

Research Report

Researcher Name	Tsvetomira Hristova Ivanova
Home Institute	Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, Bulgaria
Nationality	Bulgarian
Host Researcher	Assoc. prof. Takashi Ishigaki
Host Department	Undergraduate School of Cultural and Social Studies Department of Psychological and Sociological Studies
Research Period	July, 22nd 2024 - January, 21st 2025
Research Field	Social Studies: Rural Revitalization in Japan



Research Theme at Tokai University	
Title:	The Japanese government's rural revitalization policies and their impact on socio-cultural processes at the local level: the relationship with local self-initiative - the case of Ogata-mura in Akita prefecture
Abstract:	The research aims at finding the connections between the initiatives that members of local communities take to revitalize (and the necessity to revitalize) the areas in which they live, prompted by, in addition to, or in spite of government measures. Through field research - in-depth interviews with residents of Ogata-mura, Akita prefecture, the author describes the socio-cultural processes in the village and seeks an answer to the question of whether it is possible to solve the problems from within, at the local level, without (total) dependence on “the outside”, as well as the factors, on which these (successful and sustainable) initiatives depend. The results of the research serve as a basis for further research and comparative studies on the same subject in Bulgaria.
Results / Achievements:	
Please write a summary of your research results / achievements. Also, please share your research papers/articles, books, poster presentations if there is any.	
<p>The first two months of the research (July-September, 2024) were dedicated to collecting of documentation and relevant data: a summary of the Japanese government's rural revitalization measures and research on local policies and regulations were made. Initial research on self-initiatives of local communities was also performed. The work included visits to various libraries, as well as meetings with (local) administration and researchers from various universities. In this stage of the research, the help of Assoc. prof. Takashi Ishigaki from the Department of Psychological and Sociological Studies at Tokai University was of vital importance.</p> <p>The next two months (October-November, 2024) were dedicated to the preparation of surveys and interview questions based on the collected data and finding a suitable case/place/community/prefecture for field work. The administration of the HSCO were very helpful with the preparation of the filed work business trip and it was also generously funded by Tokai University.</p> <p>In December, 2024 I conducted the field work in Ogata-mura, Akita prefecture, after initially visiting the village in November. The work was successful and locals – both villagers and administration readily participated in the interviews and the expected amount of data was collected. The results of the research serve as basis for further research and comparative studies. Those will be published in a book by the end of 2025 by Sofia University (Bulgaria) Publishing House. The support of Tokai University will be noted in it.</p> <p>In the middle stages of my research I presented my results at the conference “Japan: Pre-modern, Modern and Contemporary” held in Bucharest, Romania on September 2-4th, 2024.</p> <p>I also find the book edited by Prof. Iwamoto Yutaka “これからの地方創生・関係人口ー関係人口から持続可能な地域の創り手へ” invaluable for the further development of this research and hope for continuous collaboration based on the expert knowledge and experience of Tokai University professors.</p>	