in your region?
		71	Do you want your children to continue to live in your region?
		72	In your opinion, what does a happy region look like? Please describe in detail.

Description of the Assessment Index

1) Mutual Help: Participation and Cooperation among Community Members

Overview

Mutual help refers to the kind of society where organic connections among people and organizations in the region have been maintained, where there is vibrant community of mutual assistance. When interpersonal relationships and relationships between organizations are good in the region, not only the regional foundation is stable and efforts within the region can move forward smoothly, but the environment has been set where troubles that are beyond the individual to solve or other large issues can be dealt with through mutual assistance and cooperation.

We consider it ideal when various people and organizations within the region are actively involved, in cooperation with each other, and participating in the regional community. Therefore, we use local management organizations (such as self-governing resident organizations or nonprofit organizations) and regional activities (such as volunteer activities) as the index here, because they are important opportunities for community participation.

Also, we give serious consideration to the role of local municipal governments since they can lead to wider and more sustainable measures, and value the relationship between residents and the municipal government here as well. Finally, we ask not only about cooperative relationships within the region but also about interaction with the outsiders and support efforts for those moving into the region.

Points to Consider (Index Items)

Local Management Organizations (Self-Governing Resident Organizations, Nonprofit Organizations, etc.)

- Number of organizations
- Diversity of membership

Volunteer Activities and Mutual Assistance

- Activeness of regional community activities (such as volunteer activities)
- Presence of people and places to go for help

Local Municipal Government and Residents

- System to reflect resident demands
- Consideration for resident diversity
- Residents actively raising demands

Regional Security and Safety

- Safe neighborhoods
- Active volunteer firefighters

Interaction, Reception and Communication

- Interaction with urban communities
- Mechanism for receiving new residents
- Communication of local initiatives

Examples

Towa District, Nihonmatsu City, Fukushima Prefecture: Regional Revitalization by a Nonprofit Organization

Yuki-no-Sato Towa Furusato-zukuri Kyogikai (Council for Hometown Development of Organic Farm Village Towa) is an incorporated nonprofit organization in the Towa district of Nihonmatsu City, in the mountainous region in the Abukuma Mountains. Around 250 households of local organic farmers and other residents felt alarmed that their community was left out of the so-called *great Heisei municipal mergers* and formed the council in 2005. They operate a roadside rest area as a contractor of the city, and base their activities there. They have been engaging in resident-led comprehensive revitalization efforts such as brand marketing and the so-called sixth-order industrialization (combining primary, secondary, and tertiary industries) of local produce, supporting new farmers, promoting interactions with urban areas, and green tourism.



[Left: Rice Reaping Experience in Towa district, Nihonmatsu City, Fukushima Prefecture]

[Right: Farmhouse inn and restaurant in Towa District]

Ohnan Town and Yoshika Town (formerly Kakinoki Village), Shimane Prefecture: New Resident Support

Ohnan Town, which aspires to be the “Best Village in Japan to Raise Children,” engages in thorough care for newcomers, including child care support measures. The Settlement Support Coordinator, who works for the town’s Settlement Promotion Department, not only supports newcomers in locating housing and employment, but also provides guidance on everyday issues such as neighborhood relations, where the support does not end at the point of settling but extends to hands-on follow-up care after settlement. Yoshika Town has a strong network of newcomers, and continues to draw new arrivals by disseminating their voices nationwide.



[Left: In Ohnan Town]

[Right: Roadside rest area in Yoshika Town]

2) Economy, Finance and Industries: The Regional Cyclical Economy

Overview

We believe that the local economy has a higher likelihood of remaining sustainable when economic activities such as production, consumption, saving, and investment stay and circulate as much as possible within the region. For example, we pay attention to employment opportunities in the local industries and the presence of successors in agricultural, forestry, fishing, merchant, or industrial enterprises as a means of bringing sustainable production to the region. We also value efforts to utilize local resources, such as the development of local specialty items and green tourism, as something that can help appeal their region to the outside world and can contribute to the economy. Finally, local production and local consumption, sixth-order industrialization, and other economically and industrially collaborative efforts within the region are considered valuable as an index.

