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LOCAL REVITALIZATION PROJECT TO TURN MY HOMETOWN, KOMONO TOWN, INTO "SPACE TOWN"

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Abstract

In Japan, the concentration of population in urban areas and the declining birthrate and aging pop- ulation have led to the decline of rural areas. To solve this problem, I have planned and started to put into practice a space project to revitalize the region by turning my hometown, Komono Town, into ”space town.” First, we have initiated activities to introduce space education programs to schools in order to get parents and children living in Komono Town interested in private space travel and the private space business. Specifically, we visit the mayor of the municipality and the board of education, and hold lectures by private astronauts at elementary and junior high schools to implement the program to give children a dream. In addition to children, we also offer lectures on commercial space travel for elderly people living in Komono Town. Nearly 25 percent of the population of Komono Town is elderly. By having a goal of space travel, the elderly will find a purpose in life, which will enhance their vitality and revitalize the community. Furthermore, we will make effective use of vacant houses and land owned by the elderly by converting them into places to practice private space education. We will also attract tourists from other regions by offering space tours to simulate space travel with private astronauts using a private spacecraft education and training simulator, which was created by converting a camping trailer.
In this paper, I report the results of my examination of the project to revitalize my hometown, Komono Town, as a rural area by turning it into ”space town,” as well as the issues involved in the implementation of the project.

Keywords: Komono-cho, Revitalization of a local area, SKIP

Nomenclature
Komono-cho: A local town in Mie Prefecture in Japan

Acronyms/Abbreviations

SKIP: Star Kids International Program

1. Introduction

In recent years, the population of Japan has been declining as young people move to urban areas, leading to the decline of rural areas. My hometown, Komono Town, is experiencing a similar decline in population and an increase in the number of vacant houses and lots. My online tutoring school, SKIP (Star Kids International Program), has a private space education program as part of its classes.

Last year, in my 2022 paper, I presented "A Private Space Education Program to Alleviate the Shortage of Teachers on Commercial Space in Japanese Schools". Through this private space education program, we plan to revitalize our hometown, Komono Town, as a "space town".

Specifically, the program plans to (1) hold lectures by commercial astronauts at schools, (2) offer courses on commercial space travel for the elderly, (3) use vacant land as a place to practice commercial space education, and (4) convert a camping trailer and use it as a simulator for commercial spacecraft education and training.

2. Lectures by commercial astronauts

2.1 Outline of Lecture

In order to encourage children living in Komono Town to have dreams about space, we are planning to visit the mayor of my municipality and the board of education to give lectures at local elementary and

junior high schools, which will be held in the winter of 2023.

My municipality has five elementary schools and two junior high schools. The total number of students will be approximately 4,000.

By holding lectures at schools, we are able to encourage many children to have dreams and hopes for commercial space travel at the same time.

After the success of the lecture in one municipality, we will realize similar lectures at schools in neighboring municipalities. In this way, we will be able to give a great number of children dreams and hopes for civilian space travel.

Fig. 1 Director of Education of Komono Town (Middle)

2.2 Problem

According to the post-program questionnaire survey, the program has greatly stimulated the children's curiosity about commercial space travel.
However, a survey of the children's behavior after the program showed that the curiosity aroused by the program disappeared within about a week, as they were busy with daily homework and tests.

2.3 Solution

Create an online group for participants of space education programs and lectures using social networking services, etc., and regularly communicate with their peers who are interested in civilian space travel to maintain their curiosity about space. 3.

3. Offer a course on commercial space travel for the elderly.

3.1 Outline of the course

Approximately 25% of Komono Town's population is elderly (65 years old or older).
Therefore, it is essential to offer courses for the elderly in order to revitalize the local community.
Therefore, we will hold a course for the elderly to learn about cutting-edge commercial space travel at a local community center.

First, as a financial planner, I will provide advice on the financial aspects necessary for private space travel, including asset planning to efficiently accumulate funds.
As an administrative paralegal, I will also provide legal advice on how to give your grandchildren private space travel as a gift during their lifetime, or how to leave assets as a will.

Fig. 2 Space Lecture for the Elderly in Komono

3.2 Problem

Elderly people living in rural areas think that commercial space travel is something that has nothing to do with them. Therefore, there is a problem that people do not easily gather even when notifying them of course offerings.

