

## Chapter 2: Five Factors for Successful Initiatives

Successful initiatives toward vibrant communities or businesses differ greatly from one another in terms of achievements and processes toward them. There is no unified model by which any municipality, community or business can achieve successful outcomes.

Yet a number of factors are commonly found in the case studies in Chapter 1. There are: (i) voluntary participation, (ii) better use of local resources, (iii) concentration, (iv) cooperation and partnership, and (v) continuity and expansion

### Section 1. Voluntary participation

It is important to gain voluntary participation in an initiative toward vibrant communities or business. This can be made possible by nothing but effort and ingenuity.

#### 1. Raising and sharing awareness

##### [Promoting motivation and creativity]

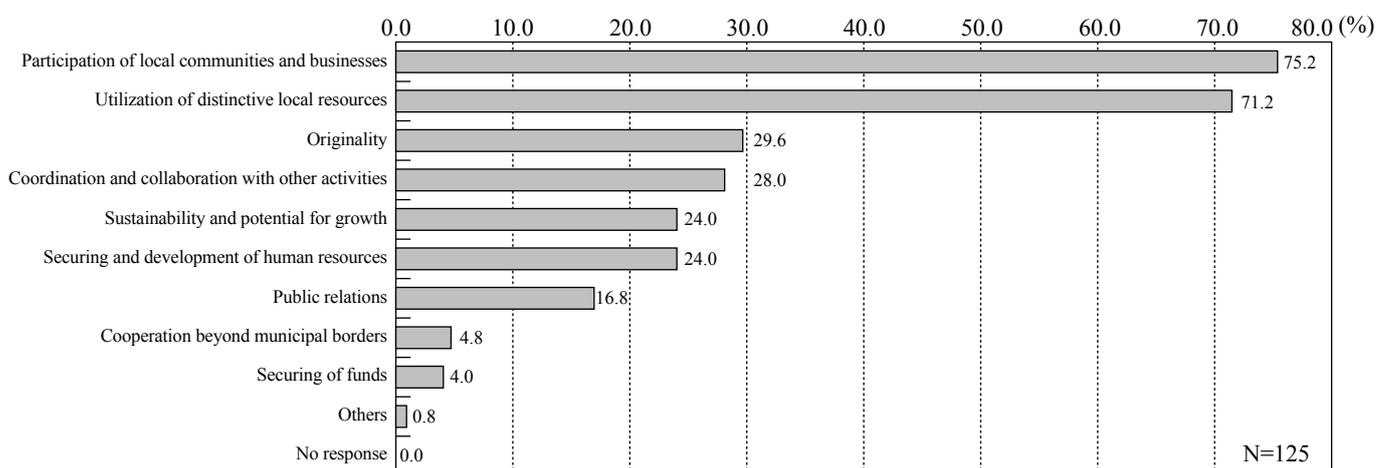
First of all, it is important that someone—be it the head or employee of a municipality, a shop owner or a resident—expresses his or her desire for change and share it with others. While gathering information on activities in other areas, including policies and programs of other municipalities, those who share such desire may come to feel like changing their community for the better or come to think what they can do for their community.

Cases studies on businesses suggest that initiatives for change come from rank-and-file employees as well as management. Such endogenous initiatives may stem from employees' ideas in response to socioeconomic changes, developments in policies by the central and local governments, or comments and suggestions from their customers.

##### [Sharing the willingness to participate and contribute with an increasing number of people]

The case studies in Chapter 1 show community development initiatives involved a wide range of participants, including residents, businesses and NPOs.

#### What aspects do you or your organization consider especially important in your community revitalization initiative?



Notes: 1. This question was addressed to 125 municipalities that answered “achieved satisfactory results” or “achieved some results but not sufficient” when asked about the outcomes of their community revitalization initiatives.

2. Due to multiple answers (up to three,) the total exceeds 100%

It should be noted, however, community revitalization initiatives did not win a wide range of participants spontaneously. In many cases, a number of participants rose by degrees, or the sectors like the community and NPO increased their roles gradually.