Points to Consider (Index Items)

Economic Inequality

- Income inequality within the region

Financial Institutions

- Degree of use of local financial institutions

Employment & Sustainable Revenue

- Employment opportunities
- Environment conducive to entrepreneurship and other business endeavors
- Successors for merchants and industrial enterprises

Regional Cyclical Economy

- Patronage of stores within the region
- Coordination among farmers, merchants, and manufacturers

Women's Economic Activity

- Women's economic activity

Local Branding and Local Specialty Items

- Local specialty product development

Industry Taking Advantage of Natural Capital

- Efforts to protect agricultural businesses in the region
- Unique approaches to utilize local resources
- Successors in farming, forestry, and fishing
- Local municipal support of farming, forestry, and fishing

Examples

Higashi Naruko District, Osaki City, Miyagi Prefecture: Regional Revitalization through Cooperative Relationships

When the Higashi Naruko District, once a thriving hot spring therapy town, was seeing the number of visitors dwindle down and the regional economy suffer, they began to promote regional revitalization through cooperation with agriculture and other local industries. One such program is the Rice Field Hot Spring Therapy, which combines farming experience and hot spring therapy. Another program called Local Soy Bean Hot Spring Therapy @ Naruko Hot Spring Village offers guests at the inn in the Higashi Naruko District to cultivate unused farm to grow soy beans together, where the harvested produce will be served at the inn. They are working on building a cooperative relationship with the neighboring hot spring town as well, sharing information of each district and seeking directions where all of their communities can coexist.



[Left: Narukogotenba Station in Naruko district]
[Center: Local Soy Bean Hot Spring Therapy]
[Right: Outdoor bath with snow view]

Kamikatsu Town, Tokushima Prefecture: Regional Revitalization Business through the *Tsumamono* (=garnishing served with meals at Japanese restaurants)

Shipping local leaves (maple, persimmon, nandina, etc.) based on the market monitoring system via the computer, this physically non-taxing new business allows for great contribution from the elderly residents who have deep knowledge of local plants. Taking advantage of local resources and revitalizing the economy, this has led to lowering of medical costs as many elderly residents regained their health after finding a job to which they can devote themselves.

Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture: Marugame Shopping District's Marumaru Marché Promoting Proper Distribution of Locally Produced Ingredients

Marugame Town Shopping District, which had experienced a decline, was revitalized through the Shopping District Promotion Association's redevelopment project. The Marumaru Marché, based on the Local Production Local Consumption concept, have direct contracts with local farmers and sell pesticide-free and low-pesticide vegetables. Working with the local fishing cooperative, they also sell fish caught by fishermen who are conscious of conserving local resources, and introduce to the consumers various local specialty items that were not widely known. By eliminating the intermediary exploitation, they aim to build a market where the farmers can set their own prices for their produce.

3) Natural Environment: Preservation and Conservation of the Regional Environment

Overview

All over Japan, beautiful nature and scenery that evoke nostalgia abound. Much of these natural and scenic treasures have been preserved as a result of the fruit of daily work and efforts of those who live in those regions. In this section on coexistence with nature, you will assess the activities related to the preservation of the regional natural environment and scenery, and the primary industry efforts to make the most of local natural resources. Especially, we give high priority to agriculture as the basis of life in many communities in Japan, and ask whether environmental conservation farming is being done and the efforts made to deal with abandoned farmlands. For communities that engage in forestry and fishery, we ask about whether or not they are done in sustainable manners. Also, activities related to renewable energy, recycling, and reusing are also addressed here.

Points to Consider (Index Items)

Sustainable Primary Industry

- Organic farming & environmental conservation farming
- Home gardens & community farms
- Conservation of woodland areas
- Sustainable forestry
- Sustainable fishing

Natural Environment

- Development of renewable energy
- Efforts to preserve the landscape
- Recycling & reusing activities

Land & Soil

- Efforts to enrich the soil
- Efforts to reduce abandoned farmlands

Examples

Umaji Village, Kochi Prefecture: Citron and Wood Product Development Yielding Great Economic Effect

Creating cosmetics and bath additives, the village has expanded their market of the locally produced citron and have gained strong direct sales power through catalog sales. Their wooden business bags and cushions, which utilize thinned wood for the purpose of forest preservation, have turned out to be also very popular. Additionally, inter-generational interaction is active among those who seek out experiences in nature.