3.3 Solution

Regarding the content in the first half of the lectures on "how to make a will," "how to effectively use vacant houses and land," "inheritance of farmland," etc., will be given to solve problems that local elderly people are currently facing. Then, in the second half of the course, we will attract the elderly by giving a talk about private space travel.

4. Use vacant land as a practice site for private space education

4.1 Overview of the use of vacant land

In rural areas of Japan, the population is decreasing as young people move to urban areas, and the number of

vacant houses and lots is increasing. Therefore, we will revitalize rural areas by making effective use of these vacant houses and land.
Specifically, we are planning an event where parents and children can experience the moon's surface by assuming that vacant lots where stones have been abandoned are craters on the moon. This will bring people from the urban areas to the rural areas.

Fig.3 Candidate sites for lunar experience events

4.2 Problem

Owners of vacant land are not interested in private space travel and do not agree to use the land as a site for private space education practices.
The problem is that the owner of the vacant land is unknown or may have moved to a distant place.

4.3 Solution

Have the owners attend the private space travel course described in Section 2 above and combine it with a course on solving the problems they are facing, such as "taxation measures for vacant land," to gain their understanding.
If the owner is unknown, cooperation from the government should be sought.

5. Use of Private Spacecraft Training Simulators converted from camping trailers and dome houses

5.1 Overview of Education Using the Private Spacecraft Education and Training Simulator

The ASTRAX civilian spacecraft education and training simulator, which was created by converting a camping trailer and a dome house, will be installed in a vacant lot in Komono Town.

Since these simulators are mobile, hands-on sessions will also be held at elementary and junior high schools in the town.

By holding a private spacecraft education and training simulator hands-on learning session at schools where lectures by commercial astronauts were held as described in Section 1 above, students can have a realistic experience of commercial space travel.

Fig. 4 ASTRAX Commercial Spacecraft Education and Training Simulators

5.2 Problem

Administrative permission is required to bring a camping trailer or dome house onto public school grounds, but the administrative process can be very lengthy.
In addition, if the installation is on vacant land, the same issues as in Section 3-2 above apply.

5.*3 Solution*

Japanese administrative agencies are conservative and slow to make progress on first-time projects, but once a precedent is set, the second time is quicker. Also, if you can build a relationship of trust with the government agency, the conversation can proceed relatively quickly. Therefore, by ensuring the success of the first project, we aim to build trust with the government agencies and conduct the next project as soon as possible.

6. Conclusion

In order to implement a project to revitalize our hometown, Komono Town, by turning it into a "space town" to revitalize the region, it is essential to have the understanding and cooperation of the local government and residents as a prerequisite for this project.

At present, however, the understanding and cooperation for space travel are insufficient. The reason for this may be the lack of information and bias toward

private-sector space travel. Therefore, first of all, it is necessary to continue to actively provide information to government officials and key members of the local community.

In addition, most residents believe that space is not relevant to their lives. Therefore, in order to encourage them to participate in space events, it is necessary to make them feel that their participation will benefit their daily lives. Specifically, participation in space education events improves motivation to learn science and English, and the effective use of vacant land as a space education site provides tax benefits.

Through these activities, the project will be facilitated by stimulating interest in private space travel and gaining the understanding of the government and residents for the space project.

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故郷の菰野町を「宇宙の町」にする地方活性化プロジェクト

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Abstract

In Japan, the concentration of population in urban areas and the declining birthrate and aging pop- ulation have led to the decline of rural areas. To solve this problem, I have planned and started to put into practice a space project to revitalize the region by turning my hometown, Komono Town, into ”space town.” First, we have initiated activities to introduce space education programs to schools in order to get parents and children living in Komono Town interested in private space travel and the private space business. Specifically, we visit the mayor of the municipality and the board of education, and hold lectures by private astronauts at elementary and junior high schools to implement the program to give children a dream. In addition to children, we also offer lectures on commercial space travel for elderly people living in Komono Town. Nearly half of the population of Komono Town is elderly. By having a goal of space travel, the elderly will find a purpose in life, which will enhance their vitality and revitalize the community. Furthermore, we will make effective use of vacant houses and land owned by the elderly by converting them into places to practice private space education. We will also attract tourists from other regions by offering space tours to simulate space travel with private astronauts using a private spacecraft education and training simulator, which was created by converting a camping trailer.
In this paper, I report the results of my examination of the project to revitalize my hometown, Komono Town, as a rural area by turning it into ”space town,” as well as the issues involved in the implementation of the project.