The case studies in the previous chapter suggest that these initiatives won wide support because they met the three criteria: (i) they were attractive initiatives in principle and in practice; (ii) they ensured that information was fully shared; and (iii) they ensured that participants could express their views freely.

Another important factor for the success of community development initiatives is active participation of women, senior citizens and children, including their ideas.

#### **A NPO's PR publications for the local community**



#### **Workshop**



In addition, it is important to share a sense of crisis or other concerns within a business. Employees' sense of crisis with the business or industry to which they belong may develop into a creative initiative for change. And such an initiative may lead to reform or growth of that business.

### **2. Setting clear and appropriate goals**

#### **[Goals that attract both customers and participants]**

The Goals of a community revitalization initiative must meet the needs of the users of the services the initiative will create.

These goals—if they stimulate the interest of the participants, satisfy their desire for self-fulfillment, and win their empathy—may lead to active involvement of their own accord. Community development initiatives reviewed in Chapter 1 had such goals—goals that envisioned that locals would enjoy a better quality of life and have more confidence in the areas they live in.

#### **[Setting clear goals that lead to further development]**

It is necessary to set clear and realistic goals for the targeted area, because such goals will win wide support and make it possible to zero in on those goals.

The goals should also ensure that the initiative should be sustainable and have a long-term effect in light of future socioeconomic conditions.

### **3. Human resources who have a penchant for the local community, an innovative and creative mind, and a tenacious vitality**

#### **[The need for leaders and coordinators]**

Leaders are always found in the process where community development initiatives take form and win broad support. Such leaders have the capacity to improve the local community and a passion for doing so. They also have enough perseverance, the charm to involve people around them, and strong powers of persuasion.

Coordinators, who straighten out different views of many stakeholders, also play an important role in community development initiatives.

#### **Streetscape featuring homes built with a traditional method**



In the business sector, revitalization of a business or industry often requires innovative human resources who can precisely assess the needs of consumers and service users, as well as the socioeconomic circumstances.

**[Involving experts and people with an outsider’s perspective]**

As the case studies suggest, community development initiatives often requires experts.

A perspective from outside is often effective. In that sense, it is advisable to take advantage of the experience and skills of people who have moved in. It is also advisable that locals go outside and see good practices in other areas with their own eyes.

Businesses often work with universities and research institutions to develop technologies and products.

In order to gain an competitive edge, businesses often take advantage of human resources from outside or those who have learned about technologies, products or services of other businesses or industries through training programs or other means.

**Overseas study tour**



**[Leadership of heads of municipalities or top management at businesses]**

The head of a municipality often plays a crucial role in community development, as shown in the case studies.

In the private sector, top management has a decisive impact on initiatives toward vibrant business activities. This is especially true of small- to medium-sized businesses in terms of their flexibility.

The case studies show that those with strong leadership—be it the head of a municipality or the president of a business—are highly innovative and more than willing to accept creative ideas.

**Section 2. Better use of local resources**

Each initiative to develop vibrant communities or business in Chapter 1 is unique in its own way because the municipality, community or business puts available resources to good use. Any municipality, community or business has some kinds of useful resources available. Therefore, it is important that each entity takes a fresh look at itself, identifies useful but hitherto hidden resources, and makes the most of them.

**[Identifying resources useful but hitherto hidden that are locally available]**

A wide variety of tangible and intangible resources are used for community development. Among them are: traditional streetscapes, history and culture, literature works, festivals and other events, local industries and products, hot springs, or even the local lifestyles, topography and other natural conditions, genius loci and spirit of hospitality.

As the case studies suggest, some municipalities take advantage of what was nothing special or even a nuisance in the eyes of locals for their community development.

**Putting snow into a snow storage**



The “discovery” of these local resources has been made possible by a number of factors: (i) deeper understanding of