Yuzuhara Town, Kochi Prefecture: Yuzuhara Forestry Union Promoting Environmentally Conscious Forestry as a Base for Regional Development (Cooperation with the Local Municipal Government)

While lumber sales is the mainstay of the town, which has been internationally certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the union and the town government cooperate on promoting green tourism such as farmhouse inns and traditional papermaking experiences. They also actively welcome those who seek out new careers in forestry and in wind power generation.

Towa District, Nihonmatsu City, Fukushima Prefecture: “*Yuki-no-Sato Towa Furusato-zukuri Kyogikai* (Organic Village Towa Furusato Planning Council)” and Community Building Based on Environmental Conservation Farming

This council built a center to make fertilizer, which is essential to organic farming, using 14 regional resources as ingredients, including horse manure, rice husk, and sawdust. Rice and vegetables grown with this fertilizer bypass the market and are directly distributed for use in local school lunches and for co-ops in urban areas, making it possible for the producers to interact with the consumers. Furthermore, in order to revitalize abandoned farmlands, they developed new local specialty food items by processing mulberry leaves, oilseed perilla, and figs, which has led to increased employment. These efforts culminate in community development based on regional resource circulation, where the homeland scenery of dragonflies flying over rice fields and mulberry fields can now be passed down to the children.



[Teaching Farming to Children]

Nerima Ward, Tokyo Prefecture, and Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture: Providing Opportunities for Rich Farming Experiences through Urban Experiential Farms, and Training Urban Farmers’ Aids

In an experiential farm in Nerima Ward, participants grow pesticide-reduced vegetables under the guidance of the farm owner. Community is being built around various events through the farm including harvest festivals, rice planting and harvesting experiences in rural terraced rice fields, and concerts in vinyl greenhouses. On the other hand, in Yokohama City, in order to preserve urban farming, supplementary farm labor is being trained through the provision of experiential farms, opening of direct sales stands, and hosting of agricultural technical workshops.

4) Good Living: Health, Education and Care for Disadvantaged

Overview

In this section on life and livelihood, we ask about the extent to which the health and education of regional residents are ensured. Specifically, we will check to see how well the facilities and mechanisms for health and education have been developed. We will consider active community involvement of elderly persons or persons with disabilities, who are generally considered socially vulnerable persons, as an important index for assessing that good living has been ensured for every person.

Additionally, we regard I-Turners from outside of the region and other external human resources, who come to the region when they find it attractive, as sources of new information, wisdom, and labor, as well as potential sources for shifting, developing, and creating sustainability in life and livelihood in the region. Therefore, we will also check to see whether I-Turners and outsider personnel exist, and what kinds of efforts are being made to welcome them.

Points to Consider (Index Items)

Health

- Employment & activities for the elderly
- Watching over elderly residents living alone
- Medical facilities
- Average life expectancy & illness/injury prevention

Education

- Lifelong education
- Elementary school consolidations
- Regional parenting environment

Socially Vulnerable Persons

- Ease of life for people with disabilities

Movement of People

- I-Turners (those who moved from outside of the region who were not originally from the region)
- Outsider staff involved in regional development
- Advice for new farmers

Examples

Kamikatsu Town, Tokushima Prefecture: The Leaf Business Attracting U- and I-Turners and Becoming Life's Passion for the Elderly

The elderly residents can live active and healthy lives thanks to having this line of work that make good use of the knowledge they already have while not being physically taxing. Also welcoming U- and I-Turners, there is active interaction among native and new residents through events such as the terraced rice field music festival.