アブストラクト

日本では、都市部への人口集中と少子高齢化により、地方が衰退するという問題が生じています。そこで、このような問題を解決するため、私の故郷である菰野町を「宇宙の町」にすることにより、地域を活性化する宇宙プロジェクトを計画し、実践に向けて動き始めています。まず、菰野町に住む親子に、民間宇宙旅行や民間宇宙ビジネスに興味を持ってもらうため、宇宙教育プログラムを学校に導入するための活動を開始しています。具体的には、自治体の市長、教育委員会を訪問し、小学校、中学校で民間宇宙飛行士の講演会を開催して、子ども達に夢を与えるプログラムを実施しています。また、子どもたちだけでなく、菰野町に住む高齢者を対象に、民間宇宙旅行についての講座を開講します。菰野町の人口の半数近くは高齢者です。高齢者の方々が、宇宙旅行という目標を持つことで生きがいを見つけ、活力を高め地域の活性化に繋げていきます。さらに、高齢者が所有する空き家・空き地を民間宇宙教育の実践の場所に変えることで有効活用していきます。また、キャンピング・トレーラーを改造して制作した民間宇宙船教育訓練シミュレーターを使って、民間宇宙飛行士と一緒に、宇宙旅行の擬似体験をする宇宙ツアーを開催して、他の地域から観光客を呼び込みます。
本論文では、私の故郷の菰野町を、「宇宙の町」にすることで地方を活性化するためのプロジェクトの内容、実践における課題点について、検証結果を報告します。

Keywords: 菰野町、地方活性化、SKIP

Nomenclature
菰野町：三重県にある地方都市

1. はじめに

近年、日本では若い人々が都市部に移動することで人口が減少し、地方が衰退するという問題が生じています。私の故郷・菰野町も同様に、人口が減少し、空き家・空き地が増えています。

私が運営するオンライン学習塾 SKIP（Star Kids International Program）では、授業の一環として、民間宇宙教育プログラムを実施しています。

昨年 2022 年の論文では、「日本の学校における民間による商業宇宙に関する教師不足を解消するための宇宙教育プログラム」を発表しました。

この民間宇宙教育プログラムによって、故郷の菰野町を、「宇宙の町」として活性化することを計画しています。

具体的には、①学校で、民間宇宙飛行士による講演会を実施、②高齢者を対象にした民間宇宙旅行の講座を開講、③空き地を民間宇宙教育の実践の場として利用、④キャンピング・トレーラーを改造して民間宇宙船教育訓練シミュレーターとして利用することを計画しています。

2. 民間宇宙飛行士の講演会を実施

2.1 講演会の概要

菰野町に住む子ども達に、宇宙に対する夢を持ってもらうため、自治体の市長や教育委員会を訪れて、地域の小学校や中学校での講演会を企画しています。2023年冬に実施することが決まっています。

私の自治体は、小学校が5校と中学校が2校あります。生徒数は、合計約4千人になります。学校での講演会という方法をとることにより、一度に多くの子ども達に、民間宇宙旅行への夢や希望を持ってもらうことができます。

また、ひとつの自治体での講演会が成功した後は、隣の自治体でも同様に、学校での講演会を実現していきます。これにより、非常に多くに子ども達に、民間宇宙旅行に対する夢や希望を与えることができます。

図 1　菰野町の教育長と

2.2 課題

宇宙教育プログラム実施後のアンケート調査によると、プログラムによって、民間宇宙旅行に対する好奇心が大きく刺激されていることが伺えます。

しかし、プログラムを受けた子供達の、その後の行動を調査すると、日々宿題やテストに追われて、プログラム受講によって喚起された好奇心は、およそ一週間以内に消えてしまっていることが分かります。

2.3 解決策

宇宙教育プログラムや講演会の参加者を対象に、SNS 等を利用したオンライングループを作り、定期的に、民間宇宙旅行に関心を持つ仲間達と交流することで、宇宙に対する好奇心を維持します。

