

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

the municipality or community, (ii) flexible thinking or a shift in thinking, (iii) innovative use of existing resources, (iv) attention to fresh perspectives from outside, and (v) selection of advantageous resources.

An inspection tour of a traditional building



A former post office turned into a visitor center



[Maintenance, conservation and improvement of local resources]

Municipalities and communities should ensure that local resources are properly maintained, conserved, improved, and even recorded for future use as appropriate.

To that end, necessary arrangements may as well be made, as suggested by the case studies.

[Proactive use of external resources]

Some municipalities or communities combine local resources with external resources to enhance the value of the former. Some of them learn from development initiatives in remote locations with similar situations. Others work with neighboring municipalities or communities for synergy effects.

In the private sector, businesses take advantage of joint research and development with others or even with universities and research institutions.

[“Discovery,” strategic selection, maintenance, conservation and improvement of resources]

As the case studies suggest, some businesses concentrate their efforts on the cultivation of a small or niche market by identifying potential demand.

Section 3. Concentration

[Concentrated investment]

Businesses identify sectors where they can enjoy competitive advantages. Then they concentrate their management resources on these sectors to expand their market shares or establish their distinctive positions there.

[Integration of community development policies; strategic public relations]

As suggested in the case studies, municipalities should implement community development policies in an integrated manner so as to achieve successful outcomes soon and maximize their synergy effects.

Section 4. Cooperation and partnership

For successful community development, local stakeholders should—while exercising their originality—work together toward common goals. Businesses should also ensure such cooperation and partnership in developing new technologies with central or local governments and universities and in developing new services with other businesses of a different industry.

1. Pursuing common goals

Goals cannot be achieved unless different stakeholders share goals and work toward them.

With this in mind, some municipalities set up a council where the municipal government, local communities and businesses establish common goals. Some even incorporate such goals into an ordinance.

Businesses should set goals that can win support of other parties concerned.