Joetsu City, Niigata Prefecture: Village Settlement Revitalization College “Riso Gijuku”

A nonprofit organization called Kami Echigo Mountain Village Fan Club has worked on reviving folk events, preserving terraced rice fields, and revitalizing old traditional-style houses. Through this school based in Kuwatoridani, the mountainous region in the western part of Joetsu City, this nonprofit organization began providing a comprehensive learning space for developing village settlements in 2015. Seeing that many young people who dive into and work in the field of community revitalization experience difficulties, the school provides thoughts and theories on village settlement communities through everyday wisdom and know-how backed up by praxis.



[Left: Cultivation in Rice Field]

[Center: Small Water Supply Utility]

[Right: Village Settlement Revitalization College Brochure of “Riso gijuku”]

Photos courtesy of handouts for presentation by Mr. Go Sekihara in “Community Power Forum” Symposium on 4th march in 2016

Towa District, Nihonmatsu City, Fukushima Prefecture: “Abukuma School of Farming and Life”

The school was established in 2013 to provide new farmers from outside of the region a space to learn organic farming skills. Through learning at the school, students get to reaffirm the significance of living in the region and continuing farming, and also think about various measures and efforts for the future. With three courses in farming, regional culture, and communications, first-rate experts serve as instructors and around 50 students of a wide variety of backgrounds have signed up.



[Left: Presentation of the case examples in the school]

[Right: Lecture about Organic Farming]

Photos Courtesy of Abukuma School of Farming and Life on Facebook

5) Public Facilities: Support for Sustainable Living

Overview

In this section, we measure how public facilities, which support people's lives and the economy, are being used in the region. These facilities include the following: public transportation including roads, bridges, railroads, and buses; power sources such as electricity and gas; public health facilities such as water, sewer, and waste managements; and information infrastructure such as phone lines and the internet. Schools, hospitals, libraries, elder care facilities, emergency evacuation shelters, city hall branch offices, and other facilities that support and enhance residents' lives are also included. Irrigation facilities and disaster management measures, which also support regional life and economy, are included in this section as well. Overall, we believe that adequacy, sustainability, usability, and extent of resident participation in these facilities lead to community power that result in high satisfaction of the residents.

Points to Consider (Index Items)

Public Transportation & Modes of Transportation

- Development of public transportation
- High usage of bicycles and public transportation (=efforts to suppress carbon emission)

Regional Base

- Existence of resident voluntary activity base
- Use of libraries, community centers, children's centers, etc.

Energy

- Energy self-sufficiency

Irrigation

- Maintenance of irrigation facilities

Disaster Management

- Resident-led efforts on disaster prevention

Other

- Efforts to utilize vacant houses

Examples

Kuzumaki Town, Iwate Prefecture: Regional Development through Reusable Energy

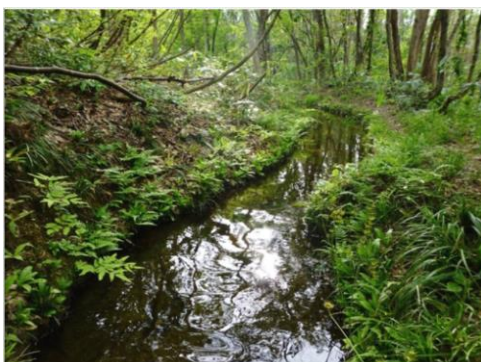
Touting the slogan, “A town of milk, wine, and clean energy at latitude 40 north,” this small town of about 7,000 deep in the mountains of Iwate Prefecture welcomes many visitors from all over the country each year. Since early on, the town has taken advantage of its highland terrain and taken up wind power energy. In combination with biogas energy that uses manure from dairy farming, which is the main industry in town, and woody-biomass energy that uses biomass chips from thinned wood and tree bark pellets, the town’s energy self-sufficiency rate reaches 160%. Their food self-sufficiency rate is also high at 200%.



