

Nagakute Yuimaaru Website

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Abstract

This website aims to share information about local art, music, farming, and dining in Nagakute, Aichi prefecture, Japan. In Japan, communication between fellow local citizens is weakening; therefore, this website is an attempt to stimulate communication between local residents and create a recycling-oriented community.

Introduction

In 2011, a nuclear power plant accident occurred in the Japanese prefecture of Fukushima. The resulting release of radioactivity led to local soil contamination, thereby forcing the collapse of the regional community as many people were compelled to leave their land. This reminded us of the importance of regional communities in protecting the land we live on. Further, the radiation contaminated many agricultural products, which has led to increased concerns about agricultural product safety. On a related but different note, as in many other towns, communication between the citizens in Nagakute has weakened. Although many people conduct grassroots activities for the regional community, running small businesses and cultivating safe vegetables within the region, information about these activities is not being successfully shared across the region.

Method

Therefore, a website was created for sharing information about local resident activities. This website has posted various local stories about organic farmers, locally sourced restaurants, welfare institutions involved in farming, environmentally oriented gardening companies, environmental education groups, community based cafes, and local galleries and musicians. As art, design and music play a particularly significant role in stimulating communication between local residents; thus, these areas have been emphasized. This website publishes basic information about the groups such as their names, addresses, pictures, brief summaries, maps, websites, and Facebook URLs. It has also published interview footage and RSS feeds distributed in blogs. The site has also made it possible to post information about each group or gallery event. The website also has several pages that are useful for business or sales. On the farmer's page, there is

a farm hand recruiting form and a form to sell agricultural products. Also, a catering request form is on the culinary page.

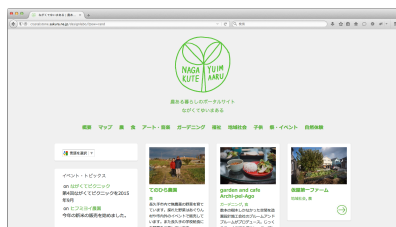


Fig 1. Nagakute Yuimaaru Website, 2015, Haruo Ishii, /website, <http://www.nagakute-yuimaaru.com>.

Result

The website has been very popular and is regularly accessed. In addition, requests to cover stories in the local area have increased and are actively pursued. Local residents enthusiastically share their activities and thoughts through interviews. This rising interest demonstrates that information about local activities has not been spread adequately and that the residents are eager to disseminate information on a wider scale.

Conclusion

Many people in Japan are still living at evacuation sites because of the nuclear power plant accident, which means that the accident has not yet ended. However, underlying the nuclear power plant accident is the fact that our own lives and that of the regional communities have been entrusted to strangers, which can be observed through our dependence on huge systems such as nuclear power plants. Therefore, it is important to create recycling-oriented communities that are regionally self-sufficient in terms of economy, energy, agriculture, food, art, music, and the raising of children. This would allow communities to be independent of huge systems such as nuclear power plants and become more self-reliant. Therefore, it is important to create initial connections and information exchange between fellow local residents through electronic media such as this website.