3. 高齢者を対象に、民間宇宙旅行の講座を開講

3.1 講座の概要

菰野町の人口の約25%は高齢者（65歳以上）です。
そのため、地方活性化のためには、高齢者を対象にした講座が不可欠です。

そこで、地域の公民館で、高齢者を対象に、最先端の民間宇宙旅行について学ぶ講座を開催します。

まず、民間宇宙旅行に必要な資金面について、効率的に資金を積み立てる資産計画を、ファイナンシャルプランナーとしてアドバイスを行います。
また、孫に、民間宇宙旅行をプレゼントする方法について、生前贈与や、遺言として資産を残す方法など、行政書士として法律面でのアドバイスを行います。

図 2　高齢者向け民間宇宙講座

3.2 課題

民間宇宙旅行は、地方に住む高齢者にとっては、自分達とは関係のない話と思っている。そのため、講座開催の案内を告知しても、人がなかなか集まらないという問題があります。

3.3 解決策

講座の内容について、講座の前半に、「遺言の作り方」「空き家・空き地の有効活用の仕方」「農地の相続」など、今、地域の高齢者が抱えている問題を解決する講座を行います。そして、講座の後半に、民間宇宙旅行についての話を行うことで、高齢者を集めます。

4. 空き地を民間宇宙教育の実践場として利用

4.1 空き地の利用の概要

日本の地方部では、若い人が都市部へ移動することにより、地方の人口が減少し、空き家・空き地が増えています。そこで、これらの空き家・空き地を有効活用することで、地方を活性化します。

具体的には、石が放置されている空き地を、月のクレーターと想定して、親子で月面体験ができるイベントを計画しています。これにより、都市部から地方に、人を呼ぶことができます。

図 3 月面体験イベントの候補地

4.2 課題

空き地の所有者が、民間宇宙旅行に関心がないため、民間宇宙教育実践の場としての利用に承諾してくれない。
空き地の所有者が不明、または遠方に引っ越している場合があるという問題があります。

4.3 解決策

上記セクション2で述べた民間宇宙旅行の講座に参加してもらい、「空き地に課税される税金対策」など、所有者が直面している問題解決のための講座を合わせて行うことで、理解を得てもらいます。
所有者不明の場合は、行政に協力を求める必要があります。

5. キャンピング・トレーラーやドームハウスを改造した民間宇宙船教育訓練シミュレーターの利用

5.1 民間宇宙船教育訓練シミュレーターを利用した教育の概要

菰野町の空き地に、キャンピング・トレーラーやドームハウスを改造して制作した ASTRAX 民間宇宙船教育訓練シミュレーターを設置します。
また、これらのシミュレーターは移動可能なため、町内の小学校や中学校でも体験会を実施します。

上記セクション1で述べた民間宇宙飛行士による講演会を実施した学校で、民間宇宙船教育訓練シミュレーター体験学習会を行うことで、民間宇宙旅行をリアルに感じてもらうことができます。

図 4 ASTRAX 民間宇宙船教育訓練シミュレーター

5.2 課題

公立学校の敷地内に、キャンピング・トレーラーやドームハウスを持ち込むためには、行政の許可が必要になりますが、行政手続きは、非常に長い時間がかかる場合があります。
また、空き地に設置する場合は、上記セクション 3.2 と同様の問題があります。

5.3 解決策

日本の行政機関は、初めてのプロジェクトに対しては保守的で進捗が遅いですが、一度前例を作れば二度目は早いです。また、行政機関と信頼関係を構築できれば、比較的早く話が進みます。そのため、一度目のプロジェクトを確実に成功させることで、行政機関と信頼を築き、次のプロジェクトの早期の実現を目指します。

6. 結論

故郷の菰野町を、「宇宙の町」にすることにより地方を活性化するためのプロジェクトを実施していくためには、その前提として、行政と住民の理解と協力が必要不可欠です。

しかし、現時点では、これらが不十分です。その原因は、民間宇宙旅行に対する情報の不足と偏りが考えられます。そのため、まず、行政職員や住民の主要メンバーに、積極的に情報提供を継続していく必要があります。

また、ほとんどの住民は、「宇宙は自分の人生には関係ないもの」と考えています。そのため、宇宙イベントへの参加を促すためには、参加によって日々の生活にメリットがあることを感じてもらう必要があります。具体的には、宇宙教育イベントに参加することで、理科や英語に対する学習意欲が向上する、空き地を宇宙教育の場所として有効活用することで税金対策になるなどです。

これらの活動によって、民間宇宙旅行に対する関心を喚起して、宇宙プロジェクトに対する行政と住民の理解を得た上で、同プロジェクトを円滑に進めていきます。

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