[Left: Wind turbines built in the mountainous highland]
[Right: Biogas plant that use farm manure]

Yamato District, Kitakata City, Fukushima Prefecture: Maintaining the Hillside Channel “Motoki Uwazeki”

The beautiful terraced rice field scenery in the Yamato District is in thanks to the abundance of water brought to the region through the hillside channel called Motoki Uwazeki. Difficulty of maintaining this open-air hillside water channel, which has been passed down for over 260 years since the Edo Period, has led to many residents stopping rice cultivation. To solve this problem, volunteers were sought from the cities during the spring dredging season when hands are needed the most, and this water channel essential for rice cultivation is maintained thanks to this cooperative relationship between city residents and farmers. This has also developed into an economic tie as volunteers directly purchase rice and sake that derive from the water from this water channel.



[Left: Motoki Uwazeki hillside water channel as passed down from the Edo Period]
[Right: Local elementary school students cooperate with the residents in conducting research on living creatures]
[Photos courtesy of the Society for the Preservation of Channels and Woodland Areas in Motoki and Wasetani on Facebook]

6) Culture and Tradition: Preservation and Continuation of Culture and Tradition

Overview

Culture and tradition that have been passed down from generation to generation in the region are considered valuable for instilling regional pride and attachment to the residents. In this section, we assess efforts to preserve and to pass down regional traditional culture as well as the newly created cultural, artistic, and athletic activities as factors that heighten the sense of satisfaction residents feel with the community. Traditional culture pertains to tangible and intangible cultural properties such as temples, shrines, historic sites, festivals, and traditional events, as well as to culinary culture, customs, and everyday wisdom that have been passed down within households in the region. We also ask if there is an adequate environment for the residents to access and to enjoy cultural, artistic, and athletic activities.

Points to Consider (Index Items)

Preservation & Continuation of Cultural

- Preservation efforts for tangible cultural properties
- Preservation efforts for intangible cultural properties
- Local festivals and cultural events

Sports & the Arts

- Facilities and organizations for sports and the arts
- Sports and arts events and organizations for participation of and interaction with/among outsiders

Culinary Culture

- Preservation and continuation of food culture

Customs & Everyday Wisdom

- Preservation and continuation of handiworks and wisdom
- Inter-generational communication

Education & Communication of Culture & Tradition

- Dissemination, education, and sharing of regional resources
- Communication of regional history, culture, and traditions to the outside

Examples

Shirataka Town, Yamagata Prefecture: Agricultural Processing Group “Shirataka Nora Society” Processing and Selling Traditional Preserved Foods

Using pesticide-free and reduced-pesticide crops as ingredients, and avoiding the use of additives and chemical seasoning, this group produces and sells a variety of processed foods including pickles and rice cakes, which have been made in the region since long ago, as well as original side dishes and confectionery. They are not aiming for efficiency, and they avoid mechanization while they stick to making multiple traditional preserved foods and other food items by hand. Through these efforts, they contribute to local culinary culture being passed down. Starting with 32 processed items, they make more than 60 items now, while the number of members who make purchase orders have increased to around 300.



[Left: Members of the Shirataka Nora Society]

[Right: Processed foods made by the Shirataka Nora Society]

Joetsu City, Niigata Prefecture: Nonprofit Organization “Kami Echigo Mountain Village Fan Club” Preserving and Continuing Regional Traditional Culture

The club conducted a comprehensive research and analysis on the existing and surviving handiworks in the region, where they exposed the critical conditions including specifics about the number of years it will take until certain techniques will disappear. When they concluded that almost all handiwork techniques will indeed disappear within about ten years, they established a nonprofit organization. The organization engages in the preservation and conservation of folk events mainly carried out by local residents, and the preservation and revitalization of regional traditional culture and art of living.



[Left: Dream Bon Festival]

[Right: Moonlight kagura (Shinto sacred music and dance)]

7) Subjective Measures of Happiness: Satisfaction with Life and Hope for the Future

Overview

Finally, we would like to ask about an overall opinion of life in the community. This section is called the “Subjective Measures of Happiness,” because people understand happiness comprehensively, and this varies from person to person. Through listening to factors that make up or affect happiness – such as the level of satisfaction with current life in the region, or hopes for the future including whether or not there is desire to continue to live in the region – we hope to grasp the richness and the challenges in the region as well as the residents’ true feelings.

As we believe that it does not sit well to fit this section into a radar chart, the answers to the questions in this section are to be written in the blank spaces provided in the survey and to be compared with the aforementioned six sections in analysis.

Points to Consider (Index Items)

- Level of satisfaction with current life in the region
- Attachment with the region
- Pride for the region
- Desire to continue to live in the region
- Desire for the children to continue to live in the region
- What a happy region looks like in your opinion

Example

Arakawa Ward, Tokyo Prefecture: Creation of the Gross Arakawa Happiness (GAH) Indicator

Under the leadership of the mayor who believed that “the ward government is a system to make its citizens happy,” the Research Institute for Local government by Arakawa City (RILAC) created the Gross Arakawa Happiness (GAH) Indicator. The goal was to conduct survey research with ward residents based on this index, identify problems, and to reflect them on policy making. In 2013, the Municipal Union for Increasing the Sense of Happiness among Residents or the so called “Happiness League” was established upon proposal by the mayor of Arakawa.

Looking Toward the Future: Linking the Community Power Assessment Tool to Future Endeavors

By holding a workshop using the Community Power Assessment Tool, we believe that it will lead to the following discoveries and effects. It is our sincere hope that the workshop results may be linked to future regional development and revitalization endeavors in your regions and communities.

1) Understanding regional characteristics using the Community Power Assessment Tool

When you examine your community through the six areas that make up community power, you will be able to take a more comprehensive look at life in your community. You may see with a fresh set of eyes that there indeed are various residents in your region with different standpoints and needs, or that what you usually take for granted can be considered rich community treasures. We hope that this tool will be useful in providing a bird's-eye view of the characteristics of your community, and as a measuring stick for sorting and understanding its status quo.

2) Workshop as a space to share opinions on the community's current condition

As you discuss each of your answers in the assessment tool, each person will be able to share the ways in which s/he recognized and understood the issues in the community, while also being made aware of what was previously unknown to you about the region, or comparing differences in your opinions. As an organic part of this process, you will most likely see the strengths and weaknesses of your region and the problems your community faces. This process in and of itself is of great value looking forward, as regional strengths and problems arise out of discussion among people who are bearers of regional development and revitalization efforts, hence leading to proactive involvement in any measures to come.

3) Workshop confirming and strengthening the cooperative relationship in regional development and revitalization

It is ideal to have a diverse representation of people among participants of the workshop across the wide array of statuses, ages, genders, and occupations. They would ideally include not only the representatives from the municipal government, resident organizations, and volunteer organizations, but also U-Turners, I-Turners, women, and the young people as well. When regional issues are shared among workshop participants, and when each of their thoughts and feelings about the community are shared and validated, the next steps can be much smoother. It can also help establish an organizational support system for future regional development and revitalization efforts, too.

4) Redoing the assessment tool workshop after some time, checking to see what changes have been made, and giving them consideration to take further measures

Community power will certainly change as a result of the efforts being made in the region and of various factors reflecting changes in society. When you are so immersed in regional development and revitalization efforts, there may be changes that you are unaware of, and there may also be possibilities of ripple effects that have reached beyond the intended targets of your efforts. When a set amount of time has passed, redoing the workshop using the same assessment tool can help visualize such changes and to help you plan for further action.



CSO Network Japan

CSO Network Japan aims to contribute to achieving a just and sustainable society in which individuals can earn a dignified living and the disempowered can participate meaningfully in decision-making, by way of linking up different actors beyond boundaries and sectors. In collaboration with Japanese and overseas CSOs and with a focus on multi-sector partnerships, CSO Network Japan works on action-oriented research, information dissemination, and holding events and seminars. The current priorities of its activities are (1) promotion of “social responsibility” and “sustainability”, (2) research on new trends of international development, (3) information dissemination about SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) and (4) efforts to support sustainable local community building.

Community Power Assessment Tool Work Book

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A large, dark blue curved shape, resembling a stylized wave or a partial circle, occupies the top half of the page. It has a lighter blue gradient on its inner curve.

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